



Complaints and Compliments
National Quarterly Report
April-June 2004

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 (42 6499) or
Director Corporate Planning (42 5706).

Introduction

This report provides statistical data for complaints and compliments received during the period April to June 2004. All statistical data included in this report was extracted on 7 July 2004. Where appropriate, comparative tables and graphs are provided for previous reporting periods.

Executive summary

Complaints

A total number of **319** complaints were reported about Customs compared with **405** in the previous quarter. The top three complaints were:

“Didn’t Expect Duty/Tax or Fees” (**41**),

“Officer was rude” (**38**), and

“Process took too long” (**29**).

Compliments

A total number of **222** compliments were reported about Customs compared with **233** in the previous quarter. The top three compliments were:

“Officer/s was helpful” (**86**),

“Appreciated assistance” (**62**) and

“Officer/s was professional” (**28**).

Service Standards

The average complaint resolution time of **8.12** working days reported in the previous quarter has *increased* to **10.15** working days. The average compliment resolution time of **1.29** working days reported in the previous quarter has *increased* to **1.44** working days. These resolution times are within the 15 working day service standard.

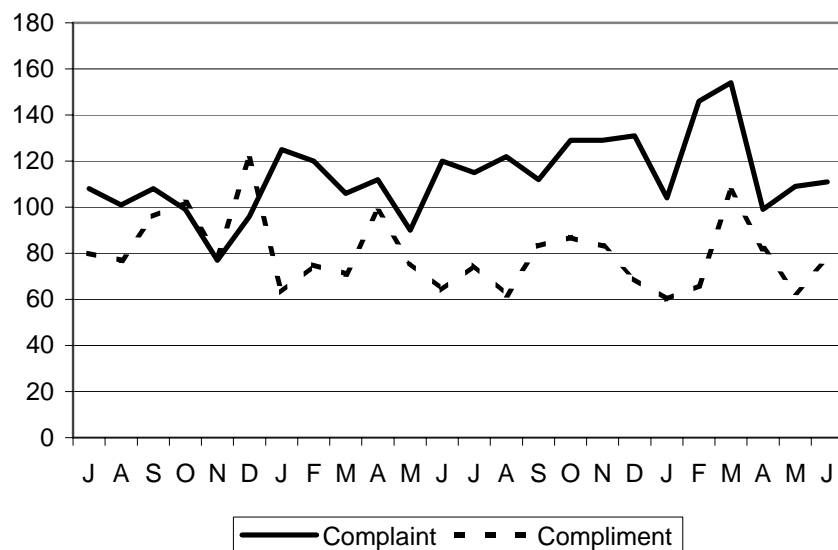


Figure 3. National trends July 2002 - June 2004 by month

Significant variations in the December 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

'Process took too long'

The complaint 'Process took too long' decreased nationally from **56** to **29**. This decrease occurred mainly within the Container Examinations Facility (CEF) – from **31** to **16**.

'Queue delay'

Passenger Processing, nationally, has seen a decrease in 'Queue delay' complaints with **15** received this quarter compared to **40** previously.

The Primary Line received **12** complaints (compared to **28** last quarter). Areas where these complaints reduced were Melbourne Airport (**-6**), Sydney Airport (**-5**), and Perth Airport (**-5**).

'On hold too long'

The complaint of 'On hold too long' decreased nationally from **23** to **7** during this quarter. The main area with a decrease was CI&SC from **23** last quarter to **5** this quarter.

Complaint by Work Area

Container Examination Facility (CEF)

A total of **32** complaints were recorded for the CEF during the April to June quarter, compared to **46** during the previous quarter (See Annex B).

Customs Information & Support Centre (CI&SC)

A total of **22** complaints were recorded for the CI&SC, compared to **53** during the previous quarter (see Annex C).

Passengers Division

A total of **153** complaints were registered for Passengers Division during the June quarter, compared with **202** for the previous quarter (see Annex D). There were reduced complaints against Baggage, Primary Line and Tourist Refund Scheme.

