



***Complaints and Compliments***  
***National Quarterly Report***  
***April to June 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 April to June 2005. All statistical data included in this report was extracted on 11 July 2005. Where appropriate, comparative tables and graphs are provided for previous reporting periods.

## Executive summary

### Complaints

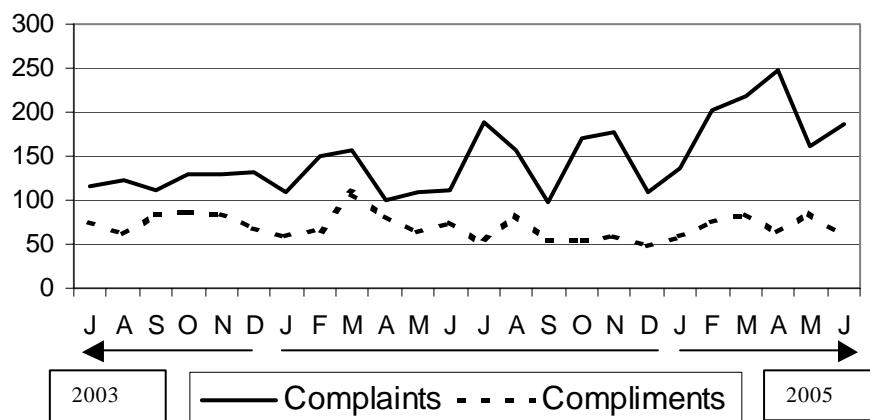


Figure 1. National trends for complaints and compliments from July 2003 to June 2005 by month

A total number of **665** complaints, including referrals, were reported compared with **612** in the previous quarter. This is the largest number of quarterly complaints since March 2001. The top three complaints were:

- “Didn’t expect duty/tax” (**154**),
- “Officer was rude” (**62**), and
- “Process Took Too Long” (**44**).

Complaints about new passenger duty-free concessions, introduced on 1 February 2005, were the primary reason for the overall increase in complaints.

Included in the total of 665 complaints were **70** complaints that subsequently were referred to other agencies.

### Compliments

A total number of **212** compliments were reported about Customs compared with **221** in the previous quarter. The top three compliments were:

- “Officer/s was helpful” (**72**),
- “Appreciated assistance” (**49**) and
- “Officer/s was professional” (**36**).

There were **5** referrals to other agencies.

## Significant variations in the June 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**

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

The complaint 'Didn't expect duty/tax' increased nationally from **143** to **154** and relates largely to changes in passenger concessions (**129**) (see Annex A).

#### ***'Officer was rude'***

The complaint 'Officer was rude' increased nationally from **53** to **62**. This increase occurred mainly within Passengers (from **43** to **46**) (see Annex D).

#### ***'Process took too long'***

The complaint 'Process took too long' increased nationally from **28** to **44**. This increase was mainly related to container delays (CEF)(from **11** to **25**) (see Annex B).

#### ***'Queue system' / 'Queue delay'***

The complaints about 'Queue system' and 'Queue delay' decreased nationally from **44** to **30**. The reduction was largely in Passengers (see Annex A).

# 1. National Trends

## 1.1 National Trends by Region

### Complaints

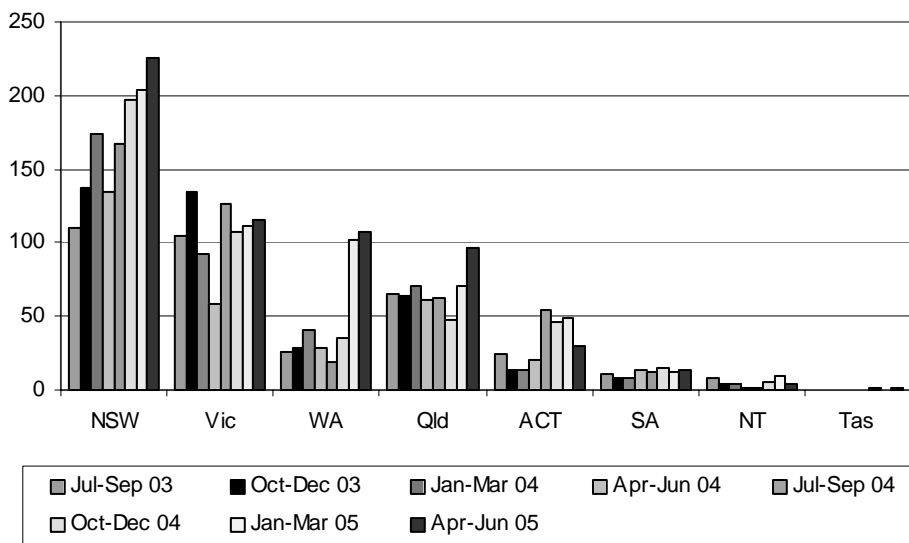


Figure 2. Total number of complaints by region comparing each quarter from July - September 2003 to April - July 2005

