



***Complaints and Compliments***  
***National Quarterly Report***  
***July to September 2006***

- 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 July to September 2006. All statistical data included in this report was extracted on 18 October 2006. Where appropriate, comparative tables and graphs are provided for previous reporting periods.

## Executive summary

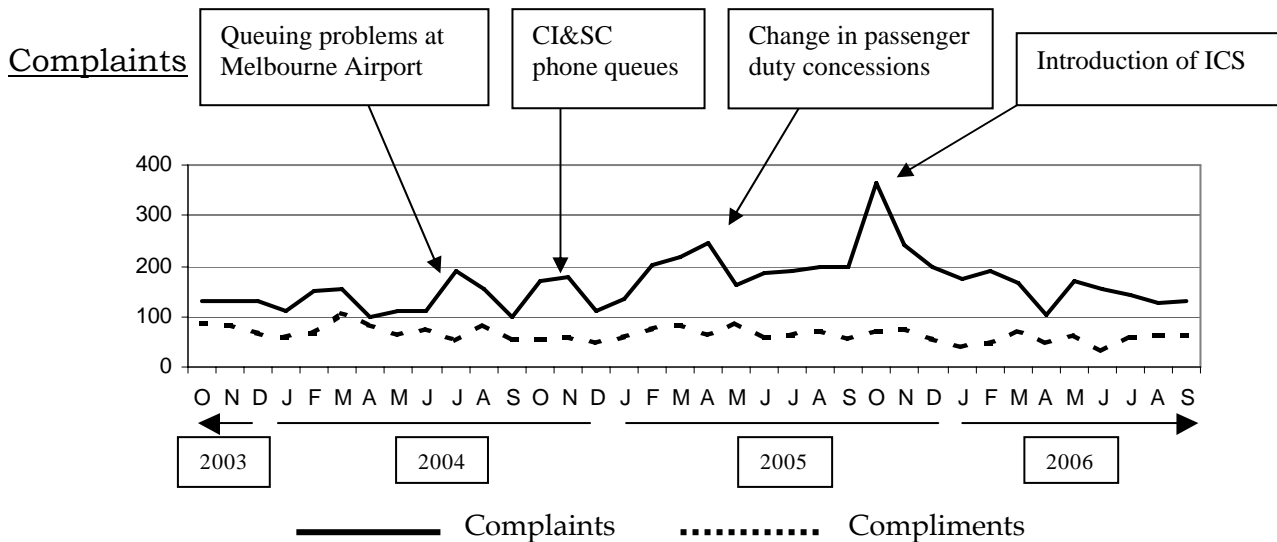


Figure 1. National trends for complaints and compliments from October 2003 to September 2006 by month

A total number of **398** complaints, excluding referrals, were reported compared with **429** in the previous quarter. This is the lowest quarter for complaints since the June quarter in 2004 (**320**).

The top four complaint issues were:

- **Didn't expect duty or tax (62):** These complaints occurred primarily in Passengers (**52**). **51** of them related to passenger concessions (see Annex A).
- **Process took too long (56):** Of these complaints, **32** related to Container Examination Facilities (see Annex B), **8** related to Passengers (see Annex A) and **8** related to Postal Operations.
- **Officer was rude (33):** This occurred **24** times in Passengers, **8** of which were at Perth Airport and **7** at Sydney Airport (see Annex D).
- **Didn't Expect Fees (31):** Most complaints (**19**) related to Container Examination Facilities (see Annex B)

In addition to the above, Customs referred **60** complaints to other agencies.

## Compliments

A total number of **185** compliments were reported about Customs compared with **140** in the previous quarter. The top three compliments were:

- “Officer/s was helpful” (**61**),
- “Appreciated assistance” (**34**), and
- “Officer/s was professional”/ “Officer was friendly” each with (**23**).

In addition to the above, Customs referred **2** compliments to other agencies.

## **Significant variations in the June Quarter**

### General

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

### **Type of Complaint**

#### ***‘Officer was rude’***

The complaint ‘Officer was rude’ decreased nationally from **51** to **33**. These complaints mainly relate to Passengers (see Annex D).

#### ***‘Process took too long’***

The complaint ‘process took too long’ increased nationally from **47** to **56**. **28** of these complaints related to containers at the CEFs (see Annex B) and **8** related to Postal Operations.

#### ***‘Always searched’***

The complaint ‘Always searched’ decreased nationally from **29** to **21**. **17** of these complaints related to containers being placed on hold for x-ray (see Annex B).

#### ***‘Late barrier hold put in place’***

The complaint ‘Late barrier hold put in place’ increased nationally from **8** to **16**. This relates to late holds placed on containers for x-ray (see Annex B).

