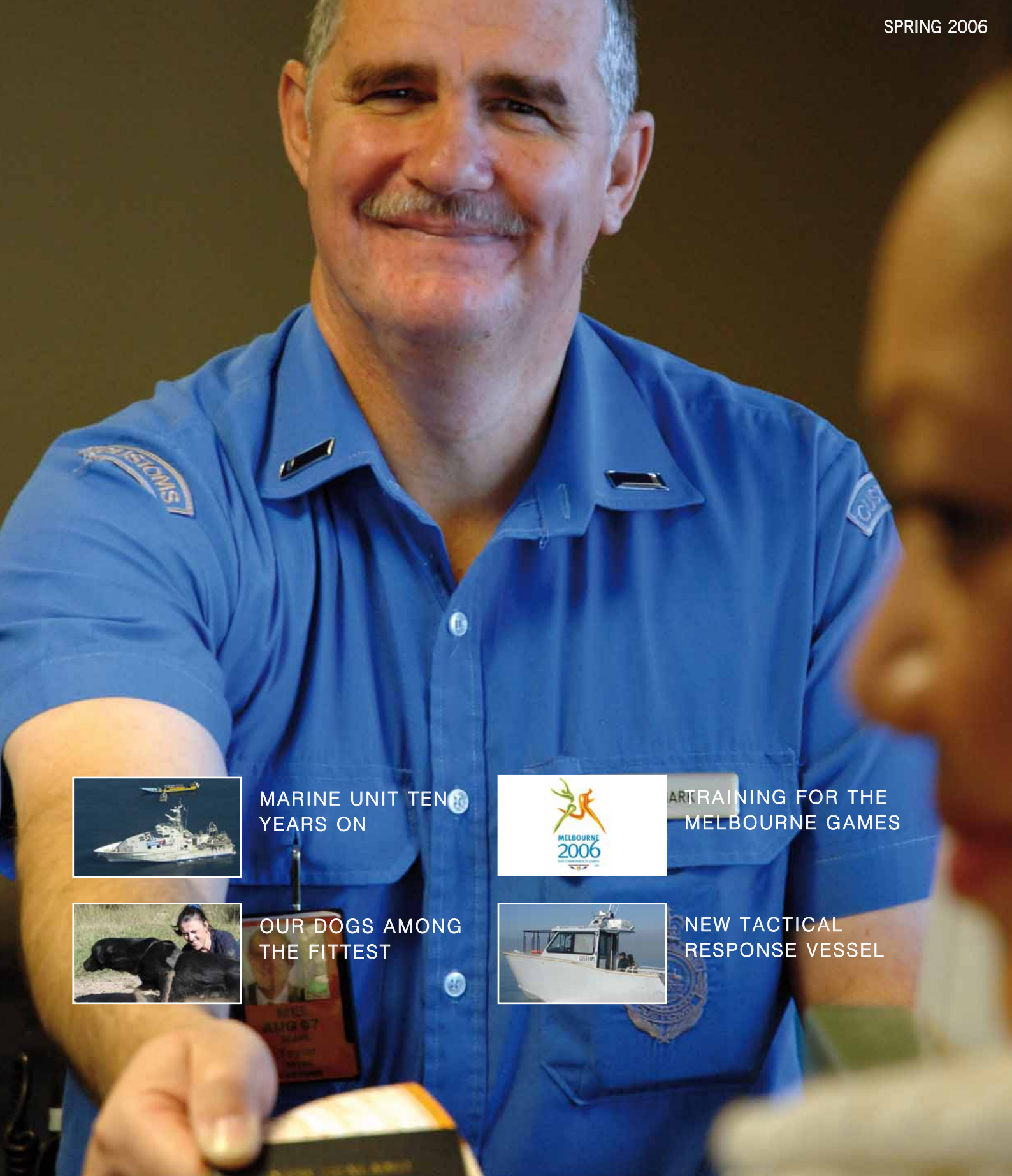


# Manifest

NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

SPRING 2006



MARINE UNIT TEN  
YEARS ON



TRAINING FOR THE  
MELBOURNE GAMES



OUR DOGS AMONG  
THE FITTEST



NEW TACTICAL  
RESPONSE VESSEL



**ON THE COVER:**

Photo: Mark Taylor from Melbourne

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# Job with a harbour view

Officers in training with the Customs National Enforcement Training Centre in Sydney took a plunge off a 25m building in White Bay as one of the practical exercises in a technical heights management course.

Flying high: Officers in training.

Picture: Nathan Phillips

Enforcement officers, specifically the Technical Support Groups from the NSW, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia regions, underwent the training to assist them with deploying special equipment.

Trainers Nathan Phillips and Dave Cameron also put the group through a variety of rescue scenarios at differing heights. “The group had a healthy respect for heights,” Nathan said. “We taught them how to work effectively and carry out rescue operations in difficult situations at height.”

WA Enforcement officer Tony Di Vincenzo said the training was “the best course completed in Customs”. Fellow WA officer Michael Jez said it was “hard at first but enjoyable the more it went on”.

The National Enforcement Training Centre provides training in a range of search activities undertaken by Customs officers. Besides the search courses, the centre develops and delivers courses for partner agencies such as maritime and aviation environment awareness for detector dog units and a quarantine bulk ship inspection course.

# Customs meeting new border challenges

New Customs CEO Michael Carmody has outlined the strategic challenges facing the agency in the medium term.

“As reinforced in this year’s Budget, Customs is Australia’s primary border-protection agency,” Mr Carmody said in his Strategic Statement for 2006-07.

“In performing our role we work closely with a range of agencies, often exercising powers on their behalf, at other times working with them to complement capabilities and powers. Together we are called on to provide a sense of security to the community, supporting the continuation of the Australian lifestyle.”

Mr Carmody said Australia’s security, environment or lifestyle would be compromised by a failure by Customs to meet border-protection responsibilities or to properly facilitate trade or meet revenue collection responsibilities.

“We also are present at the border because of our community protection role,” he said.

“It is important to note however that the community has reasonable expectations about ease of travel and doing business. If our approaches to border security unreasonably compromise those expectations we will lose the community’s support and, as a result, our ability to perform our role. Facilitating the movement of legitimate travellers and goods is therefore essential.

“In addressing this tension we will:

- work with industry to embed as far as possible our border-protection approaches within their business models
- enhance our intelligence and targeting capabilities to better focus on high risk travellers and cargo



- focus on achieving efficiency improvements that would allow us to direct increased effort into our community protection role (after meeting the Government’s efficiency dividend and funding appropriate pay rises).”

Mr Carmody pointed out that Customs operated in a complex and dynamic environment, and had adopted certain priorities.

“These include maintaining the community’s confidence and delivering on border protection, facilitation and revenue commitments. Customs priorities where we need to improve are to :

- work with other law-enforcement agencies to deal with threats from illicit drugs
- enhance intelligence and targeting capabilities
- provide leadership in enhanced whole-of-government response to illegal foreign fishing
- work with industry to deliver material benefits to industry and government from the Integrated Cargo System
- focus on improving the consistency and efficiency of operations.”