Comparing against the previous quarterly figures (excluding referrals), an increase in complaints occurred in Queensland (+28), New South Wales (+22), Victoria (+5), Western Australia (+5), South Australia (+2) and Tasmania (+1). A reduction in complaints occurred in the Australian Capital Territory (-19) and Northern Territory (-6).

### Compliments

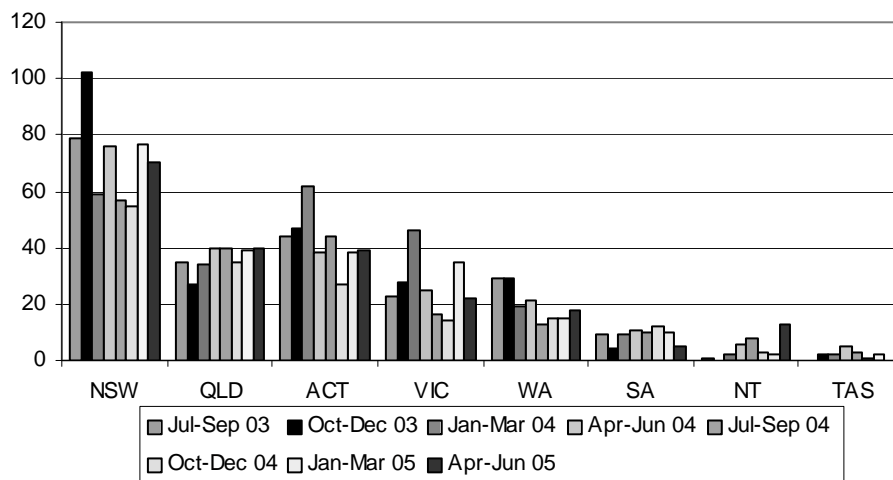


Figure 3. Total number of compliments by region comparing each quarter from July - September 2003 to January - March 2005

A comparison of national trends for compliments between this quarter and the previous quarter (excluding referrals) revealed increases in the Northern Territory (+11), Western Australia (+3), the Australian Capital Territory (+1) and Queensland (+1). Victoria (-13), New South Wales (-7), South Australia (-5) and Tasmania (-2) experienced reductions.

## National Trends by Function

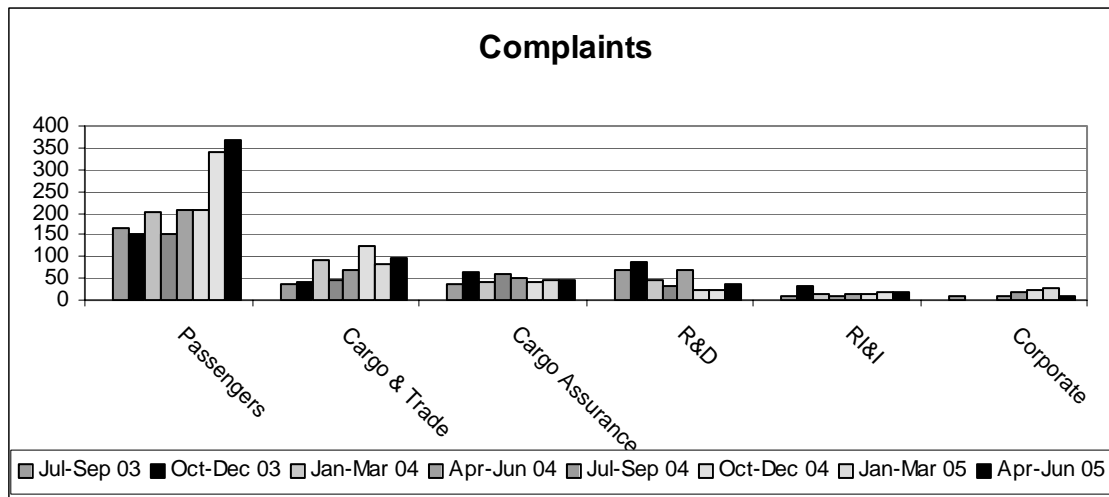


Figure 4. Total number of complaints for the six larger branches or divisions comparing the last 8 quarters

