



Complaints and Compliments
National Quarterly Report
January to March 2005

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

Introduction

This report provides statistical data for complaints and compliments received during the period January to March 2005. All statistical data included in this report was extracted on 15 April 2005. Where appropriate, comparative tables and graphs are provided for previous reporting periods.

Executive summary

Complaints

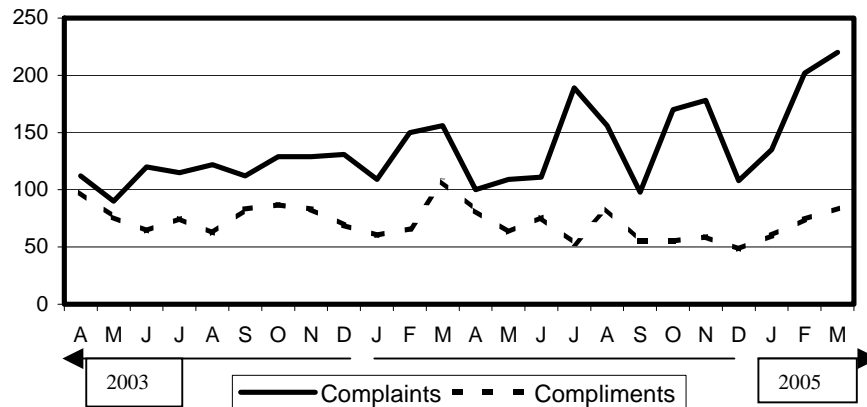


Figure 1. National trends for complaints and compliments from April 2003- March 2005 by month

A total number of **612** complaints, including referrals, were reported compared with **524** in the previous quarter. This is the largest number of quarterly complaints since March 2001. The top three complaints were:

- “Didn’t expect duty/tax (**143**),
- “Officer was rude” (**53**), and
- “Queue delay” (**52**).

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

Included in the total of 612 complaints were **55** complaints that subsequently were referred to other agencies.

Compliments

A total number of **221** compliments were reported about Customs compared with **162** in the previous quarter. The top three compliments were:

- “Officer/s was helpful” (**82**),
- “Appreciated assistance” (**48**) and
- “Officer/s was professional” (**25**).

There were **3** referrals to other agencies.

Significant variations in the March Quarter

General

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

Type of Complaint

'Didn't expect duty/tax'

The complaint 'Didn't expect duty/tax' increased nationally from **43** to **143** and relates largely to changes in passenger concessions (**116**) (see Annex A).

'Officer was rude'

The complaint 'Officer was rude' increased nationally from **35** to **53**. This increase occurred mainly within Passengers (from **27** to **43**) (see Annex A).

'Queue system' / 'Queue delay'

The complaints about 'Queue system' and 'Queue delay' decreased nationally from **69** to **44** in Passengers (see Annex A).

'On hold too long'

The complaint 'On hold too long' decreased nationally from **70** to **38**. This decrease occurred mainly within the Customs Information and Support Centre (Cargo and Trade Division)(from **68** to **36**) (see Annex C).

1. National Trends

1.1 National Trends by Region

Complaints

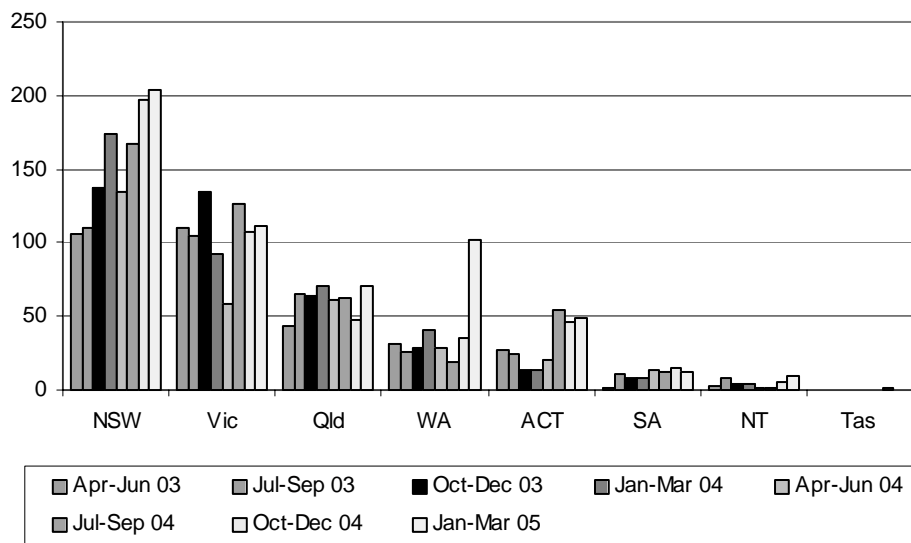


Figure 2. Total number of complaints by region comparing each quarter from April - June 2003 to January - March 2005

Comparing against the previous quarterly figures (excluding referrals), an increase in complaints occurred in Western Australia (+67), Queensland (+22), New South Wales (+7), Northern Territory (+4), Victoria (+4) and the Australian Capital Territory (+3). A reduction in complaints occurred in Tasmania (-2) and South Australia (-1).