Postal Operations

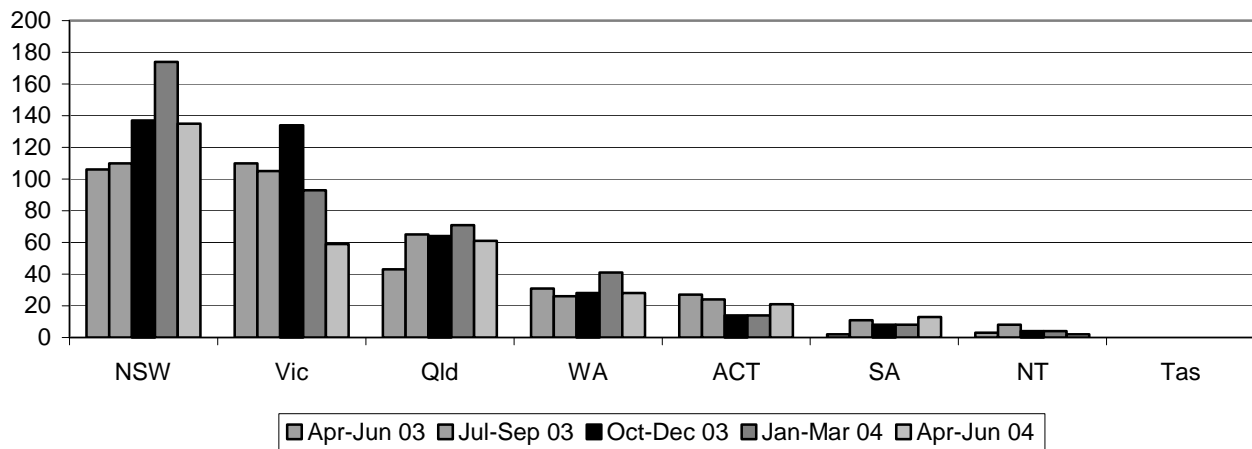
A total of **47** complaints were registered for Postal Operations during the April to June quarter, compared with **32** for the previous quarter (see Annex A).

CMR

CMR received **2** complaints. One complaint was in regard to the Customs Connect Facility and the other was regarding liaison.

1. National Trends

Complaints



Comparing against the previous quarterly figures (excluding referrals), an increase in complaints occurred in the Australian Capital Territory (+7), South Australia (+5) and Northern Territory (+2). A reduction in complaints occurred in New South Wales (-39), Victoria (-34), Queensland (-10) and Western Australia (-13). Tasmania remained stable with 0 complaints.

Compliments

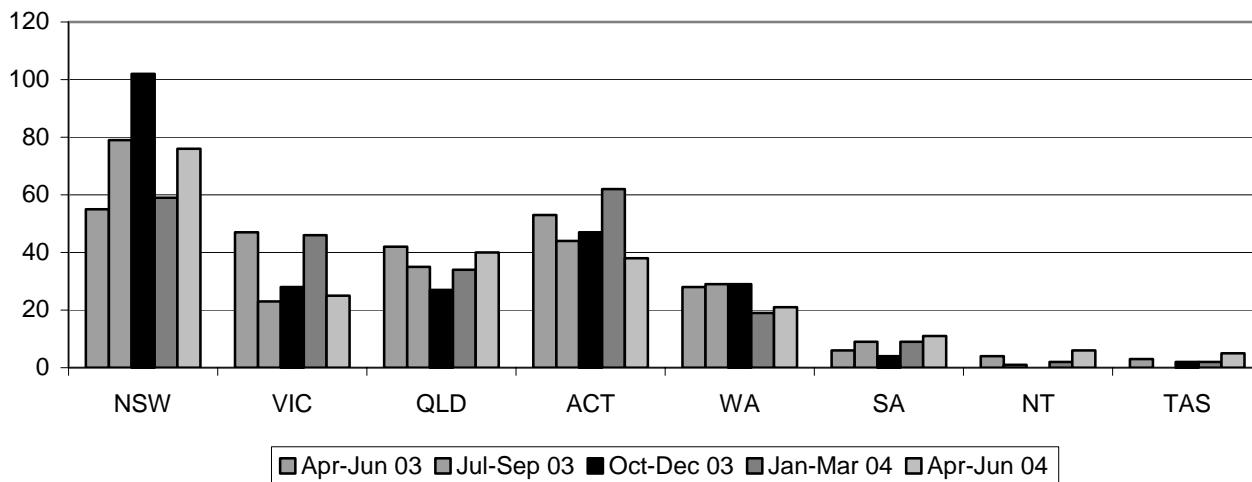


Figure 3. Total number of compliments by region comparing each quarter from April - June 2003 to April - June 2004

A comparison of national trends for compliments between this quarter and the previous quarter (excluding referrals) revealed increases in New South Wales (+16), Queensland (+6), Western Australia (+6), Northern Territory (+4), Tasmania (+3) and South Australia (+2). The Australian Capital Territory (-24) and Victoria (-21) experienced reductions.

National Trends by Division

Complaints

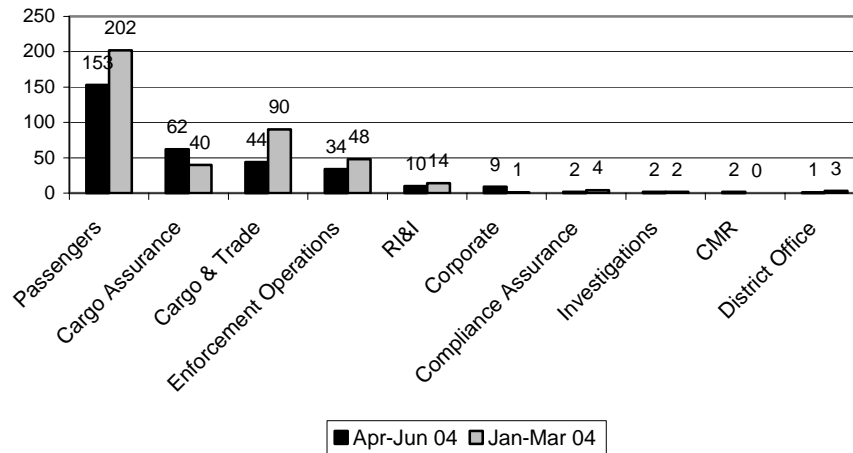


Figure 4. Total number of complaints by division comparing January - March 2004 with April - June 2004