# 1. National Trends

## 1.1 National Trends by Region

### Complaints

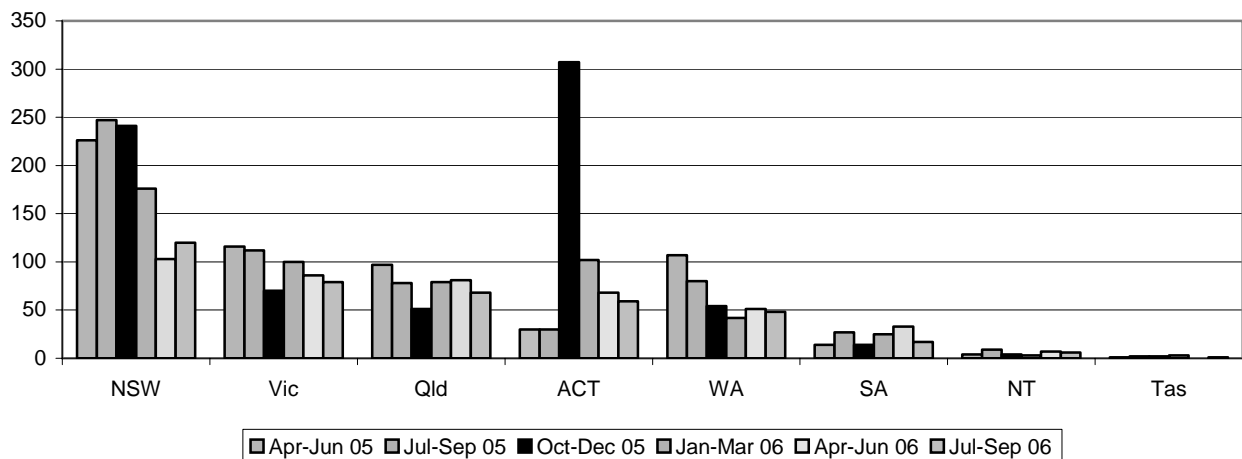


Figure 2. Total number of complaints by region comparing each quarter from April-June 2005 to July-September 2006

In summary, comparing against the previous quarterly figures (excluding referrals), the complaint number differences are:

New South Wales **(+17)**, South Australia **(+8)**, Tasmania **(+1)**, Queensland **(-13)**, Australian Capital Territory **(-10)**, Victoria **(-7)**, Western Australia **(-3)** and Northern Territory **(-1)**.

### Compliments

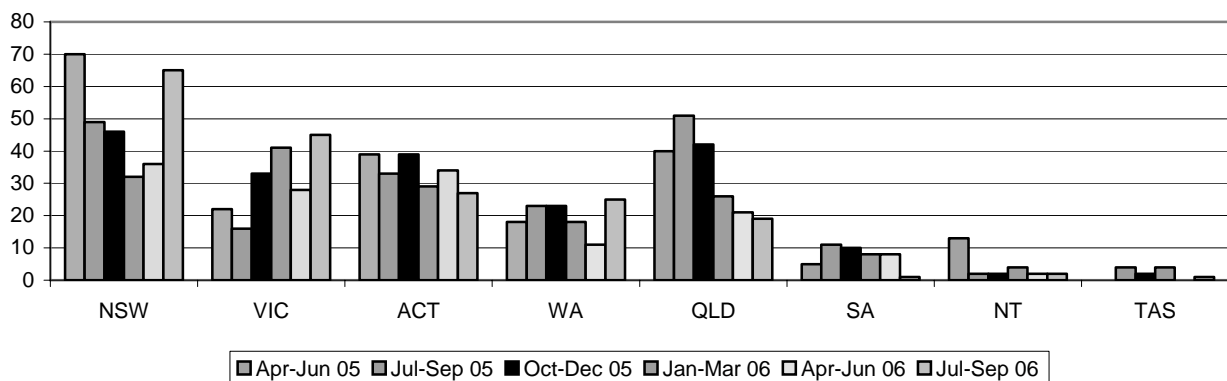


Figure 3. Total number of compliments by region comparing each quarter from April-June 2005 to July-September 2006

In summary, comparing against the previous quarterly figures (excluding referrals), the compliment number differences are:

New South Wales **(+29)**, Victoria **(+17)**, Western Australia **(+14)**, Tasmania **(+1)**, Northern Territory **(0)**, Australian Capital Territory **(-7)**, South Australia **(-7)**, and Queensland **(-2)**.

