

100 years of service 1901-2001

Other information required for annual reporting purposes

Occupational health and safety

Customs continued to evaluate and develop its national health and safety infrastructure in accordance with the *Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Act 1991* (OH&S Act).

The Customs Occupational Health and Safety Manual and associated guidelines were reviewed through extensive workplace consultative forums.

Customs hosted and continued to play a significant role with the Commonwealth Safety Managers Forum, which met bimonthly to address national rehabilitation, compensation and return to work issues. Customs was also represented in the Comcare Australia Employer Consultative Group and participated in a number of Comcare Australia working parties.

An internal review resulted in the restructuring of the cost centres for the national workplace. This will provide better alignment of information from Comcare and the Customs Human Resource Information System for analysis and performance monitoring.

The following guidelines were reviewed and updated:

- border technology
- occupational health and safety training
- staff safety
- eyesight testing
- first aid
- fumigants
- thermal conditions.

Comcare premium

Customs pays a premium to Comcare for workers compensation insurance. The premium outcome for 2000-01 included a reduction in the premium rate for 2000-01 from 1.50 per cent (prescribed) to 1.13 per cent (revised).

The Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission for Commonwealth employees sets indicators for agency performance. The performance of Customs during 2000-01 is outlined in figure 30.

Figure 30: Rehabilitation performance measures for 2000-01

Performance measure	Target	Actual
Incidence of injuries resulting in 5 days incapacity	less than or equal to 11 per 1000 employees	15.85 per 1000 employees
Lost time injury (claims) frequency rate	less than or equal to 11 per million hours worked	16.49 per million hours worked
Time taken from date of injury to date of receipt in Comcare of new claim	less than or equal to 71 days	38 days
Claimants with 10 or more days incapacity payments with a return to work plan	greater than or equal to 55%	68%
Quality of return to work outcome	greater than or equal to 75%	91%

Notifications under section 68 of the OH&S Act

There were 13 notifications under section 68 of the OH&S Act and appropriate remedial actions were taken by regional health and safety committees.

Directions under section 45 of the OH&S Act

There was one direction given relating to the disposal of a malfunctioning pyrotechnic during a remote area survival course in the Northern Territory, where a course instructor was injured. Interim procedures for the disposal of pyrotechnics were developed in conjunction with WorkHealth Northern Territory and will be finalised once a report on the incident has been completed.

Notifications under sections 30, 46 and 47 of the OH&S Act

One Provisional Improvement Notice was issued concerning the safety of staff working on board the *MV Samson Explorer*, a commercially contracted vessel used to transport illegal entrants. Customs is responsible for the maintenance of security of all persons other than crew while the vessel is so engaged.

A subsequent Improvement Notice required Customs to address the recommendations of an independent report that called for the issue of personal defence equipment.

The following measures were taken:

- operating procedures for the vessel were revised
- staff were trained in conflict management and use of force techniques
- a 'citadel' or safe haven was established aboard the vessel
- personal defence equipment was issued.

Planned/reactive investigations conducted

Comcare conducted two reactive investigations of Customs: one relating to the safety of staff embarked in vessels, the second involving work processes at a cargo examination facility. Customs addressed the issues and recommendations involving the embarked staff, and is awaiting a report on the cargo examination work processes.

Freedom of information

Section 8 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) requires Customs to publish certain details about freedom of information. This includes details about the way the agency is organised, its functions, its decision-making powers, arrangements for public involvement in the work of the agency, documents held by the agency and the way in which members of the public may obtain access to these documents.

Organisation, functions and powers

Information on the organisation and functions of Customs is contained in the Overview section of this report. General information on the powers of Customs is also contained in the Overview section. A list of Commonwealth legislation under which Customs has powers is available in Appendix F on page 184.

Arrangements for external consultation

There is a number of formal consultative mechanisms in place to allow organisations and people outside the Commonwealth to participate in the formulation and administration of policy by Customs. Further information on these mechanisms is available in the Overview section of this report.

Informal feedback about the decisions and actions of Customs from clients and other interested parties is encouraged in the form of complaints and compliments. Further information on this is available in the Accountability to clients section of this report.

Customs also has a general policy of inviting comment on significant policy issues before decisions are made. This includes consulting in particular with relevant industry groups and welcoming feedback from other interested parties. For example, Customs undertook public forums in major Australian cities to consult about the changes proposed through cargo management re-engineering.