# Like the athletes, we trained hard for the Melbourne Games

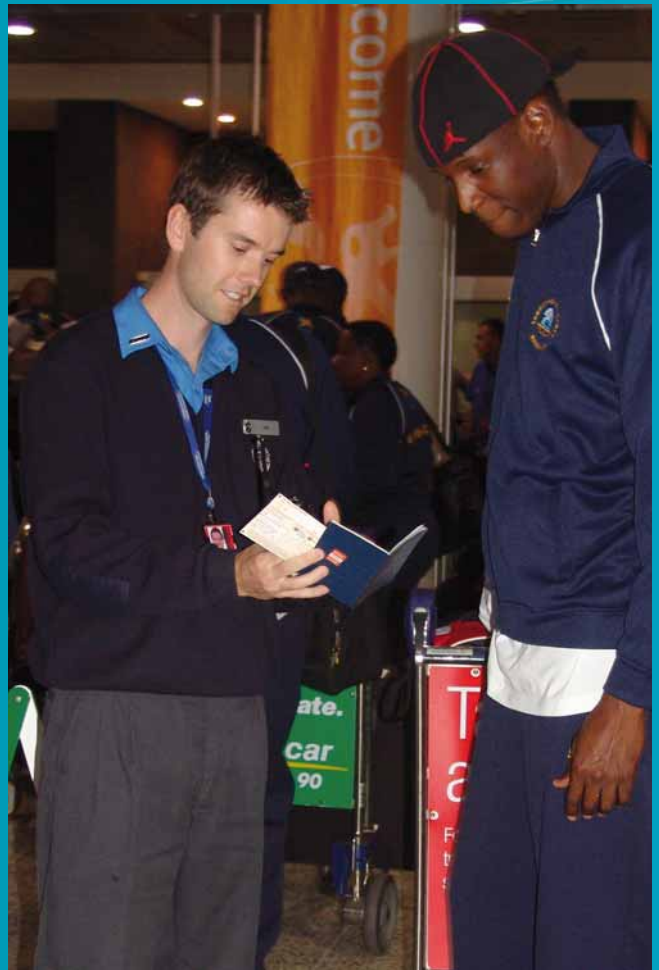
The Commonwealth Games period was always going to be a busy time for Customs. With more than 40,000 visitors, competitors and Games family members, including 2000 VIPs arriving in Australia for the Games, Customs was focused on facilitating the influx of people, luggage and cargo while maintaining its high level of border security.

Just like the preparations needed by top athletes, Customs planning for the Games began four years before the event, and a Commonwealth Games steering committee was formed.

A project team was the lynchpin that coordinated and synchronised our involvement in the Games.

Working closely with State and Federal Government agencies and non-government bodies such as the Commonwealth Games Corporation, Customs developed systems, procedures and protocols to facilitate the Games.

Officers at airports around Australia either shared the increase in passenger numbers or accepted short-term postings to Melbourne Airport - the key destination for athletes and Games family members.



Officers greeted hundreds of athletes at Melbourne Airport.

Each day, 99 per cent of passengers arriving at Melbourne International Airport were processed into Australia within 30 minutes of their aircraft arriving at the terminal. New digital signage welcomed and informed passengers of Customs requirements.

On the cargo side, officers worked around the clock at air and sea ports, as well as at off-site venues, to process Games-related goods such as competitor equipment, team medical kits, giveaways, and media and broadcasting equipment. Most required clearance under special concessional provisions.

But behind the scenes much more was happening.

A significant achievement was the development of a refined system for exporting firearms.

With competitors in the shooting events arriving and departing from different States at different times, a streamlined process was needed to simplify compliance for the competitors while still enforcing Australia's firearm controls.

Customs, in conjunction with the Department Defence, developed a procedure that enabled all firearms to be cleared out of Australia using one export permit per team. A database kept track of the information to ensure that all firearms entering Australia were accounted for after the Games.

And to minimise delays at the airport, firearms had serial numbers verified, were wrapped and Customs sealed at shooting venues and the Games village.

Revised protocols for handling performance and image-enhancing drugs were developed, and a temporary Tourist Refund Scheme office was set up at the Games village. The office refunded more than \$17,000 during the Games.

The availability of these facilities, as well as Customs requirements, was conveyed to all team officials with information packs, coordinated by the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, written specifically for each country.

Intellectual property rights were also an important issue for consideration. Inevitably, major events bring with them a risk of copies and fakes.

Customs developed and enforced the official legal framework, the *Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games (Indicia and Images) Protection Act 2005*, to help prevent the importation of counterfeit merchandise bearing official Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games logos, words and markings.

This task also involved training Customs, Victoria Police and Australian Federal Police staff in identifying counterfeit products.

Finally, security issues were not sidelined. Customs was a key player in a joint intelligence team, the Commonwealth Games Maritime Group, which included Defence, Victoria Police and other law-enforcement agencies.

To heighten border control, Customs ran a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week maritime operations room, deployed an additional 12 highly trained interstate staff to the Games maritime force, and boosted the visible presence of armed Customs officers on the water and waterfront.

Increased boarding of vessels at port and sea, ship searches, and roadblock and chokepoint activities were complemented by a Customs patrol vessel, a jet-powered pursuit tender, and a new tactical response vessel.





Customs played a key role in the success of 2006 Australian Grand Prix.

# Thanks from Grand Prix organisers

Australian Grand Prix organisers in Melbourne have thanked Customs for contributing to the success of this year's event.

Customs Event Status was granted under S162A of the *Customs Act* to the organising body that gave a financial undertaking as security against GST and Customs duties.

Following a large round-table meeting at Albert Park with the principal customs brokers and freight forwarders for the Grand Prix, Melbourne securities and events officers coordinated all Customs issues over the ensuing weeks.

They worked closely with their colleagues in passenger and cargo examination areas and at Customs House, Melbourne Airport.

Issues included the arrival of five special flights at Avalon Airport, processing of crews and passengers, cargo screening, Melbourne Airport passengers arriving with Grand Prix goods (team technicians and mechanics have been known to arrive in the night carrying that vital and top-secret engine component which is going to win it!), carnets and pre-clearances of other items.

The various Customs clearance arrangements proceeded smoothly — a credit to Customs teamwork and the strong, established relationships with all other parties involved.

During the week before the weekend race, a team of four security and two cargo examination officers visited the track under intense security provisions.

The customs brokers' representative introduced officers to racing team managers, who explained the arrangements for organising and securing all temporary imports in their care. There were rows of shipping containers holding masses of tyres.

There was high-level security everywhere in the pit area. The Customs officers identified the serial numbers of various team engines and chassis imported under carnets and event security. They examined and verified the details and descriptions against the commercial-import documents.

# New Chief for JOPC and Coastwatch



Rear Admiral James Goldrick is the new Commander Joint Offshore Protection Command and Director General Coastwatch.

He has 32 year's service in the Royal Australian Navy. He took over from Rear Admiral Russ Crane.

His previous role was Commandant of the Australian Defence Force Academy and before that Director General Military Strategy in the Department of Defence.

In earlier years, he served as the Commanding Officer of Fremantle-class patrol boat HMAS *Cessnock*. He twice commanded frigate HMAS *Sydney* and later served as the inaugural Commander Australian Surface Task Group.

During this posting, he commanded the Australian task group deployed to the Persian Gulf in early 2002 and also served as commander of the multinational naval forces conducting maritime interception operations to enforce UN sanctions on Iraq, including units from the RAN, the United States Navy, the Royal Navy and the Polish Armed Forces.

James has a strong interest in naval history and contemporary naval affairs and has lectured and written extensively on various topics.

"I am excited by the opportunity of working within Customs and taking forward the initiatives announced by government to develop Australia's maritime surveillance and response capabilities," he said.

Rear Admiral Russ Crane, after two years as Director General Coastwatch, became Deputy Chief of Navy, where he is responsible for managing the business aspects of the Navy.

He commented that his time working with Customs had been an exciting, challenging and rewarding opportunity. "I have enjoyed and learnt a great deal from the different perspectives and strengths of Customs in that time," he said.

# Firearm parts investigation leads to major drug find

By Rod Daniels

Customs key role in screening all international mail has been highlighted in a case relating to the illegal importation of firearm parts.

A major investigation began in Adelaide in 2003 after officers at the International Mail Centre in Melbourne detected a number of parts for a Colt semi-automatic .45 and a .38 Colt diamondback handgun sent from the United States.

Customs screens all international mail to ensure that weapons and other prohibited items are not illegally imported into Australia.

Investigations officers in Adelaide, assisted by the South Australia Police, executed a search warrant on an Adelaide property where evidence was found relating to the purchase of firearm parts.

Customs then Regional Director South Australia Virginia Lynch said: "This should serve as a severe warning to anyone contemplating smuggling firearms. The illegal importation of parts for prohibited weapons is a very serious criminal offence."

Computer forensic examination of a computer seized during the warrant action identified evidence of a suspect buying firearm parts via the Internet. Also seized were firearms parts relating to two Uzi sub-machine guns and four Sten guns.

"While these weapons and parts may be freely available on the Internet and for sale in some other countries, they cannot be imported into Australia without appropriate permission," Ms Lynch said.

