

# Manifest

NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

AUTUMN 2007



WATCHING  
OUR WHARVES



GREAT WAY TO  
GO TO WORK



COURTESY AT  
SYDNEY AIRPORT



CLOSER TIES  
WITH NZ



**ON THE COVER:**

Monitoring shipping in the port of Melbourne.

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# Keeping an eye on Australia's wharves

Every moment of the day, Customs closed-circuit television cameras monitor the comings and goings on Australia's wharves, in major ports and remote locations. These electronic eyes are on watch at 32 of the major ports around the country and by the end of 2007 a further 31 places will be covered.

These 63 locations represent all of Australia's proclaimed seaports where ships arriving from overseas are required by law to make their first call and complete Customs, Immigration and Quarantine formalities.

While Customs has officers assigned to each of these places, the CCTV cameras play an increasingly important role in the work of border protection. They are used to provide 24/7 surveillance and response capability and each of the cameras on the various wharves can be used for general or targeted monitoring activities as well.

All are linked in a national network controlled from the National Monitoring Centre at Customs House in Melbourne. The centre was established in 1997 and now has a team of 15 officers who work around the clock.

All the new cameras will relay digital images to the centre and to local Customs Houses and regional monitoring

centres. These images can be viewed, assessed and acted on immediately or stored for future use as part of ongoing intelligence-gathering operations.

If the officers at the centre observe unusual activity at a remote site, they contact the local Customs office or the on-call officer as well as alerting other partner government agencies as necessary.

While the centre monitors wharf activity covering vessels, movement of containers and vehicles and people, it also has additional responsibilities including receiving and assessing phone calls to the Customs Hotline and providing a national communications centre for the high-frequency radio network used by Customs.

Each year the Customs Hotline—1800 06 1800—receives thousands of calls from members of the public and industry contacts who are members of the Frontline program. The centre is responsible for assessing the information and forwarding it to relevant operational areas for action. These calls relate to various issues including terrorism, narcotics, wildlife, immigration and quarantine.

Many illegal foreign fishing vessels intercepted by Customs are detected as a result of such calls (see page 8). The



**Opposite page:** Customs officer Miles Pearman (left) and Cliff Brown at work in the National Monitoring Centre in Melbourne.

**Above:** One of the six-screen monitors at the National Monitoring Centre in Melbourne.

centre also takes after-hours calls from state police and refers these to appropriate areas of Customs.

Whenever important information relevant to Customs is received, an intelligence report is created and regional and operational areas are notified to enable them to respond accordingly.

The centre is Customs 24-hour radio base station. The primary communications role involves maintaining a listening watch for the high frequency radio network used by the National Marine Unit, Coastwatch and land patrols. Radio communications between Customs maritime and airborne assets are often passed through the centre.

Land patrols from remote Customs offices are able to use the centre as primary or backup communications, using the radio network or satellite telephone.

Over the next four years, \$27 million will be allocated to further enhance the CCTV network, extending it to Australia's international airports. To be collocated with the National Monitoring Centre in Melbourne, the air monitoring centre will also operate in a similar fashion 24 hours a day.

The main airports of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane will be linked to the new centre in the initial stages.

## Hotel worker reports bird smuggler

A hotel worker reported suspicious activity to the National Monitoring Centre. A male guest had checked out of the hotel about 30 minutes before, leaving several empty cages in his room. The worker provided the man's name, date of birth and passport details from the hotel records. The Passenger Analysis Unit in Canberra found the man was scheduled to leave Australia that evening. Customs officers at Sydney Airport found 10 live finches and nine native parrots in his hand luggage. The offender appeared in court the next day and received a \$5000 fine and a three-year good behaviour bond.

## Fishing worker reports foreigners

The National Monitoring Centre received a call on **1800 06 1800** from a worker on board an Australian fishing vessel in the Arafura Sea, north of Darwin about an Indonesian fishing vessel three or four nautical miles off the Australian coast and heading towards shore. Within minutes, two Customs vessels operating in the area responded. The fishing vessel was apprehended before reaching the coast and a further four were found. The vessels were taken to Darwin where the crews were charged and their vessels impounded. The vessels were destroyed.

