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Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development

SENATOR THE HON SIMON BIRMINGHAM

Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate

THE HON DAVID LITTLEPROUD MP

Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management
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Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries

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First flight takes off under \$110 million freight assistance initiative

Premium quality Australian seafood will soon be on the plates of thousands of overseas consumers, with the Morrison-McCormack Government helping to secure a critical freight export route under its \$110 million International Freight Assistance Mechanism.

In the first partnership struck under the new initiative that was announced last week, Australian seafood producer Tassal will today, commence twice-weekly flights packed full of premium seafood into the Taiwanese market.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Regional Development Michael McCormack said this first flight demonstrated the Government was getting on with the job of supporting Australia's agriculture and fisheries exporters.

"We are working tirelessly to relieve the immense pressure on Australian agriculture and seafood exporters, many of whom felt the earliest impacts of the economic downturn," Mr McCormack said.

"Every extra freight flight we can secure will help to save Australian jobs and keep businesses open."

Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment Simon Birmingham said there had been strong interest from exporters in the International Freight Assistance Mechanism, with Austrade and the Department of Agriculture already receiving over 500 enquiries from Australian exporters.

"Today's flight shows that we're helping to get freight and cargo planes off the ground and into the air, helping our agricultural and fisheries exporters to get moving again," Minister Birmingham said.

"This is about making sure our farmers and fishers can get their high-quality produce back into our key export markets so we can keep more Australians in jobs and generate extra export dollars."

“Helping our export sector to overcome the barrier they currently face is crucial to reduce job losses through the COVID-19 crisis and a critical part of the ultimate economic recovery.”

Federal Agriculture Minister David Littleproud said this was about helping Australian agricultural exports find their way back into global markets.

“It’s vital our farmers and fishers are still able to still export the fish they catch and the farm produce they grow,” Minister Littleproud said.

“Where there is demand overseas, we want to make sure that our farmers and fishers don’t miss out on selling their produce, just because there aren’t commercial planes flying.”

Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries Jonno Duniam said this freight assistance was a lifeline for Tasmania’s seafood industry.

“Outcomes like this are critical to getting Australia's seafood industry back on its feet after a devastating start to the year,” Assistant Minister Duniam said.

“These first flights off the tarmac will help to safeguard operations and over 1,500 regional jobs, which is exactly what this initiative was aimed at achieving.

"The fact that Tasmanian seafood is the first to take-off is a major coup for the Tasmanian seafood industry, and I know that many other products from across Australia will soon follow this lead."

This initiative is part of the Government’s \$1 billion Relief and Recovery Fund to support regions, communities and industry sectors that have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

For more information, refer to the [International Freight Assistance Mechanism](#) fact sheet.

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