Compliments

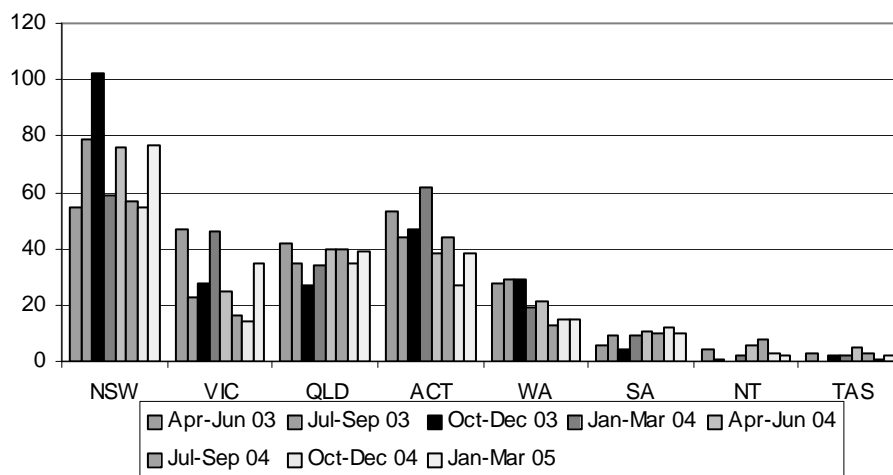


Figure 3. Total number of compliments by region comparing each quarter from April - June 2003 to January - March 2005

A comparison of national trends for compliments between this quarter and the previous quarter (excluding referrals) revealed increases in New South Wales (+22), Victoria (+21), the Australian Capital Territory (+11), Queensland (+4) and Tasmania (+1). South Australia (-2) and Northern Territory (-1) experienced reductions. No change occurred in Western Australia with 15 compliments.

1.2 National Trends by Division

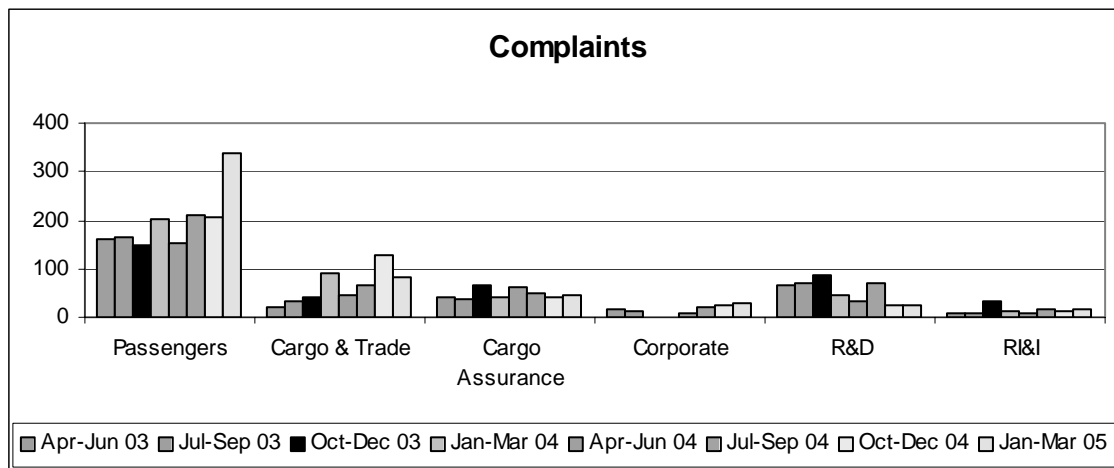


Figure 4. Total number of complaints for the six larger branches or divisions comparing the last 8 quarters

- Note:**
1. In line with regional structures, Cargo and Trade mainly includes the broker licensing, cargo systems, CI&SC, entry processing, import clearance, sea cargo, temporary imports and valuation. Cargo Assurance mainly includes air cargo and postal operations.
 2. CEF complaints have been removed from Enforcement Operations and placed under R&D.