- 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 Passengers **(+30)**, R&D **(+16)**, Cargo and Trade **(+10)**, Cargo Assurance **(+4)**, Compliance Assurance **(+2)**, RI&I **(+3)** and Investigations **(+1)**. A decrease in complaint numbers was experienced in Corporate **(-20)**, Cargo Systems **(-6)**, and the District Offices **(-2)**. There was no change in Enforcement Operations **(4)**, or in Coastwatch and Trade Measures with no complaints received. Complaints shown under Corporate include Corporate Communication and Recruitment.

The largest increase in complaints in Passengers was attributed primarily to the change in passenger concessions (see Annex A).

## Compliments

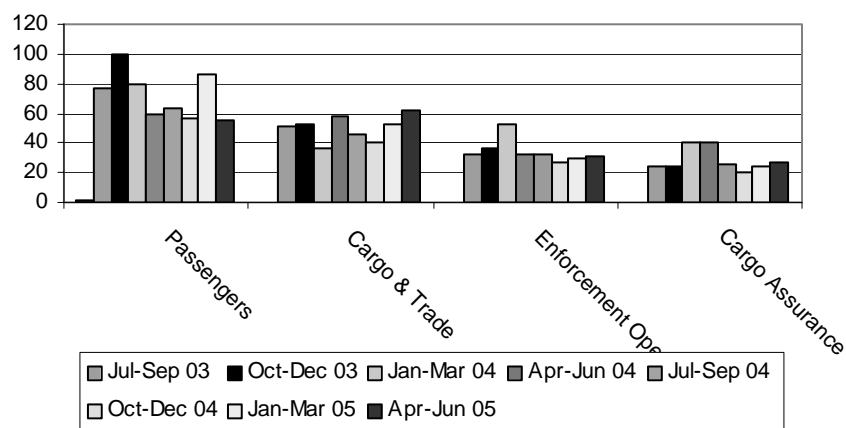


Figure 5. The trend in compliments for the four larger divisions comparing the last seven quarters

Compliment figures compared to the previous quarter indicate an increase was experienced in Cargo & Trade **(+9)**, Cargo Assurance **(+3)**, Compliance Assurance **(+2)**, District Offices **(+2)**, Enforcement Operations **(+2)**, Coastwatch **(+1)**, R&D **(+1)**, and RI&I **(+1)**. A decrease was experienced for Passengers **(-30)** and Cargo Systems **(-1)**. There was no change in Corporate **(7)**, or Investigations **(2)**.

