



***Complaints and Compliments***  
***National Quarterly Report***  
***April to June 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 April to June 2006. All statistical data included in this report was extracted on 10 July 2006. Where appropriate, comparative tables and graphs are provided for previous reporting periods.

## Executive summary

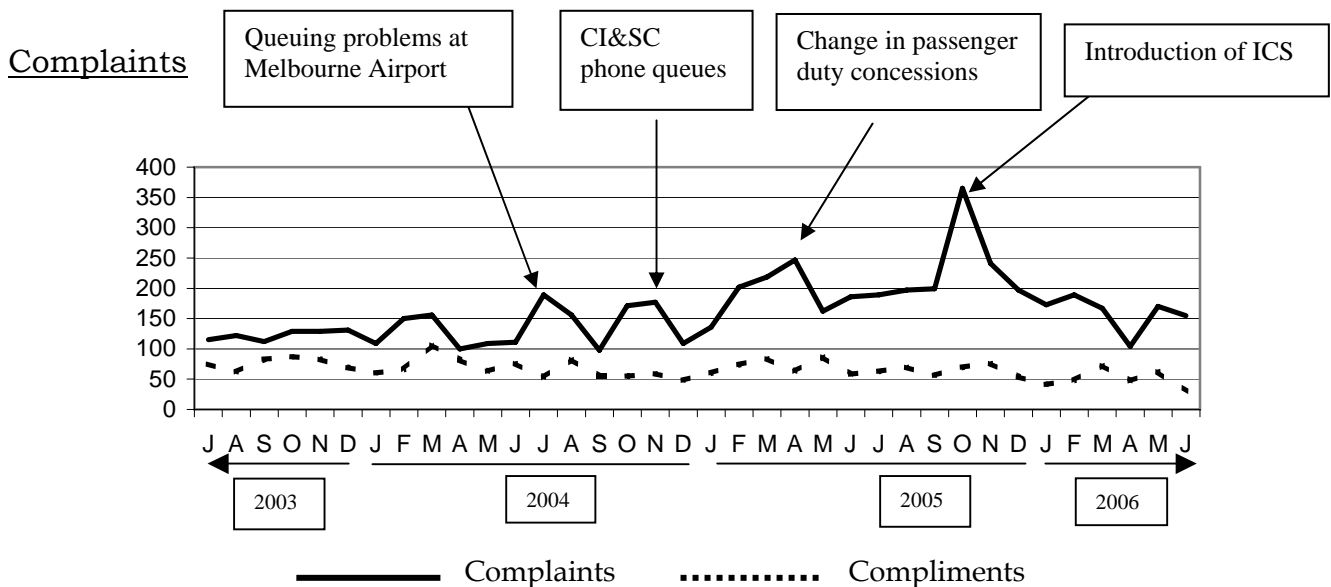


Figure 1. National trends for complaints and compliments from July 2003 to June 2006 by month

A total number of **429** complaints, excluding referrals, were reported compared with **530** 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 (57):** These complaints occurred primarily in Passengers (**53**) and related to passenger concessions (see Annex A).
- **Officer was rude (51):** This occurred **39** times in Passengers, **15** of which were at Sydney Airport and **11** at Melbourne Airport (see Annex D).
- **Process took too long (47):** Of these complaints, **25** related to Container Examination Facilities (see Annex B) and **9** related to Passengers (see Annex A).
- **Always searched (29):** Most complaints (**25**) related to Container Examination Facilities (see Annex B)

In addition to the above, Customs referred **83** complaints to other agencies.

## Compliments

A total number of **140** compliments were reported about Customs compared with **162** in the previous quarter. The top three compliments were:

- “Officer/s was helpful” (**39**),
- “Appreciated assistance” (**31**), and
- “Officer/s was professional” (**25**).

In addition to the above, Customs referred **3** 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.

Complaints against ICS have reduced significantly from **313** in the December quarter and **52** in the March quarter to **32** in the June quarter (see Annex E).

### **Type of Complaint**

#### ***‘Didn’t expect duty/tax’***

The complaint ‘Didn’t expect duty/tax’ decreased nationally from **100** to **57**. These complaints mainly relate to the passenger concessions (see Annex A).

#### ***‘Didn’t Expect Fees’***

The complaint ‘Didn’t expect fees’ decreased nationally from **46** to **26**. This is due to a reduction in ICS complaints from **27** for this issue to **13**.