## National Trends by Function

### Complaints

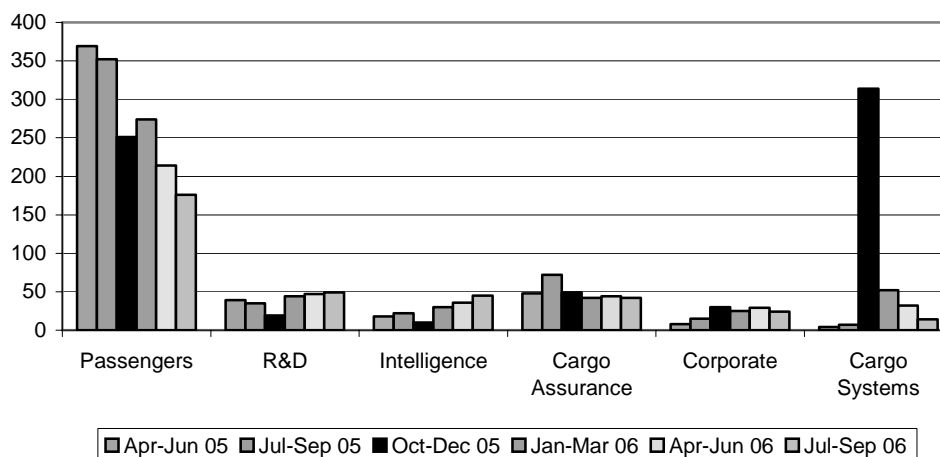


Figure 4. Total number of complaints for the six larger branches or divisions comparing the last six quarters

In summary, comparing against the previous quarter (excluding referrals), complaint number differences are:

Intelligence (+9), R&D (+2), Passengers (-38), Cargo Systems (-17), Corporate (-6), and Cargo Assurance (-2).

### Compliments

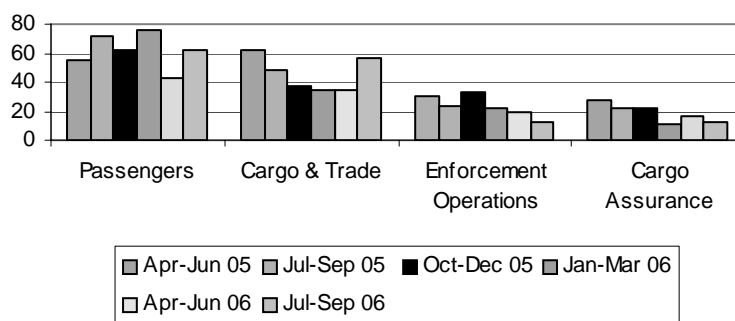


Figure 5. The trend in compliments for the four larger divisions comparing the last six quarters

In summary, comparing against the previous quarter (excluding referrals)' compliment number differences are:

Cargo & Trade (+23), Passengers (+19), Enforcement Operations (-6) and Cargo Assurance (-3).

#### Notes for the above 2 figures:

1. **Cargo Assurance** mainly includes air cargo and postal operations. **Cargo and Trade** includes the broker licensing, cargo systems, CI&SC, entry processing, import clearance, sea cargo, temporary imports and valuation;
2. **CEF complaints** are recorded under R&D;
3. **Corporate** includes Corporate Communication, Financial Services Division and Recruitment;
4. **Cargo Systems** include all ICS/CMR complaints.

A more detailed analysis of complaints and compliments for Passengers, the Container Examination Facility (CEF), the Customs Information and Support Centre (CI&SC) Rude Officers and Integrated Cargo System (ICS) are provided in Annexes A-E.

## 2. Type of Complaint

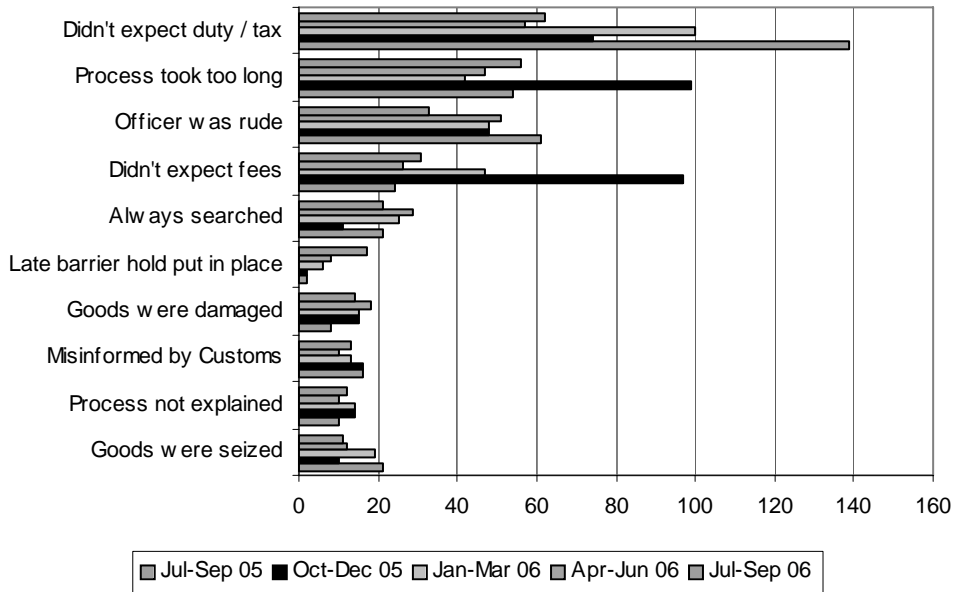


Figure 6. National Top 10 Complaints (excluding referrals) for the last four quarters

A total number of **398** complaints were made for this quarter (excluding referrals). This compares to **429** for the previous quarter and represents a **7.23% decrease**.

