



Complaints & Compliments



National Report January to June 2001

Table of Contents

<i>Executive Summary</i>	1
<i>Introduction</i>	2
<i>Complaint and Compliment Issues by Region</i>	3
<i>Complaint and Compliment Issues by Division</i>	3
<i>Main Complaint Issues</i>	4
<i>Other Complaint Issues</i>	5
<i>Selected Client Comments - Complaints</i>	6
<i>Main Compliments Offered</i>	8
<i>Selected Client Comments - Compliments</i>	9
<i>Sources - How People Contact Us</i>	10
<i>About the CCHS</i>	10
<i>Re-Categorisation of Issues</i>	12

Executive Summary

This is the first national report for the Complaints and Compliments Handling System (CCHS) covering the period January to June 2001.

- Total number of complaint issues for the period = 1035
- Total number of compliments offered = 425
- Due to the high volume of public contact, the Passenger Processing area received the most complaints and compliments.
- Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) issues account for over half of total complaints received for this period (55%).
- The main issue for clients continues to be the need to verify goods to Customs in order to claim a refund through the TRS. Many clients believe the TRS is unfair, as verification of goods is difficult because:
 - the TRS booth is located after check-in of baggage; and
 - large items cannot be taken on board as hand luggage.
- The Tourist Refund Office is reviewing the TRS policy to address issues raised by clients.
- Out of the non TRS complaints the main issues related to complaints about process inefficiencies (97) and staff attitude (68).
- A recurring complaint, although not related to Customs, is 'Referral to other agencies'. There is a perception that Customs is responsible for a number of functions that are actually performed by other agencies/organisations.
- The "Tell Us What You Think" brochure remains the most popular method by which clients contact us, to make a complaint or offer a compliment.

Introduction

This is the first national report for the Complaints and Compliments Handling System (CCHS) covering the period January to June 2001. Future national reports will be on a quarterly basis.

The purpose of the CCHS is to provide national coordination and management of complaints and compliments, and analysis and reporting including identification of opportunities for the continuous improvement of our processes and services based on client feedback.

Comparative data is not available for this report due to the acquisition of a new database and extensive back-logging of manual data. Comparative data and analysis should be available in the next report.

The national database for the CCHS, *Satisfy 2000*, will soon be upgraded and tested for the new Windows 2000 environment. When this is completed *Satisfy 2000* will produce a variety of statistical information, including:

- Number of cases and issues (ie one case may have more than one issue)
- Number of complaints and compliments by Region
- Number of complaints and compliments by Division/Branch
- Type of complaints/compliments raised by clients
- Trend data on numbers and types of issues raised by clients
- Breakdown on contact source (ie methods by which clients contact Customs)
- Resolution times (ie number of working days taken to resolve a case)

NOTE

To ensure we meet your reporting needs, we would appreciate any comments you may have about this report and welcome any input you may wish to contribute to the content and layout.

Please direct your comments to either:

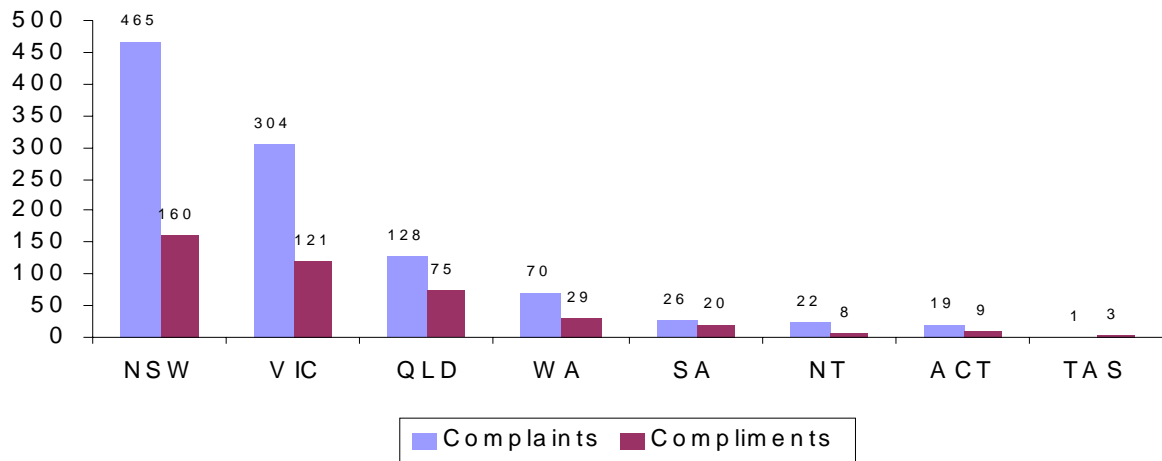
- Kaye Barron 42 5450 (Manager Client Service Policy) or
- Linda Pellew 42 2022 (National Co-ordinator CCHS).