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

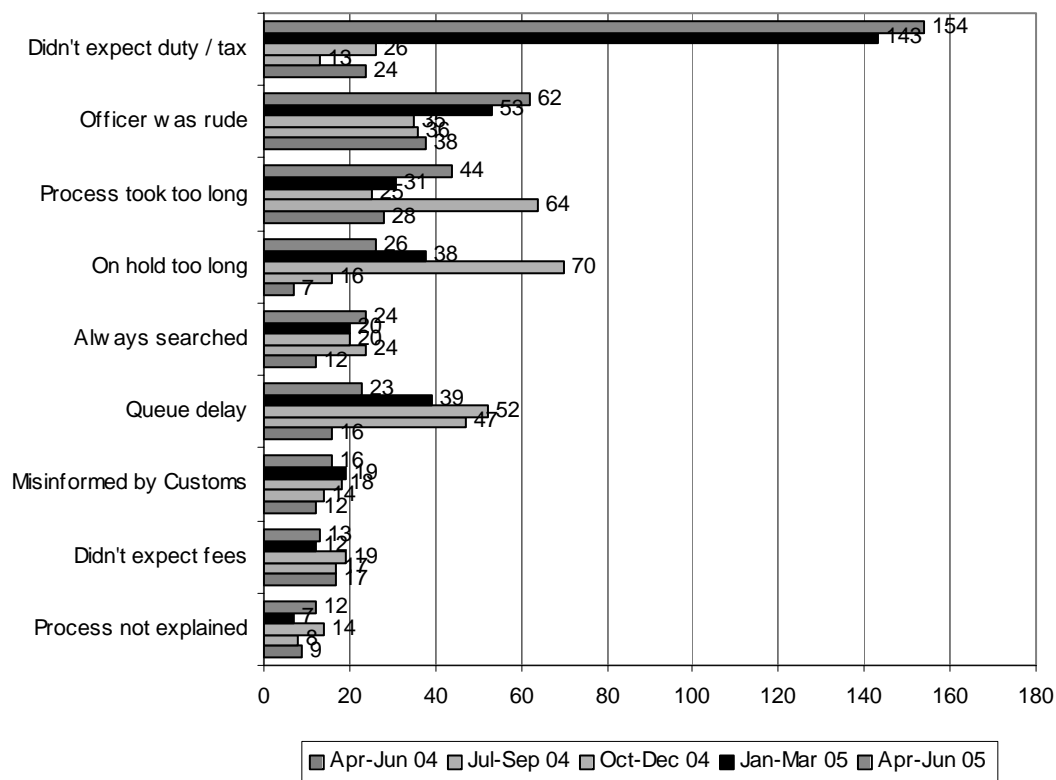


Figure 6. National Top 10 Complaints (excluding referrals) for the last five quarters

A total number of **595** complaints were made for this quarter (excluding referrals). This compares to **557** for the previous quarter and represents a **6.82% increase**.

The top four issues (excluding referrals) were:

**Didn't expect duty or tax (154):** These complaints occurred primarily in Passengers and mainly related to the new passenger concessions (see Annex A).

**Officer was rude (62):** This occurred **46** times in Passengers, **19** of which were at Sydney Airport (see Annex D).

**Process took too long (44):** Of these complaints, **26** were related to the Container Examination Facilities (see Annex B).

**On hold too long (26):** All of these complaints were made relating the CI&SC (see Annex C).

### 3. Type of Compliment

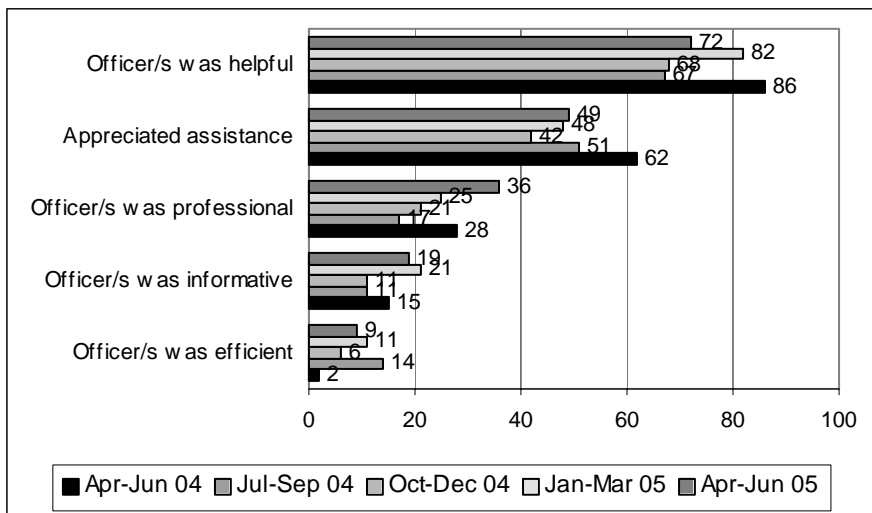


Figure 7. National top 5 compliments (excluding referrals) for the last five quarters

A total of **207** compliments were registered for this quarter (excluding referrals). This compares to **218** for the previous quarter and represents a **5.05% decrease**.

The top three issues (excluding referrals) were:

**Officer/s was helpful (72):** Cargo & Trade received this compliment most frequently with **35**. **26** of these were for the CI&SC.

**Appreciated assistance (49):** The National Marine Unit (NMU) received this compliment most frequently (**29**). This is due to high levels of operational interaction with client groups. Passengers (Liaison) also received this compliment (**6**).

**Officer was professional (36):** This compliment occurred **13** times in both Cargo and Trade and Passengers.

### 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 **70** complaints and **5** compliments. The main agencies receiving referrals were AQIS (**18**) and Australia Post (**14**).

## 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 **10.59** working days reported in the previous quarter has *increased* to **10.70** working days. The average compliment resolution time of **0.65** working days reported in the previous quarter has also *increased* to **1.11** working days. These resolution times are within the 15 working day service standard.

Out of a total of **665** cases, **20** cases did not meet the 15 working day benchmark (**3.01%**).