# Customs, AFP sign cooperation documents

Customs CEO Michael Carmody and Australian Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keelty have signed three annexes under the 2004 general Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations.

These annexes concern:

- cooperative arrangements on serious drugs
- border-controlled precursors under the Criminal Code and Tier 1 and 2 goods under the Customs Act
- joint airport investigation teams and joint intelligence investigation groups.

The signing represents the culmination of extended negotiation between Customs and the AFP. Completion testifies to the willingness of both agencies to not only recognise the policy and operational requirements of each other, but to foster a partnership in law enforcement.

Three earlier annexes concerned controlled operations, counter terrorism and human source handling. Further annexes are being developed or are the subject of proposals.

**Below:** AFP Commissioner Mick Keelty and Customs CEO Michael Carmody sign the annex documents.



# A courteous entrance to Sydney

Most passengers entering Australia through Sydney Airport think Customs people are a well-mannered bunch. Results from a survey on the courtesy of Customs at Sydney Airport are encouraging—85% of passengers gave the organisation seven out of 10 or above.

Sydney Airport Corporation commissioned Sweeney Research to find out what passengers think about their arrival experience. It was done over a two-month period.

Only 3% of passengers surveyed gave Customs three out of 10 or less for courteousness.

The outwards queue results were similarly positive—88% giving seven out of 10 or above and only 2% giving three out of 10 or less.

Director Passengers Branch at Sydney Airport Matt O'Connor said, "The results are very positive.

It reflects the professional balance displayed by Customs officers at Sydney Airport in undertaking important border-protection roles with a client service focus."



# New maritime crew requirements due this year

New legislation this year will require foreign sea crew to apply for maritime crew visas before they come to Australia. It will replace the current situation in which all a ship's crew are covered by a special purpose visa on arrival if they all hold valid passports and documents that verify their employment on the ship.

The legislation is expected to take effect on 1 July 2007. From that date, the 130,000 foreign sea crew who come to Australia annually on commercial ships such as cargo and cruise ships and other non-military ships will need to apply for and hold the new maritime crew visa (MCV) before they arrive.

A six-month transitional period will end on 31 December 2007. It will allow the maritime industry to adapt to the requirements and to apply for maritime crew visas. From 1 January 2008, the maritime crew visa will be mandatory.

New processes will be implemented by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and Australian Customs with the introduction of the MCV legislation, which will strengthen Australia's border security but enable the entry of genuine foreign seafarers.

The design of the new visa will largely mirror the current special purpose visa regime. The new visa will require a formal application submitted and approved before arrival in Australia, bringing entry requirements for seafarers in line with other visitors to Australia.

The maritime crew visa will be:

- required by all foreign sea crew (except New Zealanders and Australian permanent resident visa holders)
- free
- valid for three years
- valid for multiple entries into Australia by sea (not by air).

Maritime crew visa applications can be made via the Internet or on a paper form starting from 1 July 2007. Internet applications are expected to take a few minutes to complete and most will be finalised within days. An application can be made by sea crew or by a third party on their behalf, for example a shipping company, crew manning agent, or ship's agent.

The maritime crew visa application form is likely to require the following information:

- applicant passport biographical data
- residential address and contact details
- employer address and contact details
- character- and security-related declarations.

DIAC and Customs are working to ensure a smooth introduction of the maritime crew visa into the shipping industry.

Further information

email: [seaports@immi.gov.au](mailto:seaports@immi.gov.au)

website: [www.immi.gov.au/sea](http://www.immi.gov.au/sea)

phone: **131 1881 (Australia)**



# Tackling illegal fishing at the source



**A joint Australia-Indonesia awareness campaign on the impact and consequences of fishing illegally in Australian waters is well under way, with visits already completed in Jayapura, Merauke, Rote and Sulawesi. A proposed visit to Dobo and surrounding fishing villages is planned. Following is a report from Australian Customs representative Kate Walker who joined a visit to south and south-east Sulawesi:**

The aim of the campaign, in illegal-fisher source villages, is to stop the flow of illegal fishermen who are entering Australian waters fishing for shark fin and reef fish. The outreach visits involve an open discussion with the local community and local government officials.