Categories of documents maintained

Customs maintains information on a wide range of topics, which can be broadly categorised into a number of areas.

- Agendas, minutes and decisions (including internal and external meetings, and ministerial, interdepartmental and general correspondence and papers).
- Internal administration papers (including research and project reports, accounting and financial records, legal records and personnel and staffing records).
- Manuals and training materials (including video tapes, guidelines, directions and administrative instructions relating to Customs operations and legislative procedures. This also includes some publications prepared for the guidance of staff and the business community to assist in decision-making).
- Briefing papers (including briefs, submissions and reports to the Customs Executive and the Minister for Justice and Customs. These would generally relate to policy development and background to particular administrative decisions).
- Database records (including computer files, printouts, microfiche, preprinted forms and statistical tabulations).

Availability of documents to members of the public

Many of the documents maintained by Customs are available on request. This includes documents such as:

- annual reports
- corporate plans and other associated planning documents
- a wide range of fact sheets, brochures and booklets covering areas of responsibility of Customs (such as information on importing and exporting goods, information for people travelling overseas and details on industry assistance schemes).

To ensure a transparent process, in which all interested parties have the maximum opportunity to defend their interests, Customs also maintains a public file for all anti-dumping and countervailing investigations and reviews.

There is also a range of documents maintained by Customs available for purchase. This includes documents such as:

- Commonwealth of Australia Gazette/Special Gazettes
- Commonwealth of Australia Gazette Tariff Concessions
- Dumping commodities register
- Australian Customs tariff guide
- Schedule of commercial tariff concession orders
- Combined Australian Customs Tariff Nomenclature Statistical Classification.

Facilities to obtain access to documents

Documents available to the public can generally be obtained from the Customs Internet site at www.customs.gov.au or by contacting a Customs Information Centre. Details on Customs information centres are provided in Appendix B on page 175.

Information about Customs publications may also be obtained by contacting:

Director Corporate Communication
Australian Customs Service
5 Constitution Avenue
Canberra ACT 2601
ph. 02 6275 6793
fax 02 6275 6992
email communication@customs.gov.au

Applications for access to documents, including those not generally available to the public, can also be made under the FOI Act.

Freedom of information inquiries

Applications for access to documents under the FOI Act can be made by contacting the Freedom of Information Coordinator at any of the Customs state offices. Contact details for these offices are provided in Appendix B on page 175. Inquiries can be made by letter, telephone, or in person. Formal freedom of information requests must be made in writing and should include telephone contact numbers and a return address. A \$30 application fee must accompany each request.

Customs provides facilities for inspecting documents accessed under the FOI Act.

Freedom of information requests received

The 52 section 15 freedom of information requests received by Customs during 2000-01 covered issues such as:

- import and export-related documents and statistics
- decisions on tariff matters
- processing of passengers at airports
- access to personal information such as staffing and recruitment files.

Figure 31: Requests made under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*

	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Requests Received*			
Section 15	58	47	52
Section 54 (internal review)	5	7	8
Section 55 (AAT review)	2	4	2
Total	65	58	62
Decisions in relation to Section 15 Requests			
Access granted in full	20	20	24
Access granted in part	17	14	14
Access refused	14	14	6
Requests transferred	1	1	2
Requests withdrawn	6	3	4
Time taken to process Section 15 requests			
0-30 days	34	34	26
31-60 days	12	12	17
61-90 days	2	1	1
90 plus days	3	3	-
Fees and charges (\$)			
Total application fees collected	1 690	1 390	1 600
Total charges notified	2 517	935	2 785
Total charges remitted	-	69	-
Total charges collected	2 306	935	2 785
Outstanding charges at 30 June	211	-	-

* A section 15 request is a request for access to information. A section 54 request is a request for a decision about a section 15 request to be reviewed by Customs (ie. Internal review). A section 55 request is a request for a decision about a section 15 request to be reviewed by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (ie external review). Further information on these requests is available in the FOI Act.

Advertising and market research

Customs must report on its expenditure on advertising and market research, as outlined in section 311A of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*. The amounts shown below cover expenditure during 2000-01.

Customs did not pay any amounts to advertising agencies to develop advertising campaigns, to market research organisations or to polling organisations.

DAS Distribution was paid \$8405.04 (including GST) for direct mailing of Tourist Refund Scheme information to travel agents and other tourism organisations.