## 6. How People Contact Us

The main methods for contacting Customs during this quarter were by email (**307**), phone (including the 1800 number) (**207**), brochure (**127**), letter (**101**) and remote entry (**103**).

*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 email, phone, remote entry and letter have increased this quarter (email from **266** to **307**, phone from **176** to **207**, remote from **87** to **103**, and letter from **89** to **101**), whereas the number of complaints or compliments received by brochure has decreased from **182** to **127**.

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 **369** (excluding referrals) during this quarter (compared to **339** in the previous quarter) which is equivalent to 1 complaint for every **12,444** passengers arriving in Australia. This compares with one complaint for every 13,290 passengers in the October to December quarter.

During the period 1 April to 30 June 2005 **4,591,824** 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	123	1,002,604	8,151
Brisbane	61	425,973	6,983
Melbourne	72	466,283	6,476
Perth	76	221,701	2,917
<b>Average</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>529,140</b>	<b>6,132</b>

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

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

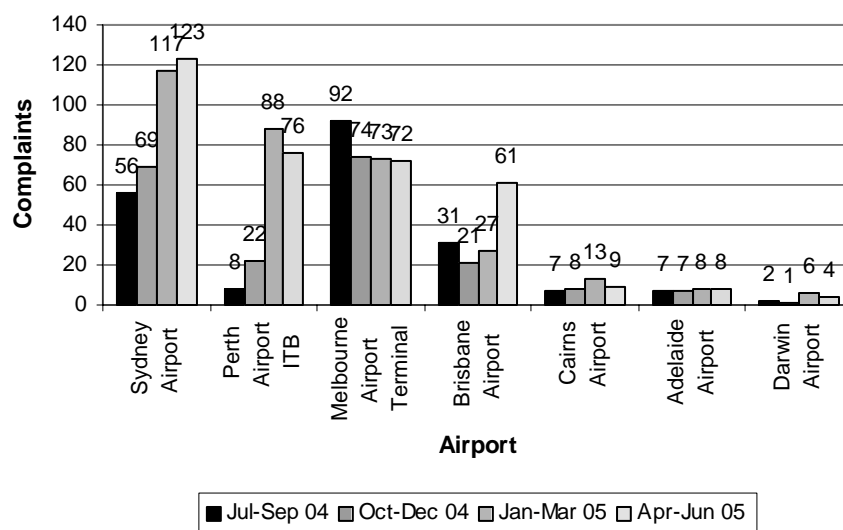


Figure 1. Passenger Complaints at each Airport for July – September 2004, October – December 2004, January – March 2005 and April - June 2005

Of the **123** complaints received at Sydney Airport **33** related to TRS, **21** related to being selected, searched, examined or questioned, **19** related to rude officers (see Annex D) and **11** related to queues.

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

Branch	Jan-Mar 05	Apr-Jun 05
Enforcement	191	202
TRS	51	74
Primary Line	60	46
Baggage	27	41
Other activity	5	4
Enquiry Counter	5	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>369</b>

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

The increase in complaints occurred largely in:

- Enforcement mainly concerned 'Didn't expect duty/tax' (**133**, an additional **13**). **129** of these related to the new passenger concessions introduced on 1 February 2005 (see details below);
- TRS for 'claim not made' (**25**, an additional **18**); and
- Baggage regarding 'I didn't like the questions' (**9**, an additional **8**).

A decrease in 'Queuing' complaints (**-15**) occurred mainly in the Primary Line at Sydney Airport (**-10**).

Issue: "Didn't expect duty/tax"

Changes in passenger concessions for incoming passengers became effective from 1 February 2005. A total of **129** complaints (**116** in the previous quarter) were received relating specifically to this issue. The majority of complainants stated that they were not aware of the change in the passenger concessions legislation.

Regions where the passenger concessions complaints occurred were:

Region	Feb-Mar 05	Apr-Jun 05
SA	2	1
NT	2	2
ACT	1	4
NSW	5	23
QLD	9	31
VIC	38	39
WA	59	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>129</b>

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

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

Issue: "Claim not made"

These complaints related to TRS claims not being made (see below). **13** of these complaints occurred at Sydney Airport. The majority of these related to passengers being too late to make their claim, or the TRO being closed.

A total of **74** complaints were received about the Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) compared to **51** last quarter. A comparison of the top five TRS complaints is shown in Table 4 below.

