



## ***Complaints and Compliments***

### ***National Quarterly Report***

***July to September 2005***

- This report is provided to senior managers within Customs and is published on the Customs website.
- For further details on any of the information contained in this report please contact National Coordinator (46 6499) or Director Corporate Planning (46 5706).

## Introduction

This report provides statistical data for complaints and compliments received during the period July to September 2005. All statistical data included in this report was extracted on 17 October 2005. Where appropriate, comparative tables and graphs are provided for previous reporting periods.

## Executive summary

### Complaints

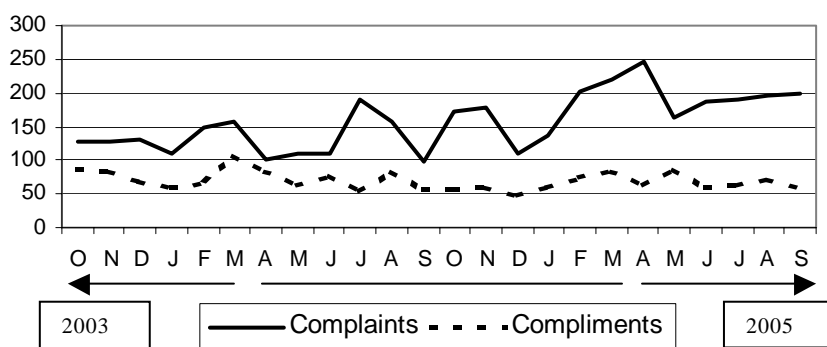


Figure 1. National trends for complaints and compliments from October 2003 to September 2005 by month

A total number of **650** complaints, including referrals, were reported compared with **665** in the previous quarter. The top three complaints were:

- “Didn’t expect duty/tax” (**139**),
- “Officer was rude” (**61**), and
- “Queue delay” (**29**).

Included in the total of 650 complaints were **65** complaints that subsequently were referred to other agencies.

### Compliments

A total number of **190** compliments were reported about Customs compared with **212** in the previous quarter. The top three compliments were:

- “Officer/s was helpful” (**65**),
- “Appreciated assistance” (**36**) and
- “Officer/s was professional” (**24**).

There was **1** referral to other agencies.

## Significant variations in the September Quarter

### General

The following issues are highlighted as areas where a significant variation, increase or decrease, has occurred compared to the previous quarter.

### **Type of Complaint**

#### ***'Claim not made'***

The complaint 'Claim not made' (I was not able to lodge my claim) decreased nationally from **25** to **11** and related to the Tourist Refund Scheme (see Annex A).

#### ***'Didn't expect duty/tax'***

The complaint 'Didn't expect duty/tax' decreased nationally from **152** to **139**. This reduction in complaints mainly related to the new passenger concessions (see Annex A).

#### ***'Goods were seized'***

The complaint 'Goods were seized' increased nationally from **8** to **21**. This increase occurred mainly in Passengers (see Annex A).

#### ***'On hold too long'***

The complaint 'On hold too long' decreased nationally from **26** to **12**. This decrease related to the Customs Information and Support Centre (CI&SC) (see Annex C).

# 1. National Trends

## 1.1 National Trends by Region

### Complaints

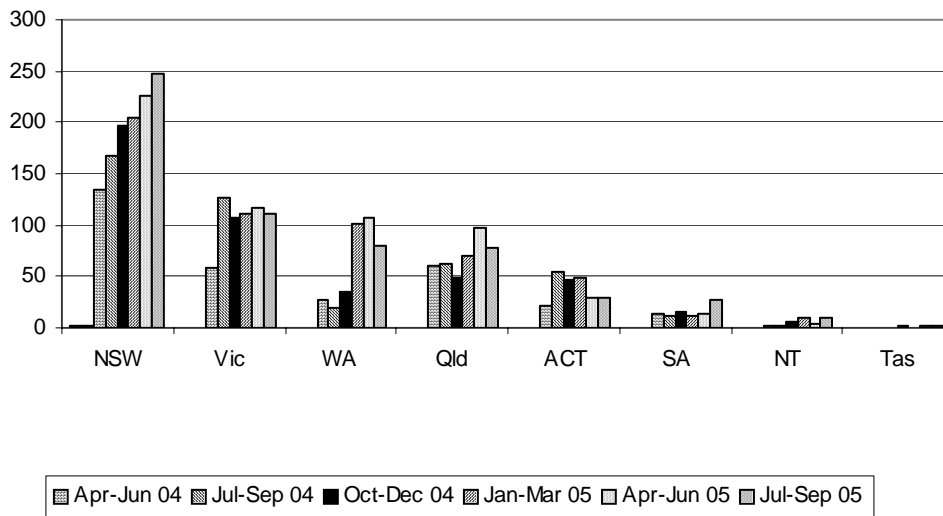


Figure 2. Total number of complaints by region comparing each quarter from April to June 2004 to July to September 2005

Comparing against the previous quarterly figures (excluding referrals), an increase in complaints occurred in New South Wales (+22), South Australia (+13), Northern Territory (+5), and Tasmania (+1). A reduction in complaints occurred in Western Australia (-27), Queensland (-20) and Victoria (-5). The Australian Capital Territory remained the same with 30 complaints.

