

Fish lands SA an important new market

SOME traditional South Australian industries have been hit hard by Chinese trade imposts, particularly the important wine sector.

Lobster exports also were hampered by the trade dispute, which intensified as Australia sought an investigation into the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In a piece of welcome good news, though, one of China's Asian rivals, Japan, is providing an important alternative market.

The \$161m worth of exports to Japan from SA in July was the best result yet recorded for that calendar month.

This was driven by surging tuna exports, which are shipped mostly frozen in July and August.

Trade Minister Stephen Patterson says SA's latest 12-month trade period has been the strongest on record, exporting \$13bn of goods – a 19 per cent rise.

Given the increasing tightening of global supply lines, this is a valuable and important achievement.

SA's targeting of closer trade ties with Japan makes a great deal of sense.

Australia has strong and broad-ranging security and economic ties with Japan, underpinned by a 2007 security co-operation declaration and a 2015 economic partnership agreement.

Japan was Australia's second-biggest trading partner before the pandemic hit in 2018-19. That year, two-way goods and services trade was valued at \$88.5bn. Japan is second only to China in Australia's export markets.

SA and Japan have longstanding economic ties, not only in the lucrative tuna industry. For almost 20 years, Mitsubishi Motors Australia made Sigmas and Magnas at a manufacturing plant in Tonsley, in Adelaide's south.

Strategically, Australia must seek alternate markets while attempting to promote fair and reasonable trade with China. We must continue trying to engage with China, particularly over trade, but recognise we cannot afford to be overly dependent on one nation.

The pandemic has profoundly disrupted global trade. In this context, SA's record figures are encouraging and welcome.