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Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

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Guy Barnett, Minister for Trade

Fresh food exporters take flight

The Tasmanian Government is working hard to support our primary producers and exporters as they continue to work through the freight challenges posed by COVID-19.

Several tonnes of fresh Tasmanian produce, predominantly rock lobster and abalone, were aboard the first Cathay Pacific flight of the season which left Hobart last night bound for Hong Kong.

The resumption of these flights is a welcome boost for exporters of premium, time-sensitive freight, such as seafood and cherries, who have been without a direct air freight link with Asia since the service ceased earlier this year.

In the past 12 months our major fresh produce exports to Hong Kong of Tasmanian rock lobster, Atlantic salmon, cherries and beef have brought in more than \$24 million, a significant contribution to our economy locally.

The flights were described as a 'game changer' by industry when first introduced last summer and we expect even more enthusiasm from producers and exporters this season.

Flights are expected to initially operate weekly and will continue after Christmas to coincide with the cherry season to help meet the nearly \$16 million in demand from Hong Kong for this prime Tasmanian produce.

The Tasmanian Government is the strongest supporter of our trade sector with annual exports reaching \$4.21 billion to September 2021.