### Compliments

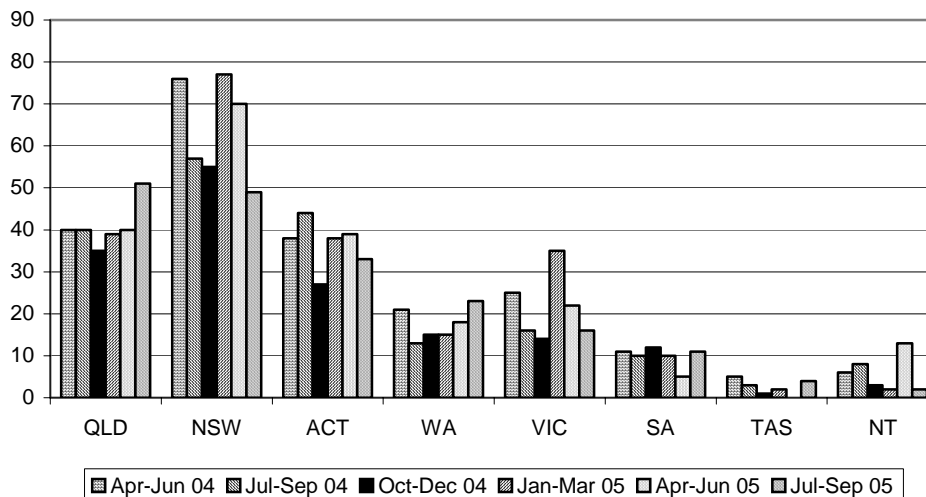


Figure 3. Total number of compliments by region comparing each quarter from April to June 2004 to January - March 2005

A comparison of national trends for compliments between this quarter and the previous quarter (excluding referrals) revealed increases in Queensland (+11), South Australia (+6), Western Australia (+5) and Tasmania (+4). New South Wales (-21), the Northern Territory (-15), the Australian Capital Territory (-6) and Victoria (-6) experienced reductions.

## National Trends by Function

### Complaints

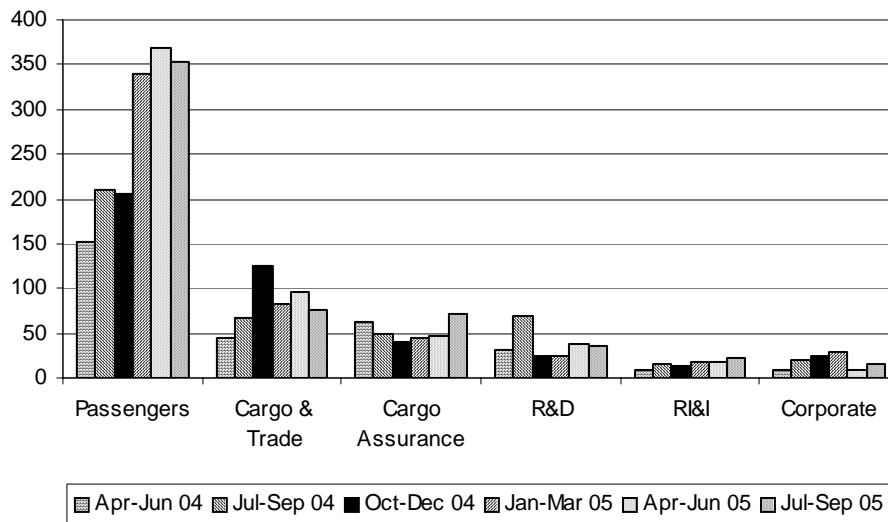


Figure 4. Total number of complaints for the six larger branches or divisions comparing the last six quarters

**Note:** 1. Cargo and Trade includes the broker licensing, cargo systems, CI&SC, entry processing, import clearance, sea cargo, temporary imports and valuation. Cargo Assurance mainly includes air cargo and postal operations.  
2. CEF complaints are recorded under R&D.

A comparison of figures against the previous quarter reveals an increase in complaint numbers for Cargo Assurance (+24), Corporate (+7), RI&I (+4), Cargo Systems (+3) and Investigations (+1). A decrease in complaint numbers was experienced in Cargo and Trade (-20), Passengers (-17), R&D (-4), Compliance Assurance (-3), Enforcement Operations (-2), the District Offices (-1) and Investigations (-1). There was no change in Coastwatch and Trade Measures with no complaints received. Complaints shown under Corporate include Corporate Communication and Recruitment.