A comparison of figures against the previous quarter reveals an increase in complaint numbers for Passengers (+134), Cargo Assurance (+4), Corporate (+4), RI&I (+4), District Offices (+3), Cargo Systems (+1), Compliance Assurance (+1). A decrease in complaint numbers was experienced in Cargo and Trade (-43), Coastwatch (-2), Investigations (-2), Enforcement Operations (-1), R&D (-1). There was no change in Trade Measures with no complaints received.

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

Compliments

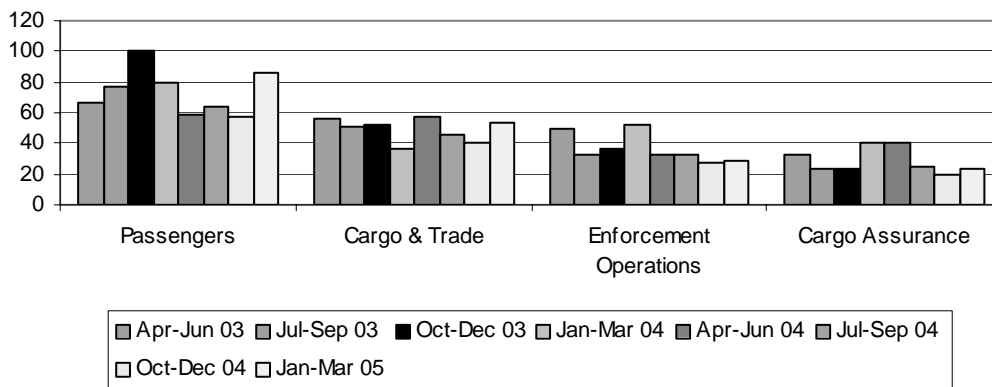


Figure 5. The trend in compliments for the four larger divisions comparing the last seven quarters

Compliment figures compared to the previous quarter indicate an increase was experienced in Passengers (+29), Cargo & Trade (+12), Cargo Assurance (+4), RI&I (+4), Corporate (+3), Cargo Systems (+2), Compliance Assurance (+2), Enforcement Operations (+2), Investigations (+1) and R&D (+1). A decrease was experienced for District Offices (-5).

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

2. Type of Complaint

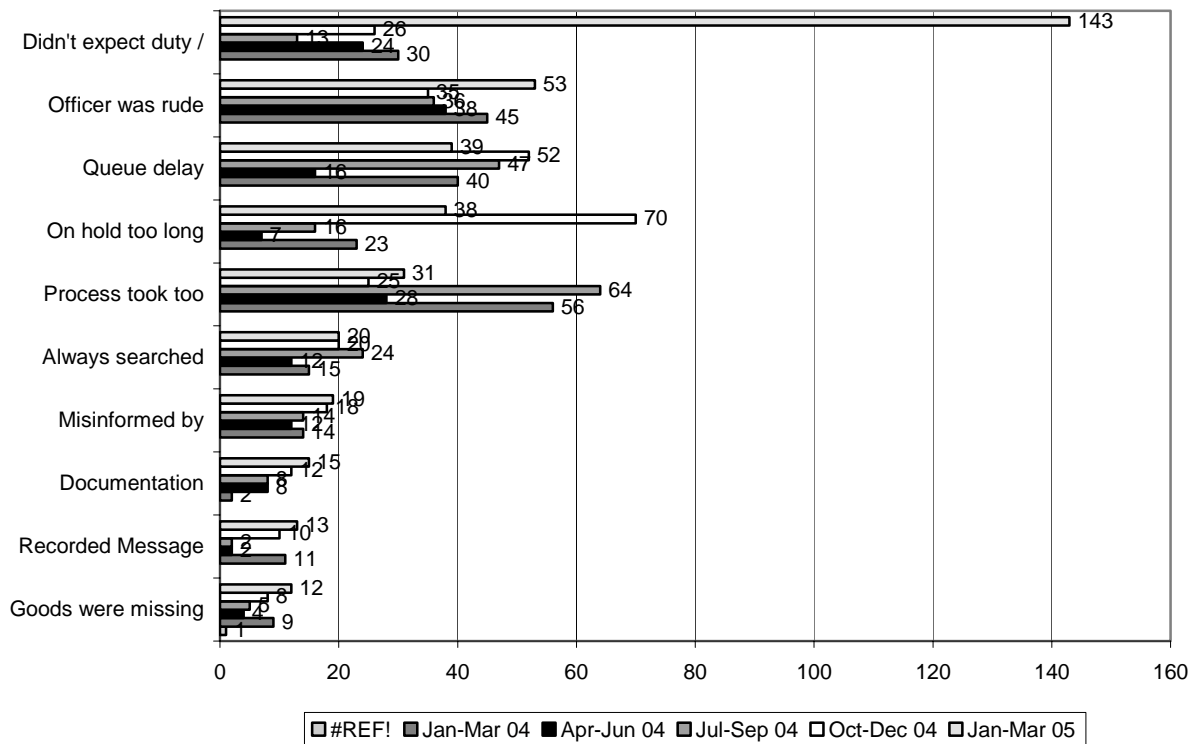


Figure 6. National Top 10 Complaints (excluding referrals) for the last five quarters

A total number of **557** complaints were made for this quarter (excluding referrals). This compares to **455** for the previous quarter and represents a **22.42% increase**.