The delegation comprised Australian officers from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry, the Australian Fisheries Management Authority and Indonesians from Marine Affairs and Fisheries and local government officials.

The delegation went to the regencies of Makasar, Sinjai (south Sulawesi) and Kendari and Wakatobi (south-east Sulawesi). Within these regencies we visited Bonetambun Island, Pulau Sembilan, Pulau Kalidupa, and Wanci Wangi Wangi. These villages rely largely on fishing, aquaculture, and agriculture subsistence.

A typical day began with meeting the local government officials to discuss the proposed program and events for the day. Fisheries Management provided A3-sized charts





**Opposite page:** After the meetings, visitors and locals met for one-on-one discussions.

**Above left:** One of the village meetings, in Pulau Sembilan.

**Above right:** The outreach program for Sulawesi ended with a music concert that about 4000 people attended.

**Below:** A typical Indonesian fishing village.

showing, in Bahasa Indonesia, the Australian exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and a “box” within it where traditional fishing methods are permitted. The charts clearly defined the Indonesian/Australian sea border.

Indonesian Government officials accompanied the Australians and Indonesian journalists to the fishing villages or the organised venues where the delegation met face-to-face with the local fishermen.

We were invited to a number of radio stations where one-hour segments on the awareness campaign were organised and listeners could phone in with questions.

The majority of questions centred on the charts. Typical questions were about:

- the sea border
- what fish could be caught in the “box”
- how Indonesian fishermen were treated if caught.

The locals were also seeking assistance from the Indonesian Government on alternative livelihoods to illegal fishing.

Attendance varied. In some of the smaller fishing villages, numbers were around 20 but in larger communities it was between 100 and 250.

The outreach program for Sulawesi ended with a music concert that about 4000 people attended. There was a strong message throughout the concert to stop illegal fishing. The village children were invited to participate in games on stage with the catch phrase “stop illegal fishing”. Throughout the campaign more than 1000 pieces of merchandise (with anti-illegal fishing slogans) were given to school students.

The mix of agencies in the delegation emphasised the whole-of-government approach Australia is taking to stop illegal foreign fishing in our waters.

The outreach program provides an excellent opportunity to meet fishing communities that have been involved in illegal fishing activities. It also provides a forum to discuss issues such as sustainability of fisheries resources on both sides of the border and the consequences of illegal fishing in Australian waters.



# A great way to go to work

Customs officers at Mackay District Office in Queensland were faced with the problem of quickly getting to and from international bulk carriers anchored kilometres offshore, waiting to load at Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal.





**Above:** Customs officers in a helicopter hangar at Mackay airport.

They enlisted the services of a local helicopter charter company to fly them out. In that way, officers could be whisked from ship to ship and carry out Customs and immigration formalities and minimise delays for Customs and to the crews themselves.

This was some two years ago. It has been an outstanding success.

Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal is some 38km south of Mackay. It is Queensland's largest export coal terminal and one of the largest facilities of its kind in the world. It has around 1000 Customs-involvement ship arrivals each year and accounts for approximately six per cent of the world's seaborne coal trade.

It is an impressive enterprise that keeps the 11 officers at the District Office constantly occupied. Boarding and clearing the vessels is one of their many functions. There can be up to 30 bulk carriers at anchor at times, waiting to berth at the terminal to be loaded up with their cargo, mined from coalfields in Central Queensland.

For the terminal to keep up with mounting world demand for coal, the operators have to work as speedily as is safely possible to transfer the cargo to the waiting vessels. Thus, the need to quickly complete government formalities, such as Customs and immigration procedures, is essential. District Manager Dave Thoms\* and his team tried several alternatives before getting approval from Customs management for the helicopter option.

At first, Dave and his team drove to Dalrymple Bay—up to an hour each way. But it was not just the time or the distance. Because the two wharves themselves are about five kilometres offshore (along a single-lane “road”), boarding vessels from them is often difficult because of the tides, the swell and the uncertainty of the weather.