The largest increase in complaints in Cargo Assurance was attributed primarily to Postal Operations. These complaints increased nationally and were mainly about taxes/fees (+7) and the length of time it took to release goods (+5).

## Compliments

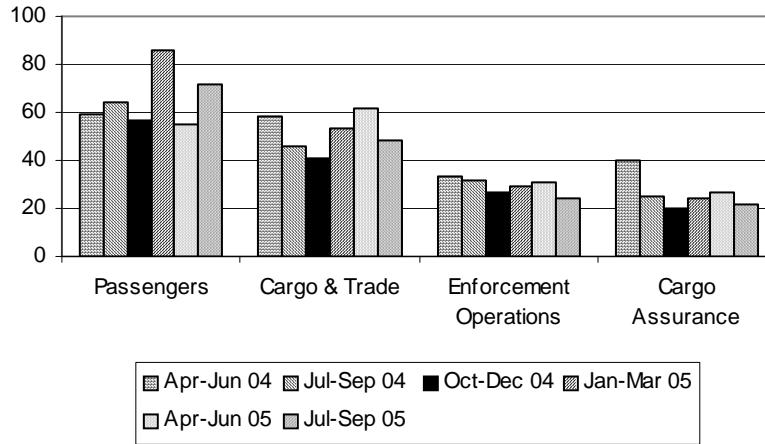


Figure 5. The trend in compliments for the four larger divisions comparing the last six quarters

Compliment figures compared to the previous quarter indicate an increase was experienced in Passengers **(+17)**, District Offices **(+4)** and Cargo Systems **(+3)**. A decrease was experienced for Cargo & Trade **(-14)**, Enforcement Operations **(-7)**, Compliance Assurance **(-6)**, Cargo Assurance **(-5)**, R&D **(-3)**, Corporate **(-2)**, RI&I **(-2)**, Coastwatch **(-1)** and Investigations **(-1)**.

A more detailed analysis of complaints and compliments for Passengers, the Container Examination Facility (CEF), and the Customs Information and Support Centre (CI&SC) are provided in Annexes A-C.

## 2. Type of Complaint

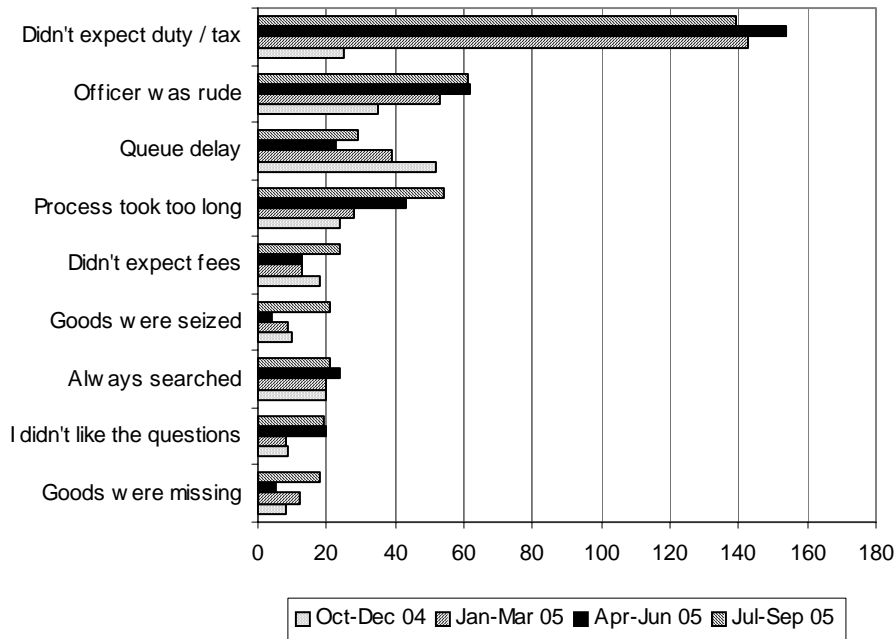


Figure 6. National Top 10 Complaints (excluding referrals) for the last four quarters

A total number of **585** complaints were made for this quarter (excluding referrals). This compares to **595** for the previous quarter and represents a **1.68% decrease**.

The top four issues (excluding referrals) were:

- **Didn't expect duty or tax (139):** These complaints occurred primarily in Passengers (**116**) and mainly related to the new passenger concessions (see Annex A).
- **Officer was rude (61):** This occurred **50** times in Passengers, **20** of which were at Sydney Airport (see Annex D).
- **Process took too long (54):** Of these complaints, **20** were related to the Container Examination Facilities (see Annex B).
- **Queue delay (29):** All of these complaints occurred in Passengers, **19** of which were at Sydney Airport (see Annex D).