Comparing figures against the previous quarter reveal an increase in complaint numbers for Cargo Assurance (+**22**), Corporate (+**8**) and CMR (+**2**). A reduction in complaint numbers was experienced in Passengers (-**49**), Cargo & Trade (-**46**), Enforcement Operations (-**14**), RI&I (-**4**), Compliance Assurance (-**2**) and District Offices (-**2**). Investigations has not changed (**2**).

The largest decrease in complaints in Passengers (see Annex D) was attributed largely to Baggage which had **22** complaints compared to **43** complaints last quarter. This decrease of **21** complaints largely relates to the issues of 'Didn't expect duty/tax' (-**5**) and 'Queue delay' (-**5**).

The largest increase in complaints in Cargo Assurance was attributed to Postal Operations with **47** complaints compared to **32** complaints last quarter (see Annex A). This increase of **15** complaints largely relates to the issues of 'Goods were seized' or 'Goods were withheld' (+**8**) and phone complaints (+**4**).

Complaints

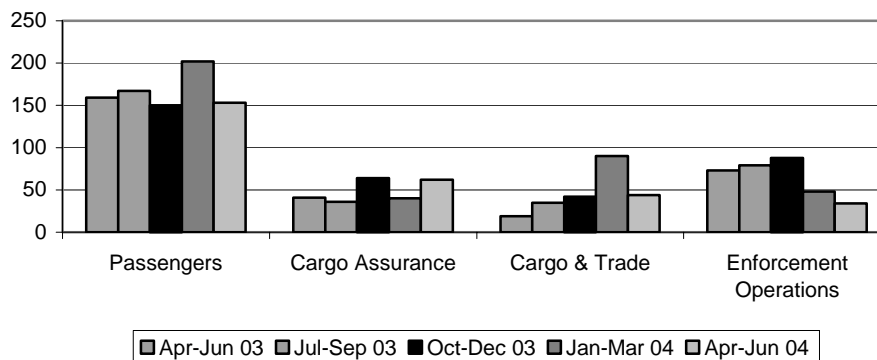


Figure 5. The trend in complaints for the four larger divisions comparing the last five quarters

Compliments

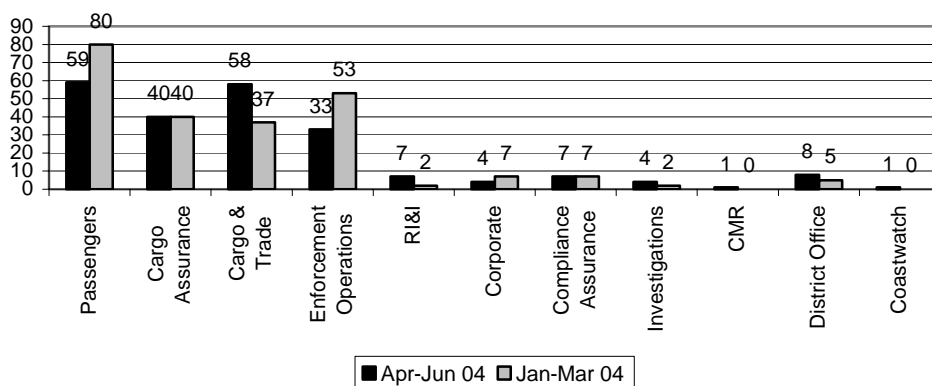


Figure 6. Total number of compliments by division comparing January - March 2004 with April - June 2004

Compliment figures for this quarter compared to the previous quarter indicate a decrease for Passengers **(-21)** (see Annex D), Enforcement Operations **(-20)** and Corporate **(-3)**, while increases were experienced in Cargo & Trade **(+21)**(see Annex A), RI&I **(+5)**, District Offices **(+3)**, Investigations **(+2)**, CMR **(+1)** and Coastwatch **(+1)**. Cargo Assurance **(40)** and Compliance Assurance **(7)** have not changed.

A more detailed analysis of complaints and compliments for Cargo & Trade, the Container Examination Facility (CEF), the CI&SC and Passengers are provided in Annexes A-D.