Also found at the property was a large quantity of high purity MDMA (ecstasy), and two laboratories producing MDMA. There were 544 tablets and enough powder to produce another 8700. These tablets are valued at \$50 each on the street. Police seized four handguns, two semi-automatic assault rifles and a quantity of cash.

Although these matters started with relatively small detections in Melbourne, results highlight the success of cooperative work between law-enforcement agencies and excellent analytical work.

Cumulative sentences handed down for all State and Commonwealth offences totalled five years.



Some of the seized firearms.

# A decade of offshore maritime patrol and response



On 14 September 2000, as millions were watching the Sydney Olympics opening ceremony, Customs officer John Casley died on board the Australian Customs Vessel (ACV) *Corio Bay* off the NSW coast. John, a former marine officer, was on the *Corio Bay* as a volunteer to lend a hand with operations in support of the Olympics. The Casley family has since established an annual award in John's honour, presented to a member of the Marine Unit who best exemplifies the qualities that John Casley stood for during his time with Customs.

Over the past 10 years, the Customs National Marine Unit has evolved into a major player in the field of blue water maritime border protection. The original fleet of sheltered waters vessels and inshore and offshore patrol vessels, managed separately by regional staff, has been rationalised, centralised, enlarged and upgraded. Crews and vessels have been armed, the Unit has been given a wider role including international patrols and training has been upgraded. Significant acts of bravery have been recognised. This article traces the history of the Unit.

## The concept

A centralised Customs marine unit was first raised in 1994 when the Report of the Review into the Australian Customs Service made recommendations relating to the future management of the Customs seagoing fleet.

The Government directed that a review of Customs marine functions be conducted by an interdepartmental committee, convened by Customs. (The convenor, Brian Hurrell, later took over management responsibility for maritime operations as National Manager Enforcement Operations.)

To ensure full and effective utilisation of the seagoing fleet, the committee recommended, inter alia, that management of the fleet be centred in Canberra. The Minister for Small Business, Customs and Construction approved these recommendations on 17 February 1995.

A meeting of regional and central office marine managers was convened in Canberra where it was agreed that new operating arrangements would take effect from July 1995. Thereafter, seagoing vessels were funded and allocated tasks by a central coordinating body, known as the National Marine Unit.

## The start

In December 1995, the Unit's Central Office structure was established with the creation of eight positions split into two functional areas: Marine Operations and Marine Resources.

Marine Operations was responsible for client liaison (ie, other agencies such as Immigration, Quarantine and Fisheries), tasking and deployment of the seagoing fleet. Marine Resources was responsible for crew training,

competency assessment and acquisition and maintenance of the seagoing fleet.

Regional Marine Officers from across Australia were invited in December 1995 to briefings on the new structure of maritime operations. All officers were offered positions in the new unit.

In January 1996, Regional Officers who elected to join the Unit's seagoing fleet became outposted Central Office staff under new conditions of service specific to their functions, negotiated by Customs with crew and the staff association.

At this time, the Customs seagoing fleet comprised four 20m Minister-class vessels - *Charles Kingston*, *Andrew Fisher*, *Sir Austin Chapman* and *Sir William Lyne* - plus the 22m *Delphinus* (formerly a Victorian Fisheries patrol vessel).

Responsibility for maintaining these vessels fell to the Marine Resources Manager, John Simmons, Customs principal adviser on all marine technical matters. He had played a major role in the design of the Minister-class vessels.

To assist the Marine Resources Section in developing standard operating procedures and technical policy, the Unit cycled a number of commanding officers through Central Office.

## First expansion

In August 1996, Customs acquired patrol vessel *Wauri* from the Australian Fisheries Management Authority. *Wauri* was based at Thursday Island and conducted most of her patrols in the Torres Strait in support of Australian Fisheries Management Authority tasks.

John Simmons retired in 1997 after 22 years of service. Greg Hellesey joined the Unit in November 1997 as Director Engineering.

While initially responsible for the overseeing and conduct of preventive and breakdown maintenance of the Minister-class fleet, Greg Hellesey's section would, in time, expand to incorporate responsibility for the development of technical policy and standards, contract management, infrastructure development and support, particularly in regard to the replacement fleet.

## Drug taskings

Throughout 1998-99, Customs was involved in joint-agency drug operations on the East Coast with Minister-class



ACV *Botany Bay* boarding foreign fishing vessels in northern Australia.

vessels playing major roles. Despite considerable operational shortcomings (mainly because these vessels were built for offshore work in limited circumstances), seagoing crew got the best from these hulls and achieved successes.

Of particular note were the efforts of seagoing crew in *Delphinus* and *Sir William Lyne* when apprehending a mothership, MV *Uniana*, off Grants Beach, near Port Macquarie, in October 1998. The *Uniana* had been fitted with a fast speedboat hidden from aerial view. The speedboat was launched in the early hours from 24 nautical miles offshore. When it finally reached the beach in rough sea conditions, it was met by police who seized 400kg of heroin.

While awaiting the return of the speedboat, *Uniana* strayed into Australian territorial waters. The commanding officer on *Sir William Lyne* instructed the master of the *Uniana* to stop. Boarded and secured by a police tactical response team, *Uniana* was escorted to Sydney by both Customs vessels.

Two months later, *Wauri* and *Sir William Lyne* were tasked to engage in another drug operation. This time a foreign yacht was reportedly heading to Coffs Harbour with drugs concealed on board. The *Maeve Chique* was seized when a search in port found 225kg of cocaine concealed in her tender.

## Anti-people smuggling

A trend developing in the late 1990s was the use of steel-hulled vessels to smuggle people to Australia's east coast.

Once again Customs vessels filled an important interdiction role. In May 1999, *Delphinus* assisted in the escort of *Kayuen* after it was intercepted off Wollongong with suspected unlawful non-citizens (SUNCS) on board.

Then, on 4 June 1999, *Ji Chong Lee*, after being detected by authorities transporting a large number of SUNCS, was intercepted by *Delphinus* off Broken Bay, NSW.

## International cooperation

In November 1997, the Government announced a National Illicit Drug Strategy, which included measures aimed at improving Australia's law-enforcement capacity in the Torres Strait. This included instituting joint border patrols with Papua New Guinea.

The first 10-day patrol was conducted in 1998. *Wauri* transported representatives from Customs, the Australian Federal Police, the Queensland Police, the PNG Internal Revenue Service and the Royal PNG Constabulary to coastal villages in PNG's Western Province Region and to island communities on the Australian side of the border in the Torres Strait.

In May 2000, *Wauri* was redeployed from the Torres Strait to Ashmore Islands to protect the environmental integrity of the Marine Nature Reserve from illegal fishing activity. *Delphinus* then replaced *Wauri* as the primary response platform in North Queensland.

While operating at Ashmore Islands, *Wauri's* crew played a significant role in border protection by responding to unauthorised boat arrivals.

Between July 2000 and December 2001 about 36 suspect illegal entry vessels were boarded near Ashmore Islands.

In August 2005, Singapore hosted a proliferation security initiative exercise known as Exercise Deep Sabre. It involved maritime law-enforcement agencies from various countries including the Singapore Navy, the Royal Navy, the US Navy, the US Coast Guard, the New Zealand Air Force and the Japanese Coastguard.

Customs participation in this exercise included a return passage from Darwin to Singapore, via Benoa, of more than 4000 nautical miles.

## The upgrade

During the 1990s, it became increasingly evident that the now ageing fleet of Minister-class vessels was not going to be able to cope with the expanding roles of Customs in support of facilitation of trade, movement of people and compliance with Australian laws in our offshore areas of jurisdictional responsibility.

The fleet needed to conduct complex maritime operations out to, and sometimes beyond, the 200-nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around Australia's 36,000km of mainland coastline and some offshore territories.

In early 1997, funding for such a replacement fleet was approved and went out to tender in September. Tenders closed in November.

In 1999 the arrival of the first of the new fleet of Customs vessels was heralded. ACV *Roebuck Bay* was the first of the new fleet of eight Bay-class vessels accepted into service. Later that year, ACV *Botany Bay* and ACV *Holdfast Bay* were commissioned.

In mid-1999, Customs created a new position with responsibility for the overall effective administration and operation of the National Marine Unit. Keith Johnson, a former Royal Australian Navy captain, joined Customs as Marine Superintendent.