## 3. Type of Compliment

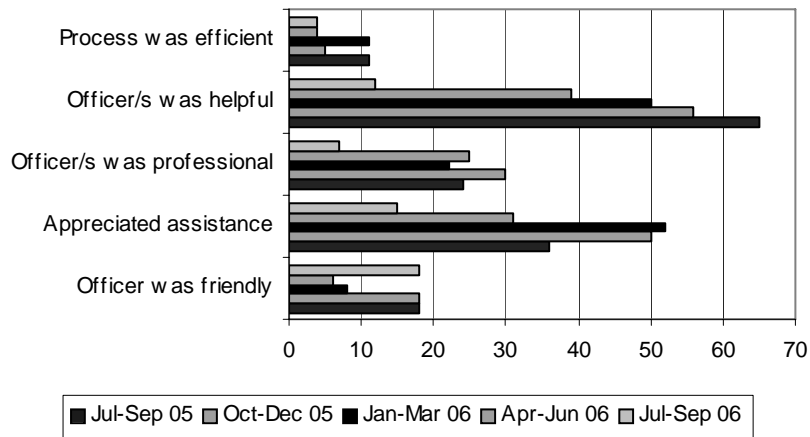


Figure 7. National top 5 compliments (excluding referrals) for the last five quarters

A total of **185** compliments were registered for this quarter (excluding referrals). This compares to **140** for the previous quarter and represents a **32.14% increase**.

The top three compliment issues were:

- **Officer/s was helpful (61):** Cargo & Trade received this compliment most frequently with **36**. **19** of these compliments were for the CI&SC and **12** were for staff at the counter.
- **Appreciated assistance (34):** Passengers received this compliment most frequently (**15**), **7** of which occurred at Sydney Airport.
- **Officer was friendly (23):** This compliment occurred **18** times in Passengers and occurred **12** times on the Primary Line.
- **Officer was professional (23):** This compliment occurred **10** times in Cargo & Trade, **6** of which occurred at the CI&SC.

#### 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 Compliments Network. During this quarter Customs referred **60** complaints and **2** compliments. The main agencies receiving referrals were AQIS (**30**), Airlines (**9**), Australia Post (**6**), and Brokers (**3**).

#### 5. Performance Against Service Standards

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

**If you write to us or email us**

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

##### Service Standards

The average complaint resolution time of **10.26** working days reported in the previous quarter has *decreased* to **9.19** working days.

The average compliment resolution time of **1.82** working days reported in the previous quarter has *decreased* to **1.39** working days.

These resolution times are within the 15 working day service standard.

Out of a total of **645** cases received, **24** cases opened during the September quarter did not meet the 15 working day benchmark (**3.72%**). Last quarter **3.51%** of cases did not meet this criteria.

## 6. How People Contact Us

The main methods for contacting Customs during this quarter were by email (**352**), phone (including the 1800 number) (**111**), letter/fax (**70**), brochure (**52**) and remote entry (**55**).

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

The number of complaints or compliments received by email have increased this quarter from **294** to **352**.

The number of complaints or compliments received has decreased by:

- phone (from **134** to **111**),
- remote entry (from **84** to **55**), and
- brochure (from **64** to **52**).

Those submitted by letter or fax remained the same (**70**).

The purpose of the CCMS is to provide:

- National coordination of complaints and compliments,
- Analysis of data,
- Reporting of results, and
- 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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Name: Roni Giacobetti, National Coordinator, Complaints and Compliments Network, 02 6275 6499

Email: [roni.giacobetti@customs.gov.au](mailto:roni.giacobetti@customs.gov.au)

## Passengers

### Complaints

The number of complaints received nationally was **176** (excluding referrals) during this quarter (compared to **214** in the previous quarter) which is equivalent to 1 complaint for every **15,922** passengers arriving in Australia. This compares with one complaint for every 11,050 passengers in the April to June 2006 quarter.

During the period 1 July to 30 September 2006 **2,802,284** 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	49	1,222,048	24,940
Melbourne	47	559,273	11,899
Brisbane	29	533,764	18,406
Perth	25	264,874	10,595
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>2,579,959</b>	<b>17,200</b>

Table 1. Number of complaints lodged at the **four major airports** compared to the number of passengers arriving during July to September 2006

Figure 1 below compares the number of Customs complaints received by each of Australia's major airports:

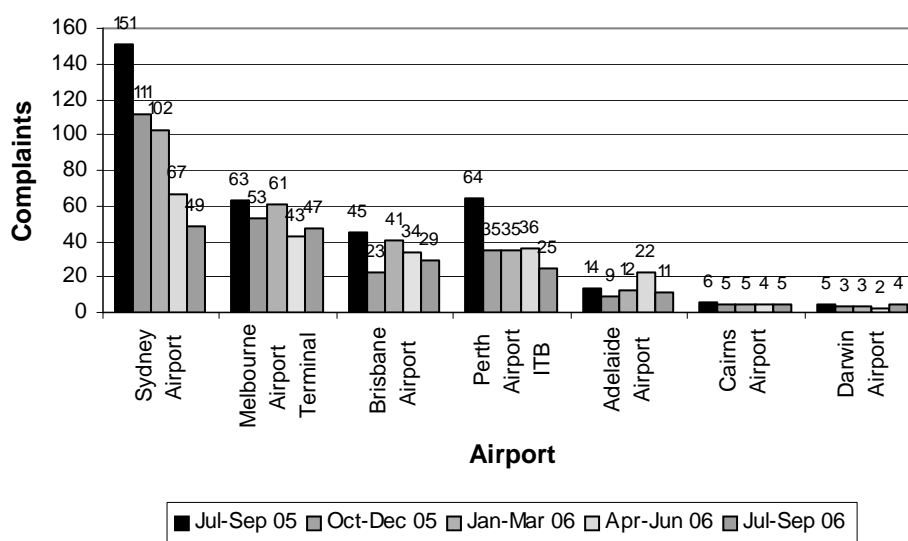


Figure 1. Passenger Complaints at each Airport for July – September 2005, October – December 2005 and January – March 2006, April – June 2006 and July – September 2006.

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

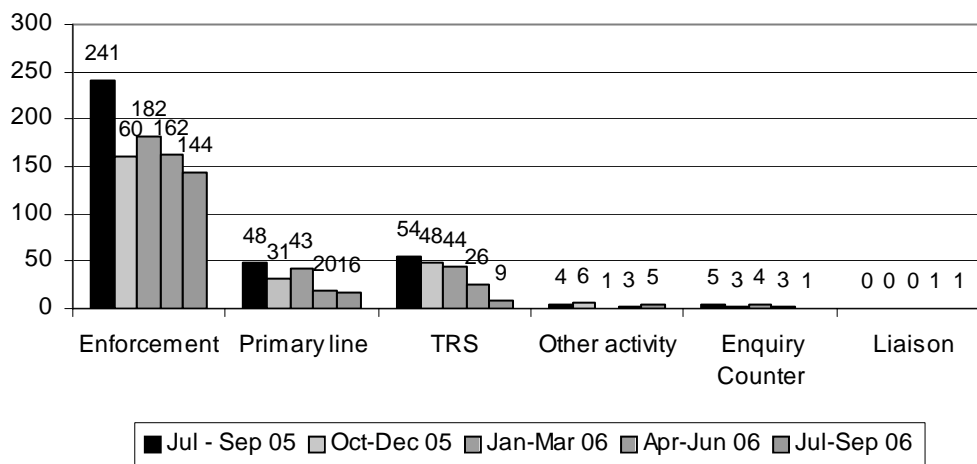


Figure 2. Passengers complaints - comparative assessment by region for July to September 2005, October to December 2005, January to March 2006, April to June 2006 and July to September 2006

The decrease in complaints mainly concerned:

Enforcement - Issue: Didn't expect duty/tax' (**51**, down from **53** during the previous quarter). These related to passenger duty free concessions.

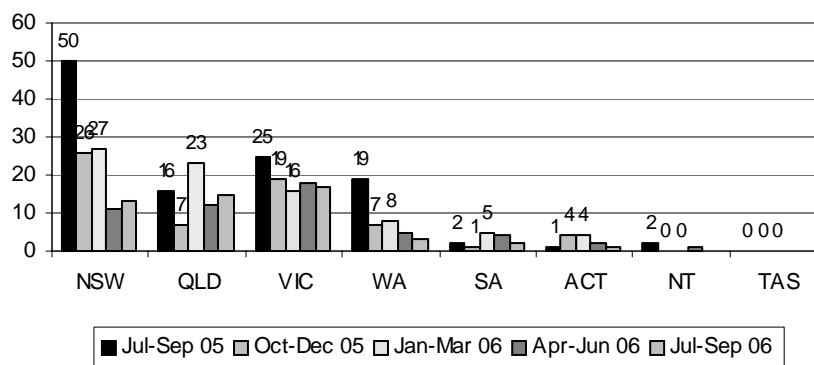


Figure 3. Passenger concessions complaints - comparative assessment by region for July to September 2005, October to December 2005, January to March 2006, April to June 2006 July to September 2006.

### Compliments

There were **62** compliments for Passengers during this quarter, representing an increase of **44.19%**.