### 3. Type of Compliment

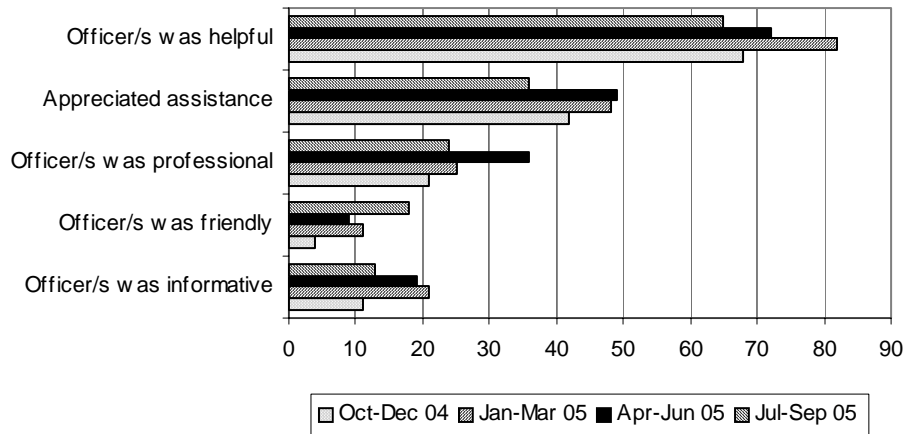


Figure 7. National top 5 compliments (excluding referrals) for the last four quarters

A total of **189** compliments were registered for this quarter (excluding referrals). This compares to **207** for the previous quarter and represents a **8.70% decrease**.

The top three issues (excluding referrals) were:

- **Officer/s was helpful (65):** Cargo & Trade received this compliment most frequently with **27**. **14** of these were for the CI&SC.
- **Appreciated assistance (36):** The National Marine Unit (NMU) received this compliment most frequently (**19**). This is due to high levels of operational interaction with client groups. Passengers (Liaison) also received this compliment (**9**).
- **Officer was professional (24):** This compliment occurred **10** times in Passengers and **7** times in Cargo and Trade.

### 4. Referrals to other agencies

Where complaints or compliments are not related to Customs operations or procedures, they are referred to the relevant agencies by the Complaints and Compliment Network. During this quarter Customs referred **65** complaints and **1** compliments. The main agencies receiving referrals were AQIS (**29**).

## 5. Performance Against Service Standards

The Complaints and Compliments Network monitors performance against the Customs Client Service Charter. The Client Service Charter states:

### **If you write to us or email us**

We aim to acknowledge your communication within 5 working days and to respond within 15 working days of receipt of your email or written correspondence. If we cannot fully answer your query in that time, we will give you an interim response and advise as to when a final response can be expected.

### Service Standards

The average complaint resolution time of **10.70** working days reported in the previous quarter has *decreased* to **9.15** working days. The average compliment resolution time of **1.11** working days reported in the previous quarter has also *increased* to **1.36** working days. These resolution times are within the 15 working day service standard.

Out of a total of **650** complaints, **27** cases did not meet the 15 working day benchmark (**4.15%**).

## 6. How People Contact Us

The main methods for contacting Customs during this quarter were by email (**292**), phone (including the 1800 number) (**221**), brochure (**113**), letter (**95**) and remote entry (**99**).

*Note: 'Remote' entries are originally made by phone or email direct to a Customs work area. A Customs officer then forwards the complaint or compliment to their regional coordinator via a remote entry icon on their desktop.*

The number of complaints or compliments received by phone has increased this quarter (from **207** to **221**), whereas the number of complaints or compliments received by email, brochure, remote and letter has decreased (email from **307** to **292**, brochure from **127** to **113**, remote from **103** to **99** and letter from **101** to **95**).

The purpose of the CCMS is to provide:

- National coordination of complaints and compliments
- Analysis of data
- Reporting of results
- Identification of opportunities for continuous improvement of our processes and practices based on client feedback. The CCMS is committed to recording and reporting all comments provided by clients about their experience with Customs.

Feedback on any information contained in this report should be directed to the following Complaints and Compliments staff:

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## Passengers

### Complaints

The number of complaints received nationally was **352** (excluding referrals) during this quarter (compared to **369** in the previous quarter) which is equivalent to 1 complaint for every **7,912** passengers arriving in Australia. This compares with one complaint for every 12,444 passengers in the April to June quarter.

During the period 1 July to 30 September 2005 **2,784,851** passengers arrived through international airports nationally. Numbers of passengers arriving through each major airport are shown in Table 1 below.