<b>Symptom</b>	<b>Jan-Mar 05</b>	<b>Apr-Jun 05</b>
Claim not made	7	25
Officer was rude	4	8
Queue delay	9	8
Goods not in possession	6	7
Misinformed by Retailer	1	4

*Table 4. Top 5 TRS complaints - comparative assessment  
October – December 2004 and January – March 2005*

## Compliments

There were **55** compliments for Passengers during this quarter, representing a decrease of **36.05%**.

Branch	Jan-Mar 05	Apr-Jun 05
Primary line	21	15
Liaison	11	7
Baggage	8	8
Other activity	15	9
Enquiry Counter	0	3
Enforcement	14	9
TRS	17	4
Total	86	55

*Table 4. Passenger compliments - comparative assessment  
January – March 2005 and April – June 2005*

The **9** ‘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 increased slightly during the quarter.

In April to June 2005, Customs inspected **37,119 TEU** and received **71** complaints (including complaints to Profiling and Alerts and CTO/Wharf/Stevedores and 2 which were responded to in the ACT). This is equivalent to **1** complaint for every **522.80 TEUs**. This compares with **1** complaint for every **770.33 TEUs** in the previous quarter.

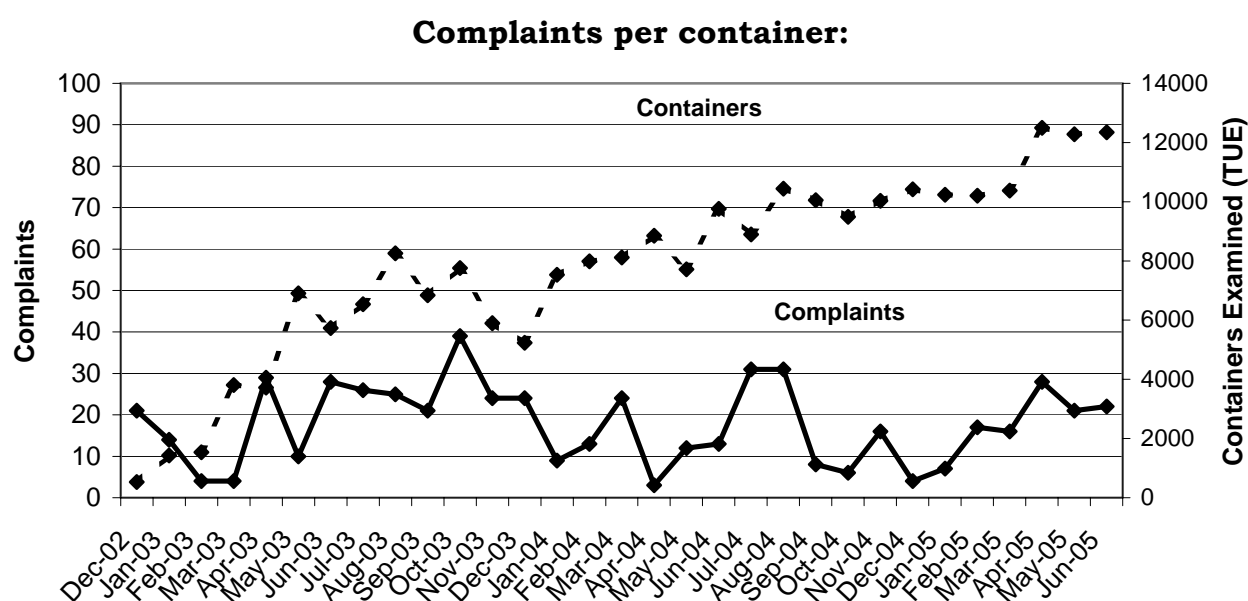


Figure 1. Trend of complaints against TEUs x-rayed by Customs since CEFs opened in December 2002

The following table details CEF complaints registered for each for the June quarter (**41** compared to **24** for last quarter). This is an increase of **70.83%**. This table excludes complaints recorded against CTO/Wharf/Stevedores or Profiling and Alerts.

Issues	Canberra	Adelaide	Sydney	Brisbane	Melbourne	Fremantle	Total
Didn't expect fees/duty/tax	-	-	2	1	4	1	8
Goods not repacked properly	-	-	-	1	1	-	2
Goods were damaged	-	-	-	2	1	1	4
Goods were missing	-	-	1	-	1	-	2
Goods were withheld	-	1	-	-	1	-	2
Process took too long	-	1	2	7	4	7	21
Policy/ACN doesn't work	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
3 free days storage is not enough	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>41</b>

Table 1. National CEF complaints by region for April to June 2005

Note: Issues for Canberra are policy related

The two main complaint issues were:

Issue: “Process took too long” (**21**) is an increase from **13** during the last quarter. This increase occurred equally in all regions.