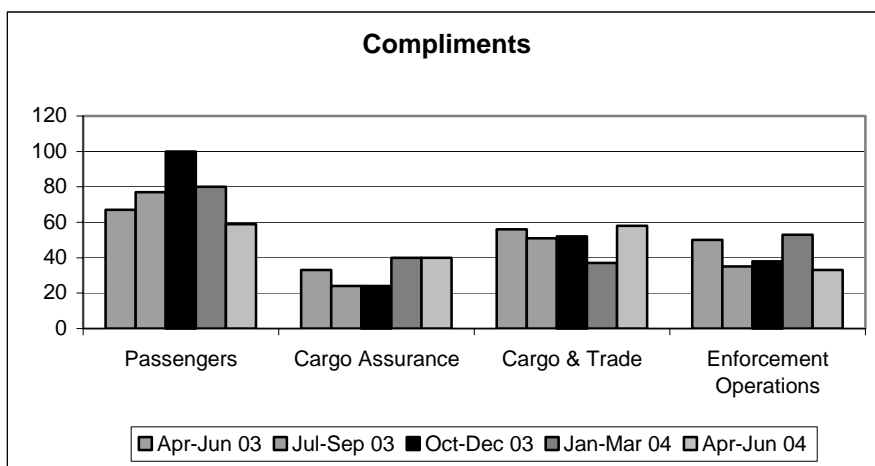


Figure 7. The trend in compliments for the four larger divisions comparing the last five quarters

2. Type of Complaint

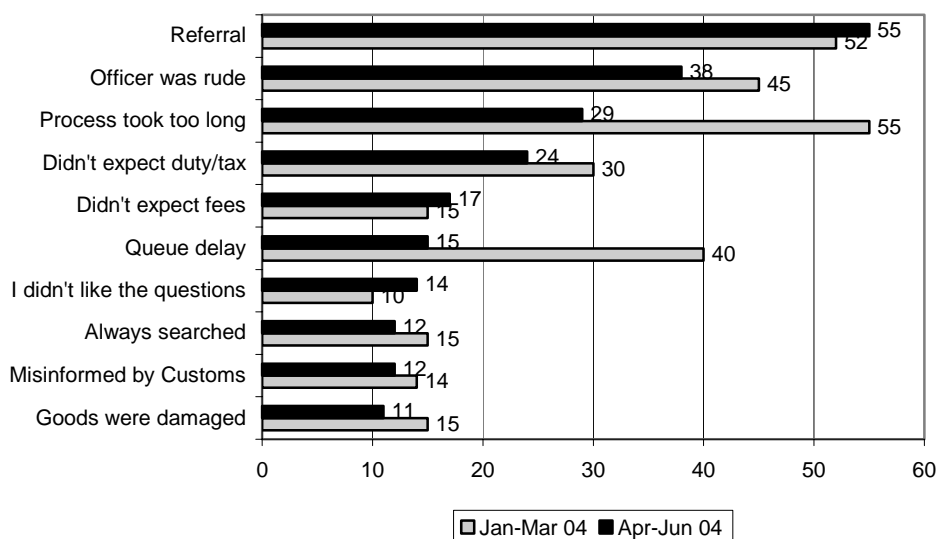


Figure 6. National Top 10 Complaints January - March 2004 and April - June 2004

A total number of **319** complaints were made for this quarter (excluding referrals). This compares to **405** for the previous quarter and represents a **21.23% decrease**.

The top four issues (including referrals) were:

Referral (55): 22 of the 55 referral complaints were for AQIS. Other referrals were largely to Australia Post and Brokers.

Officer was rude (38): This occurred 34 times in Passengers. The majority of these were classified against Enforcement (12) and Primary Line (12).

Process took too long (29): Enforcement Operations received this complaint most often with 16 complaints, all of which were for the CEF (see Annex B).

Didn't Expect Duty/Tax (24): 12 of these complaints occurred in Cargo Assurance, 9 of which occurred at the Postal Operations.

3. Type of Compliment

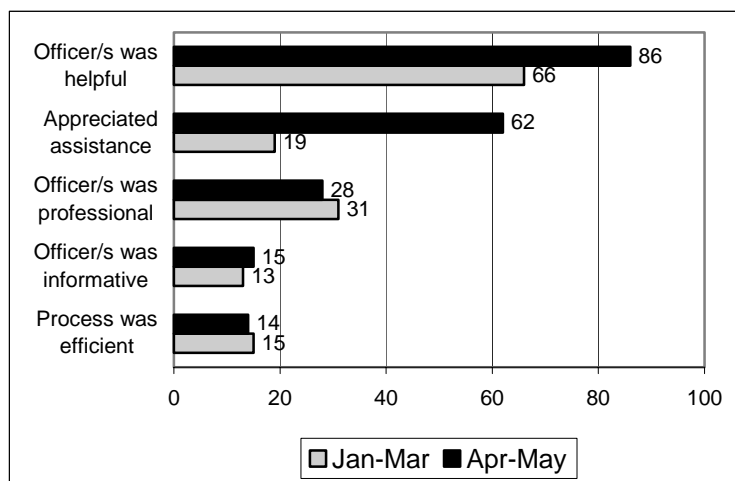


Figure 7. National top 5 compliments January - March 2004 and April - June 2004

A total of **222** compliments were registered for this quarter (excluding referrals). This compares to **233** for the previous quarter. The following provide a summary of the top three issues:

Officer/s was helpful (86): Cargo & Trade received this compliment most frequently with **41**. **29** of these occurred in NSW, **26** being the CI&SC. Cargo Assurance received **28** compliments with **22** being for Postal Operations.