Two further Bay-class ACVs were commissioned in March 2000 - *Hervey Bay* and *Corio Bay*.

Crew strength increased, as did Central Office numbers, organised into three sections: Operations, Engineering and the Marine Standards Section.

While Australia was winning Olympic gold in Sydney, MV *Samson Explorer* entered service with Customs on a two-year contract to transport suspected unlawful non-citizens from a point of interception - usually Ashmore Islands - to the Australian mainland.

Shortly after entering service, responsibility for managing all aspects of *Samson Explorer's* tenure with Customs, including the provision of onboard security officers, was passed to the Marine Unit.

ACV *Storm Bay* was commissioned in November 2000 and ACV *Dame Roma Mitchell* in December 2000.

In a first, *Storm Bay* made passage to New Zealand in February 2001. During its four-week deployment, *Storm*

*Bay* circumnavigated both islands of New Zealand. And, despite experiencing uncomfortable sea conditions, completed a number of wildlife conservation and fisheries tasks in support of New Zealand's law-enforcement agencies.

Although entering service in September 2000, the last Bay-class vessel, *Arnhem Bay*, was not commissioned until March 2001. It marked the end of a 37-month project from inception of the Bay-class fleet to the last hull formally entering service.

Around this time, marine engineering staff were being kept busy coordinating the construction of a dedicated and purpose-built wharf at Neutral Bay, Sydney, as well as negotiating berthing agreements at Cairns and Melbourne.

Now the Unit needed sufficient crew to operate each of the eight vessels for about 150 sea days a year or 1200 sea days a year for the entire fleet - not full capacity, but requirement at that time.

The Unit's seagoing strength reached a level of 90 by mid-2001.

The ACV replacement project informed the Navy's Armidale-class patrol boat project. Unit officers helped the Navy avoid some significant potential pitfalls with the implementation of its project.

MV *Tampa*, with people rescued from the sea onboard, arrived off Christmas Island in August 2001.

Although ACVs were not involved in the *Tampa* incident, it did have a significant flow-on effect for the Unit. Soon after, Customs received additional budget funding and additional seagoing crew were recruited.

The growth responsibilities associated with managing this many crew warranted the establishment of a fourth section. The Marine Crew Operations Section was established in March 2002.

The increased capability at sea resulting from the arming of the fleet meant yet another increase in seagoing crew numbers. The most recent intake of Unit recruits began their training at Canberra in early 2006.

## Use-of-force

In 1999, after a review of risks associated with conducting constabulary operations far offshore, Customs introduced use-of-force training for all seagoing crew.

The first contingent began a six-week course with the AFP

in Canberra in January 2000. All seagoing officers would now carry firearms and associated accoutrements for personal protection and for the protection of others facing an immediate threat of violence.

With a need to use force becoming more commonplace when attempting to board vessels at sea, in mid-2005 the Government approved additional expenditure to enable Customs to fit deck-mounted weapons on its Bay-class fleet.

The 7.62mm FN Herstal MAG 58 general support machine-gun was settled on. *Corio Bay* was the first to be fitted in July 2005, the remaining vessels fitted by December. During this period, all seagoing crew were trained in the operation of this weapon system.

## Professionalism and bravery

The Unit's history is steeped in examples of officers demonstrating professionalism, commitment and bravery. Nothing illustrates this more notably than the efforts of nine crew onboard *Arnhem Bay* during a safety of life at sea incident, involving a vessel in distress near Ashmore Islands.

Late in the afternoon on 8 November 2001, *Arnhem Bay* assisted in the recovery of more than 160 people from a blazing Indonesian fishing vessel. Crew from the ACV, using the vessel's tenders, recovered most of the people from the sea.

This rescue included taking a 10-day old baby directly from the burning vessel and one seagoing crewmember leaving the safety of his own tender to rescue a small child from the sea. These were among a number of selfless acts performed by Customs officers in extreme circumstances.

*Arnhem Bay's* crew members demonstrated the highest degree of tenacity, compassion, seamanship and devotion to the task at hand. Courage and professionalism earned them a commendation from the Deputy Chief Executive Officer in 2002. The following year crew efforts were further acknowledged when they were presented with the Chief Executive Officer's award.

## Southern Oceans spinoff

In March 2003, at the direction of the Government, the Unit trained and deployed an armed boarding party as part of the first Customs-led armed Southern Ocean patrol on MV *Aurora Australis*.

This operation was the precursor to the establishment of the Southern Oceans Marine Patrol and Response Unit, which now operates patrol vessel *Oceanic Viking*.

## The record

In just over 10 years, the Unit has conducted strategic and tactical maritime response tasks for 27 Commonwealth and State government client agencies. In the process ACVs have:

- boarded over 2040 foreign fishing vessels
- conducted more than 330 legislative forfeitures where gear and catch have been removed and forfeited under fisheries legislation
- apprehended some 400 vessels detected operating illegally inside the AEEZ
- detained about 57 suspect illegal entrant vessels
- played major roles in several multi-agency drug operations
- boarded and/or identified over 1751 other vessels, including merchant vessels, yachts and recreational smallcraft of interest to Australian law-enforcement agencies
- transported and accommodated over 1000 passengers on overnight voyages
- hosted in excess of 10,000 visitors during vessel open days, promoting Customs community participation program, Hotline.

## The future

With such a huge coastline and vast Exclusive Economic Zone, Australia faces an increasingly daunting challenge in protecting and policing our borders and undersea resources.

Customs, as an agency responsible for managing the security and integrity of Australia's borders, will continue to require a seagoing fleet capable of undertaking law-enforcement responsibilities in a maritime environment.

Customs is now planning the capabilities for a replacement fleet to meet the challenges of the future - the ever-changing demands needed to protect and police our borders and undersea resources as well as emergent sovereignty and border protection threats.



ACV *Arnhem Bay* intercepting foreign fishing vessel north of Wessel Islands.



Customs detector dog handler Helen and her charge Levi get down and dirty on the K9 biathlon course.

## Our detector dogs shine at 2006 national K9 biathlon

Customs detector dog teams have taken on their competitors in the canine world and shown themselves to be among the fittest in Australia.

Australia's law-enforcement agencies gathered to watch 39 dog teams compete in the 2006 national K9 seminar and biathlon at the John Moroney Correctional Facility at Windsor, north west of Sydney.

The event brings together 10 Australian organisations from the border security, corrective, emergency, military and police services. State and Federal Government organisations attend.

The event also provides a valuable opportunity for officers working in Australia's detector dog units to network and share practices and techniques.

Held over a 2.9km course, the biathlon involves eight obstacles that challenge the dog and handler to negotiate barrels and water hazards, leopard crawl through mud and wade together through water.

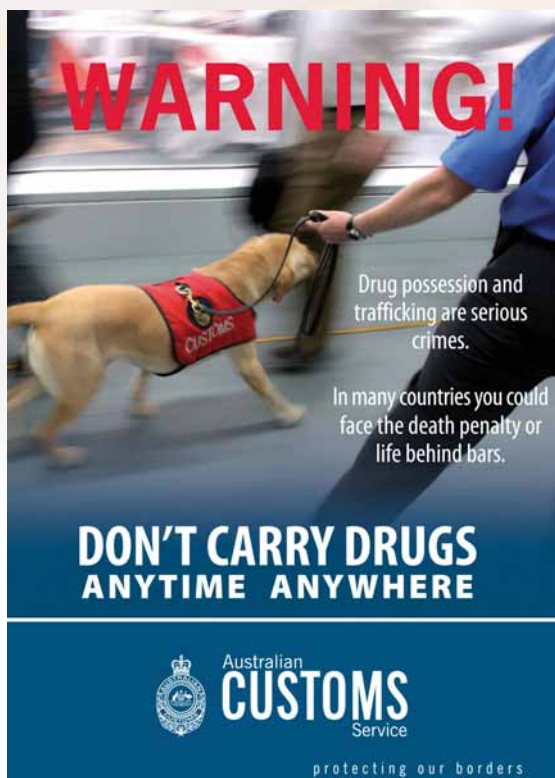
Sydney dog handler Helen Dennis said, "The dog can only go as fast as the handler. The handler has to be in control of the dog 100 per cent of the time."

Three Customs dog teams from Sydney competed.

Taking on the top dog of the canine world - the German shepherd - is no walk in the park but the Customs labradors put in an outstanding effort.

The event may only temporarily sort out who's who in the dog kingdom but it definitely proves the Customs detector dog teams contain some of Australia's fittest officers.

# Don't carry drugs anytime, anywhere!



The Minister for Justice and Customs, Senator Chris Ellison, has launched this poster a stark warning to travellers of the consequences of trying to take illegal drugs overseas.

Copies of the poster are being put up at every international airport around Australia

“I want these posters to be seen by everyone as they leave the country, to signal to anyone carrying drugs - or even contemplating the idea - that if they are caught overseas, at best they face many years in prison, at worst they face execution,” Senator Ellison said.

The Minister pointed to several high-profile foreign drug cases in recent years involving Australians in which death sentences had been handed down.

“Some cases have received a great deal of publicity, but still there are many other Australians languishing in foreign prisons on drug charges in our region and beyond,” he said.

“It is important that these strategically placed warnings reinforce the message to all Australians of the stupidity in carrying illicit drugs and also of the dire consequences if they do.”

Senator Ellison said that, while this campaign was targeted at people travelling overseas, it was just a part of the Government's *Tough on Drugs* strategy of fighting illicit drugs on three fronts: education, rehabilitation and law enforcement.

# Customs in the media

## Smuggling syndicate dismantled

A joint investigation by Customs, the Australian Federal Police and the Indonesian National Police has dismantled possibly the largest pseudoephedrine smuggling syndicate to target Australia.

The syndicate allegedly imported more than 380kg of pseudoephedrine in at least six importations.

It is estimated the imports could have been made into more than 250kg of methamphetamine. In its purest form, the methamphetamine which may have been produced has an approximate street value of \$71 million.

The latest development in the operation was the detention by the Indonesian National Police of two Indonesians, one of whom is a resident of Australia.

The initial breakthrough in the investigation came when Customs uncovered \$22 million worth of pseudoephedrine tablets inside a shipping container at Port Botany in Sydney after the vessel had arrived from Jakarta.

Customs and the AFP formed a joint investigation which monitored the delivery of the container. Consequently four people were charged and about two million pseudoephedrine tablets were seized.

The AFP passed intelligence to the INP about the possibility of a syndicate smuggling pseudoephedrine in Indonesia. The information included details about two Indonesian men suspected of being principal members of the syndicate.

The Indonesians monitored the activities of the two men and detained them in relation to allegations concerning the exportation of pseudoephedrine in Indonesia.

Customs National Manager Investigations Richard Janeczko said: "International cooperation with Indonesia and partnerships within Australian law-enforcement



Customs officers with some of the 2m tablets containing pseudoephedrine.

agencies are critical in making Australia and the region a safer and better place in which to live".

One of the four persons charged in Sydney appeared in court and was granted bail. All four people charged in Sydney are expected to next appear in Sydney Central Local Court.



Some of the eggs wrapped in pantyhose.

## Improved facilities at Willie Creek

Improvements to a facility for processing illegal foreign fishers at Willie Creek near Broome was announced by Justice and Customs Minister Senator Chris Ellison. The upgrade cost \$1 million. It is the first of several that will enable Customs to accommodate foreign fishers while they undergo preliminary interviews and health checks. Other Customs processing facilities at Gove and Weipa are due for completion by the end of 2006.

## Budgie smuggler penalised

A 56-year-old man from Sydney's outer western suburbs received a \$25,000 penalty in Sydney's Downing Centre District Court for attempting to smuggle Australian native bird eggs to Thailand.

A company director of Box Hill pleaded guilty to contravening the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*.

He was stopped by Customs officers at Sydney International Airport as he was about to board a flight to Bangkok. Two rose-breasted galah eggs and two gang gang cockatoo eggs, wrapped in pantyhose, were found in his underwear.

The birds were believed to have been destined for the illegal black market in Asia.

Galahs and gang gangs are listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The maximum penalty for illegally exporting CITES-listed specimens is 10 year's imprisonment and/or a fine of \$110,000.

Customs Regional Director NSW Gail Batman said Australia's diverse wildlife was highly prized by collectors overseas.

"It is a cruel and despicable trade made worse by the influence of those involved in the illegal black market," she said.

"The law provides substantial penalties to deter people from becoming involved in this criminal activity."

Customs  
in the  
media



# X-ray training gives PNG a clear vision

**In response to a request by the Internal Revenue Commission of PNG, Australian Customs has provided x-ray training to PNG customs and quarantine officers at Port Moresby's Jackson's International Airport. Through its Enhanced Cooperation Program, the Australian Government also donated x-ray equipment to PNG Customs. Considered one of Australian Customs experts in the x-ray field, national x-ray training coordinator Ramon Quizon was asked to coordinate the training package and make the trip to PNG. Following is his report on time with PNG Customs officers:**

Armed with just a little knowledge of the country and its people, I looked at this rare opportunity to train the Customs staff of our nearest neighbour as an adventure. Port Moresby, the capital of PNG, is about the same size as Canberra but the two capitals are worlds apart culturally and geographically.

The Internal Revenue Commission's Deputy Commissioner for PNG Customs John Kerlin who had been seconded from the Australian Customs Service for a few years, had been briefing me about the security and what to expect, even before I landed in the country.

I was told to expect the unexpected in PNG and was pleasantly surprised that the passport officer who

processed me on the primary line at Jackson's International Airport recognised my name and said that she would be one of the first batch of trainees!

On the first day of the training period, the Commissioner for PNG Customs Paul Iramu opened the course at the IRC building.

The x-ray training was a two-day course split into theory knowledge on the first day and practical skills on the second day.

The first day covered basic radiation safety, occupational health and safety, image interpretation, clue identification, methods of concealment and familiarisation with the Smiths-Heimann cabinet x-ray system.

On the second day, trainees were provided with practical skills in x-ray operation and image interpretation using simulated bags, unaccompanied/mishandled bags and online passenger bags from flight arrivals.

A total of 26 officers were trained, of which four were officers from the National Agricultural Quarantine and Inspection Authority (NAQIA) and 22 were from the Internal Revenue Commission (Tax and Customs operations).

While the training focused on the detection of revenue and quarantine goods, which are the main items of interest to PNG Customs Passenger Processing, x-ray images of other prohibited and restricted items (such as narcotics, wildlife, cash and firearms) were also analysed. These images elicited the most interest.

During the practical sessions with the x-ray equipment at the airport, trainees were able to detect undeclared revenue and quarantine goods as well as a prohibited imports from passenger bags and unaccompanied bags.

The PNG Customs Passenger Processing Airport Manager, Naime Aeava, was very pleased to know that the trainees had already detected narcotic paraphernalia using the x-ray equipment, which was also a first for PNG Customs.

Considering that many of the officers had not seen any x-ray images prior to this training, it is expected that they might take some time to familiarise themselves to see assorted items in a different light.

An assessment program to monitor the image interpretation skills of the staff has been forwarded to the PNG Senior Training Officer Customs Technical, Anna Fairi. I also recommended that x-ray operators should be allowed ample time to build up their image interpretation skills before they get assessed.

Feedback from the staff has been very positive. They appreciated the x-ray images of hits from Australia and the tips that were provided when identifying prohibited and restricted goods.

Despite having very few inbound flights on which to practise, the officers said that the practical sessions were adequate. They were very eager to x-ray as many bags as they could. It is good to have such enthusiastic trainees.



Opposite: Ramon Quizon (left) showing how to interpret x-ray images to PNG Customs and Quarantine officers.

Above: PNG Senior Training Officer Customs Technical Anna Fairi with a class of Customs and Quarantine officers and Ramon Quizon.

# Customs and PSI



'Passengers' are escorted safely from the suspect' plane (New Zealand Air Force 757).

## **Proliferation Security Initiative countries included:**

Argentina, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Philippines, Poland, Singapore, Russia, The Netherlands, Turkey, USA, Britain.

## **Observer countries:**

Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Laos, Malaysia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, Qatar, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Arab Emirates

## **Participating Customs Enforcement Operations officers from the Northern Territory played host to Pacific Protector 06, part of a major Proliferation Security Initiative exercise. Roger Batch reports:**

The Proliferation Security Initiative is an informal arrangement designed to disrupt the trafficking of weapons of mass destruction and related materials. The Initiative specifically responds to the urgent need to capture WMD-related transfers between countries or countries not of proliferation concern. Such transfers breach international non-proliferation norms. Since its launch in May 2003, the Initiative has rapidly built up its operational strength and momentum and has the support of more than 70 countries.

The *Statement of Interdiction Principles*, finalised in Paris in September 2003, sets out the core objectives and methods of the Initiative and commits participants to work together, as necessary, and consistent with each nation's domestic law, as well as relevant international law, to act to prevent the illicit trade in WMD and WMD-related material.

Exercise Pacific Protector 06 certainly achieved these objectives. The one-day exercise, which took place at Darwin RAAF base in April, was the culmination of three days of activities which included a tabletop discussion and a series of presentations from member countries and key Australian agencies.

The tabletop discussion was attended by Initiative-partner country delegates. The discussion provided an ideal forum for delegates to discuss some of the key legal and procedural issues surrounding the sort of actions that would be required to prevent the spread of WMD or WMD-related material.

In recent times, Australian Customs has been involved in two key regional exercises. Both were maritime-based and took place in Japan in 2004 (Exercise Team Samurai 04) and Singapore (Exercise Deep Sabre 05). The key difference this time around was that Pacific Protector 06 involved an air interdiction.

The nature of air transport means that reaction time for air situations is far shorter than for maritime scenarios.

Interdicting planes is also far more problematic than for ships. There is a requirement to land the aircraft to complete any search and seizure activities.

## Scenario

The scenario for Pacific Protector 06 involved a known front company in the fictitious state of Kamaria acquiring sensitive WMD items from various sources in Europe. Intelligence suggested that the front company was part of an illicit proliferation network and intended to re-export goods from Kamaria to a WMD program in a country of proliferation concern. The network was thought to be exploiting Kamaria as a transshipment point due to a lack of effective export controls at Kamarian ports. The method of exportation was to be by air.

The aircraft involved was identified and, using diplomatic channels, agreement was secured from the aircraft's home country for it to be diverted from its flight route to Darwin Air Base. Two RAAF FA/18s were dispatched to escort the aircraft to ground. Once on the ground, Customs took over the operation, led and coordinated the search and removal of the suspect material with the assistance of a number of Australian and international agencies.

## Sequence of events

The exercise was carried out in bright and sunny conditions at the fighter replenishment apron at the RAAF base in Darwin. Observers from more than 17 Initiative member countries and 15 outreach countries were witness to the day's events.

The exercise started in spectacular fashion with an ear-splitting flyover by three FA/18 aircraft. Two of these aircraft formed the escort for the suspect aircraft (which was actually a New Zealand Air Force 757) while the third photographed the mid-air interception.

After the FA/18 landed, the 757 cruised down the runway and within a few minutes was on blocks in front of the apron. A cordon was quickly put around the aircraft. Customs was called into action and a combined Australian Customs/Japan Customs-Police/Quarantine team entered the aircraft cabin to conduct initial screening of passengers.

While the cabin was being secured and the passengers screened, two further teams of Australian Customs and Japanese officers secured the starboard cargo holds. These were then opened and made ready for initial screening by these teams. As the passengers disembarked, they were screened with radiological

detection equipment, escorted to a bus and removed from the area. A thumbs-up from the cabin clearance group commander indicated that all was clear and that there was no radiological source detectable in the cabin area.

Action in the cargo hold resulted in the detection of two sources which were deemed to be above our safe operating limits. The groups immediately withdrew and joined the cordon around the aircraft.

At this point, members of the Australian Army Incident Response Regiment and the Singapore Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Explosive Task Force landed in a C-130 Hercules and disembarked in front of the observers. The Army's tank-tracked robot was deployed to the front of the apron as both groups unloaded the rest of their kit and made preparations to assist.



Customs officer Phil Watt, Manager, Enforcement Operations Coordination, discusses the progress of Exercise Pacific Protector 06 with Captain Tong Yi Chuen and 3rd Sergeant Teo Pho Ping Maximilian of the Singapore Army.

Manager Enforcement Operations in the Northern Territory Brennan Fraser-Bell was the operation commander for the ground phase of the exercise and, at this point, he tasked the Army and the Singapore force to find and render safe the material located by the Australian Customs/Japan groups.

Both groups then deployed to the cargo holds fully kitted in their radiological suits and found and removed the sources from each of the cargo holds. These were then brought to the front of the apron where a safety cordon was established. A robot removed the sources and placed them in a shielded container, allowing access for further analysis.

This stage of the operation was carried out by a US Customs Border Protection Unit and the Australian Radiological Protection and Nuclear Safety Authority. Finally, a Royal Air Force team completed the final sweep of the cargo hold.



An officer of Singapore's Defence Force Chemical Biological Radiological and Explosive Unit carefully removes the 'suspect' material from the plane.

National Manager Enforcement Operations Brian Hurrell, in conjunction with a number of Defence Force personnel, provided a running commentary of the day's events, ensuring that our overseas visitors, could easily follow the activities.

A number of displays rounded out a very full morning. The Customs Detector Dog Unit and mobile x-ray capabilities were on show and were enthusiastically received by all observers.

## The wash-up

An after-exercise debrief was held on the air base. As well as providing a chance for observers to ask questions about legislative and procedural issues faced during the exercise, it allowed Customs and other agencies to explain what occurred during the cargo search.

In Customs case, this meant explaining what would have happened with the processing of the passengers on board the aircraft. To do this, a video showing the search of a passenger's bags was produced. For this scenario, the video highlighted some of the key indicators which would lead to further examination. In this case, Customs identified a passenger of concern. The video clearly shows the passenger carrying material of concern, mainly in the form of intellectual property. She was referred to the Australian Federal Police for further investigation.

## Customs commitment

Customs resource commitment to this exercise was significant. At a senior level, Customs was represented by DCEO John Jeffery, Head of Customs Legal Unit Kirstin Whitehouse, National Manager Enforcement Operations Brian Hurrell and Regional Director NT Andrew Hudson. The exercise planning team comprised three officers from Central Office: Roger Batch, Dan Bland and Julie Turner. The exercise required nearly 20 personnel from Darwin office, three from Victoria, including its forward command post and search truck as well as a range of support staff who fulfilled important roles such as hosting members from outreach countries. Having that many staff 'out of action' meant that the rest of the NT team had to cover extra workloads, so the entire region contributed in a very positive way to the successful outcome of this exercise.

## Impressions

From a planning perspective, it is difficult to convey how much work is involved in an exercise such as this. The interaction between agencies that was part and parcel of the process was extremely positive and each agency now has a greater understanding of the difficulties others face.

A significant benefit from an operational readiness perspective came out of the transport move by RAAF C-130 Hercules of the Victorian Region's search truck and forward command post. This was a first for both Defence and Customs and, hopefully, will pave the way for future movements when required at short notice.

It is often the case that you feel a sense of deflation after a big event, particularly one that has been some months in the planning. This time, however, this feeling was offset by the upbeat, enthusiastic and professional approach displayed by the local Customs staff involved.

Perhaps the single most impressive act of the day occurred at the after-exercise function where one of our local officers assured our Japanese colleagues that he could whistle up a crocodile. After getting himself in position on the beach and commencing 'the call', a sizable goanna crept out of the bushes behind him. Needless to say, this man is now a legend among our international guests.

If you need something done and you want it done well, you could do a lot worse than getting it done in Darwin.

# Retired US Customs chief strengthened ties with Australia

United States Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) first Commissioner, Robert C Bonner, who retired in September 2005, is credited with implementing wide security and counter-terrorism programs after 9/11. The key ones were the Container Security Initiative (CSI), the 24-hour rule and the Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT).

CSI is based on bilateral agreements for the placement of US officers at ports to target high-risk containers. Australia is not part of this CSI program.

C-TPAT is a partnership with the trade community, where the trade agrees to meet security criteria in return for benefits and facilitation. There are more than 9000 C-TPAT members, most of them US importers.

The 24-hour rule requires sea carriers to report cargo 24 hours before lading in the foreign port. This allows risk assessment before cargo is put on board.

In April 2003, Commissioner Bonner visited Australia for Customs-to-Customs bilateral discussions.

The two organisations agreed to:

- a reciprocal arrangement to examine high-risk export cargo at the request of either country
- further discuss opportunities to advance container and supply chain security
- share information on targeting and methodology approaches
- collaborate on new or emerging technologies to develop working models
- an in-depth exchange of information on the modernisation of cargo systems.

In June 2005, the World Customs Organization (WCO) agreed to the Framework of Standards for International Trade Security and Facilitation (FoS), based on two pillars:

Pillar One is Customs-to-Customs arrangements. Pillar Two is Customs-to-business partnership programs.

US programs are largely reflected in the WCO standards framework. In particular, C-TPAT was a key model for Pillar

Two and the 24-hour rule is reflected in Pillar One where Customs administrations are recommended to introduce advanced cargo reporting.

In September 2005, Australian Senior Customs Representative in Washington Teresa Conolan accompanied a team from US CBP to Australia. The aim was to agree protocols for an arrangement to x-ray or examine high-risk export cargo at the request of either country. This is in line with the WCO standards framework and will not involve any US CBP officers being posted to Australia.

Australian Customs views this as an opportunity to test and demonstrate the principles of Pillar One which includes Customs-to-Customs exchange of data and x-ray images, and export examinations on request.

Australian Customs is in the early stages of developing a Customs-to-business partnership in line with Pillar Two. The program will be similar to C-TPAT but not require foreign validations by Customs or Australian industry. A key element of Pillar Two is mutual recognition of Customs partnership programs world-wide.



A farewell reception for Commissioner Bonner was held at the Australian Embassy in Washington. (From left) Assistant Commissioner of US CBP International Affairs E. Keith Thomson, the Hon Jennifer Dunn, Mrs Betty Richardson, Commissioner Bonner, Mrs Kimmi Bonner, Australian Ambassador Dennis Richardson, Australian senior Customs representative Teresa Conolan and Australian Customs representative Dean Hogarth.



Customs officer Barry at the helm in challenging conditions.

Photo: Zen team member Brooke Payton

By Merran Teale, Sydney

Usually surrounded by aircraft and passengers, Sydney International Airport officer Barry Ryan also knows about the high seas. A veteran yacht racer and nine-time Sydney-to-Hobart crew member, Barry prepares each year to take on Bass Strait while others relax at home and watch the action on TV.

As one of the crew of Sydney 38 class yacht *Zen*, Barry knows the familiar sight of Sydney Heads as the first landmark on the ocean trek towards Tasmania. The only landmark that really matters to him, though, is Constitution Dock in Hobart.

Designed as an offshore one-design class yacht, *Zen* carries a crew of 10 and races in all major offshore events in Australia and overseas. It is governed by class rules, which are strict - from sailcloth material weight and strength to the type of sailor on board.

The vessel is 38 feet long and about seven wide. She weighs 5.5 tonnes and is weighted by the manufacturer to insure no one tampers with her.

"If conditions are right, we have a top speed of around 20 knots and average the Sydney to Hobart course at around seven knots," Barry said.

The yacht entered the last Sydney-to-Hobart in the Sydney 38 division, which Barry says is "the hottest division" in the race. There were 14 other yachts in the division.

To prepare for the event, the boat was rebuilt from the mast to the rudder and all sails were either repaired or replaced. Barry said the logistics involved in the Sydney-to-Hobart event are enormous.

"The regulations we need to follow and the seamanship required to make the journey makes it difficult because a simple item that breaks at sea could put the boat or crew in trouble," he said.

"It takes about three months of work on the boat and to train the crew to follow simple tasks in trying conditions." *Zen* operates with an inshore crew and an offshore crew with only four people who do both and a crew support network of around 25 people.

In last year's event, Barry was the most experienced crewmember with a Cat 2 rating, the second highest possible. He was one of two sailing masters to lead their team on respective watches.

For the crew of *Zen*, the lovely little seaside town of Eden is no heavenly sight. It was here they retired to in the 2004 event after turning back halfway across Bass Strait.

"We were getting sleet on us in the middle of Bass Strait and a lot of the crew succumbed to the cold," he said. Two women and Barry were the only ones not down with seasickness or hypothermia.

"The worst thing is for the boat to be retired," he said. "The crew heads are down and no one is keen to talk.

"Most of the crew were suffering from the cold, so as soon as we could cook, we did. We gave everyone hot food and drink.

"I jumped on another boat and went to the pub and bought a bottle of rum back with me. Drinks were had and pledges were made to do this race again." But only five of the 2004 crew signed up for the 2005 event.

“In 2005, we set a target to finish and not break the boat,” he said. “Another sailing master and I drove hard when we could.”

Barry said team *Zen*’s strategy was to stick on the current as the breeze was strongest on the verge of two currents - the Great Southern current that comes from Cairns and the Southern Ocean current that comes from the Antarctic. When these two currents meet, storm cells develop. “That strategy worked for a while because there was no gradient breeze offshore, but because the front was coming from the west, we had to be west of the rhumb line for us to do well,” Barry said.

The two boats that followed this strategy placed first and second.

“The winners were smart and tough and proved it on one of the toughest bits of water in the world,” he said.

“In the tricky light to moderate winds off the NSW coast, we were running second to third most of the way and overtook *Lexus* (a professional outfit with a race journalist on board).

“This was good as it put some pressure on the front runners who later told me that they were a bit unsure of sailing their own race and changed their tactics after that,” Barry said.

As the conditions got worse there was a need to preserve the boat. The call came to back off. At that stage, the top speed was around 18 knots.

“We were going for it,” Barry said.

With waves over five metres, the crew felt every one and found it hard to keep the boat upright at times.

“It is cold and it’s hard,” Barry said.



Team Zen.

# Fintrax on track with Customs



From left, Fintrax Operations Manager Scott Lingard, Customs Manager Tourist Refund Scheme Meera Mathai, National Manager Customs Passengers Branch Jan Dorrington and Fintrax Asia Pacific Managing Director Declan Barry.

A small Australian subsidiary of Irish company Fintrax Payment Services Pty Ltd has reaffirmed its partnership with Customs and the travelling public.

Fintrax Asia Pacific has won, through open tender, another two years as a payment service provider for the Tourist Refund Scheme run by Customs on behalf of the Australian Taxation Office.

The Tourist Refund Scheme allows Australian and overseas visitors a refund of the goods and services tax (GST) and wine equalisation tax (WET) on goods bought in Australia and taken overseas.

More than 100 officers at airports Australia-wide refund GST and WET to eligible travellers.

According to recent statistics, the scheme has returned over \$50 million to travellers. That equates to more than \$567 million in retail sales across Australia.

Customs is responsible for export verification and the payment provider is responsible for ensuring travellers receive their refunds through a number of nominated options, including to credit card and charge card accounts, bank accounts and cheques (in ten currencies).

Fintrax won the original tender in 2000.



# Going through its paces

A new class of Customs vessel takes to the water  
Port Phillip Bay, Victoria.

A new class of Customs tactical response vessel has been put through its paces in Victoria before formal handover to Customs.

The vessel, the first of four being manufactured for Customs, is permanently based in Victoria.

It boasts modern navigation, communication and radar systems and features auto pilot and the ability to track vessels. It has a top speed of over 40 knots fully loaded. With a crew of two it can transport a six-person boarding party to vessels requiring boarding in the bay.

The vessel is berthed at Williamstown and can be towed on a trailer to conduct operational activity along the coast. It is operated by the Enforcement Operations (Response) Group.

The three other tactical response vessels will be deployed in Dampier, Fremantle and Sydney to improve Customs ability to patrol international ports and their approaches.

# Ocean liners of yesteryear



The liner *Oriana* being escorted into Sydney Harbour.

## **Peter Chinn takes a nostalgic look at the ocean liners that once sailed into Sydney:**

My service in the old Customs Landing Branch during 1959-64 was at the tail end of the heyday of the great passenger ship era.

Sydney would often see four or five arrivals a day, from the big P&O liners to smaller vessels from New Guinea (now Papua New Guinea) and the Pacific islands.

By the end of the 1960s, with the growth in international air travel, the shipping companies began withdrawing their vessels from service. 1955-56 was the last year that overseas passenger arrivals by sea exceeded air arrivals at Sydney: 83,087 to 56,366.

Until the late 1960s, the British merchant navy was the largest in the world and most of the ships in Sydney were flying the Red Ensign. Britain's admission to the European Union has seen the reorientation of our trading links to the Asia Pacific region and we are now more familiar with the flag carriers of China, Japan, Korea and Singapore.

In the age of the passenger liner, two great shipping companies dominated for over 100 years: P&O (Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company) and Orient Line (Orient Steam Navigation Company Ltd).

Before they amalgamated operations in 1960 as P&O-Orient Line (later, simply P&O), their vessels were quite different. P&O ships had white hulls with yellow funnels. Their crews were mostly Indian-Goanese stewards and

Lascar seamen with British officers. Orient liners had corn-coloured hulls with yellow funnels and all-British crews.

In the late 1950s, P&O's fleet comprised the pre-war *Strathaird*, *Stratheden*, *Strathmore* and *Strathnaver* (which all had gone by 1963) and the much larger ships of the post-war period, the *Himalaya*, *Arcadia* and *Iberia*. The *Canberra* made her maiden voyage in 1961.

At the same time, the Orient Line had the old *Orontes* and the *Orion* from before the war and the post-war *Orcades*, *Oronsay* and *Orsova*. Matching the *Canberra* was the company's super-liner *Oriana*.

I recall the arrival of the *Oriana* on her maiden voyage on 30 December 1960. It was a double event as she was the first vessel to berth at the new overseas terminal at Circular Quay.

While the *Canberra* and *Oriana* carried over 2000 passengers in two classes (plus 900 crew) the others accommodated about 1200 with 700 crew. In later years, these became one-class ships. The bulk of passengers were assisted immigrants who paid a fare of £10.

Shaw Savill & Albion Line was another British company in the Australian trade. It had many fine cargo vessels such as *Gothic*, *Cymric* and *Aramaic*.

Like many cargo vessels in those days, they carried 12 passengers. Above that number they were required to have a doctor on board. Their finest passenger ship was the *Dominion Monarch*, at 27,000 tonnes the world's largest motor ship at the time of her construction in 1939. A one-class (first) ship, she carried 525 passengers and a large amount of cargo.

Shaw Savill ultimately replaced her and the very old *Moreton Bay* with two innovative liners, *Southern Cross* and *Northern Star*.

The *Southern Cross* carried 1100 passengers and operated from England to Australia and New Zealand via Panama; the *Northern Star* via Cape Town with 1400 passengers.

Italian shipping companies had a large share of the passenger market, much of which was immigrant. Lloyd Triestino had three sister ships: *Australia*, *Neptunia* and *Oceania*, and *Toscana* in service from Genoa during the 1950s, being replaced by the much larger and luxurious *Galileo Galilei* and *Guglielmo Marconi*.

Sitmar, another Italian line (and in more recent times before its merger with P&O synonymous with Pacific cruises) was heavily into the carriage of immigrants.

The 1950s saw them operating the *Castel Felice*, *Castel Bianco* and the original *Fairsea* which was a converted wartime auxiliary aircraft carrier. These were in time replaced by the much-improved *Fairsky* and *Fairstar*.

Italian line Flotta Lauro was into the ex-aircraft carrier business with its *Sydney* and *Roma* during the 1950-60 period. But with two Dutch companies withdrawing from their round-the-world passenger services in 1964, the company bought *Willem Ruys* and *Oranje*, which had both been regular visitors to this port.

Flotta Lauro renamed them *Achille Lauro* and *Angelina Lauro* and renovated them. The *Angelina Lauro* carried 189 first class and 1427 tourist class passengers; the *Achille Lauro* 152 first class and 1500 in tourist class. Their time on the regular passenger service to Australia was short and they were withdrawn in 1973.



Clerks and declaration officers boarding a vessel to process passengers.



A Customs officer processing passengers at Wharf 12, Pyrmont.

Another Italian company represented in Australia was the Cogedar Line of Genoa with three relatively small ships, *Aurelia*, *Flaminia* and *Flavia* which disappeared from the scene, like so many others, during the mid-1960s.

Chandris Lines started a service to Australia in 1959 with the *Patris*, which was followed into service by the *Brittany* (until she was destroyed by fire in 1963), *Ellenis*, *Australis*, *Britanis* and finally *Queen Frederica*.

One of the finest Dutch liners serving Australia was the longest-named of all, *Johan Van Oldenbarnevelt* of the Nederland Line. The other ship of that line on the Rotterdam-Australia run was *Oranje*. Royal Rotterdam Lloyd Line served Australia with *Willem Ruys*. Two other migrant-carrying Dutch vessels were the *Zuiderkruis* and *Groote Beer*.

Dutch liners regularly visiting Sydney on the Southeast Asia service and owned by the Royal InterOcean Lines were *Nieuw Holland*, *Tjiwangi* and *Tjiluwah*. These were high-risk smuggling vessels and teams of Customs Preventive Officers would be put on board to search for contraband. At the time, transistor radios had just come on the market (in the days of innocence before drugs) and large caches would often be found.

Also high-risk were the British ships of the China Navigation Company. *Changsha* and *Taiyuan*, popular tourist ships, would generally yield productive searches, to reveal not only contraband but illegal immigrants.

*Anking* and *Anshun* were two other regular visitors of the line. I recall one of them bringing a couple of hundred White Russian refugees expelled from Manchuria in mid-1959. They were very poor and their possessions were packed in ancient chests and boxes.

China Navigation Company had a fleet of much smaller vessels plying the New Guinea ports. They were immaculate vessels carrying about 60 passengers, such as *Sinkiang*, *Shansi*, *Soochow* and *Pakhoi*.

A big French shipping company, Messageries Maritimes, had a long presence in Australian waters with passenger and cargo ships. On the European service, we regularly saw *Melanesien* and *Tahitien*. But the best-known vessel of all was *Polynesie* which sailed between Sydney, Noumea and the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu).

The major islands shipping company was Burns Philp. The company had the distinction of operating three of the four Australian-registered passenger vessels on regular

overseas service. The largest were *Bulolo* and *Malaita*; the former carrying 240 and the latter 100 passengers, and *Malekula* — 12 passengers — servicing New Guinea.

With smaller passenger capacity were the Glasgow-registered vessels *Braeside* and *Burnside* on the Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia service. Other vessels such as *Montoro*, *Tulagi* and *Moresby* plied the Solomon Islands, New Hebrides and Norfolk Island ports.

Much prized “down the bay” boarding jobs by Customs Landing Branch officers were the luxurious Matson liners *Mariposa* and *Monterey* out of San Francisco. On completion of passenger declarations, Customs assistant wharf examining officers would be treated to sumptuous breakfasts before the ship berthed.

I regularly performed declaration clerk duties on Huddart Parker's *Wanganella*, an Australian ship, and Union Steam Ship's *Monowai*. These vessels arrived like clockwork on alternate Tuesdays from Auckland and Wellington and their crews and passengers were friendly, homely and unpretentious. We would board the ships off Watson's Bay at about 6.30am and, after taking declarations, adjourn to the dining room for breakfast.

In its latter days of service, one of the last interstate liners, *Kanimbla*, owned by Mclwraith McEacharn Ltd, was used for cruises to Japan and Hong Kong. On her arrival in Sydney one autumn day in 1959, I put in the hardest day in my working life, collecting duty from crew members.

It was my first experience of duty collection. Half a dozen Customs assistant wharf examining officers sat at a dusty trestle table with impatient Australian crew members anxious to get away. There were no calculators, duty rates were complex and we were working in pounds, shillings and pence. It was a relief when I stepped out into the sunshine on finishing duty.

The era of the passenger ship in the Port of Sydney was one of infinite variety and colour. The ships, their passengers and crews, the company officials and the people connected with their arrivals and departures provided a rich backdrop to the working lives of Customs officers associated with them.

Progress dictated the passing of this era but those of us who lived through it are richer for the experience.

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