#### ***‘Queue delay’***

The complaint ‘Queue delay’ decreased nationally from **26** to **11**. These complaints are due to queues at airports, mainly in the primary line and enforcement areas (**8**), and **3** relate to Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) booths (see Annex A).

#### ***‘Phone / email not answered’***

The complaint ‘Phone/email not answered’ decreased nationally from **19** to **8**. Complaints mainly relates to a lack of response to enquiries about the status of compensation claims by Financial Services Division (FSD) (**6**).

#### ***‘On hold too long’***

The complaint ‘On hold too long’ decreased nationally from **11** to **1**. This reduction in complaints relates to the CI&SC (**11**)(see Annex C)

# 1. National Trends

## 1.1 National Trends by Region

### Complaints

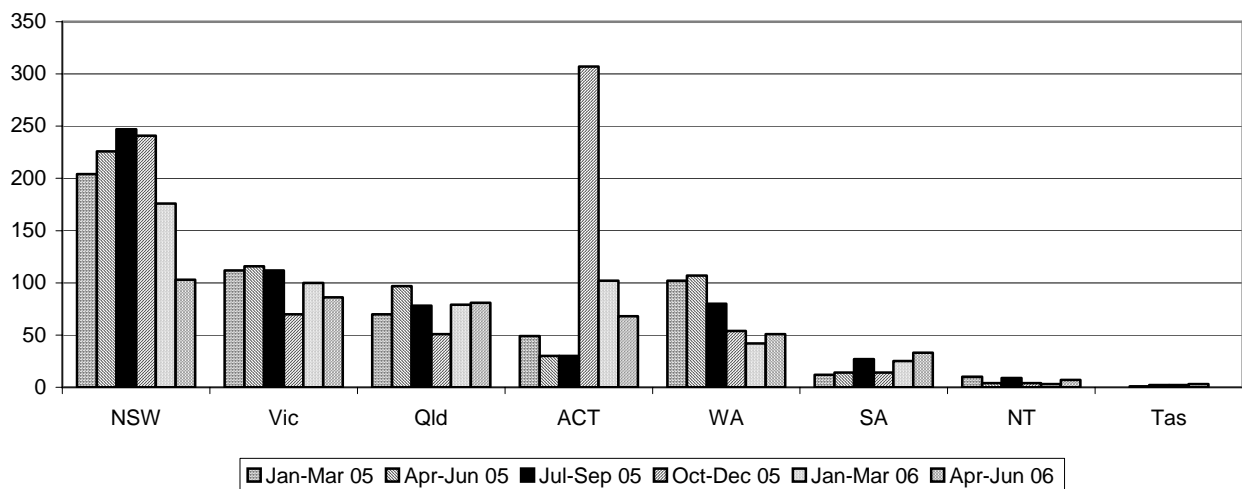


Figure 2. Total number of complaints by region comparing each quarter from January-March 2005 to April-June 2006

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

Western Australia (+9), South Australia (+8), Northern Territory (+4), Queensland (+2), New South Wales (-73), Australian Capital Territory (-34), Victoria (-14), and Tasmania (-3).

### Compliments

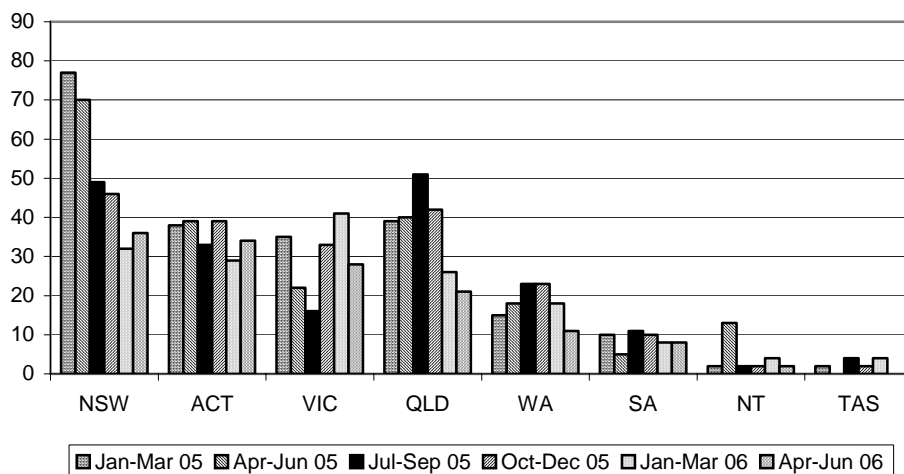


Figure 3. Total number of compliments by region comparing each quarter from January-March 2005 to April-June 2006

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

Australian Capital Territory (+5), New South Wales (+4), Victoria (-13), Western Australia (-7), Queensland (-5), Tasmania (-4), Northern Territory (-2), and South Australia (0).