Appreciated assistance (62): The National Marine Unit (NMU) received this compliment most frequently (**30**). This is due to high levels of operational interaction with client groups. Passengers (Liaison) also received this compliment (**25**).

Officer was professional (28): Cargo and Trade received this compliment most frequently with **9**.

4. Referrals to other agencies

Where a complaint or compliment is 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 **1** compliment. The three main agencies for referrals were AQIS (**23**), Australia Post (**9**) and brokers (**6**).

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.

In responding to clients there were **12** cases out of a total of **597** cases registered (including referrals) where Customs did not meet the 15 working day benchmark (**2.01%**).

Average resolution times (in days) for complaint and compliment issues reported during the last nine months are as follows:

	Oct-03	Nov-03	Dec-03	Jan-04	Feb-04	Mar-04	Apr-04	May-04	Jun-04	Average
Complaint	13.84	9.20	8.89	7.38	9.34	12.42	12.83	10.92	9.53	10.54
Compliment	1.70	1.19	0.76	2.62	0.75	1.16	2.33	1.27	0.59	1.37

6. How People Contact Us

The main methods for contacting Customs during this quarter were by email (**227**), phone (including the 1800 number) (**102**), brochure (**100**), letter (**76**) and remote entry (**57**). During this quarter clients tended to use email more often and telephone and brochures were used less.

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 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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Name: Roni Giacobetti, National Coordinator, Complaints and Compliments Network, 42 6499

Email: roni.giacobetti@customs.gov.au

Cargo & Trade

Complaints

There were **44** complaints registered for Cargo & Trade during this quarter (a decrease from **90** last quarter).

Branch	Jan-Mar 04	Apr-Jun 04
CI&SC	53	22
Import Clearance	6	8
Entry Processing	7	5
Counter	10	3
Sea Cargo	3	3
CPR	0	2
Valuation	0	1
Client Education	6	0
Temporary Imports	3	0
Other Activity	2	0
Total	90	44

*Table 1. Cargo & Trade complaints - comparative assessment
January - March 2004 and April - June 2004*

The decrease in Cargo & Trade complaints during this quarter was mainly in the CI&SC (see Annex C), and Counter (Brisbane) areas.

Compliments

There were **58** compliments for Cargo & Trade during this quarter (an increase from **37** last quarter). See a comparison in Table 2 below.

Issue	Jan-Mar 04	Apr-Jun 04
Officer/s was helpful	20	41
Officer/s was professional	8	9
Officer/s was efficient	5	1
Appreciated assistance	1	0
Officer/s was friendly	1	1
Officer/s was informative	1	5
Process was efficient	1	1
Total	37	58

*Table 2. Cargo & Trade compliments - comparative assessment
January - March 2004 and April - Jun 2004*

Postal Operations

The number of complaints for Postal Operations have *increased* from **32** to **47**. Due to differing regional structures, figures for Postal Operations are not included in 'Cargo and Trade', but are shown under 'Cargo Assurance'. Some regions include Postal Operations under 'Cargo Assurance' and others include it under 'Border Compliance and Enforcement'. As such the figures have been extracted separately and shown in Table 3 below.

Issue	Jan-Mar 04	Apr-Jun 04
Didn't expect duty/tax	6	9
Goods were seized	0	6
Goods were damaged	5	5
Process took too long	3	4
Didn't expect fees	3	3
Goods were withheld	1	3
Phone not answered	2	3
Documentation	1	2
I got the run-around	0	2
On hold too long	0	2
Process not explained	0	2
Calls not returned	0	1
Goods not repacked properly	0	1
Goods were missing	4	1
Misinformed by Customs	2	1
Payment facility	3	1
Other	1	1
Officer was rude	3	0
Unhappy with selection	1	0
Total	32	47

*Table 3. Postal Operations - comparative assessment
January - March 2004 and April - June 2004*

Postal Operations received **31** compliments during this quarter (**14** of which were in Queensland). See a comparison in Table 4 below.