They attempted boarding the bulk carriers from boats but there was a degree of danger in this for the same tide, swell and weather reasons.

“After trialling boats, we began boarding the ships by helicopter,” Dave said. “We found it to be much more efficient, much safer for the officers and we are able to board the ships in a much more orderly fashion.

“In an average week, we will clear about 20 ships. We board them with at least two officers and sometimes with four and six or eight officers, depending on the risk that we believe the ship may pose to Australia.”

The officers board their chartered helicopter at Mackay Airport, saving the one-hour drive. The flying time to the closest vessel takes about eight minutes; the most distant up to 15 minutes.

“When you look at them from the air and from a distance, these ships look like a postage stamp. You really wonder about how you are going to board a ship that way —how the chopper is going to fit on the ship. But, as you get closer, the ship gets larger and larger. By the time you



are almost on the deck, the ship is huge—plenty of space for many choppers to land.

“The ships’ masters are aware of our arrival before landing. The reason we have to give them that kind of heads-up is for them to get a fire party ready. Any time a helicopter comes to land on a ship, there are crew dressed in fireproof clothing waiting for us. They also have the fire hydrants ready as a safety precaution.

“The reason we don’t give them more notice is that we want to drop in unexpectedly. We don’t want to give them too much advance notice because we want to see if there are any prohibited goods on board.

“If everything is in order and we don’t find any reason to look any further or ask any further questions, the formalities can be completed in around an hour. But we could spend any time, even days, on the ship. We can bring in extra resources as and when required.

“While it takes eight to ten minutes to get to the first ship, after that, we can leapfrog from one to another in two or three minutes.

“The helicopter generally waits with us while we do our work. We may drop two officers on one ship and another two on the next one and then continue leapfrogging. It might pick up four and put them on one ship together—any combination we like.

“When we board the ships, we speak to the captain and ensure all requirements have been met such as Customs arrival forms, crew forms, and personal effects on board and

that the documentation is in order for the cargo that is being collected. Customs also works with other government agencies. For example, if we see goods that should be referred to Quarantine, then we do so.

“Everyone that has had anything to do with this applauds the initiative. Certainly industry is supportive of us getting on board as quickly and as efficiently as we do. The crews are impressed that Australia sees this as such a high priority that they allocate the resources for us to do this. They have not seen it anywhere else in Australia and it seems not anywhere else in the world.”

Dave Thoms says officers at Mackay “look forward to going to work each day. They come back from their helicopter trips with smiles on their faces. What is better than flying out over the blue waters of the Whitsundays each morning and seeing the whales frolicking down below? It’s fantastic. It is just a great way to go to work.”

The charter operator, Whitsunday Helicopters, has done more than 60,000 landings on ships off Dalrymple Bay, not just for Customs but for transferring pilots, company representatives and crew as well as taking out urgently needed equipment and supplies. Customs officers have done over 1000 landings.

\* Dave Thoms has since taken up a Customs position on Thursday Island off the northern tip of Queensland.

# Customs in the media

## Targetting drug imports

In Sydney, there were five significant drug detections a one week period. At least 18 people were arrested for unrelated drug-importation offences. Methods of concealment included inside shoes and shoe moulds, inside shorts, and internally.

An attempt to import through air cargo almost 3kg of cocaine in bar stools from Hollywood, California, was discovered, resulting in the arrests of two men.

In Perth, a British national was arrested for allegedly attempting to import heroin concealed in his stomach. In hospital, the man passed 100 pellets allegedly containing heroin.

In Brisbane, four people were arrested over their alleged involvement in an importation of approximately 80,000 MDMA (ecstasy) tablets into Australia in toy boxes. One man was also arrested and charged with attempting to possess a commercial quantity of a border-controlled drug. The MDMA is alleged to have an approximate street value of \$3.2 million.

Also in Brisbane, two men from Britain were charged over their alleged involvement in importing approximately 6kg of MDMA tablets, inside a DVD player in their luggage.