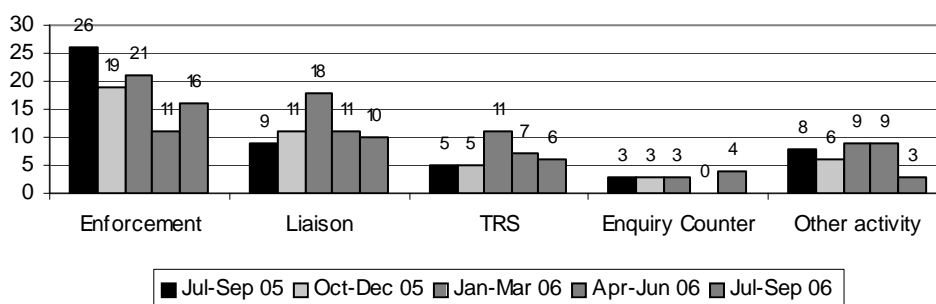


Figure 4. Passenger compliments - comparative assessment for July to September 2005, October to December 2005, January to March 2006, April to June 2006 and July to September 2005

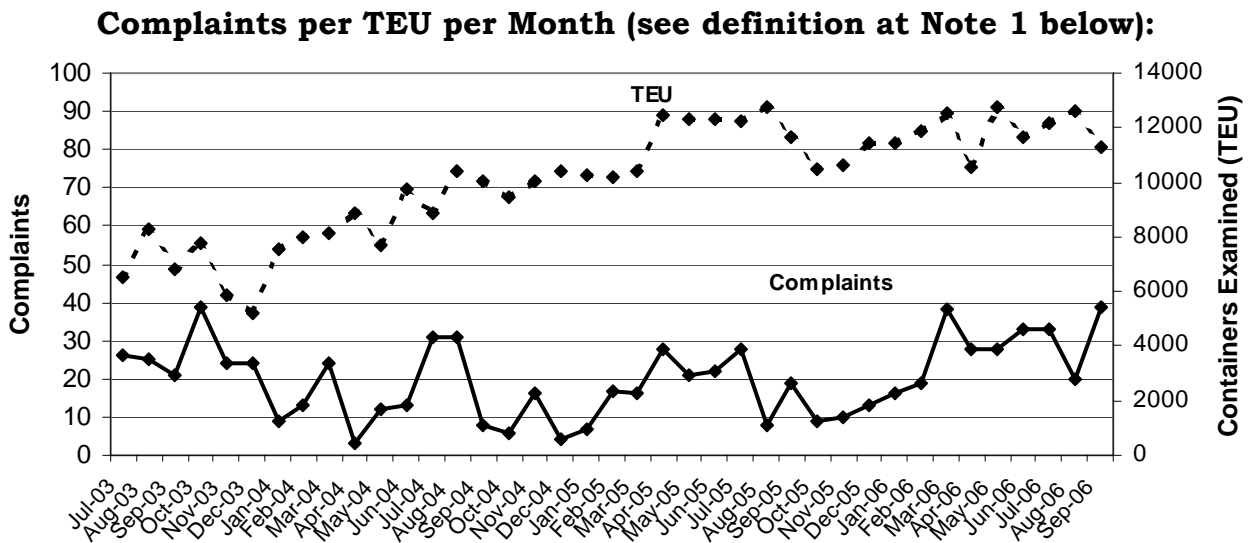
## Annex B

### Research & Development Branch (R&D) Container Examination Facility (CEF)

Figure 1 below shows that complaints against CEFs per number of twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU)<sup>1</sup> examined have increased from **89** to **92** during the quarter.

In July to September 2006, Customs inspected **36,127 TEU** and received **92** complaints (including complaints to Profiling and Alerts and CTO/Wharf/Stevedores and Brokers]. **4** of these complaints were responded to in the ACT.

This is equivalent to **1** complaint for every **392.68 TEU**. This compares with **1** complaint for every **392.65** TEU in the previous quarter.



*Figure 1. Trend of complaints against TEU x-rayed by Customs since July 2003*

The increase in complaints during this quarter occurred largely in New South Wales with an additional **13** complaints.

Of the total **92** complaints, the three main complaint issues were:

Issue: “Process took too long” (**32**) - an increase from **25** during the last quarter.

Issues: “Didn’t expect fees” (**19**) - an increase from **11** during the last quarter.

Issues: “Always searched” (**17**) - a decrease from **25** during the last quarter.

Excluding complaints recorded against CTO/Wharf/Stevedores, Brokers, Profiling and Alerts and Canberra, the number of operationally based complaints received nationally for the CEFs were **49**.

The following table details CEF complaints registered for each CEF for the June quarter (**49** compared to **47** for last quarter). This is an *increase* of **4.26%**. This table excludes complaints recorded against CTO/Wharf/Stevedores, Brokers, or Profiling and Alerts.

