



Jessica cherry picked

SAILOR and Young Australian of the Year Jessica Watson has lent her star power to promoting cherries.

Yesterday on Hobart's waterfront, Watson, 18, indulged in some of Tasmania's finest cherries as part of a push to alert consumers to the nutritious fruit's short season.

Tasmanian cherries are entering their prime during January, with the quality and size a boost to growers who were devastated last season.

Fruit Growers Tasmania business develop-

ment manager Lucy Gregg said the crop was very promising after last season when rain destroyed a third of the fruit.

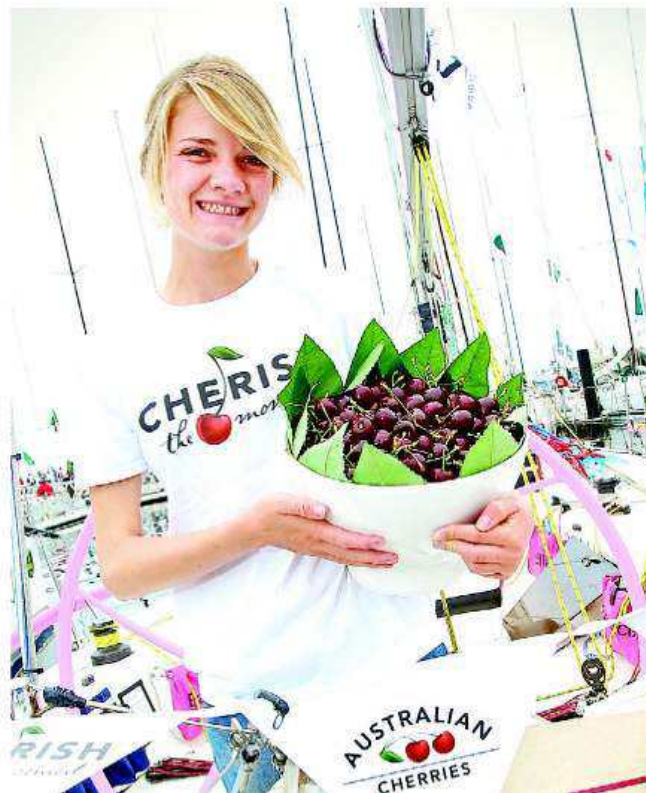
The Tasmanian cherry season begins in mid-to-late December and is moving into the January peak season.

Ms Gregg said while the crop was not as big as earlier years, size and quality were exceptional, as exports to Taiwan, Ja-

pan, South Korea and Hong Kong begin.

More than 2800ha is planted

with cherries across six states, and 13,000 to 15,000 tonnes will be harvested in Australia this season.



FLEETING: Jessica Watson cherishes cherries. Picture: SAM ROSEWARNE