The top four issues (excluding referrals) were:

- **Didn't expect duty or tax (143):** These complaints occurred primarily in Passengers and mainly related to the new passenger concessions (see Annex A).
- **Officer was rude (53):** This occurred **43** times in Passengers, **17** of which were at Sydney Airport (see Annex A).
- **Queue delay (39):** These complaints occurred in Passengers, **23** of which were at Sydney Airport (see Annex A).
- **On hold too long (38):** **31** of these complaints were made to the CI&SC (see Annex C).

3. Type of Compliment

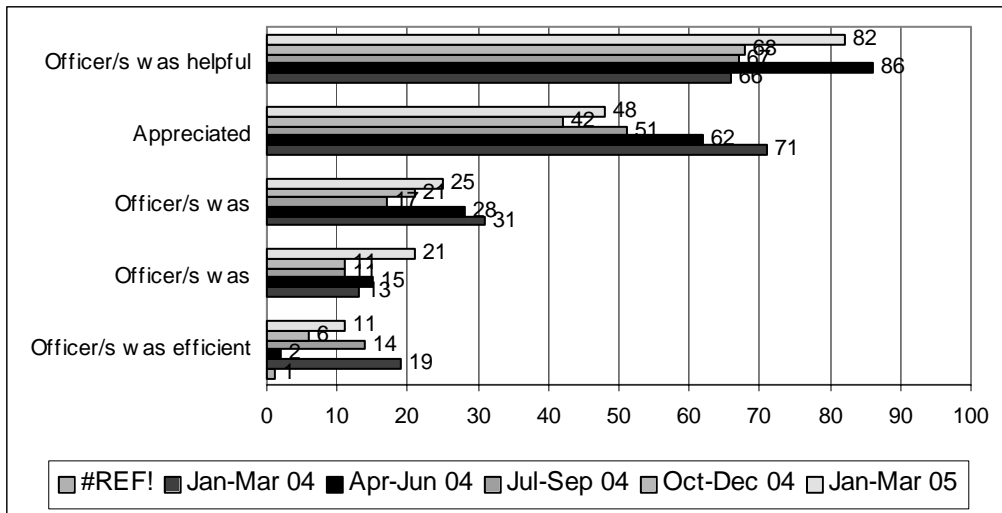


Figure 7. National top 5 compliments (excluding referrals) for the last five quarters

A total of **218** compliments were registered for this quarter (excluding referrals). This compares to **162** for the previous quarter and represents a **34.57% increase**.

The top three issues (excluding referrals) were:

- **Officer/s was helpful (82):** Cargo & Trade and Passengers each received this compliment most frequently with **30**. **19** of these were for the CI&SC and **10** were for TRS.
- **Appreciated assistance (48):** The National Marine Unit (NMU) received this compliment most frequently (**25**). This is due to high levels of operational interaction with client groups. Passengers (Liaison) also received this compliment (**9**).
- **Officer was professional (25):** This compliment occurred **10** times in New South Wales primarily in Passengers (**3**) and Cargo & Trade (**3**).

4. Referrals to other agencies

Where complaints or compliments are not related to Customs operations or procedures, they are referred to the relevant agencies by the Complaints and Compliment Network. During this quarter Customs referred **55** complaints and **3** compliments. The main agencies receiving referrals were AQIS (**27**) and Australia Post (**8**).

5. Performance Against Service Standards

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

If you write to us or email us

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

Service Standards

The average complaint resolution time of **9.33** working days reported in the previous quarter has *increased* to **10.59** working days. The average compliment resolution time of **0.34** working days reported in the previous quarter has also *increased* to **0.65** working days. These resolution times are within the 15 working day service standard.

Out of a total of **833** cases, **18** cases did not meet the 15 working day benchmark (**2.16%**).

6. How People Contact Us

The main methods for contacting Customs during this quarter were by email (**266**), brochure (**182**), phone (including the 1800 number) (**176**), letter (**89**) and remote entry (**87**).