Major Airports	Number of Airport Complaints	Passenger Arrival Numbers	Number of Passengers for Every Complaint
Sydney	151	1,192,061	7,894
Melbourne	63	572,042	9,080
Brisbane	45	525,260	11,672
Perth	64	267,991	4,187
<b>Average</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>639,339</b>	<b>8,208</b>

Table 1. Number of complaints lodged at the **four major airports** compared to the number of passengers arriving during July to September 2005

Figure 1 below compares the number of complaints received by each of the major airports:

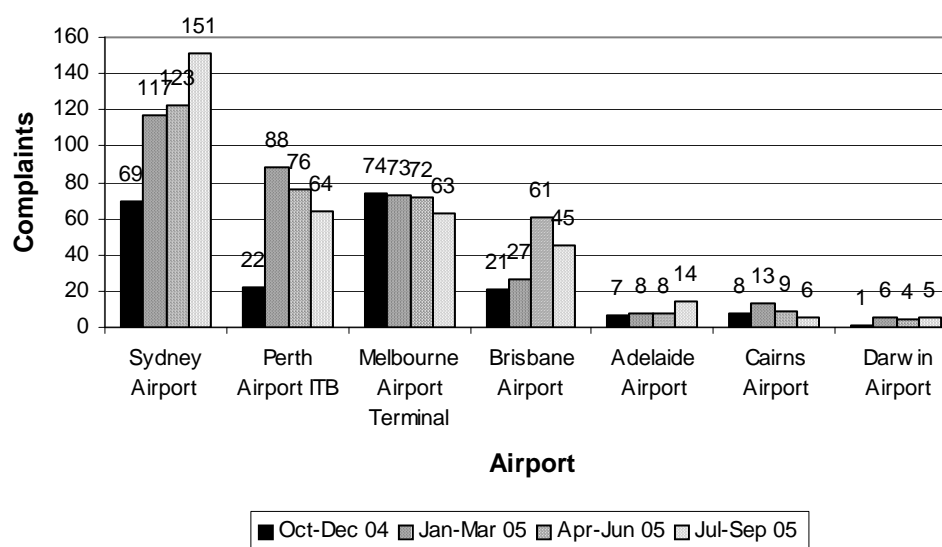


Figure 1. Passenger Complaints at each Airport for October – December 2004, January – March 2005, April - June 2005 and July – September 2005

Of the **151** complaints received at Sydney Airport:

- **50** related to paying duty,
- **28** related to being selected, searched, examined or questioned,
- **22** related to queues,
- **21** related to TRS, and
- **20** related to rude officers (see Annex D).

A comparison of all Passengers complaints for the last two quarters is shown in Table 2 below.

Branch	Apr-Jun 05	Jul-Sep 05
Enforcement	202	186
TRS	74	54
Primary Line	46	48
Baggage	41	55
Other activity	4	4
Enquiry Counter	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>352</b>

Table 2. Passengers complaints - comparative assessment by work area  
April to June 2005 and July to September 2005

The decrease in complaints occurred largely in:

- Enforcement - mainly concerning 'Didn't expect duty/tax' (**114**, down **14**). These related to a reduction about the passenger concessions introduced on 1 February 2005 (see details below); and
- TRS for 'claim not made' (**25**, down **14**).

An increase in complaints regarding goods being seized (**+8**) occurred mainly in the Primary Line at Melbourne Airport (**+6**). An increase also occurred for 'officer was rude' (**+10**) (see Annex D).

Issue: "Didn't expect duty/tax"

Changes in passenger concessions for incoming passengers became effective from 1 February 2005. A total of **114** complaints (**129** in the previous quarter) were received relating specifically to this issue. The majority of complainants continue to state that they were not aware of the change in the passenger concessions legislation. They also often state that having to pay duty for the entire amount of alcohol or tobacco brought into the country is unfair, that they should only have to pay duty on the excess.

Regions where the passenger concessions complaints occurred were:

Region	Apr-Jun 05	Jul-Sep 05
SA	1	2
NT	2	2
ACT	4	1
NSW	23	49
QLD	31	16
VIC	39	25
WA	29	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>114</b>

Table 3. Passenger concessions complaints - comparative assessment by region  
April to June 2005 and July to September 2005

Complaints allocated to the ACT were general complaints about the new passenger concession policy.

The reason provided for the increase in passenger concessions complaints at Sydney Airport is:

The July to September quarter incorporates the Northern hemisphere's holiday period. Large numbers of families tend to travel at this time. These families would have included a large number of first-time/infrequent flyers who may have been unaware of the new concession regime.

A total of **54** complaints were received about the Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) compared to **74** last quarter. A comparison of the top five TRS complaints is shown in Table 4 below.

Symptom	Apr-Jun 05	Jul-Sep 05
Claim not made	25	11
Queue delay	8	9
Lack of information	3	7
Unhappy about 30 minute rule	3	7
Misinformed by Customs	3	5

*Table 4. Top 5 TRS complaints - comparative assessment  
April to June 2005 and July to September 2005*

### Compliments

There were **72** compliments for Passengers during this quarter, representing an increase of **30.91%**.

Branch	Apr-Jun 05	Jul-Sep 05
Primary line	15	20
Baggage	8	14
Enforcement	9	12
Liaison	7	9
Other activity	9	8
TRS	4	5
Enquiry Counter	3	3
Client Education	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>72</b>

*Table 4. Passenger compliments - comparative assessment  
April – June 2005 and July – September 2005*

The **8** 'Other activity' cases refer to compliments for Customs Officers in general which didn't fit within the other classifications.