## Precursors and steroids

In Cairns, an Australian man, 34, was charged with importing pseudoephedrine, the precursor drug for methamphetamines. Two tablets were allegedly found in his underwear. Ephedrine is a prohibited precursor chemical which can be converted to produce illegal amphetamine-type substances, such as methamphetamine.

A foiled steroid-importation attempt resulted in a \$12,500 fine for a Queensland man. Customs officers in Sydney seized more than 3000 tablets when they intercepted six envelopes and a parcel. Customs investigators then executed search warrants on a Southport residence where a further 500 tablets were seized. At Melbourne International Mail Centre, we intercepted an additional three envelopes containing testosterone, a controlled substance.

In Adelaide, a woman, 28, faced charges in relation to a major operation by Customs and partner agencies targeting the importation of up to 1.5kg of pseudoephedrine inside the base of a cardboard box.

In Cairns, a man was charged with attempting to import precursor chemicals. During a search of his baggage, officers found 1.5 litres of a yellowish liquid in a bottle. The substance allegedly tested positive for piperonal, a precursor that can be diverted for use in the manufacture of MDMA.



# Australian **CUSTOMS** Service



**Above:** An Australian man was arrested for importing ephedrine.

Drugs, precursors and steroids seizures by Customs have made headlines in the media over the summer months. Other significant cases include child pornography offences, dangerous weapons and illegal cigarettes and tobacco.



**Above:** Cocaine in bar stools.



**Above:** Customs officers at Container Examination Facilities detected tobacco in containers.

Customs in Brisbane identified a steroid-distribution racket, with links to three States, after raiding five premises—testosterone, other illegal performance and image enhancing drugs and \$150,000 cash, to be proceeds of crime, were allegedly found. The investigation began when Customs officers in Sydney detected parcels containing liquid testosterone and what is believed to be human growth hormone (HGH).

Another case in Brisbane saw an Australian man arrested for importing a marketable quantity of ephedrine—41 vials and a quantity tablets and capsules.

In Sydney, a man, 21, was convicted for illegally importing performance-enhancing drugs and fined a total of \$4,067 including costs. Customs began an investigation after intercepting a parcel containing four vials of anabolic steroids, seven vials of HGH and a syringe marked as containing EPO (erythropoietin). These are all prohibited imports.

### **Illicit cigarettes and tobacco**

A Victorian man was sentenced to two years imprisonment and a \$5,000 fine for his role in smuggling a large amount of tobacco. Customs officers at the Melbourne Container Examination Facility detected nine tonnes of tobacco leaf in a container load declared as tyres and accessories. The tobacco represented a potential loss of revenue to the Commonwealth of \$2.4 million.



**Above:** A man was fined for illegally importing performance-enhancing drugs.

Customs officers at the Sydney Container Examination Facility identified a cigarette and tobacco smuggling racket, resulting in the arrests of nine men. Five sea cargo containers were found to contain more than two million cigarettes and about 12 tonnes of tobacco. The amount of duty and tax evaded amounted to more than \$5 million.

In Queensland, there was a long running multi-agency investigation into an alleged tobacco excise and duty evasion scheme estimated to have cost the Commonwealth Government more than \$10 million in lost revenue. Three foreigners and one Australian were sentenced in relation to this investigation and another five were charged.

### **Child pornography**

There were three significant cases involving child pornography-related offences in recent months. Customs investigators in Western Australia charged a man with the importation of child pornography following a baggage search at Perth International Airport.

In Adelaide, Customs investigators executed warrants

on a house as part of a major investigation that followed a Sydney interception of an airmail parcel. A man was arrested.

In Victoria, an Australian man, 36, was charged with importing child pornography after Customs officers intercepted his mail. Customs investigators seized a computer and other evidence during a search of the man's premises.

### **Dangerous weapons**

A range of prohibited imports, including a 500,000 volt stun gun, capsicum spray, nunchukus, extendable batons and knuckledusters, were found by Customs in international mail entering Sydney, Cairns and Melbourne. One case resulted in a Townsville man, 23, being ordered to pay more than \$12,000 for attempting to import a range of prohibited items.

