



## Media Release

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### Australian fresh produce industry delegation focussed on growing relationships with Japan

A delegation of Australia's major fruit and vegetable producers is travelling to Japan from 6-8 March 2024 to discuss emerging market opportunities and further enhance collaboration between the fresh produce industries of both Australia and Japan.

The delegation's visit builds on a successful trip in December 2022, and the first *Japan-Australia Fresh Produce Networking Event*.

"Australia's relationship with Japan is one of our nation's closest and most mature partnerships in Asia, if not the world. We have great respect for each other's expertise and knowledge, and we want to keep building on our engagement with our Japanese counterparts to support the best outcomes for Australian and Japanese farmers," said Australian Fresh Produce Alliance (AFPA) CEO, Ms Claire McClelland.

Over the two days in market, the delegation will visit Japanese production sites accompanied by Japanese industry representatives, host a lunch with a range of Japanese importers and meet with Australia's Ambassador to Japan.

"We know that the Japanese agriculture industry shares many of the same challenges we're facing in Australia, and we are looking forward to continuing our dialogue with key Japanese industry bodies and colleagues on our shared challenges, including workforce shortages, rising production costs and accessing trade opportunities," said Ms McClelland.

Japan is currently one of the largest markets for Australian fresh produce with table grapes, citrus, avocado, cherry and melon exports from Australia valued at AUD\$134 Million.

"Our industry sees a real opportunity to grow two-way trade with Japan. We know Australian produce has a range of benefits in the Japanese market, including our relatively close proximity to the market, and the ability to supply a range of produce counter seasonally to domestic Japanese production.

From what our Japanese counterparts tell us, we also understand there is strong interest in exploring market opportunities for more Japanese produce to be exported to Australia. Given the close ties between Australia and Japan, collaborating on increasing two-way trade is a real opportunity," said Ms McClelland.

Despite industry's ambition to grow overseas trade, government efforts and public conversation around better supporting growers is currently fixated on domestic competition issues and inquiries. The AFPA have outlined that a key solution to improving domestic competition is supporting improved technical market access and trade opportunities.

"We know that when strong export markets are made available to growers, it improves their negotiating power domestically, stabilises the price of produce for consumers and supports a more sustainable fresh produce industry. One of the best solutions to improve domestic competition for Australian producers is for the Federal Government to focus on improving industry's access to export markets through an investment of resources within the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry combined with high level political engagement focussed on improving trade outcomes," said Ms McClelland.

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**About the AFPA** - The Australian Fresh Produce Alliance (AFPA) is made up of Australia's key fresh produce growers and suppliers. The AFPA represents half the industry turnover of the Australian fresh produce sector - \$4.5 billion of the \$9.1 billion total; 1,000 plus growers through commercial arrangements and more than 15,000 direct employees through peak harvest, and up to 25,000 in the grower network.