Issues	Jan-Mar 04	Apr-Jun 04
Officer/s was helpful	16	22
Officer/s was professional	3	5
Officer/s was informative	1	2
Officer/s was efficient	2	1
Process was efficient	2	1
Total	24	31

*Table 4. Postal Operations compliments - comparative assessment
January - March 2004 and April - June 2004*

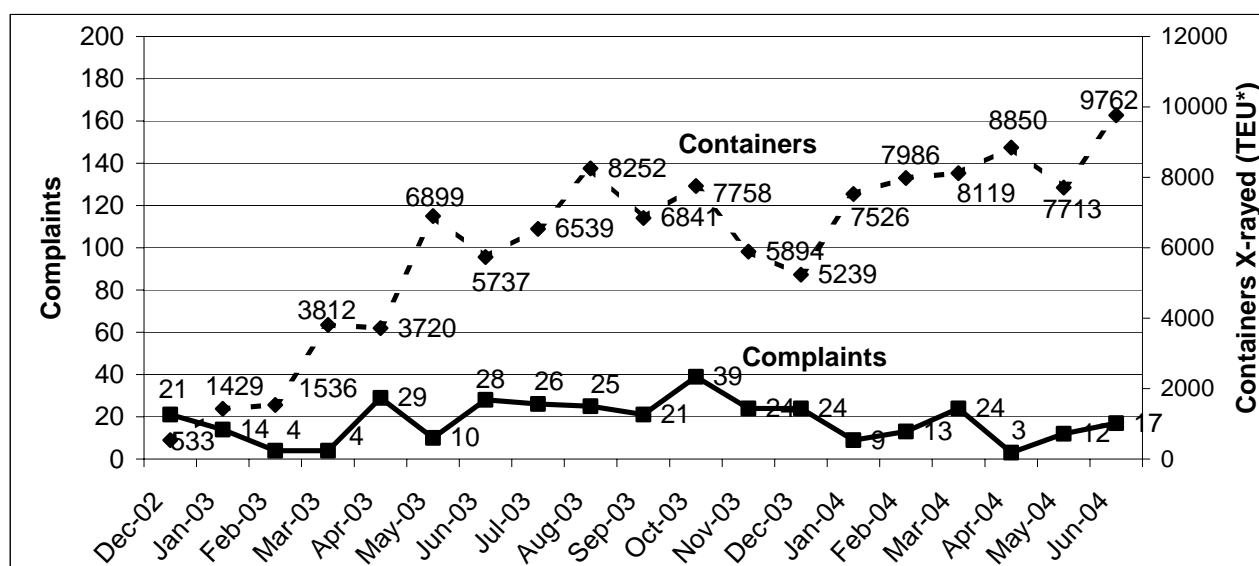
Container Examination Facility (CEF)

Figure 1 below shows that complaints against CEFs per number of twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU)¹ examined have reduced substantially as a result of service improvements.

In June 2004 Customs x-rayed 9762 TEU and received **17** complaints which is equivalent to **1** complaint for every **574 TEUs**. This is a substantial improvement on 12 months earlier when there was **1** complaint for every **205 TEUs** x-rayed. This indicates that the continued Customs focus on client service has reduced complaints considerably.

More containers, fewer complaints:

Figure 1: Trend of public 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 of the four CEFs for the April to June quarter (**32** compared to **46** for last quarter - a decrease of **30.43%**).

Issues	ACT	NSW	QLD	VIC	WA	Total
Didn't expect fees	-	-	3	2	1	6
Goods were damaged	-	-	1	-	1	2
Goods were missing	-	-	1	-	-	1
Goods were withheld	-	-	-	-	5	5
I got the runaround	-	-	-	1	-	1
Misinformed by Customs	-	-	-	1	-	1
Process took too long	2	2	9	3	-	16
Total	2	2	14	7	7	32

Table 1. National CEF complaints by region for April - June 2004

The two main complaint issues were:

Issue – “Process took too long” (**16**) is a decrease from **30** during the last quarter. This decrease occurred in Melbourne (-**11**) and Sydney (-**2**). Fremantle had an increase of **3** complaints and Brisbane had an increase of **2** complaints.

Issue – “Didn’t expect fees” (**6**) is a decrease from **12** during the last quarter. This decrease mainly Melbourne (-**7**). Brisbane had an increase of **3** complaints.

The **2** cases classified against Canberra were policy related.

A trend graph for all CEF complaints received since the facilities commenced operations is shown below.

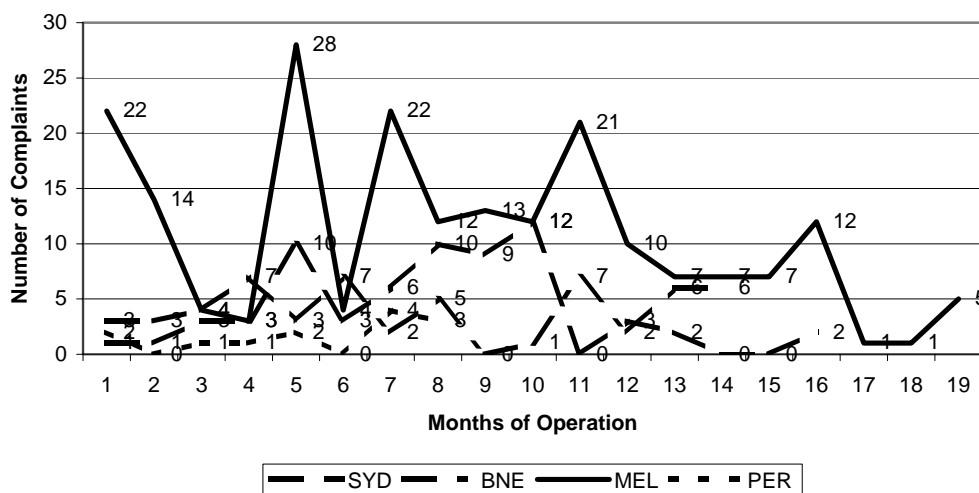


Figure 1. Comparison of complaints re CEF per month of operation eg Melbourne has operated for 19 months, Sydney for 16 months, Brisbane for 14 months and Fremantle for 8 months

During this quarter the number of complaints received nationally for the CEF was **30** (excluding those responded to by the ACT).

