



*MEDIA RELEASE* 新聞稿

**Australia announces new International Freight Assistance Mechanism to ensure fresh produce reaches Hong Kong**

(8 April 2020) – The Australian Government has launched the International Freight Assistance Mechanism (IAFM) in response to freight transport challenges caused by the outbreak of COVID-19.

The initiative was announced on 1 April 2020 with funding of AUD \$ 110 million (HK\$522 million) and will support exports of Australia’s quality fresh produce. It will enable Australian agriculture and seafood exporters to reach key overseas markets by coordinating freight flights to destinations such as Hong Kong.

“Our trading relationship with Hong Kong is an extremely important one. Australia is one of the largest suppliers of food and beverage products to Hong Kong and we want to support our producers and the people of Hong Kong who have come to enjoy and expect access to quality fresh Australian produce,” said Shannon Powell, Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner and Deputy Consul General (Commercial).

Other key markets in the initial phase will include mainland China, Japan, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with four key departure hubs from Australia: Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth.

Eligible export products include:

- seafood, including lobsters
- premium red meat, including beef and pork
- dairy, including fresh milk and yoghurt
- horticulture, including premium fruits and packaged salad or vegetables.

“This new mechanism will help maintain important freight routes for Australian producers and exporters until commercial capacity is restored and we are doing everything possible to help our firms get their quality produce on airplanes and delivered to Hong Kong.

“Australian suppliers have already seen significant increases in demand in Hong Kong since the outbreak of COVID-19, often leading to short supply on shelves, the freight flights will ensure that demand is met and that the people of Hong Kong can continue to purchase the Australian products they love.”.

The IAFM is an Australian Government initiative administered by the Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade). The first freight flight is expected to depart Australia within the next 14 days.

For further information please access <https://haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/international-freight-assistance>.