## National Trends by Function

### Complaints

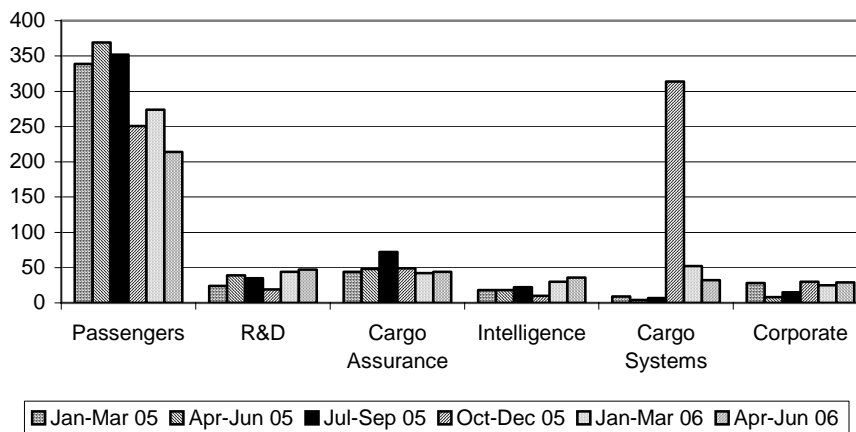


Figure 4. Total number of complaints for the six larger branches or divisions comparing the last six quarters

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

Intelligence (+6), Corporate (+4), R&D (+3), Cargo Assurance (+2), Passengers (-60) and Cargo Systems (-20).

### Compliments

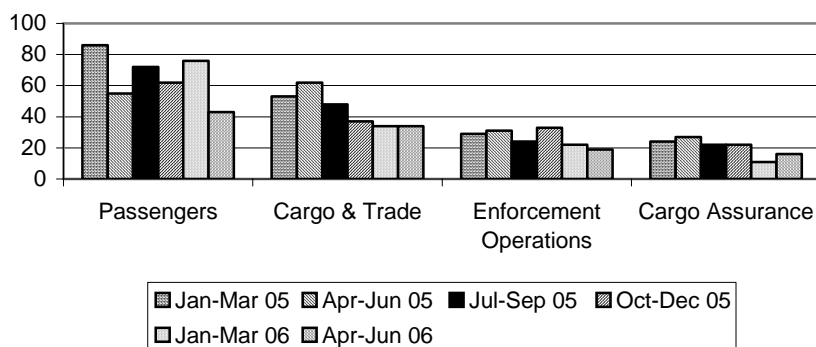


Figure 5. The trend in compliments for the four larger divisions comparing the last six quarters

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

Cargo Assurance (+5), Passengers (-33), Enforcement Operations (-3), and Cargo & Trade (0).