Issues	Brisbane	Melbourne	Fremantle	Sydney	Canberra	Adelaide	Total
Didn't expect fees	1	4	6	3	1	-	<b>15</b>
Goods were damaged	-	2	-	1		-	<b>3</b>
Goods were not repacked	1	1	-	-		-	<b>2</b>
Process not explained	-	-	-	-	1	-	<b>1</b>
Process took too long	12	4	4	6	1	1	<b>28</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>49</b>

Table 1. National CEF complaints by region for July to September 2006  
*Note: Issues for Canberra are policy related*

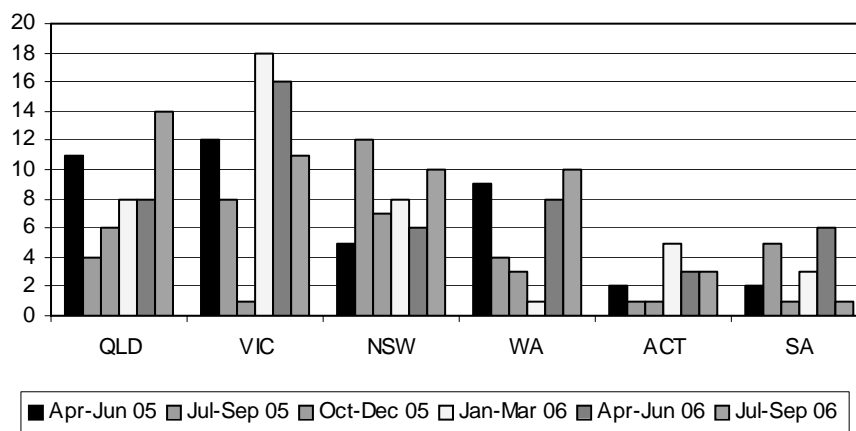


Figure 2. Comparison of CEF operations by region for the previous six quarters

Customs inspected an additional **1,181** TEU this quarter.

### Compliments

From Dec 2002 to 30 September 2006, since the first CEF was established, **22** compliments have been received for CEF operations, **10** of which have been for Victoria. These largely relate to seizures made. During this time Customs has examined 417,515 TEU.

A detailed breakdown of complaints (excluding policy related complaints responded to by Central Office) is:

**CEF Operations Complaints Only**

CEF Location	Number of Complaints	TEUs Inspected	Number of TEUs for Every Complaint
Melbourne	11	10,484	953
Sydney	10	9,937	994
Brisbane	14	9,786	699
Fremantle	10	5,490	549
Adelaide	1	407	407
Darwin	0	23	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>36,127</b>	<b>785</b>

Table 2. Number of complaints lodged compared to the number of TEUs<sup>2</sup> inspected for July to September 2006

**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, Carriers/Couriers and Brokers
10	0
12	1
10	2
5	0
2	0
0	0
<b>39</b>	<b>3</b>

Table 3: Number of CEF related complaints for July to September 2006

**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	23	10,484	456
Sydney	21	9,937	473
Brisbane	26	9,786	376
Fremantle	15	5,490	366
Adelaide	3	407	136
Darwin	0	23	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>36,127</b>	<b>411</b>

Table 4. Number of complaints lodged compared to the number of TEUs<sup>2</sup> inspected for July to September 2006 (excluding Canberra)

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. 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 **12** complaints were recorded about the CI&SC, compared with **9** for the previous quarter.

The most common complaint related to the phone (**3**). This has *decreased* from **4** during the previous quarter.

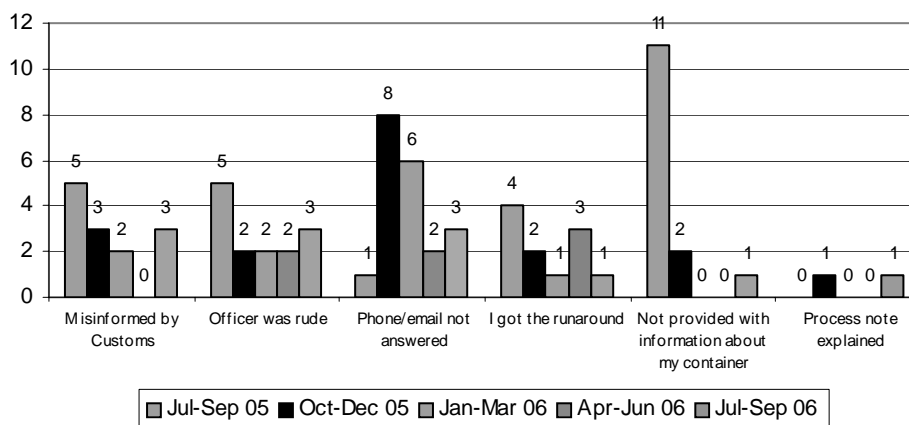


Figure 1. Comparison of the main CI&SC complaints for the previous five quarters

During the period July to September 2006 **135,883** enquiries were dealt with by the CI&SC.

The number of complaints received was **12** during this quarter which is **1** complaint for every **11,324** 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
July	8	36,569	3,252	339	40,160	5,020
August	3	45,954	4,008	351	50,313	16,771
September	1	41,447	3,760	203	45,410	45,410

Table 1. Number of complaints lodged at the CI&SC compared to the number of calls received for July to September 2006

### Compliments

The CI&SC received **29** compliments this quarter (compared to **17** which were received last quarter). **18** of the compliments related to officers being helpful.