## Research & Development Branch (R&D) Container Examination Facility (CEF)

Figure 1 below shows that complaints against CEFs per number of twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU)<sup>1</sup> examined have decreased slightly during the quarter.

In July to September 2005, Customs inspected **36,612 TEU** and received **55** complaints (including complaints to Profiling and Alerts and CTO/Wharf/Stevedores and Brokers]. **1** was responded to in the ACT. This is equivalent to **1** complaint for every **665.67 TEUs**. This compares with **1** complaint for every **522.80 TEUs** in the previous quarter.

### Complaints per TEU per Month (see definition at Note 1 below):

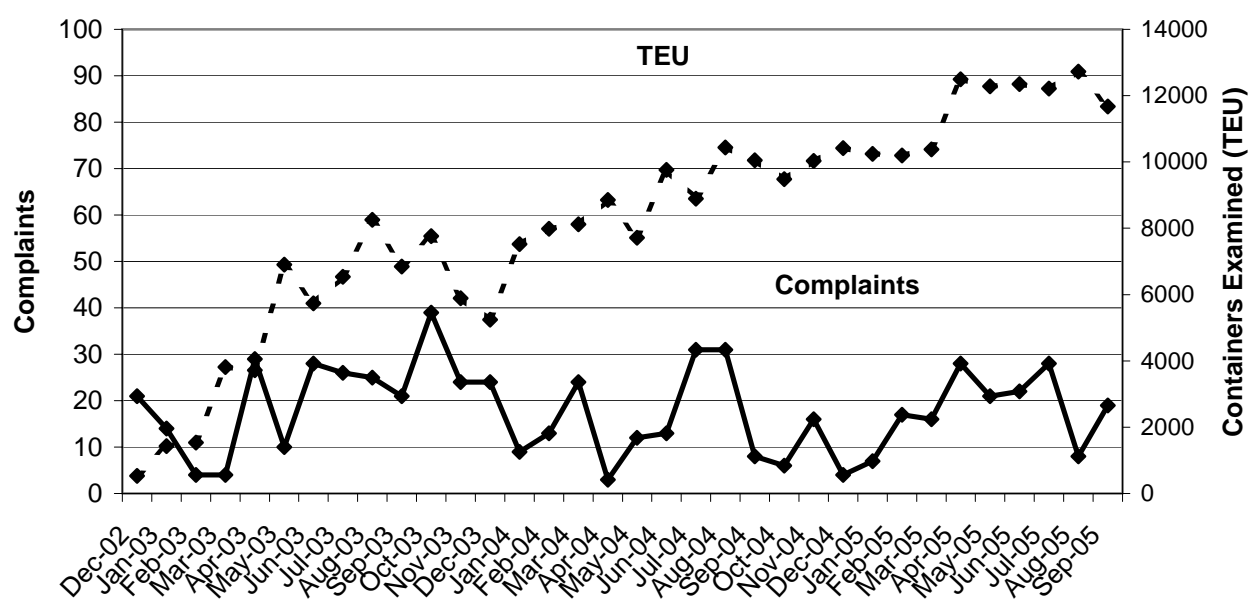


Figure 1. Trend of complaints against TEUs x-rayed by Customs since CEFs opened in December 2002

The following table details CEF complaints registered for each for the September quarter (**34** compared to **41** for last quarter). This is a *decrease* of **17.01%**. This table excludes two complaints recorded against CTO/Wharf/Stevedores, Brokers, or Profiling and Alerts.

Issues	Canberra	Adelaide	Sydney	Brisbane	Melbourne	Fremantle	Total
Didn't expect fees/duty/tax	-	-	6	1	1	1	9
Goods were damaged	-	1	-	-	1	-	2
Goods were withheld	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Process not explained	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Process took too long	-	4	6	2	6	2	20
3 free days storage is not enough	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>34</b>

Table 1. National CEF complaints by region for July to September 2005

*Note: Issues for Canberra are policy related*

The two main complaint issues were:

Issue: “Process took too long” (**20**) is a minor decrease from **21** during the last quarter.

Issues: “Didn’t expect fees/duty/tax” (**9**) is a minor decrease from **8** during the last quarter.

The **1** case classified against Canberra was policy related. This related to the length of time it takes to clear containers generally and the fees which are thereby accrued.