#### 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) and Rude Officers are provided in Annexes A-D.

## 2. Type of Complaint

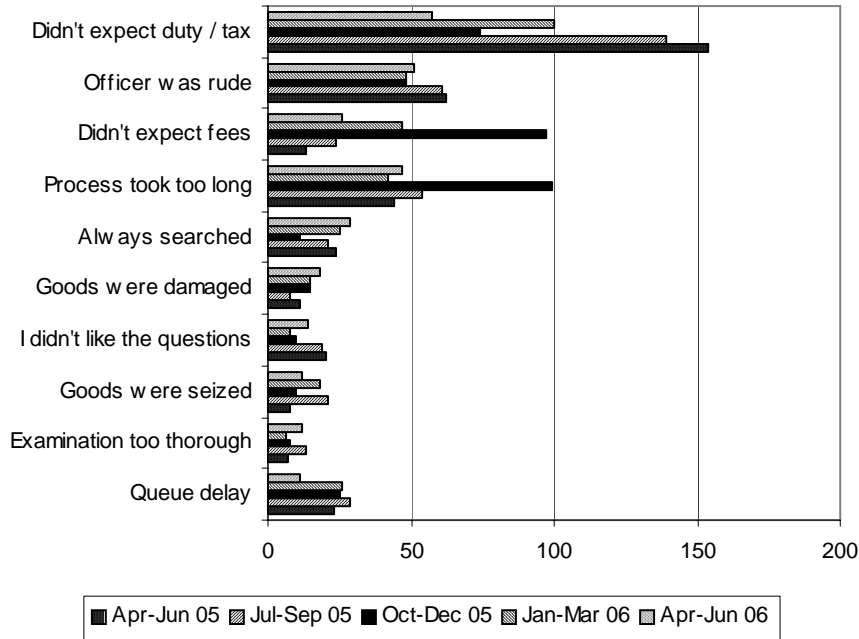


Figure 6. National Top 10 Complaints (excluding referrals) for the last four quarters

A total number of **429** complaints were made for this quarter (excluding referrals). This compares to **530** for the previous quarter and represents a **19.06% decrease**.

## 3. Type of Compliment

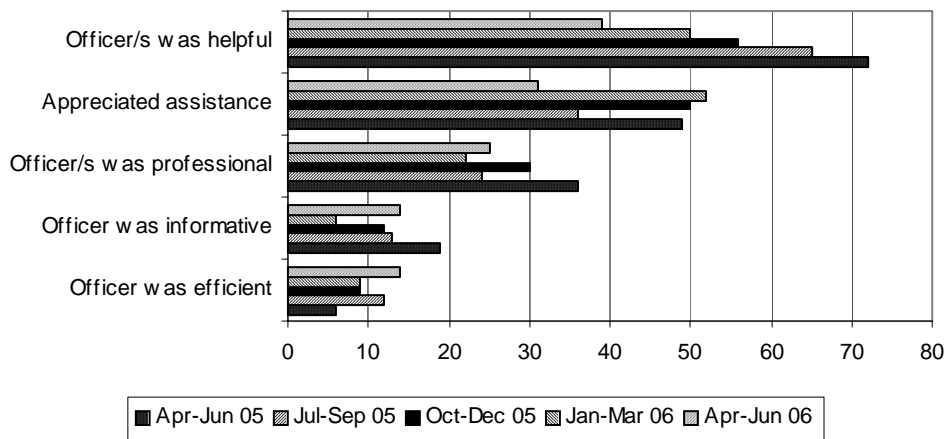


Figure 7. National top 5 compliments (excluding referrals) for the last five quarters

A total of **140** compliments were registered for this quarter (excluding referrals). This compares to **162** for the previous quarter and represents a **13.58% decrease**.

The top three compliment issues were:

- **Officer/s was helpful (39):** Cargo & Trade received this compliment most frequently with **21**. **13** of these compliments were for the CI&SC and **5** were for staff at the counter.
- **Appreciated assistance (31):** Enforcement Operations received this compliment most frequently (**18**), which includes **15** for the National Marine Unit (NMU). This is due to high levels of operational interaction with client groups.
- **Officer was professional (25):** This compliment occurred **12** times in Passengers and occurs **6** times in total in Victoria.

#### **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 **83** complaints and **3** compliments. The main agencies receiving referrals were AQIS (**36**) and Australia Post (**10**).

#### **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 **10.28** working days reported in the previous quarter has decreased to **10.26** working days.

The average compliment resolution time of **1.76** working days reported in the previous quarter has increased to **1.82** working days.

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

Out of a total of **655** cases received, **23** cases opened during the June quarter did not meet the 15 working day benchmark (**3.51%**). Last quarter **3.72%** of cases did not meet this criteria.

## 6. How People Contact Us

The main methods for contacting Customs during this quarter were by email (**294**), phone (including the 1800 number) (**134**), letter/fax (**70**), brochure (**64**) and remote entry (**84**).

*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 remote entry has increased this quarter from **81** to **84**.

Whereas the number of complaints or compliments received has decreased by:

- email (from **316** to **294**),
- phone (from **163** to **134**),
- brochure (from **100** to **64**), and
- letter or fax (from **83** to **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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Email: [roni.giacobetti@customs.gov.au](mailto:roni.giacobetti@customs.gov.au)

## Passengers

### Complaints

The number of complaints received nationally was **214** (excluding referrals) during this quarter (compared to **274** in the previous quarter) which is equivalent to 1 complaint for every **11,050** passengers arriving in Australia. This compares with one complaint for every 10,237 passengers in the January to March 2006 quarter.