More detailed information about a particular region can be obtained from the National Complaints and Compliments Unit:

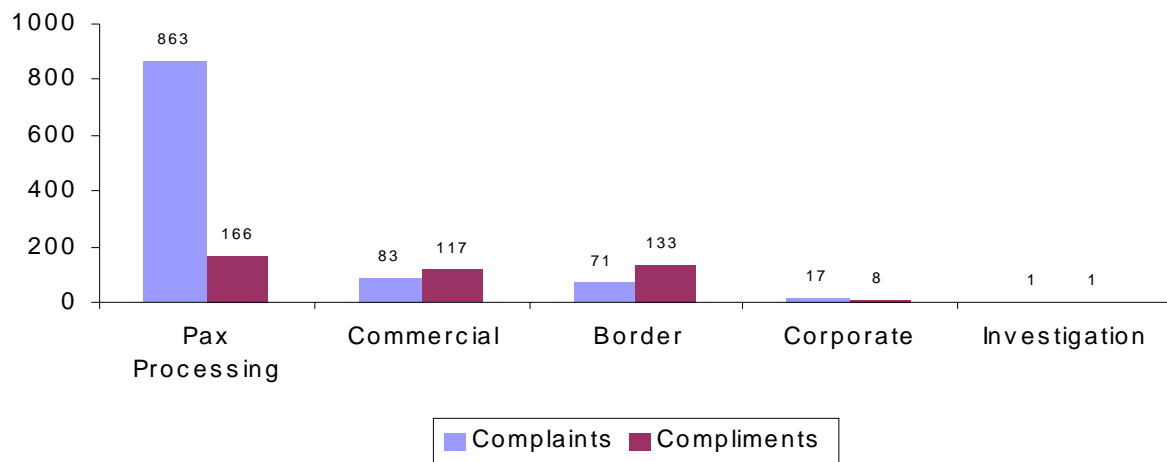
- Linda Pellew 42 2022 or
- Garry Dennis 42 2023

Complaint and Compliment Issues by Region

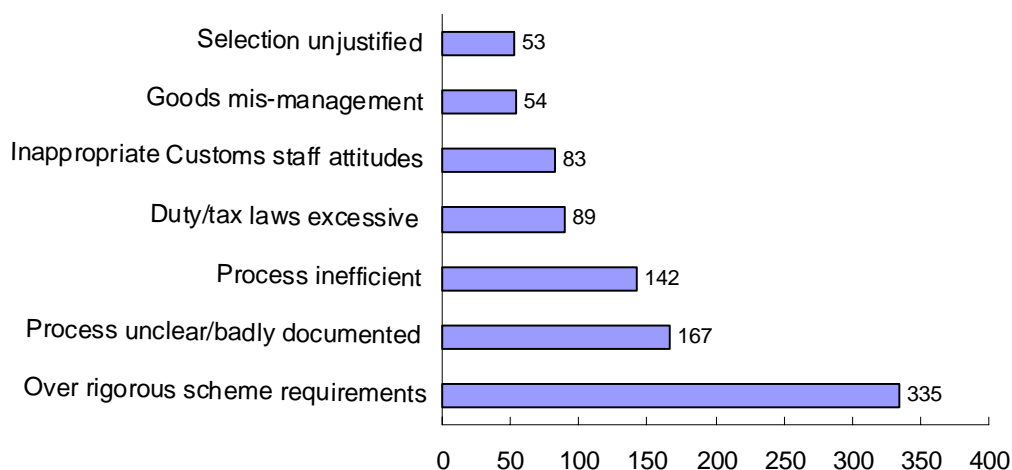
January to June 2001



Complaint and Compliment Issues by Division



Main Complaint Issues



Note: A number of issues in the database have been aggregated into the above categories. For further detail see page 12.

Tourist Refund Scheme

Aspects of the TRS remains the main concern for clients. In total, 571 out of 1035 complaints were about the TRS, representing 55% of all complaints.

'Goods not in possession' continues to be the main issue representing 23.5% of total complaints for the reporting period. The Tourist Refund Office is currently reviewing the TRS policy to address some of the issues highlighted above.

With the 77 'Unhappy with retailer' issues, 56 relate to clients being misinformed and the remaining 21 were about not being informed at all by the retailer.

The table below illustrates the total complaint issues about TRS.