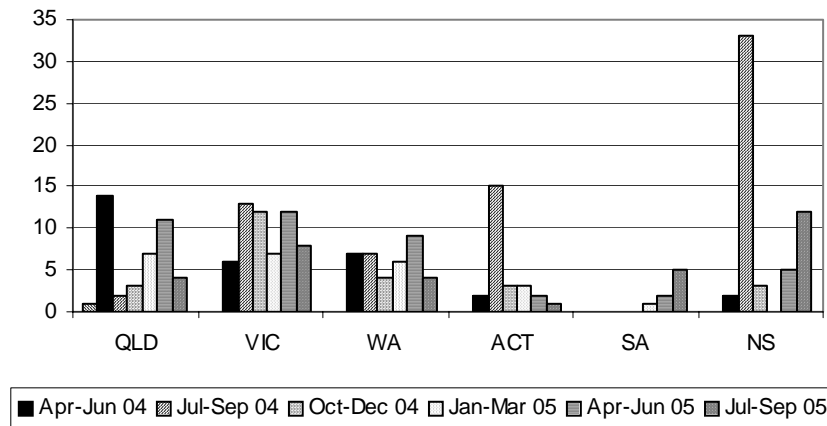


Figure 2. Comparison of CEF complaints by region for the previous six quarters

Excluding the **1** policy related complaint, the number of operationally based complaints received nationally for the CEF was **33** (excluding complaints recorded against CTO/Wharf/Stevedores, Brokers, or Profiling and Alerts).

### Compliments

From Dec 2002 to 30 Sep 2005, since the first CEF was established, **13** compliments have been received for CEF operations. These largely relate to seizures made. During this time Customs has examined 278,926 TEU.

A detailed breakdown of complaints is:

### CEF Operations Complaints Only

CEF Location	Number of Complaints	TEUs Inspected	Number of TEUs for Every Complaint
Melbourne	8	10,111	1,264
Sydney	12	10,400	867
Brisbane	4	10,286	2,572
Fremantle	4	5,471	1,368
Adelaide	5	344	69
Darwin	0	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>36,612</b>	<b>1,109</b>

Table 2. Number of complaints lodged compared to the number of TEUs<sup>2</sup> inspected for July to September 2005

### Profiling & Alerts and Wharf Related Complaints

In Addition: Number of 'CEF related' complaints classified to Profiling and Alerts	In Addition: Number of 'CEF related' complaints classified to CTO/Wharf/ Stevedores and Brokers
9	-
8	2
1	-
1	-
-	-
-	-
<b>19</b>	<b>2</b>

Table 3: Number of CEF related complaints for July to September 2005

### Total of All CEF Operations / Profiling & Alerts / Wharf Related Complaints (A Summary of Tables 2 and 3)

CEF Location	Total Number of Complaints	TEUs Inspected	Number of TEUs for Every Complaint
Melbourne	17	10,111	595
Sydney	22	10,400	473
Brisbane	5	10,286	2,057
Fremantle	5	5,471	1,094
Adelaide	5	344	69
Darwin	0	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>36,612</b>	<b>678</b>

Table 4. Number of complaints lodged compared to the number of TEUs<sup>2</sup> inspected for July to September 2005

Note:

1. The industry standard is to record container statistics in twenty foot equivalent (TEU) unit terms rather than the actual number of containers. Most international containers are either 20 ft (1 TEU) or 40 ft (2 TEUs). On average, the number of containers is equivalent to 75 per cent of the number of TEUs, e.g. 750 containers is equivalent to 1000 TEU.
2. The above TEU figures include import and export containers.
3. The official CEF complaints are shown in Table 2 and relate to specific CEF sites. We have also attached related complaints that are recorded elsewhere as the responsibility of different work areas or organizations, e.g. Risk Identification and Intelligence (Profiling and Alerts). These are included because, from the complainants perspective, their complaints are about the CEF process in general, regardless of the specific area of Customs which has responsibility to respond.

## Customs Information and Support Centre

### Complaints

During this quarter **40** complaints were recorded about the CI&SC, compared with **65** for the previous quarter. The most common complaint related to the phone (**15**) where it was either not answered, the calls were not returned, they didn't like the recorded message, or clients felt that they were on hold for too long. This compares to **40** during the previous quarter.