During the period 1 April to 30 June 2006 **2,364,770** 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	67	1,053,539	15,724
Melbourne	43	468,079	10,886
Perth	36	218,619	6,073
Brisbane	34	438,142	12,887
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>2,177,929</b>	<b>12,100</b>

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

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

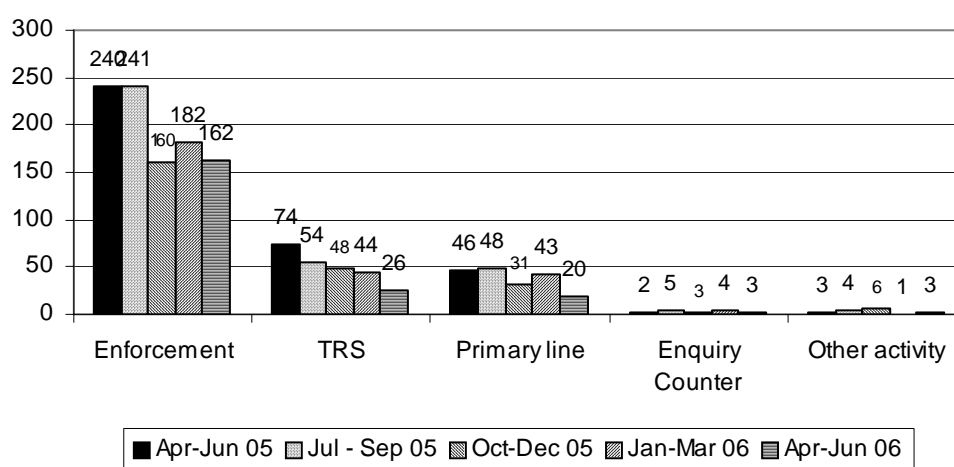


Figure 1. Passenger Complaints at each Airport for April – June 2005, July – September 2005, October – December 2005 and January – March 2006 and April – July 2006.

The **36** complaints received at Perth Airport included:

- **9** relating to being selected, searched, examined or questioned,
- **7** relating to rude officers (see Annex D),
- **5** relating to paying duty,
- **5** relating to TRS, and
- **2** relating to queues.

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

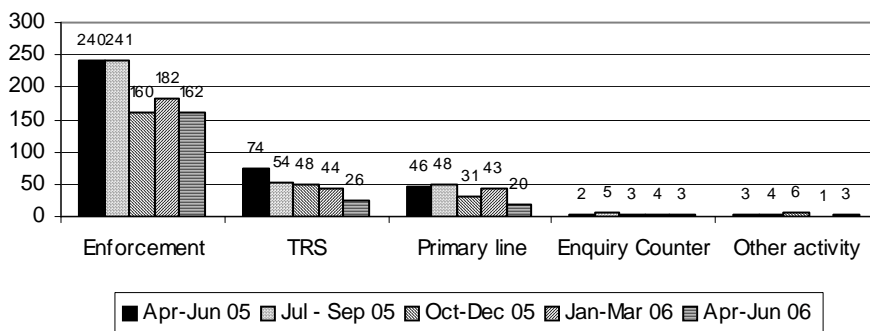


Figure 2. Passengers complaints - comparative assessment by region for April to June 2005, July to September 2005, October to December 2005, January to March 2006 and April to June 2006

The decrease in complaints mainly concerned:

**Enforcement - Issue: Didn't expect duty/tax' (53, down from 85 during the previous quarter).** These related to passenger duty free concessions.

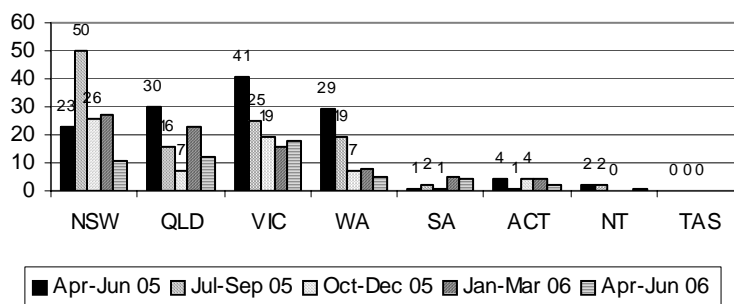


Figure 3. Passenger concessions complaints - comparative assessment by region for April to June 2005, July to September 2005, October to December 2005, January to March 2006 and April to June 2006

**TRS - Issue: 'Queue delay' (3, down 8 from the previous quarter).** A total of **26** complaints were received about the Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) compared to **44** last quarter.