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

The number of complaints or compliments received by brochure and email have increased this quarter (brochure from **178** to **266** and email from **144** to **182**), whereas the number of complaints or compliments received by phone has decreased from **201** to **176**.

The purpose of the CCMS is to provide:

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

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

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Passengers

Complaints

The number of complaints received nationally for Passengers was **339** during this quarter (compared to **205** in the previous quarter) which is equivalent to 1 complaint for every **8,371** passengers arriving in Australia. This compares with one complaint for every 13,290 passengers in the October to December quarter.

During the period 1 January to 31 March 2005 **2,837,759** passengers arrived through international airports nationally. Numbers of passengers arriving through each major airport are shown in Table 1 below.

| Major Airports | Number of Airport Complaints | Passenger Arrival Numbers | Number of Passengers for Every Complaint |
|----------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Sydney | 117 | 1,272,261 | 10,874 |
| Melbourne | 73 | 615,727 | 8,435 |
| Brisbane | 27 | 467,124 | 17,301 |
| Perth | 88 | 280,750 | 3,190 |
| Average | 76.25 | 658,966 | 8,642 |

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

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

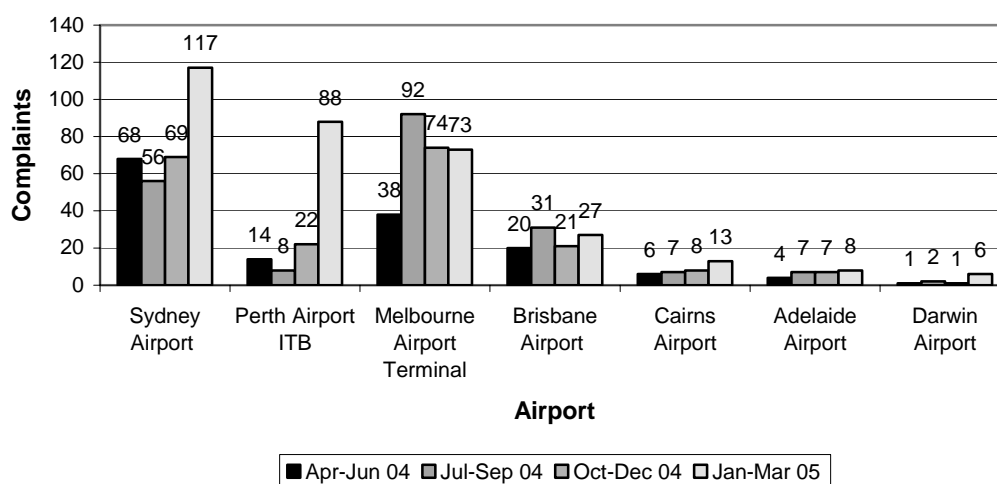


Figure 1. Passenger Complaints at each Airport for April - June 2004, July - September 2004, October - December 2004 and January - March 2005..

Of the **117** complaints received at Sydney Airport, 25 related to queues, 25 related to TRS, 23 related to being searched, examined or questioned, and 17 related to rude officers.

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

| Branch | Oct-Dec 04 | Jan-Mar 05 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|
| Enforcement | 46 | 191 |
| Primary Line | 49 | 60 |
| TRS | 45 | 51 |
| Baggage | 62 | 27 |
| Other activity | 3 | 5 |
| Enquiry Counter | 0 | 5 |
| Total | 205 | 339 |

Table 2. Passengers complaints - comparative assessment by work area October to December 2004 and January to March 2005

The increase in complaints occurred in:

- Enforcement mainly concerned ‘Didn’t expect duty/tax’ **(+114)** which related to the new passenger concessions introduced on 1 February 2005 (see details below);
- Enforcement for ‘Officer was rude’ **(+10)**; and
- Primary Line which mainly related to queuing issues **(+6)**.

The decrease in Baggage complaints was due to a reduction in queuing concerns **(-27)**.

Issue: “Didn’t expect duty/tax”

Changes in passenger concessions for incoming passengers became effective from 1 February 2005. A total of **116** complaints (0 in the previous quarter) were received relating specifically to this issue.

The majority of complainants stated that they were not aware of the change in the passenger concessions legislation.