TRS Complaint Issues	
Goods not in possession	243
Unhappy with retailer	77
Process - not explained (31) - took too long (22)	53
Unhappy about refund	40
Unhappy about 30 day limit	36
Unhappy about \$300 limit	22
Did not have tax invoice	19
Location of booth	16

TRS Complaint Issues	
Staff attitude	15
Unhappy with airline	12
Unhappy with signage	11
No refund for services	10
Queue took too long	7
Unhappy about mail back facility	5
Crew not entitled to refund	3
Goods not repacked properly	1
Other	1
Total	571

Non TRS Related Complaints

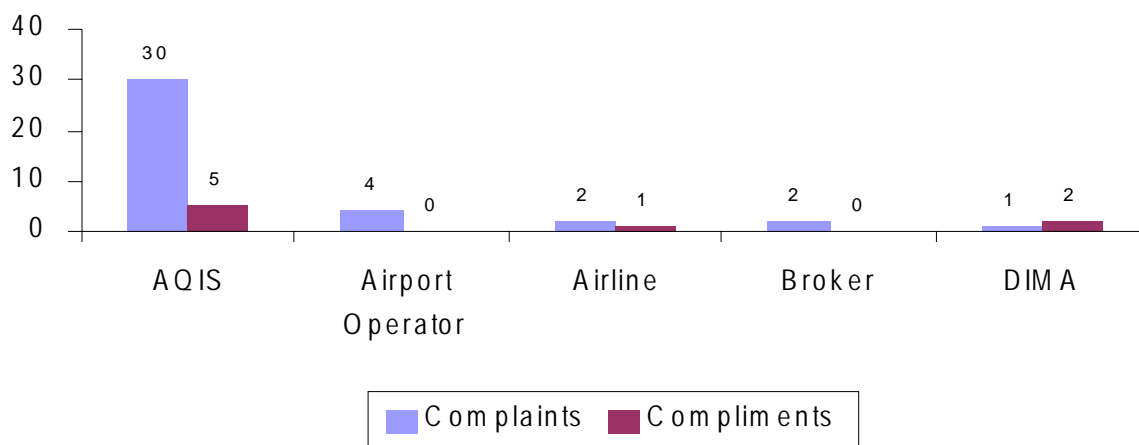
There were 464 non-TRS related complaints. The following table identifies the main issues:

Issue	Percentage
Process inefficiencies	20.8
Inappropriate Customs Staff attitude	14.6
Selection unjustified	11.4
Goods mis-management	11.4
Referral to other agencies	10.7
Duty/Tax laws excessive	10.5
Excessive breach of personal space	7.9
Process unclear/badly documented	7.7

More specific information is available on request from the CCHS unit.

Other Complaint Issues

Referrals to other agencies



The sixth top complaint was 'Referrals to other agencies', with a total of 39 complaints (3.8% of total complaints). This is a recurring theme, whereby clients believe they are dealing with Customs, when it is actually another agency/organisation.

Customs needs to address the way it markets itself to clients, as the above graph indicates, clients confuse us with other agencies such as AQIS, airline

companies and DIMA. When Customs receives these complaints, the client is notified of the correct authority and the matter is then referred to the appropriate agency/organisation.

Selected Client Comments - Complaints

Tourist Refund Scheme – ‘Goods not in possession’

Case # 100795

“Some items purchased are too large to hand carry. No TRS prior to Immigration (ONLY ONE IN THE WORLD). This is the 21st Century.”

Case # 102478

“I would like to give some feedback on your TRS. I hope your understand that it is very inconvenient for passengers to carry big hand luggage just to get a refund on tax. Purchased \$1000 on clothes - jackets, pants etc and it is very inconvenient to take all of it by hand luggage (& at the same shop same receipt).”

Case # 101285

“The Australian Government offers a tax refund scheme which does not pay out! We bought a suitcase and clothes and other goods which could not apparently be claimed because (airline) would not allow the case through as hand luggage.”

Tourist Refund Scheme – ‘Unhappy with retailer’

Case # 102641

“I received inadequate information from (retailer) and was unaware that I needed to produce the purchases to Customs.”

Case # 100725

“Store did not specify that goods needed to be shown at GST refund counter. There is no signage specifying this from GST refund operation. Terrible service to visitors.”

Case # 100725

“I was never informed to have merchandise I purchased ready for inspection. I lost out on over \$200 cash back had I been properly informed. When you pack your bags, you pack everything. You are limited with carry on to the airplane.”

Tourist Refund Scheme – ‘Unhappy about refund’

Case # 101888

"On 24th Nov, I was promised that the refund of AUD 78.60 would be credited to my credit card within approx 6 weeks. Today is 30 March 2001, and I have not seen any credit on my credit card."