Issues: “Didn’t expect fees/duty/tax” (**8**) is an increase from **6** during the last quarter. This increase occurred equally in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

The **2** cases classified against Canberra were policy related. These related to the length of time it takes to clear containers generally and the fees which are thereby accrued.

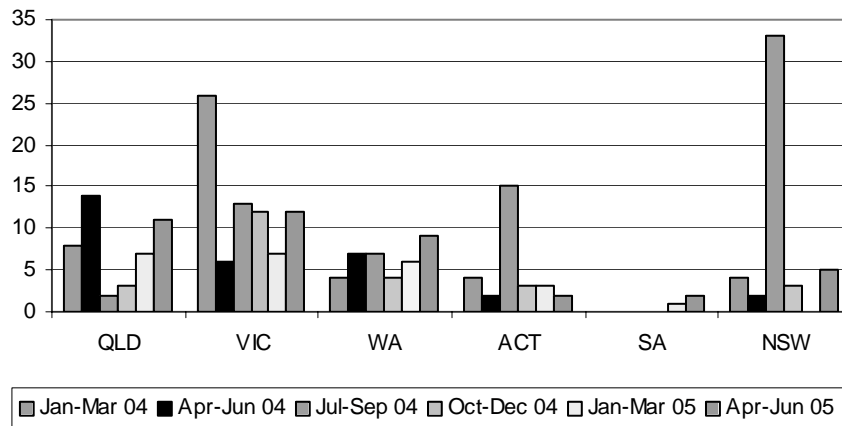


Figure 2. Comparison of CEF complaints by region for the previous six quarters

Excluding the **2** policy related complaints registered against the ACT, during this quarter the number of operationally based complaints received nationally for the CEF was **39**.

### Compliments

From Dec 2002 to 30 Jun 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 242,314 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	12	10,022	835.17
Sydney	5	11,266	2,253.20
Brisbane	11	9,693	881.18
Fremantle	9	5,805	645.00
Adelaide	2	333	166.50

Table 2. Number of complaints lodged compared to the number of TEUs<sup>2</sup> inspected for April to June 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
4	2
4	1
4	8
6	1
0	0

Table 3: Number of CEF related complaints for April to June 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	18	10,022	556.78
Sydney	10	11,266	1126.60
Brisbane	23	9,693	421.43
Fremantle	16	5,805	362.81
Adelaide	2	333	166.50

Table 4. Number of complaints lodged compared to the number of TEUs<sup>2</sup> inspected for April to June 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 **65** complaints were recorded about the CI&SC, compared with **56** for the previous quarter. The most common complaint related to the phone (**40**) where it was either not answered, the calls were not returned, or clients felt that they were on hold for too long. This compares to **41** during the previous quarter.