In Sydney, Customs intercepted two packages destined for the same address. One of which contained a timer fuse and the other a land mine. Both were inert. A warrant was executed on a townhouse where a significant collection of munitions was found. A man in his 40s was charged.

# Then there will be nine ...

**District offices in Queensland will soon total nine as Customs prepares for the opening of an office in Bowen in mid-2007. Suitable office and residential accommodation in the north Queensland town is being identified.**

Bowen District Office will assume responsibility for the port of Abbott Point from Townsville, which took over when the old Bowen office was closed in 1993. Australia's most northerly deep-water coal-shipping port, Abbott Point is undergoing infrastructure expansion—shipping is set to increase and Bowen District Office is being re-opened to meet marine crew visa requirements coming into effect in 2007.



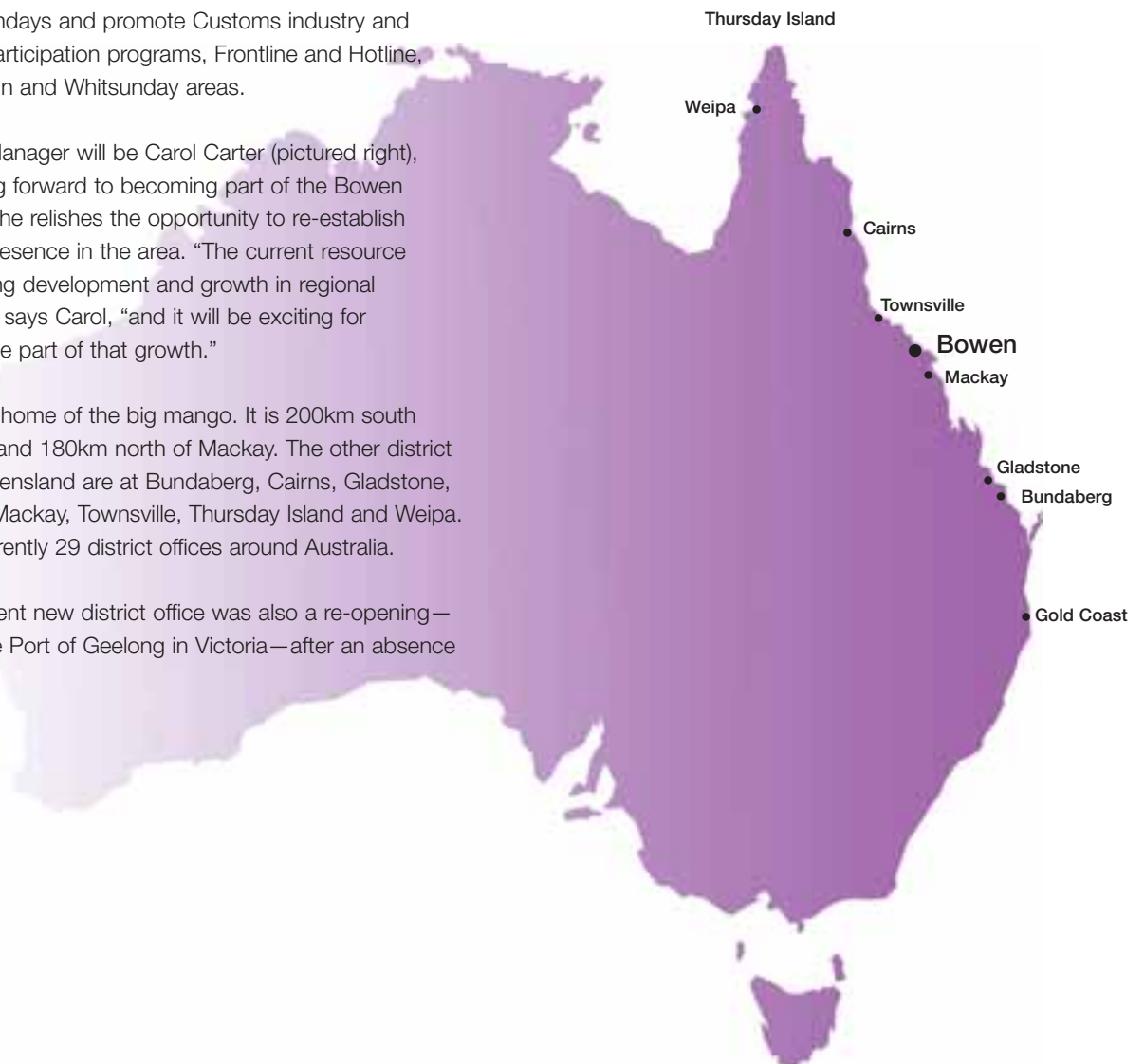
Above: Carol Carter

Bowen officers will assist also with cruise ship operations in the Whitsundays and promote Customs industry and community participation programs, Frontline and Hotline, in the Burdekin and Whitsunday areas.

The District Manager will be Carol Carter (pictured right), who is looking forward to becoming part of the Bowen community. She relishes the opportunity to re-establish a Customs presence in the area. “The current resource boom is driving development and growth in regional Queensland,” says Carol, “and it will be exciting for Customs to be part of that growth.”

Bowen is the home of the big mango. It is 200km south of Townsville and 180km north of Mackay. The other district offices in Queensland are at Bundaberg, Cairns, Gladstone, Gold Coast, Mackay, Townsville, Thursday Island and Weipa. There are currently 29 district offices around Australia.

The most recent new district office was also a re-opening—in 2005 at the Port of Geelong in Victoria—after an absence of nine years.



# Customs wins award for wildlife smuggling operation



**Left:** Acting Managing Director Tourism Australia Geoff Buckley, left, presents the award to National Manager Investigations Richard Janeczko.

## A joint operation between Australian Customs and New Zealand wildlife authorities won a Trans-Tasman Business Award.

On accepting the award as one of the joint winners in the environmental, social, government and community category, Customs National Manager Investigations Richard Janeczko said the award recognised the effectiveness of international cooperation in attempting to safeguard wildlife.