Case # 100369

"I am writing to express my disappointment at not receiving my TRS refund. I am owed \$154.49. This was supposed to be credited to (credit card)."

Staff Attitude

Case # 100014

"The customs officer whom I was declaring the goods to was very unfriendly and rude. We were scolded by him in a few incidences and he gave remarks such as "I am the one checking, not you!" when we were trying to help out. He would then stare fiercely at us. It makes us feel that we were not welcome! It really spoils the state of our holiday."

Case # 100912

"The Customs Officers not only over assert their authority, but they also treat passengers with little respect at all. Their priority to invade anyone's privacy is abused as they use this to interrogate whom ever and whenever they like in a unfriendly, unnecessary manner."

Process took too long

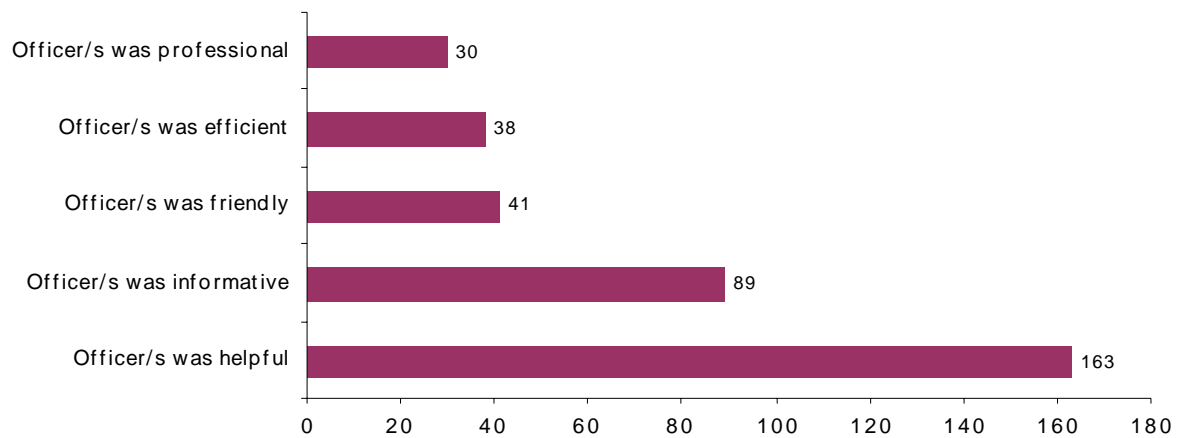
Case # 101258

"Immigration takes longer to get through than most third world countries."

Case # 100569

"The systems and processes in place are profoundly user-unfriendly and bureaucratic. It is impossible for a casual (inexperienced) customer of your services to get a simple release of goods they have surrendered at the Airport. All the staff involved are there to administer a 'process' irrespective of the merits of the case and no-one is empowered to make a decision."

Main Compliments Offered



A total of 425 compliments were received, with Passenger Processing being the main recipient of the compliments. When we receive a compliment from a client, the Complaints and Compliments Co-ordinator, in the relevant region:

1. enters the case into the database;
2. acknowledges the client and thanks them for their comments; and
3. acknowledges the officer/s for a job well done and ensures the relevant managers are notified.

Division	Compliments	%
Pax Processing	166	39.1
Border	133	31.3
Commercial	117	27.5
Corporate	8	1.9
Intelligence	1	0.2
Total	425	100

Selected Client Comments - Compliments

Case # 101149

"My husband and I have just completed a wonderful holiday in your country and felt the need to drop you a short note to commend you on the behaviour of one of your officers when we arrived. He was extremely helpful and assisted us with 2 other nuisance travellers."

Case # 101749

"Extremely helpful, prompt and courteous. Well done and many thanks for your assistance."

Case # 100539

"Thank you again for arranging a presentation at our school this term. The officers established rapport with the students and the class thoroughly enjoyed the visit."

Case # 101417

"Thanks for a most enjoyable, informative and entertaining session. We learnt a lot, we laughed a lot and we did appreciate the talk you gave us."

Case # 102007

"They were friendly, polite and very efficient - much better than a lot of countries we've been to."