### Compliments

There were **43** compliments for Passengers during this quarter, representing a decrease of **43.42%**.

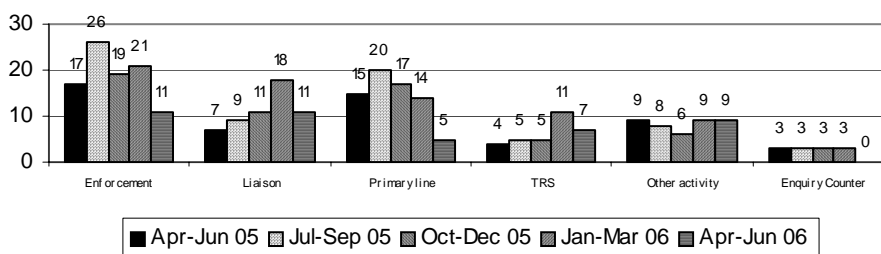


Figure 4. Passenger compliments - comparative assessment for April to June 2005, July to September 2005, October to December 2005, January to March 2006 and April to June 2006

The **9** 'Other activity' cases refer to compliments for Customs Officers largely related to expressions of appreciation for assistance for Melbourne's Commonwealth Games (**5**).

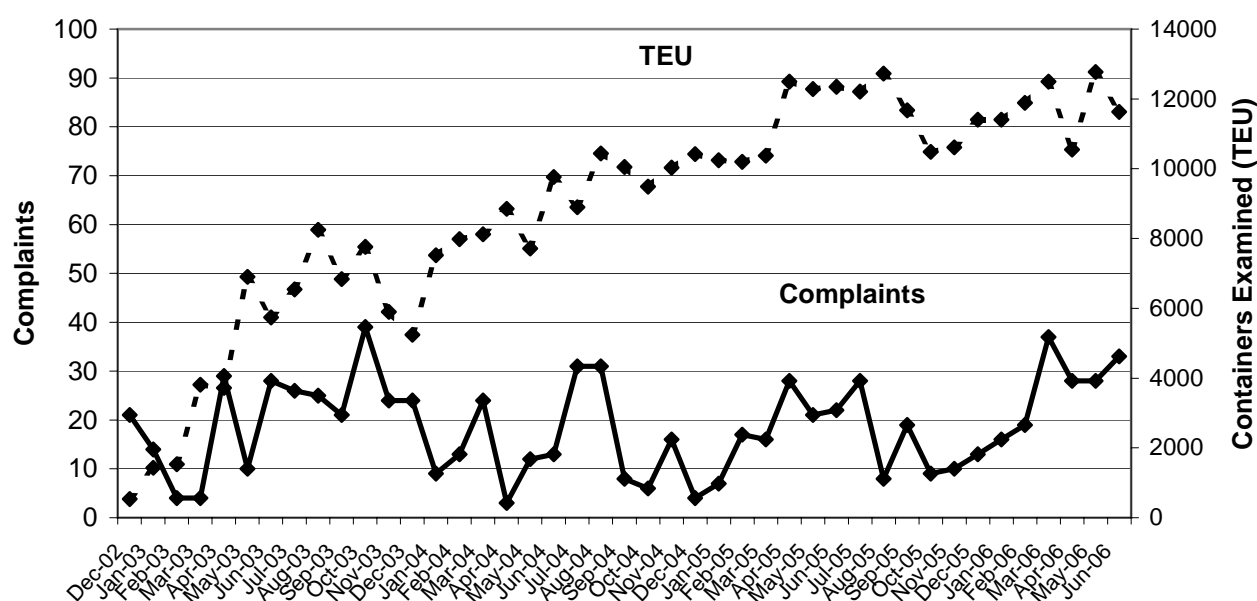
### Research & Development Branch (R&D) Container Examination Facility (CEF)

Figure 1 below shows that complaints against CEFs per number of twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU)<sup>1</sup> examined have increased from **72** to **89** during the quarter.

In April to June 2006, Customs inspected **34,946 TEU** and received **89** 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 **392.65 TEU**. This compares with **1** complaint for every **497.14 TEU** in the previous quarter.

#### Complaints per TEU per Month (see definition at Note 1 below):



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

The increase in complaints during this quarter occurred in both Queensland and Western Australia, each with an additional **12** complaints.

Of the total **89** complaints, the three main complaint issues were:

Issue: “Process took too long” (**25**) - an increase from **23** during the last quarter.

