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## RETIRED AIR MARSHAL TO CO-CHAIR FREIGHT ASSISTANCE BODY DURING PANDEMIC

Posted by [David Sexton](#) | 29th April, 2020



*Retired Air Marshall Margaret Staib. Credit: Centre for Supply Chain and Logistics*

AIR Vice Marshal (Retired) Margaret Staib has been appointed to co-chair the International Freight Assistance Mechanism, a fund set up by the federal government to help the Australian agricultural and fisheries sector export to key overseas markets such as Asia and the Middle East.

DCN has previously reported on the [establishment of the new body](#) including the appointment of respected industry figure Michael Byrne, the other co-chair, as international freight coordinator general to coordinate IFAM.

IFAM money is to come from the government's \$1bn Relief and Recovery Fund, set up in response to the COVID-19 crisis, and a network of nine airlines and six freight forwarders has been created.

To date, several flights have taken place, such as premium seafood from Tasmania to Taiwan, rock lobster from Western Australia to China and chilled lamb from Victoria to Abu Dhabi.

Deputy PM and infrastructure minister Michael McCormack said the appointments demonstrated the government's commitment to supporting supply chains.

"The COVID-19 crisis has reduced airfreight capacity and disrupted supply chains around the world," Mr McCormack said.

"More than 80% of airfreight is usually transported in passenger aircraft and given the drastic reduction in those flights, we are acting to safeguard our airfreight capacity."

Defence minister Linda Reynolds said with more than 30 years' experience in the Australian Defence Force and her past experience as chief executive of Airservices Australia, Air Vice-Marshal Staib would bring significant experience.

"Defence Force logisticians are some of the best in the business and their skills have never been in more demand than now," Minister Reynolds said.

Trade minister Simon Birmingham said the appointment complemented the Australian government's \$110m International Freight Assistance Mechanism.



*Michael Byrne*

Professor and director of the Centre for Supply Chain and Logistics at Deakin University, Dr Hermione Parsons, complimented the government on appointing both Michael Byrne and Margaret Staib.

"Michael has unparalleled logistics experience as managing director (over the last 18 years) of two of Australia's largest freight companies, Toll Holdings and Linfox and as a company director of Australia Post, and is an adjunct professor at Deakin, a foundation member of CSCL's Industry Advisory Board, and chair of CSCL's Talent and Capability Lab," Dr Parsons said.

“Similarly, Margaret’s career is internationally and nationally exemplary, includes the US Meritorious Service Medal from the Pentagon, and Margaret is also a long-standing member of CSCL’s Industry Advisory Board.”

Dr Parsons said the expertise of CSCL and Deakin University had been offered to IFAM, to help during a challenging time for the airfreight sector.

Mr Byrne hosted a virtual briefing session on Tuesday 28 April 2020 to explain the IFAM process and address industry questions. The webinar was recorded and will be able to view on the IFAM info page.