Case # 101069

" The Officer was fantastic. Knew all the procedures and guided me with his expertise and professional courtesy quickly and painlessly. Thanks"

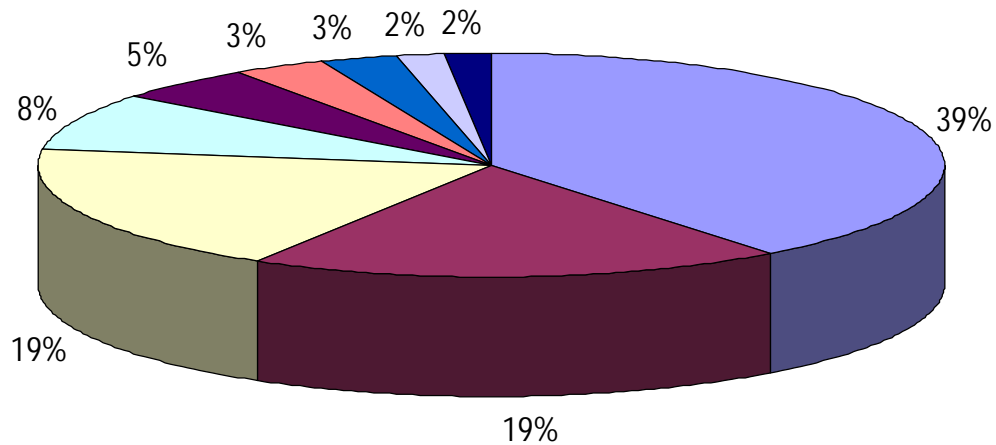
Case # 102302

"Thanks for your reply. You clearly addressed the queries I raised. I must congratulate your organisation on its prompt and efficient service."

Case # 102205

"It was superior in efficiency to any other country I have encountered. This includes UK, UAE, Nigeria, Thailand and Japan. The service was also friendly and positive in assessing the goods."

Sources - How People Contact Us



Brochure	Email	Letter	Staff Feedback	Telephone
Proforma	1800 228 227	Fax	Ministerial	

The “Tell Us What You Think” brochure continues to be the most popular way for clients to contact us.

Staff also provide feedback and with the 8% illustrated above, 5% has been received through the Complaints and Compliments icon and 3% through other methods such as e-mail and facsimiles. The complaints and compliments icon was installed on the LAN in February this year and further marketing is required to increase staff usage.

About the CCHS

The CCHS is a national database set up to capture, record, analyse, and report on complaints and compliments we receive from external clients about our decisions, procedures, products or services. It ensures we handle all complaints and compliments in a consistent way and is part of our commitment to continuously improve our services for industry and the community.

Our clients include:

- the Australian community;
- Government;
- Industry;
- travellers; and
- other Government agencies.

Through the CCHS we will be able to:

- increase the number of people who tell us when they are either satisfied or dissatisfied with the service we provide;
- provide timely and appropriate responses to clients;
- maintain client satisfaction and confidence with Custom's services;
- recognise and acknowledge the efforts of staff when clients compliment them on the service they have provided; and
- use the information from complaints and compliments to improve our service quality.

Re-Categorisation of Issues

A number of issues in the Satisfy2000 database have been aggregated into the categories in the table below. These are listed in order of the number of complaints received for each overall category.

Overall category	Issue (as described in database)
Over-rigorous scheme requirements	Crew not entitled Did not have tax invoice Goods not in possession No queuing system No refund for services Unhappy about \$300 limit Unhappy about 30 day limit
Process unclear/badly documented	Form not in my language Form was hard to read Form was too complex I got the runaround I had difficulty being understood I was misinformed Information is hard to find Information is out of date Information was misleading Lack of information Misinformed by airline Misinformed by retailer Not informed by airline Not informed by retailer Officer was hard to understand Process not explained The signage was unclear The signs weren't working There weren't enough signs
Process inefficient	Disliked Aussies only queue Disliked Express queue Disliked snake queuing Disliked straight queuing Facilities were inadequate Location of booth No queuing system Not enough staff Process took too long Queue took too long Too much paperwork Unhappy about process
Duty/tax laws excessive	Didn't expect duty/tax Didn't expect fees Didn't expect so much duty/tax Unhappy about duty/tax Unhappy about GST Unhappy about refund
Inappropriate Customs staff attitudes	Officer was rude Racist comment was made

Goods mis-management	Goods not repacked properly Goods were damaged Goods were missing Goods were seized Goods were withheld Had to repack my bags
Selection unjustified	Always searched I am always questioned Racist selection Unhappy with selection
Referral to other agency	Referral
Excessive breach of personal space	Examination too thorough Examined personal documents I didn't like the questions
Payment facilities inadequate	No credit card facilities No EFTPOS facilities Unhappy about mail back facility
Other	Not allowed into Customs Hall Other Other issue
Body search unjustified	Body search was conducted
Passport mis-management	Passport stamped on wrong page Passport wasn't stamped
On hold too long	On hold too long
Office hours too short	Office hours too short