Issues: “Always searched” (**25**) - an increase from **19** during the last quarter.

Issues: “Didn’t expect fees” (**11**) - a decrease from **15** 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 **47**.

The following table details CEF complaints registered for each CEF for the June quarter (**47** compared to **43** for last quarter). This is an *increase* of **8.51%**. This table excludes complaints recorded against CTO/Wharf/Stevedores, Brokers, or Profiling and Alerts.

Issues	Canberra	Adelaide	Sydney	Brisbane	Melbourne	Fremantle	Total
Didn't expect fees	-	-	2	1	4	4	11
Goods were damaged	1	3	-	-	2	1	7
Goods were missing	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Process took too long	1	3	3	7	8	3	25
Pre-emptive	-	-	1	-	1	-	2
Other	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>47</b>

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

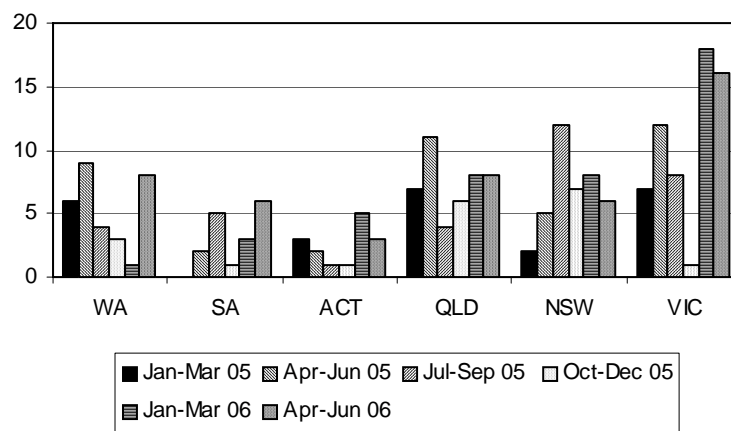


Figure 2. Comparison of CEF operations by region for the previous six quarters

### Compliments

From Dec 2002 to 30 June 2006, since the first CEF was established, **18** compliments have been received for CEF operations, **9** of which have been for Victoria. These largely relate to seizures made. During this time Customs has examined 381,388 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	16	10,089	631
Brisbane	8	9,469	1,184
Fremantle	8	4,567	571
Adelaide	6	347	58
Sydney	6	10,463	1,744
Darwin	-	11	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>34,946</b>	<b>794</b>

Table 2. Number of complaints lodged compared to the number of TEUs<sup>2</sup> inspected for April to June 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 and Brokers
8	1
14	5
5	1
3	0
2	2
0	0
<b>32</b>	<b>9</b>

Table 3: Number of CEF related complaints for April to June 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	25	10,089	404
Brisbane	27	9,469	351
Fremantle	14	4,567	326
Adelaide	9	347	39
Sydney	10	10,463	1,046
Darwin	0	11	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>34,946</b>	<b>411</b>

Table 4. Number of complaints lodged compared to the number of TEUs<sup>2</sup> inspected for April to June 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 **9** complaints were recorded about the CI&SC, compared with **27** for the previous quarter. This is a decrease of **66.67%**.

The most common complaint related to the phone (**4**). This has *decreased* from **21** during the previous quarter.

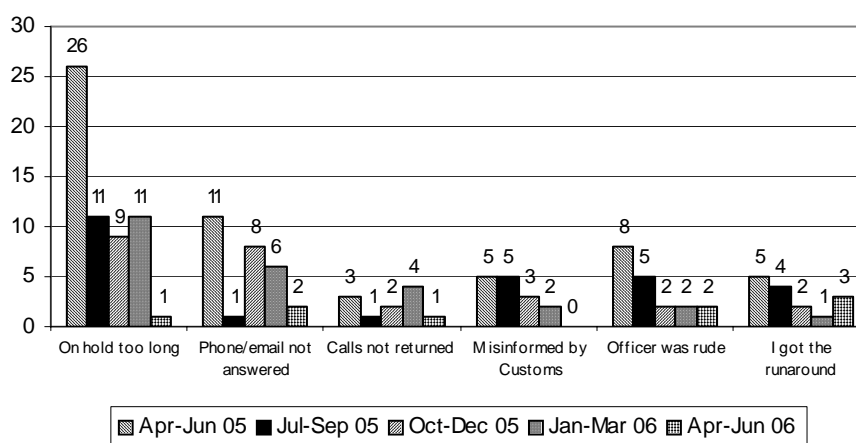


Figure 1. Comparison of the main CI&SC complaints for the previous five quarters

During the period April to June 2006 **122,132** enquiries were dealt with by the CI&SC.