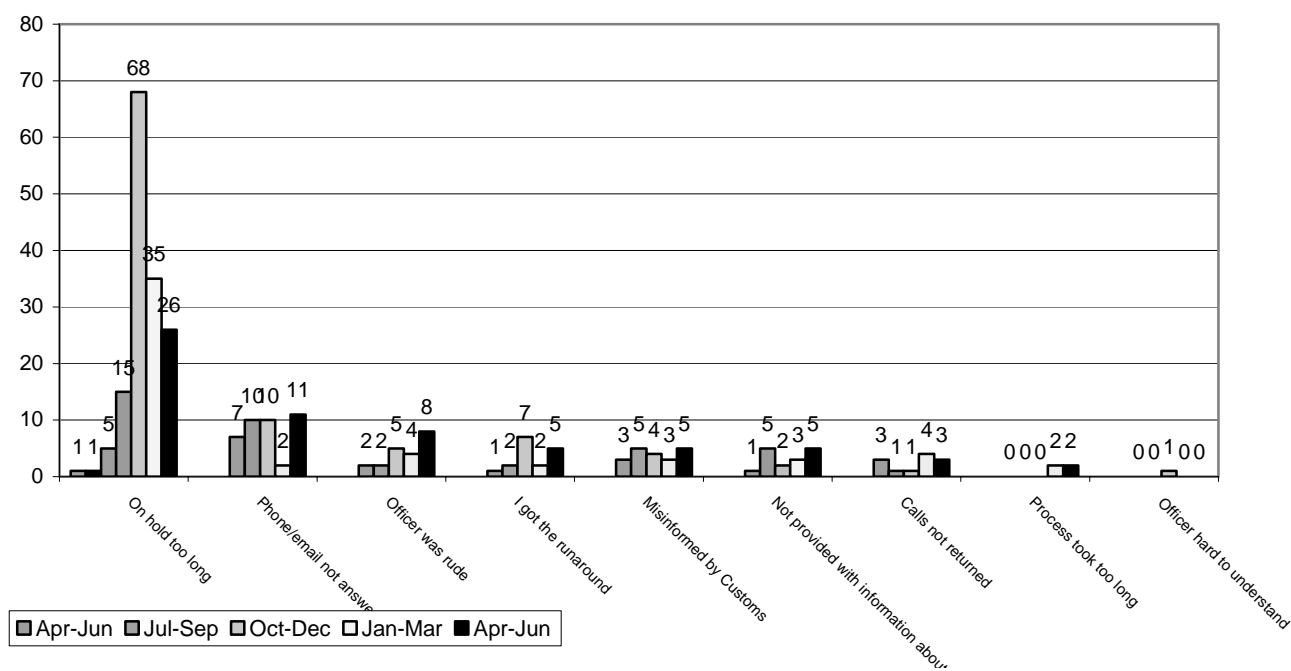


Figure 1. Comparison of CI&SC complaints for the previous five quarters

During the period 1 April to 30 June 2005 **133,873** enquiries were received by the CI&SC.

The number of complaints received was **65** during this quarter which is **1** complaint for every **2,060** 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
April	27	34,480	7,938	1,965	44,383	1,644
May	21	34,052	7,095	2,173	43,320	2,063
June	17	36,597	7,422	2,151	46,170	2,716

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

### Compliments

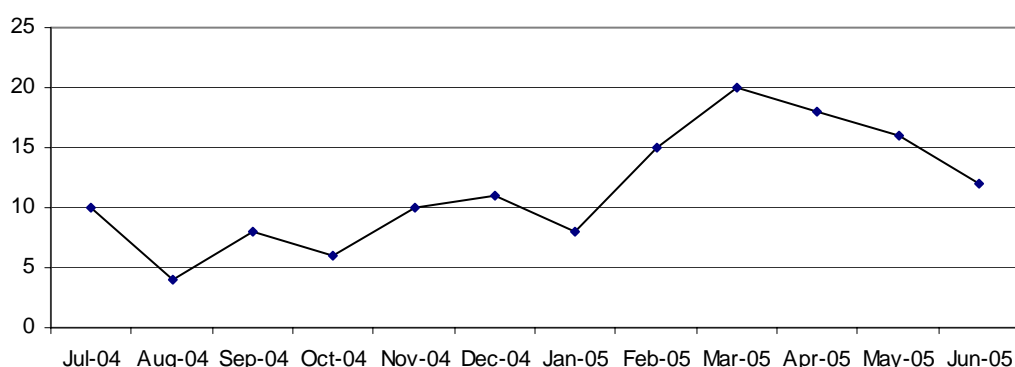
The CI&SC received **41** compliments this quarter (compared to **22** which were received last quarter). **26** of the compliments related to officers being helpful.

**Issue – “Officer was rude”**

“Officer was rude” was the second highest complaint in the quarter with **62** complaints nationally, compared with **53** in the previous quarter and **35** in the December quarter.

Work Area	Jan-Mar 05	Apr-Jun 05
Enforcement	19	20
Primary line	12	12
CI&SC	4	8
TRS	4	8
Baggage	7	6
Import clearance	-	3
Postal Operations	2	2
Client Services	-	1
Counter	4	1
Sanctions	-	1
District Office	1	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>62</b>

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

**Officer was rude**

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

Passengers Work Area – 12 months	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	VIC	WA	Total
Baggage	-	-	2	4	10	10	26
Enforcement	29	1	15	-	-	10	55
Enquiry Counter	1	-	-	-	1	-	2
Primary line	23	1	4	-	4	5	37
TRS	11	-	1	-	4	2	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>138</b>

*Table 2. Number of complaints received for ‘Officer was rude’ in Passengers by region from July 2004 to June 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 <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
The graphs are easy to understand	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
The tables are easy to understand	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

### Content

The content is:

Contains valuable information	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Tells me what I need to know	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

### Statistics

There are too many numbers	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
More analytical text is required	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

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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