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Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management
Deputy Leader of the Nationals
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SENATOR THE HON. JONATHON DUNIAM

Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries
Senator for Tasmania

To Australia's seafood industry,

The challenges Australia is facing in response to the coronavirus are unprecedented. The impact of this global pandemic has been devastating for many in Australia's seafood sector.

While the health and safety of Australians is our priority, we understand that some decisions taken to protect Australians during this time are having significant impacts on your industry.

Australia's seafood sector was one of the first hit, with many in the industry ceasing work in late January as a result of the outbreak of the coronavirus in China and the cessation of orders.

To cushion the blow for Australia's seafood industry, the Morrison Government has announced two initiatives aimed at ensuring this hard-hit and critical sector can build a bridge to recovery.

These include \$10 million to waive levies for Commonwealth fishers and a \$110 million investment to secure freight access to key international markets.

International Freight Assistance Mechanism

We are investing \$110 million into establishing the International Freight Assistance Mechanism to unlock access to key global markets for our high value fisheries and agricultural exports.

This will assist in exporting products such as seafood, meats, dairy and horticulture to markets, notably China, where air freight capacity has been severely reduced and costs have escalated to uneconomic levels in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Over time other commodities and markets will be considered.

The mechanism is aimed at keeping businesses open and Australians in jobs, while also securing Australia's position in key contested markets. This is a targeted and temporary mechanism to support access until reasonable commercial capacity is restored.

The Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade) will be the lead agency and will be assisted by a newly appointed International Freight Coordinator General, Mr Michael Byrne.

Mr Byrne is a former Managing Director of both Toll Holdings and Linfox and a former non-executive Director of Australia Post. Mr Byrne will draw on his significant international logistics expertise to fulfil this role.

Next steps: Austrade and Mr Michael Byrne have already commenced work on the International Freight Assistance Mechanism. Further information and contact details are included in the associated fact sheet.

Australian Fisheries Management Authority Levy Relief

Around \$10 million in Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) levies will be waived for all Commonwealth fishers, ensuring they do not have to pay Commonwealth levies for the remainder of 2020. This means Commonwealth concession holders will NOT pay Levy Instalment 2 and Levy Instalment 3.

This will apply to approximately 300 Commonwealth fishing vessels, directly employing around 1,500 fishers predominately in regional Australia. It will also secure the supply of seafood required by local processing facilities that directly employ around 500 people.

Next steps: Commonwealth concession holders who pay AFMA levies will NOT have to pay Levy Instalment 2 and Levy Instalment 3. Those who have already paid either instalment will be reimbursed by AFMA in coming weeks. No invoice will be sent for Levy Instalment 3.

We would like to thank industry representatives and the many individual fishers who have worked hard to deliver this support package during immensely challenging times.

This work is not over yet, and we will continue to work with you as we face the challenges ahead.

Our seafood industry has been built on the back of some of the toughest and most resilient Australians, and it is this tenacity that will see it rebuild again – and our Government will be there every step of the way.

Yours sincerely



Simon Birmingham

Yours sincerely



David Littleproud

Yours sincerely



Jonathon Duniam