**Issue – “Officer was rude”**

“Officer was rude” was the third highest complaint in the quarter with **33** complaints nationally (**51** for the previous quarter).

Work Area	Apr-Jun 06	Jul-Sep 06
Enforcement	33	16
Primary line	4	5
CI&SC	2	3
Postal Operations	1	2
TRS	2	2
Broker Licensing	0	1
Counter	0	1
DDU	0	1
Internal Affairs Unit	0	1
Liaison	0	1
Air Cargo	2	0
Client Services	1	0
Corporate Communication	6	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>33</b>

Table 1. Number of complaints received nationally for ‘Officer was rude’ by work area comparative assessment: April to June 2006 and July to September 2006

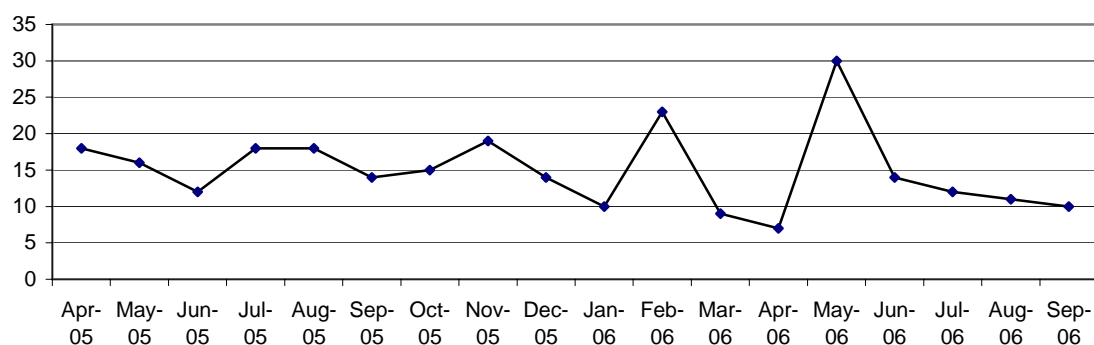
**Officer was rude**

Chart 1. Line graph of complaints received for ‘Officer was rude’ in Passengers by month from July 2005 to September 2006

Passengers Work Area – 12 months	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	VIC	WA	Total
Enforcement	4	-	4	-	2	6	16
Liaison	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Primary line	2	-	1	-	-	2	5
TRS	1	-	-	-	1	-	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>24</b>

Table 2. Number of complaints received for ‘Officer was rude’ in Passengers by region from October 2005 to September 2006

## Cargo Systems

In early October 2005 Customs new Cargo Integrated System (ICS) went live. The rate of complaints has decreased markedly since October 2005:

### ICS Complaints

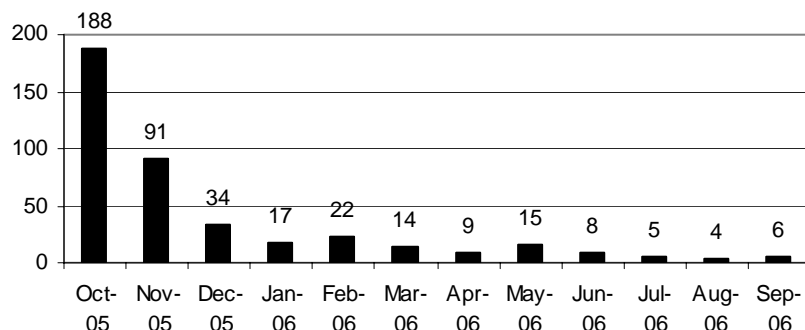


Figure 1. Number of ICS complaints received during October 2005 to September 2006

Some of the complaints recently received relate to October 2005 delays.

The reason for complaints in the June quarter were:

Issue	Jan-Mar 06	Apr-Jun 06	Jul-Sep 06
Didn't expect fees	28	13	7
System Too Slow	1	1	4
Poor Design	9	8	3
System Down	4	4	1
Documentation	0	2	0
Self Assessed Clearance	2	2	0
Implementation	1	1	0
Process took too long	6	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>15</b>

Table 1. Number of complaints received during January to March 2005 and April to June 2006 compared to July to September 2006 by complaint issue

Typical explanations of the main complaints are:

**Didn't expect fees** – related to complaints about demurrage fees charged by the Stevedores because containers were stored on the wharf in excess of the three storage-free days.

**System too slow** – related to complaints about 74A holds not being lifted as well as how long it takes to complete an entry.

**Poor design** – related to complaints about the system being badly structured and very complicated in its layout as well as the number of ICS screens.

**System Down** – related to complaints about entries not being able to be put through for whatever reason.

## 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:

- 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:

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### Other Comments

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

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