The number of complaints received was **9** during this quarter which is **1** complaint for every **13,570** 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
April	1	32,240	3,553	353	36,146	36,146
May	3	37,177	3,205	340	40,722	13,574
June	5	41,205	3,761	298	45,264	9,053

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

### Compliments

The CI&SC received **17** compliments this quarter (compared to **12** which were received last quarter). **13** of the compliments related to officers being helpful.

**Issue – “Officer was rude”**

“Officer was rude” was the second highest complaint in the quarter with **51** complaints nationally (**48** for the previous quarter).

Work Area	Jan-Mar 06	Apr-Jun 06
Enforcement	18	33
Corporate Communication	0	6
Primary line	15	4
TRS	6	2
Air Cargo	0	2
CI&SC	1	2
Client Services	1	1
Postal Operations	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>51</b>

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

*Note:* Complaints recorded against Corporate Communication related to the “Border Security” television series

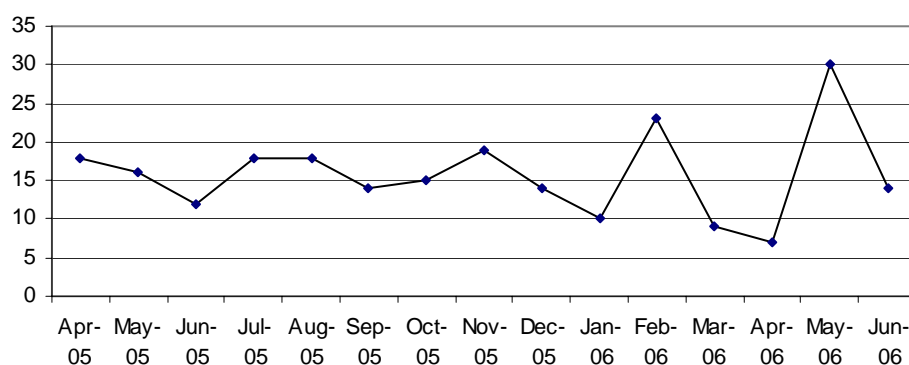
**Officer was rude**

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

The peak in May 06 largely occurred in NSW with **9** (a total of **17** during the April to June quarter compared to **23** during the January to March quarter) and Victoria with **8** (a total of **13** during the April to June quarter compared to **11** during the January to March quarter).

Passengers Work Area – 12 months	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	VIC	WA	Total
Enforcement	38	-	14	8	21	25	106
Enquiry Counter	3	-	1	-	1	2	7
Primary line	19	1	5	2	9	7	43
TRS	9	-	2	-	3	2	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>172</b>

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

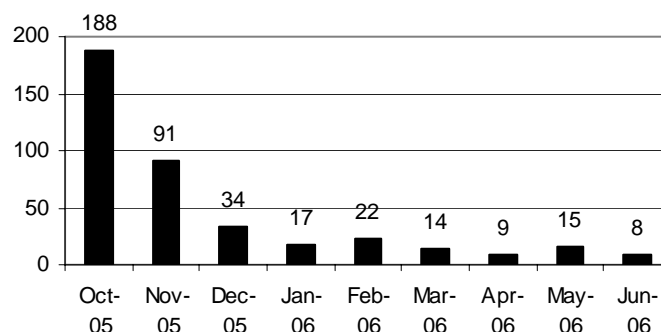


Figure 1. Number of ICS complaints received during October 2005 to June 2006

The reason for complaints in the June quarter were:

Issue	Jan-Mar 06	Apr-Jun 06
Didn't expect fees	28	13
Poor Design	9	8
System Down	4	4
Documentation	0	2
Self Assessed Clearance	2	2
Implementation	1	1
Process took too long	6	1
System Too Slow	1	1
Other (Officers not trained)	1	0
Phone/email not answered	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>32</b>

Table 1. Number of complaints received during January to March 2005 compared to April to June 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.

**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.

**Documentation** – related to complaints about the system showing container status to be clear when they have not been released or about numerous duplicate messages flooding a server.

**Self Assessed Clearance** – related to the need to obtain a broker where goods are valued at less than \$1,000.

## 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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