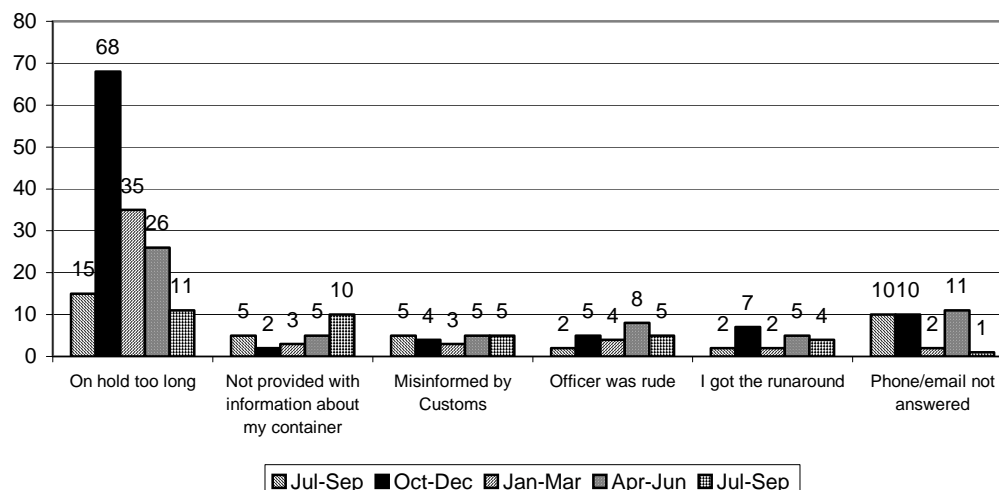


Figure 1. Comparison of the main CI&SC complaints for the previous five quarters

During the period 1 July to September **140,401** enquiries were received by the CI&SC.

The number of complaints received was **40** during this quarter which is **1** complaint for every **3,510** enquiries. See Table 2 below.

Month	Number of Complaints Received	Number of Phone Enquiries Received	Number of Email Enquiries Received	Number of Fax Enquiries Received	Total Number of Enquiries Received	Number of Enquiries for Every Complaint
July	23	34,413	7,881	892	43,186	1,878
August	10	38,262	9,414	489	48,165	4,817
September	7	39,957	8,149	944	49,050	7,007

Table 1. Number of complaints lodged at the CI&SC compared to the number of calls received for July to September 2005

### Compliments

The CI&SC received **21** compliments this quarter (compared to **41** which were received last quarter). **14** of the compliments related to officers being helpful.

**Issue – “Officer was rude”**

“Officer was rude” was the second highest complaint in the quarter with **61** complaints nationally, compared with **62** in the previous quarter.

Work Area	Apr-Jun 05	Jul-Sep 05
Baggage	6	16
Primary line	12	15
Enforcement	20	11
Counter/Enquiry Counter	1	6
CI&SC	8	5
TRS	8	4
District Office	-	1
Entry Processing	-	1
Other	-	1
Postal Operations	2	1
Import clearance	3	-
Client Services	1	-
Sanctions	1	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>61</b>

Table 1. Number of complaints received nationally for ‘Officer was rude’ by work area comparative assessment April – June 2005 and July – September 2005

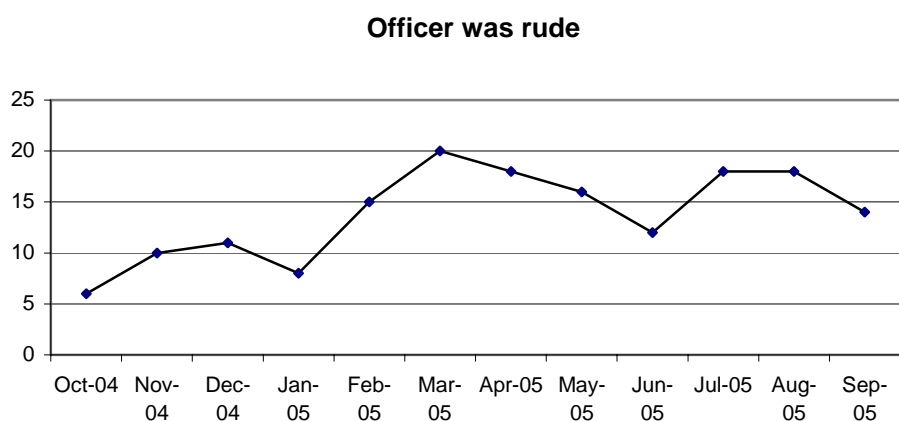


Chart 1. Line graph of complaints received for ‘Officer was rude’ in Passengers by month from October 2004 to September 2005

Passengers Work Area – 12 months	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	VIC	WA	Total
Baggage	5	-	2	3	8	16	34
Enforcement	28	1	18	-	-	12	59
Enquiry Counter	2	-	1	-	1	1	5
Primary line	28	2	5	1	6	7	49
TRS	10	-	1	-	4	4	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>166</b>

Table 2. Number of complaints received for ‘Officer was rude’ in Passengers by region from October 2004 to September 2005

## CCMS Quarterly Report Feedback Form

If you have any comments on this report please fill out the form below (replace the appropriate box with an X) and email it to either the CCMS National Coordinator (Roni Giacobetti) or to [ACS Complaints & Compliments] or forward it by facsimile on 02 6275 8099.

### Layout

- The current layout is easy to read      Yes       Average       No
- The graphs are easy to understand      Yes       Average       No
- The tables are easy to understand      Yes       Average       No

### Content

The content is:

- Contains valuable information      Yes       Average       No
- Tells me what I need to know      Yes       Average       No

### Statistics

- There are too many numbers      Yes       Average       No
- More analytical text is required      Yes       Average       No

If yes, please provide an example of what you would like to have included in the next report:

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### Other Comments

I would like to see the following alterations made to the next report:

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