“Customs and New Zealand authorities working together act as a deterrent to those who may consider flouting the law by distributing and selling protected wildlife products,” he said.

The operation uncovered an illegal exportation of 25kg of dried seahorse powder from China that was shipped via Australia to New Zealand earlier this year.

Acting on information supplied by New Zealand Wildlife Enforcement Group (a multi-agency government organisation with representatives from New Zealand Customs, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Department of Conservation), Australian Customs executed search and seizure warrants on business premises in Sydney’s eastern suburbs.

The action resulted from an interception of the powder in New Zealand by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

Inquiries indicated that the seahorse powder, declared as being a plant extract, was brought to Australia from China and exported within days to New Zealand as part of an import order for use in manufacturing medicines.

Seahorses, listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), are used in the manufacture of various pharmaceuticals and traditional medicines.

The importation and exportation of CITES-listed products without a permit is an offence under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* carrying penalties of up to 10 years imprisonment and fines of \$110,000.

The illegal trade in wildlife is considered to be the third largest illicit market in the world after arms and drugs.

“Customs takes its role of protecting the community and the environment seriously and joint operations with other countries, especially neighbors such as New Zealand, help to make the world a better place,” Mr Janeczko said.



Paul Benussi, left, presents the Customs plaque to the Master Yeoman.

## Yeoman of the plaques

Customs representative in Brussels, Paul Benussi, who has responsibility for Europe and the Middle East, presented Master Yeoman “Rocky” of the Tower of London with a Customs plaque.

The Yeomen’s Bar in the Tower has thousands of plaques from around the world that cover all the walls. They are mostly defence and law-enforcement agencies.

When then Customs Minister Chris Ellison visited in mid-2006, it was noted that Australian Customs was not represented in the collection.

So Paul Benussi organised one and, on his next official visit to London, presented it on behalf of the Minister.



**Above:** Some of the plaques covering the walls of the Yeomen’s Bar in the Tower of London.



**Australian Government**

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**Australian Customs Service**