Customs did not have any campaign-related media advertising expenditure. Starcom Worldwide (formerly AIS Media), the master agency for Customs advertising during 2000-01, was paid \$402 930.20 (including GST) for non-campaign media advertising. This included \$25 565.61 that was committed during 1999-2000 and paid during 2000-01. The expenditure included recruitment advertising, tender advertising, publication of dumping notices in the Australian Financial Review and miscellaneous advertising.

Ecologically sustainable development and environmental performance

Customs is required to report annually on its performance with regard to ecologically sustainable development (ESD) and environmental matters under section 516A of the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Administration of legislation

Customs does not have direct responsibility for any legislation with environmental implications. However, it does administer certain aspects of such legislation on behalf of a number of other government departments and agencies. Further details on this are provided below.

Contribution of outcome/outputs to ESD

The Customs outcome does not directly relate to ecologically sustainable development. However, output 3 is civil maritime surveillance and response, which provides air and marine-based civil surveillance and response services to a number of government agencies. As part of this output, regular surveillance of marine conservation areas, as well as Australia's ecologically important Coral Sea and Indian Ocean territories, is undertaken.

Immediate reports of significant wild life or sea life concentration or mortality, oil pollution or other environmental damage are provided to relevant agencies. The total price of output 3 during 2000-01 was \$174.3 million, which covered aerial surveillance of over 120 million square nautical miles and over 18 000 flying hours. It also covered marine surveillance coverage of over 1300 sea days. The portion of output 3 attributable to environmental benefit cannot be separately identified.

Environmental impact of operations and actions

Customs developed and proposes to manage an energy management plan for 2001-03. This plan is based on a *Customs Background Energy Planning and Issues* paper, which will be a working reference document for more specific operational information for the energy management plan's implementation.

This energy management plan was developed taking account the following key issues:

- Commonwealth energy efficiency policy
- Commonwealth energy intensity targets for 2002-03
- The Australian National Audit Office's (ANAO's) *Energy Efficiency Best Practice Guide*
- Commonwealth Electricity Procurement Audit No 25
- National Greenhouse Strategy
- Environment Management System.

Tenant light and power usage

One of the Commonwealth's energy-use performance targets to be met by 2002-03 is for tenant light and power usage for office buildings to be no more than 10 000 mega joules of energy per person per annum. To meet this target, the energy management plan includes a strategy to reduce tenant light and power energy usage by two million kilowatt hours, or 20 per cent, over the next two years. This will result in Customs achieving an average of 9679 mega joules per person by 2002-03.

Light and power consumption at all Customs properties (excluding specific tenancies covered under section 19 of the *Customs Act 1901*) will be considered under the energy management plan. However, Customs will focus particularly on the properties that use the most energy. An electricity consumption audit has shown that 25 properties account for approximately 80 per cent of tenant light and power consumption. These 25 properties will be targeted over the next two years to determine what energy reductions can be achieved.

Implementing the energy management plan

In the short term, implementation of the energy management plan will focus on gaining maximum electricity consumption reductions and savings through applying housekeeping measures. The ANAO's *Energy Efficiency Best Practice Guide* suggests that about 10-15 per cent savings in energy can be achieved through housekeeping measures such as conducting electricity tariff reviews and identifying energy consumption anomalies.

Customs will also consider a number of other energy reduction initiatives, such as:

- installing automatic lighting controls
- looking at office lighting levels
- detection systems, changes to plant, fixtures and equipment
- including efficiency considerations in new lease and refurbishment negotiations
- power factor correction
- computer and office equipment purchase
- motor vehicle fuel options/vehicle fleet mix
- staff education and support regarding energy efficient practices.

All energy efficiency initiatives undertaken by Customs are subject to a cost/benefit analysis to determine value for money considerations and energy savings.

Once sound housekeeping initiatives are implemented, the energy management plan then further focuses on staff awareness programs to promote further energy reduction initiatives. Customs has already implemented the Australian Greenhouse Office's working energy program, giving staff access to training and energy management tools.

Discretionary grants

Customs did not provide any discretionary grants during 2000-01.

Correction of errors

In the 1999-2000 Customs Annual Report, incorrect figures for the Quarantine Entry Fee and Ballast Water Levy were published in figure 23. The correct figures are available in this report in figure 21 on page 70.

Events that will significantly effect operations or financial results

There are no events before or after 30 June 2001 that will significantly effect the operations or financial results of Customs during 2001-02.