Breaking this figure down further:

CEF Location	Number of Complaints	TEUs Examined	Number of TEUs for Every Complaint
Melbourne	7	9,637	1,377
Sydney	2	8,601	4,301
Brisbane	14	5,280	377
Fremantle	7	3,764	538

Table 2. Number of complaints lodged compared to the number of TEUs² examined for April - June 2004

This is 1 complaint for every **852.6** TEUs examined (excluding those responded to by the ACT). This compares with one complaint for every **641.2** TEUs in the previous quarter.

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.

Customs Information and Support Centre

Complaints

During this quarter **22** CI&SC complaints were recorded, compared with **53** for the previous quarter. The most common complaint related to the phone (**15**) where it was either not answered, the calls were not returned, or clients felt that they were on hold for too long. The reasons provided by the CI&SC for the decrease in complaints this quarter were:

As the CI&SC statistical collection has improved with the Telstra call figures now available for both 1300 numbers, we have more reliable data on which to base allocation of staff.

The last quarter allowed us to look over the results of centralisation since 30 June 2003 and we can see that overall, the volume of inbound phone calls is tilting in favor of 'information' over 'support' (51%/49%). Staff resources have been reallocated to ensure more timely answer of phone calls, less waiting time and, therefore, fewer complaints about delays in answering 'information' phones.

Issue	Jan-Mar 04	Apr-Jun04
Phone not answered	14	7
On hold too long	23	5
Calls not returned	2	3
Misinformed by Customs	4	3
I got the runaround	4	2
Officer was rude	4	2
Officer was hard to understand	2	0
Total	53	22

*Table 1. CI&SC complaint issues - comparative assessment
January - March 2004 and April - June 2004*

During the period 1 April to 30 June 2004 **99,667** enquiries were received at the CI&SC. The number of complaints received was **22** during this quarter which is 1 complaint for every 4,530 enquiries. See Table 2 below.

Month	Number of Complaints Received	Number of Phone Enquiries Received	Number of Email Enquiries Received	Total Number of Enquiries Received	Number of Enquiries for Every Complaint
April	10	29,701	3,684	33,385	3,338.5
May	4	29,230	3,824	33,054	8,263.5
June	8	30,072	3,156	33,228	4,153.5

Table 2. Number of complaints lodged at the CI&SC compared to the number of calls received for April - June 2004

Compliments

The CI&SC received **30** compliments this quarter (**20** were received last quarter).

Passengers

Complaints

The number of complaints received nationally for Passengers was **153** during this quarter which is 1 complaint for every 14,107 passengers arriving. This is a decrease of **24.26%**. (The number of passengers arriving in Australia decreased by **13.77%** this quarter). See Table 3 below.

The most substantial decrease in client complaints in Passengers occurred in:

Baggage in VIC (from **22** to **9**);
the Primary Line regarding queuing problems (**49** to **17** spread evenly through NSW, VIC and WA); and
TRS in NSW (from **31** to **12**).

A comparison of Passengers complaints is shown in Table 1 below.

Branch	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun
Enforcement	56	59
Primary Line	51	36
TRS	47	34
Baggage	43	22
Enquiry Counter	2	2
Other activity	3	0
Total	202	153

*Table 1. Passengers complaints - comparative assessment
January - March 2004 and April - June 2004*

Issue: "Officer was rude". The following tables (2 & 3) compare the number of complaints received for "Officer was rude" during the last five quarters:

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

*Table 2. "Officer was rude" complaints - comparative assessment
by Branch during the last 5 quarters*

Region	Apr-Jun 03	Jul-Sep 03	Oct-Dec 03	Jan-Mar 04	Apr-Jun 04
NSW	14	13	8	15	16
VIC	5	6	8	6	8
QLD	3	1	3	8	4
WA	4	3	1	2	4
SA	0	1	0	3	2
NT	1	0	1	0	0
ACT	0	1	0	0	0
TAS	0	0	0	0	0
Total	27	25	21	34	34

Table 3. "Officer was rude" complaints - comparative assessment by Region during the last 5 quarters

Figure 1 below compares New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland against the national trend for Passengers complaints for the previous twelve months.