Issue: “Officer was rude”

The following table compares the number of complaints received for “Officer was rude” during the last seven quarters:

| Branch | Jul-Sep 03 | Oct-Dec 03 | Jan-Mar 04 | Apr-Jun 04 | Jul-Sep 04 | Oct-Dec 04 | Jan-Mar 05 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Enforcement | 8 | 8 | 13 | 12 | 7 | 9 | 19 |
| Primary line | 5 | 8 | 3 | 12 | 3 | 10 | 12 |
| Baggage | 7 | 3 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 5 | 7 |
| TRS | 4 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Enquiry Counter | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Other | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 25 | 21 | 34 | 34 | 22 | 27 | 43 |

Table 3. “Officer was rude” complaints - comparative assessment by **Branch** during the last 7 quarters

Issue:

The most substantial decrease in client complaints in Passengers occurred at Melbourne Airport:

Queue Delays – **9** (down from **24** last quarter)

Queue Systems – **1** (down from **15** last quarter).

Melbourne Airport Queuing Complaints

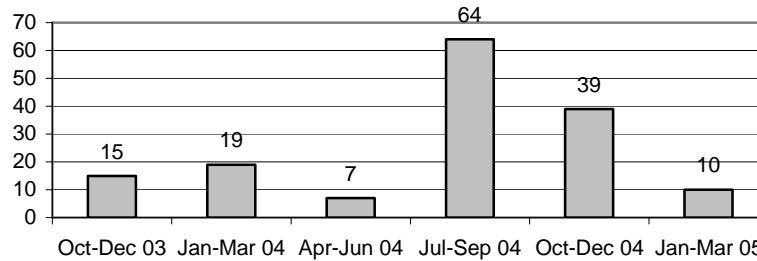


Figure 2. Queuing complaints (Queue Delays and Queue Systems) at Melbourne Airport over the last 6 quarters

Reasons for the increase in complaints for the Jul-Sep 04 quarter related to queuing problems at Melbourne Airport resulting from the final stages of infrastructure change in the baggage reclaim and examination halls.

A total of **51** complaints were received about the Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) compared to **45** last quarter. A comparison of the top five TRS complaints is shown in Table 4 below.

| Symptom | Oct-Dec 04 | Jan-Mar 05 |
|------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Queue delay | 15 | 9 |
| Unhappy about 30 minute rule | 5 | 9 |
| Claim not made | 2 | 7 |
| Goods not in possession | 5 | 6 |
| Misinformation by Customs | 4 | 4 |
| Officer was rude | 3 | 4 |

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

Compliments

There were **86** compliments for Passengers during this quarter, representing an increase of **50.88%**.

| Branch | Oct-Dec 04 | Jan-Mar 05 |
|------------------|------------|------------|
| Primary line | 17 | 21 |
| Liaison | 13 | 11 |
| Baggage | 11 | 8 |
| Other activity | 6 | 15 |
| Enquiry Counter | 4 | 0 |
| Enforcement | 3 | 14 |
| TRS | 1 | 17 |
| Client education | 1 | 0 |
| Olympics (para) | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 57 | 86 |

*Table 5. Passenger compliments - comparative assessment
July – September 2004 and October – December 2004*

The **15** ‘Other activity’ cases refer to compliments for Customs Officers in general which didn’t fit within the other classifications.

Research & Development Division (R&D) Container Examination Facility (CEF)

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

In January to March 2005, Customs inspected **30,813 TEU** and received **24** complaints. (Note: this figure includes the **28** TEU inspected in Adelaide since 16 Mar 05). This is equivalent to **1** complaint for every **1,284 TEUs**. This compares with **1** complaint for every **1,198 TEUs** in the previous quarter.

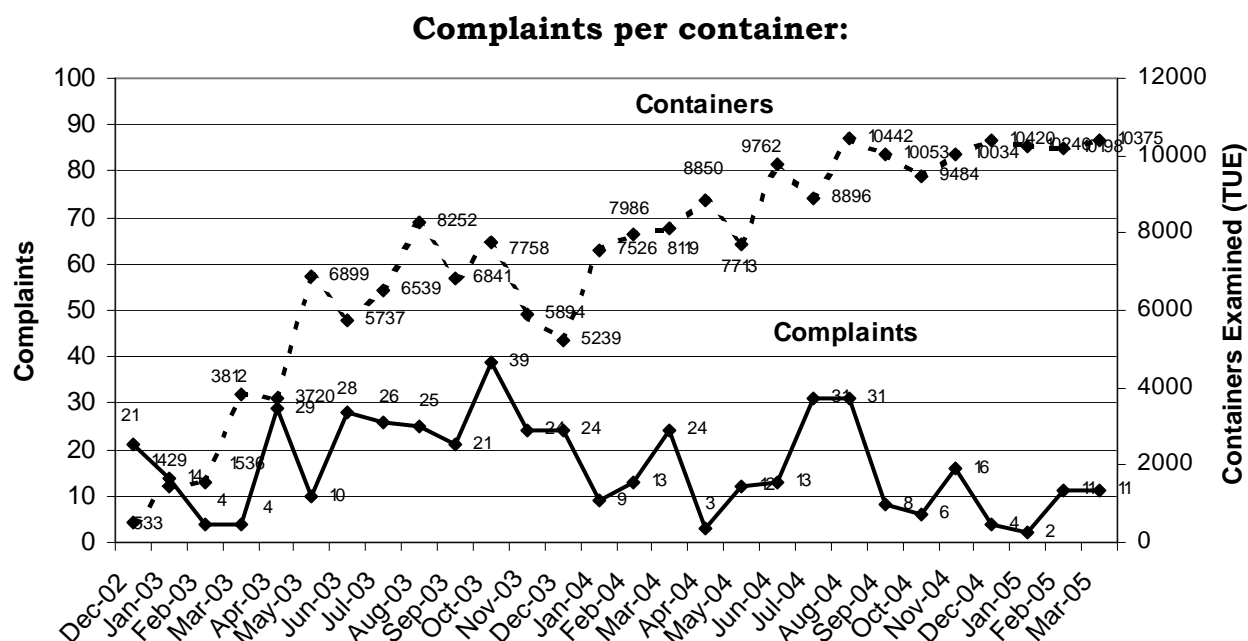


Figure 1. Trend of complaints against TEUs x-rayed by Customs since CEFs opened in December 2002

The following table provides details of the total number of complaints registered for each for the October to December quarter (**25** compared to **70** for last quarter). This is a *decrease* of **64.28%**.

| Issues | Canberra | Adelaide | Sydney | Brisbane | Melbourne | Fremantle | Total |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Didn't expect fees/duty/tax | 1 | - | - | 2 | 3 | 1 | 7 |
| Goods were damaged | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| Goods were missing | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| Goods were withheld | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | 2 |
| Misinformed by Customs | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| Process not explained | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | 2 |
| Process took too long | 2 | - | - | 5 | 2 | 4 | 13 |
| Total | 3 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 24 |

Table 1. National CEF complaints by region for January to March 2005

Note: Issues for Canberra are policy related

The Adelaide CEF officially opens on 3 May 2005, however it has been occupied since 16 March 2005. **28** TEU were inspected in Adelaide during March 05.

The two main complaint issues were:

Issue: “Process took too long” (**13**) is an increase from **10** during the last quarter. This increase occurred mainly in Brisbane (+4) and Melbourne (+2).

Issues: “Goods were missing” or “Goods were damaged” (**0**) both decreased from **3** during the last quarter. This decrease occurred in Melbourne (-3).

The **3** cases classified against Canberra were policy related. These related to the length of time it takes to clear containers generally and the fees which are thereby accrued.

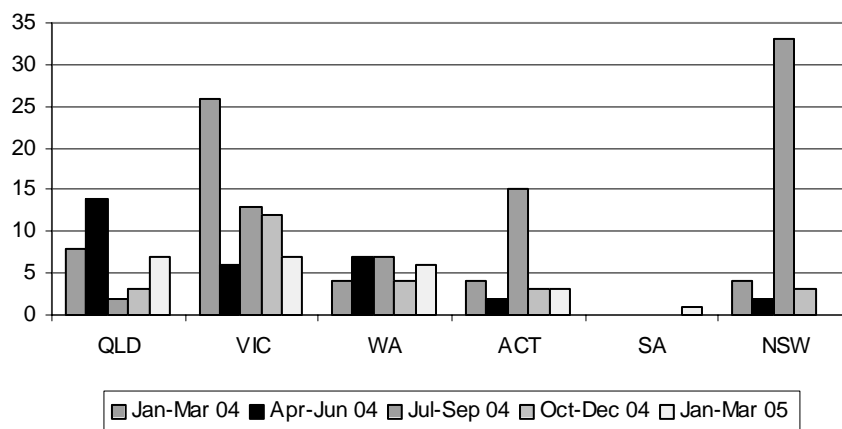


Figure 2. Comparison of CEF complaints by region for the previous five quarters

Excluding the **3** policy related complaints registered against the ACT, during this quarter the number of operationally based complaints received nationally for the CEF was **21**.

A detailed breakdown of complaints is:

CEF Operations Complaints Only

| CEF Location | Number of Complaints | TEUs Inspected | Number of TEUs for Every Complaint |
|--------------|----------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Melbourne | 7 | 9770 | 1,396 |
| Sydney | 0 | 9476 | n/a |
| Brisbane | 7 | 6439 | 920 |
| Fremantle | 1 | 5100 | 5,100 |
| Adelaide | 1 | 28 | 28 |

Table 2. Number of complaints lodged compared to the number of TEUs² inspected for January to March 2005

Profiling & Alerts and Wharf Related Complaints

| In Addition: Number of 'CEF related' complaints classified to Profiling and Alerts | In Addition: Number of 'CEF related' complaints classified to CTO/Wharf/ Stevedores |
|--|---|
| 4 | 2 |
| 5 | 1 |
| 4 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |

Table 3: Number of CEF related complaints for January to March 2005

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

| CEF Location | Total Number of Complaints | TEUs Inspected | Number of TEUs for Every Complaint |
|--------------|----------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Melbourne | 13 | 9770 | 752 |
| Sydney | 6 | 9476 | 1,579 |
| Brisbane | 11 | 6439 | 585 |
| Fremantle | 2 | 5100 | 2,550 |
| Adelaide | 1 | 28 | 28 |

Table 4. Number of complaints lodged compared to the number of TEUs² inspected for January to March 2005

Note:

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

Customs Information and Support Centre

Complaints

During this quarter **56** complaints were recorded about the CI&SC, compared with **97** for the previous quarter. The most common complaint related to the phone (**41**) where it was either not answered, the calls were not returned, or clients felt that they were on hold for too long. This compares to **79** during the previous quarter.

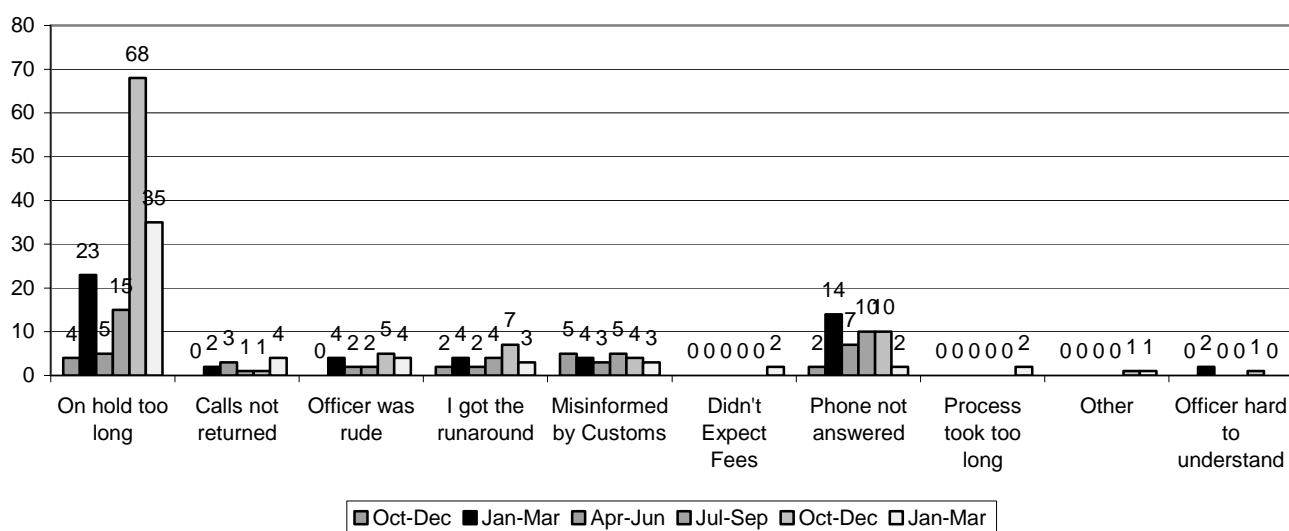


Figure 1. Comparison of CI&SC complaints for the previous six quarters

During the period 1 January to 31 March 2005 **122,327** enquiries were received by the CI&SC.

The number of complaints received was **56** during this quarter which is **1** complaint for every **2,184** enquiries. See Table 2 below.

| Month | Number of Complaints Received | Number of Phone Enquiries Received | Number of Email Enquiries Received | Number of Fax Enquiries Received | Total Number of Enquiries Received | Number of Enquiries for Every Complaint |
|----------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| January | 21 | 32,612 | 6,838 | 2,073 | 41,523 | 1,977 |
| February | 22 | 31,047 | 6,956 | 2,132 | 40,135 | 1,824 |
| March | 13 | 31,585 | 7,002 | 2,082 | 40,699 | 3,128 |

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

Compliments

The CI&SC received **22** compliments this quarter (compared to **26** which were received last quarter). **19** of the compliments related to officers being helpful.

CCMS Quarterly Report Feedback Form

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

Layout

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

Content

The content is:

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

Statistics

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

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

Other Comments

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