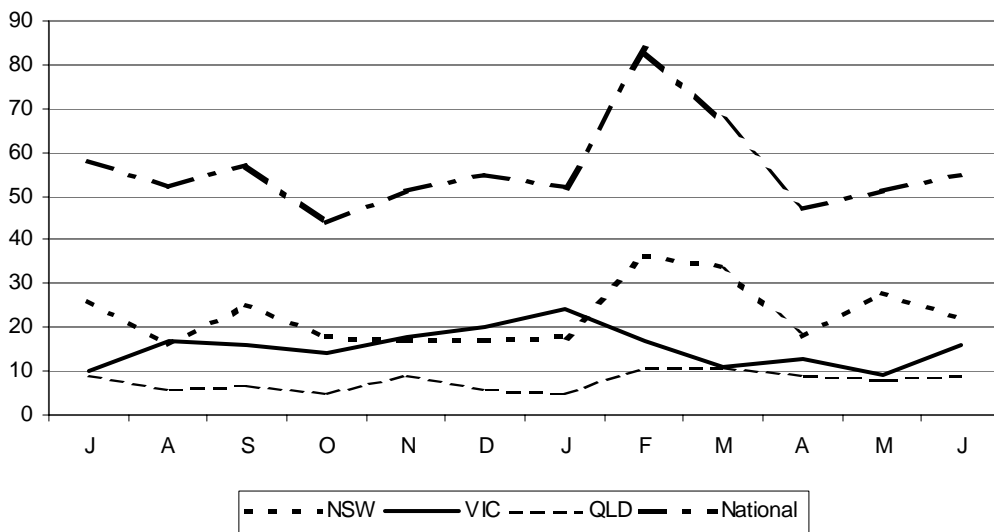


Figure 1. Trend Graph of New South Wales, Victorian and Queensland Passengers complaints shown with the national trend for July 2003 - June 2004

Figure 2 below compares complaints received by each of the airports during this quarter.

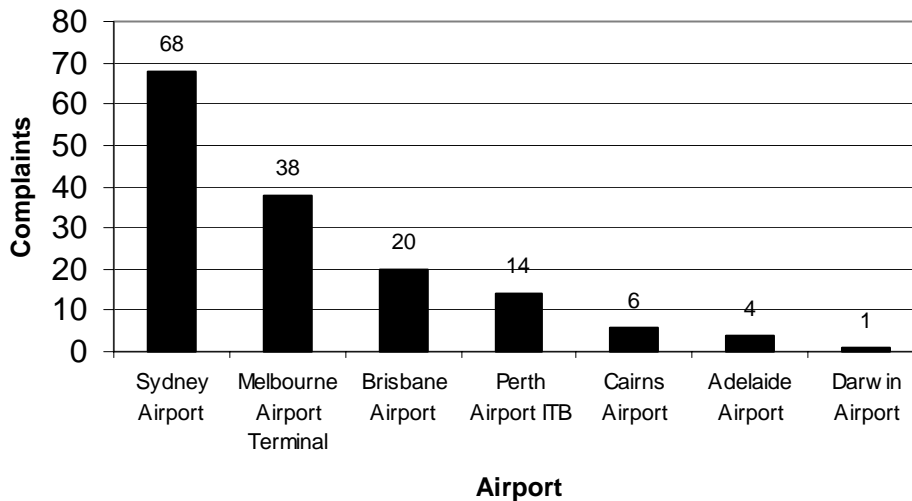


Figure 2. Passenger Complaints at each Airport for April - June 2004

A total of **34** complaints were received about the TRS. A comparison of the top five TRS complaints is shown in Table 4 below.

Symptom	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun
Lack of information	6	5
Misinformed by Customs	6	4
Goods not in possession	4	4
Queue delay	5	3
Unhappy about 30 minute rule	5	3

Table 4. Top 5 TRS complaints - comparative assessment
January - March 2004 and April - June 2004

During the period 1 April to 30 June 2004 **2,158,358** passengers arrived through international airports nationally. Numbers of passengers arriving through each major airport are shown in Table 5 below.

Airport	Number of Airport Complaints	Passenger Arrival Numbers	Number of Passengers for Every Complaint
Sydney	68	967,728	14,231
Melbourne	38	439,199	11,558
Brisbane	20	380,563	19,028
Perth	14	197,705	14,122

Table 5. Number of complaints lodged at major airports compared to the number of arrival passengers for April - June 2004

You will note from the above table that Brisbane airport had the lowest number of complaints per passenger arrival, and Melbourne airport had the highest number of complaints per passenger arrival.

Compliments

There were **59** compliments for Passengers during this quarter, representing a decrease of **35.59%**. See a comparison in Table 6 below.

Branch	Jan-Mar 04	Apr-Jun 04
Liaison	10	20
Primary line	18	17
Enforcement	12	7
Baggage	18	6
TRS	11	4
Enquiry Counter	5	2
Client education	2	2
Other activity	4	1
Total	80	59

*Table 6. Passenger compliments - comparative assessment
January - March 2004 and April - June 2004*

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]

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:
