

Australian
CUSTOMS
Service

National

National Quarterly Report

Complaints and Compliments

July to September 2002



Executive Summary	2
Background	3
Complaints and Compliments	4
Issues by Region	4
Trend by Issues	4
Issues by Division	5
Complaints	5
Trend by Complaint Issues	5
Main Complaint Issues	6
Referral to other agencies	6
Queue Delay	7
Goods not in possession (TRS)	7
Tourist Refund Scheme	8
Trend for TRS Complaints	8
Other Complaint Issues	9
Compliments	10
Trend by Compliment Issues	10
Significant Compliments Offered	10
Officer/s was helpful	11
Officer/s was informative	11
Referral to other agencies	11
Performance Against Service Standards	12
How People Contact Us	12

Executive Summary

This is the national report for the Complaints and Compliments Management System (CCMS) covering the period July to September 2002. Please note that references in this report to various Branches and Divisions in the Australian Customs Service ('Customs') refer to the corporate structure which existed prior to October 2002.

A total number of **349** complaints were reported for the period. This is a **2.6%** decrease from the previous quarter, with **358**.

A total number of **258** compliments were offered during this report period. This is a **6.6 %** increase from the previous quarter with **224**.

'Queue Delay', features as the most significant complaint issue for Customs in this quarter with **26** complaints. Analysis has revealed, that during this quarter, **18** of these complaints pertained to the Baggage and Primary line operations at Melbourne Airport.

Complaints regarding the procedures and administration of the Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) continue to form the bulk of all complaints received, with **129** made during this quarter.

A total of 31 complaints were referred to other organisations.

The most frequent compliment used by clients to describe Customs officers during this quarter was "Officer was helpful" (**78**). The following Divisions received this praise: Border (**29**) Commercial (**24**) and PAX processing (**25**).

Average resolution time for complaints has increased to **5.94** days compared to **4.11** for the previous quarter.

Average response time for compliments was **1.4** days, compared to **0.9** days for the previous quarter.

Background

This is the seventh national report for the Complaints and Compliments Management System (CCMS). This report covers the period from July to September 2002. The report also contains trend information for the 12 month period from Oct 2001 to Sep 2002.

The purpose of the CCMS is to provide:

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

The national database for the CCMS, *Satisfy2000*, has been designed to log all complaints and compliments received in a systematic way and provide statistical information as detailed in this report. The database also has the capacity to provide customised reports to meet specific needs of managers, on request.

NOTE

Some changes have been made to the level of reporting and the layout of information. To ensure we meet your reporting needs, we would appreciate any comments you may have about this report and welcome any input you may wish to contribute regarding the content and layout.

Please direct your comments to either:

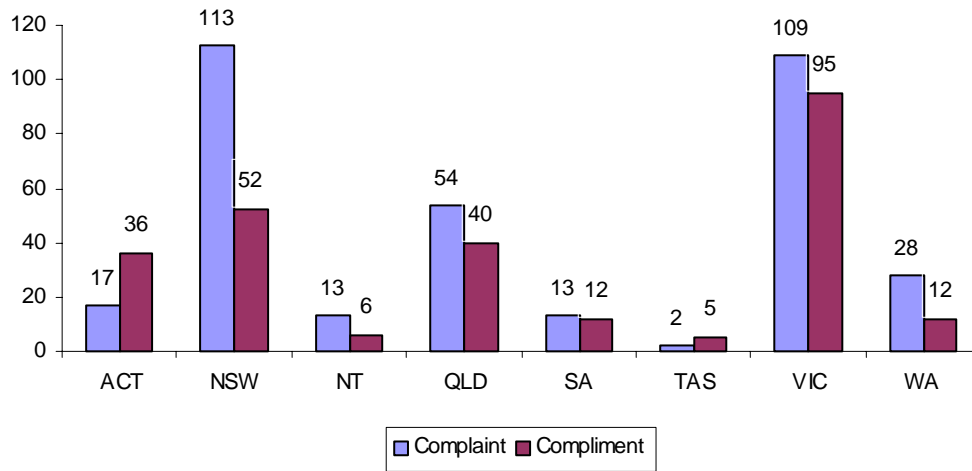
Kaye Barron 42 5450 (Manager Client Service Policy)
Andrew Williams 42 6580 (National Coordinator CCMS); or
andrew.williams@customs.gov.au).

Regional Coordinators

More detailed information about a particular region may be obtained by contacting dedicated Complaints and Compliments Coordinators in each region – see Annex C.

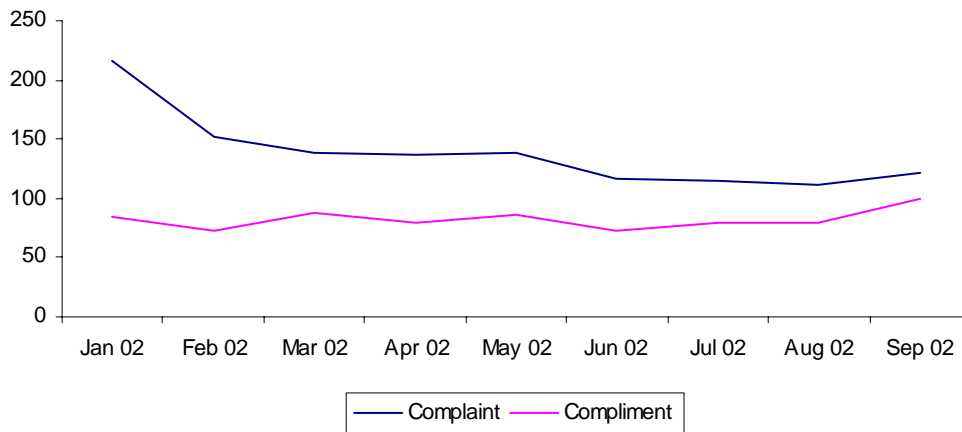
Complaints and Compliments

Issues by Region

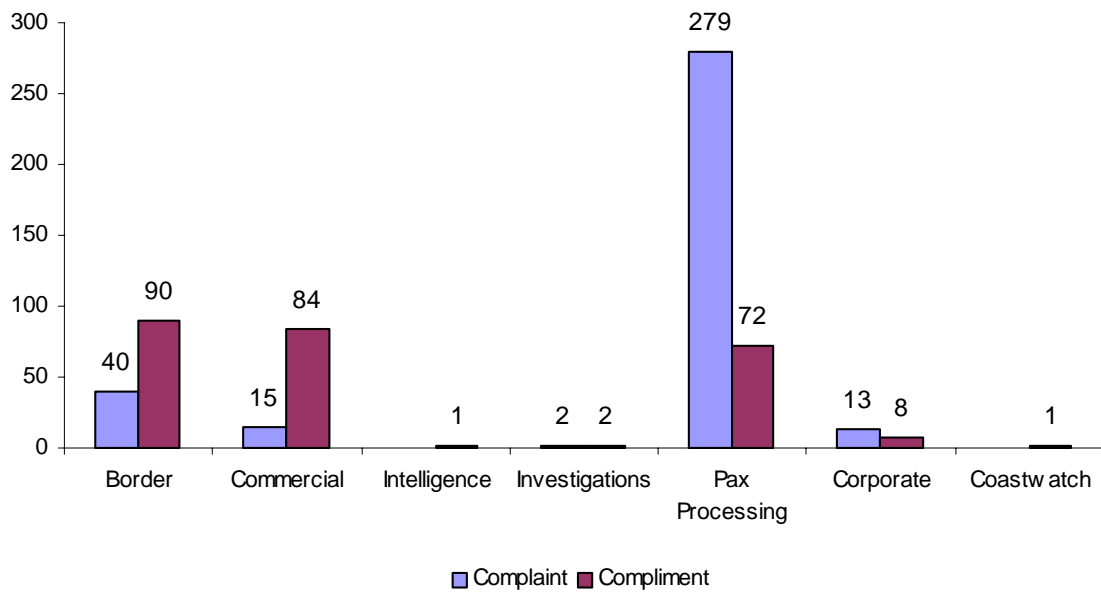


The total number of complaints reported for this quarter was **349**, compared to **358** for the previous quarter. The total number of compliments reported for this quarter is **258**, compared to **242** for the previous quarter.

Trend by Issues



Issues by Division

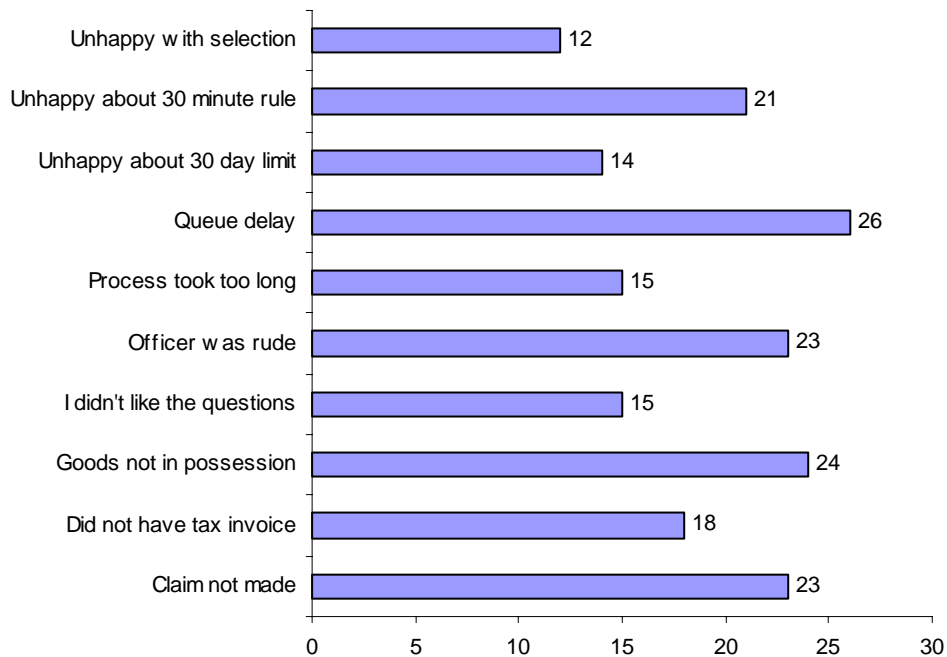


Complaints

Trend by Complaint Issues



Main Complaint Issues



Referral to other agencies

Customs continues to receive complaints from clients about issues which clients perceive are Custom's responsibility, but are actually the responsibility of other organisations. In this quarter, **31** complaints were referred to other organisations. This compares to **33** referred in the previous quarter.

When Customs receives a complaint, which relates to another organisation, the client is notified of the appropriate recipient organisation. With the client's approval, the matter is then referred to the appropriate organisation for their response.

Queue Delay

The main complaint issue for this quarter is 'Queue Delay' with a total of **26**. This is a 44.5% increase on the previous quarter, with **18**. Analysis has revealed that of the **26** complaints about 'Queue delay', **18** pertained to Baggage and Primary line operations at Melbourne Airport. A selection of client complaints is provided Annex – A.

	Work area	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep
NSW	Primary line	4	2
NT	Baggage	0	1
QLD	Baggage	0	1
	Primary line	4	1
	TRS	1	1
SA	Baggage	2	1
VIC	Baggage	3	12
	Primary line	4	6
	TRS	0	1

Goods not in possession (TRS)

The second top complaint for this quarter is 'Goods not in possession', with a total of **24** complaints. This is a **13%** decrease in complaints reported from the previous quarter, with **37**.

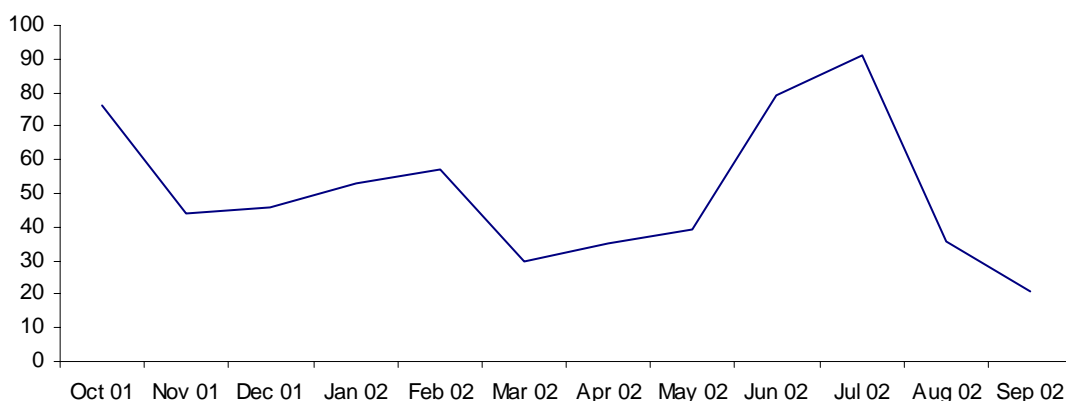
State	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep
NSW	26	17
QLD	5	3
VIC	6	1
TAS	-	-
SA	-	-
WA	-	3
NT	-	-
Total	37	24

Tourist Refund Scheme

In the third quarter of 2002, 129 complaints relating to TRS were reported. This represents a 15.4% decrease in the number of TRS complaints, compared against the previous quarter. The Trends for TRS Complaints chart below indicates a steady decrease since July 2002.

TRS Issues	Apr to Jun	Jul to Sep
Claim not made	23	23
Did not have tax invoice	20	18
Good exported unaccompanied	1	5
Goods not in possession	37	24
Lack of information	2	4
Misinformed by airline	-	1
Misinformed by Customs	-	2
Misinformed by retailer	2	-
No refund for services	3	2
Officer was rude	4	6
Process not explained	3	3
Queue delay	1	2
Unhappy about \$300 limit	13	2
Unhappy about 30 day limit	22	14
Unhappy about 30 minute rule	6	21
Unhappy about refund	3	2
Total	140	129

Trend for TRS Complaints



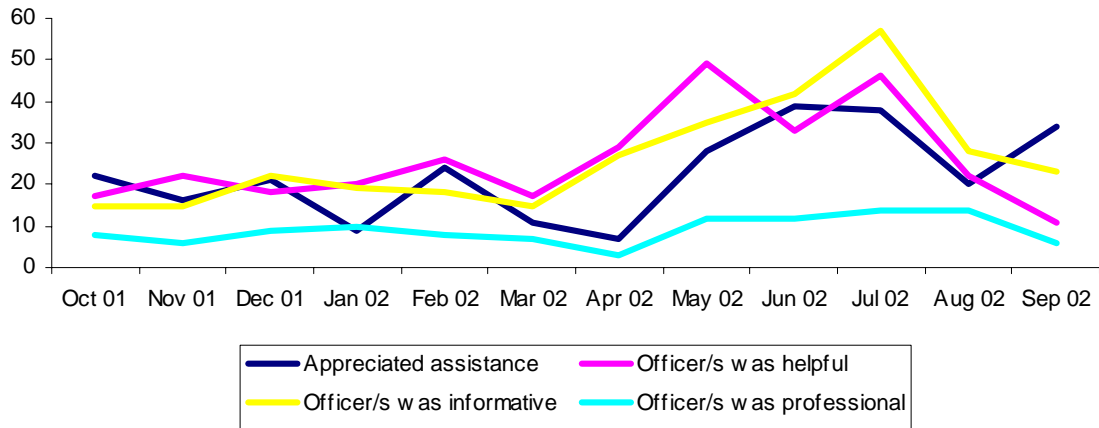
Other Complaint Issues

The remaining 127 complaints are spread over 32 separate issues and relate to the operations of 6 Branches of Customs. The following table indicates by Division, Branch and Complaint, the issues that have been reported more than twice for this period.

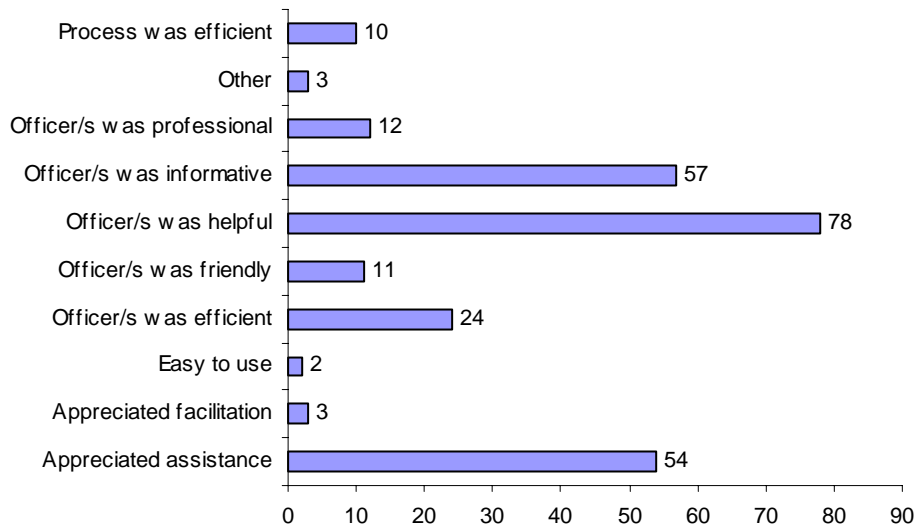
Division	Branch	Complaint	Occurrence
Commercial	CIC Import clearance	Misinformed by Customs	3
Corporate	Corporate Communications	Documentation	4
		Lack of information	3
Pax Processing	Baggage	Always searched	7
		Did not expect duty/tax	6
		Goods were damaged	6
		Examination to thorough	4
		Goods were seized	4
		Lack of information	4
		Process not explained	3
Border	Postal operations Cargo clearance	Goods were missing	4
		Did not expect duty/tax	3
		Goods were damaged	3
Total			54

Compliments

Trend by Compliment Issues



Significant Compliments Offered



Officer/s was helpful

The main compliment offered this quarter was 'Officer/s was helpful', with a total of **78**. Many of these compliments were received from other agencies, acknowledging the assistance given by Customs during a joint operation or project. A selection of client compliments is contained in Annex - B.

Officer/s was helpful	Apr to Jun	Jul to Sep
Border	20	29
Commercial	18	24
Pax processing	26	25
Total	64	78

Officer/s was informative

The second top compliment was 'Officer was informative', with a total of **57**. The following table demonstrates that the Commercial Division continued to receive accolades on the level of service provided to client groups.

Officer was informative	May to Jun	Jul to Sep
Commercial	31	39
Border	14	9
PAX processing	3	7
Corporate	2	1
Intelligence	0	1
Total	50	57

Referral to other agencies

Customs also receives compliments from clients about issues which they perceive are Customs responsibility, but which are actually the responsibility of other organisations. In this quarter, **4** compliments were referred to other agencies. This compares with **2** referred compliments in the previous quarter.

Performance Against Service Standards

The Complaints & Compliments Network monitors performance against the Customs Service Charter:

“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.”

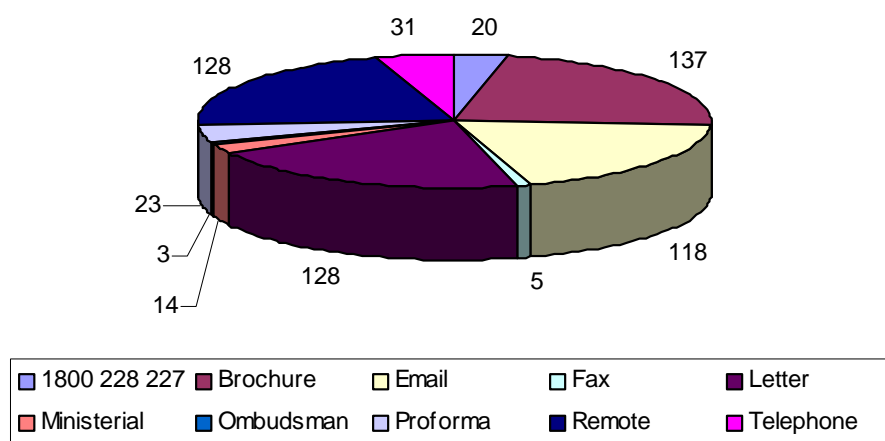
In acknowledging complaints, the Complaints & Compliments Network met the time standard in every case during the quarter.

In responding to clients, there were 20 cases where Customs did not respond within 15 working days. In 9 of these cases, the client was advised of the delay in responding to their complaint. The lack of responses within the specified timeframe has been addressed with all coordinators being advised of the performance standard required.

Resolution time averages (in days) during the quarter were as follows:

	July	August	September	Average
Complaints	6.65	7.52	3.66	5.94
Compliments	2.90	0.81	0.49	1.40

How People Contact Us



During this quarter, Brochures (**137**) proved to be the most popular feedback format used by clients. This was followed by Written communications, (**128**) Remote (Complaints and Compliments icon) entries (**128**) and Emails (**118**).

Selected client comments – Complaints

Queue delay

Case 106853

While I appreciate that there may be delays in Customs, due to infrastructure improvements being made, the excessive delays in getting through the red exit (especially compared to Green) are unlikely to encourage people to honestly declare items they are carrying. This would be counter productive.

Case 106801

What's up with the red queue? 1 1/2 hours waiting to show my biscuits, then Customs officer doesn't even look at them. I won't bother declaring anything next time.

Case 106564

Not happy with the length of red queue and amount of time spent in the same. Client service: she saw Customs assist a number of other passengers with small children, but they did not help her, (ie: it should be across the board and not selective). Other issues include: rudeness of officers at the red marshal point and the futility of declaring items, waiting in a long queue and not having bags opened.

Case 106637

Arrived on a flight from South East Asia and declared wooden articles. I missed the connecting flight to Sydney due to spending over 1 hour in a red queue. I joined the queue at 0600 hrs, and cleared the AQIS examination bench at 0800 hrs).

Case 106417

I would like to know what you believe is a reasonable amount of time it should take to get off the plane, and proceed to the general public?

Case 106409

My contact with Customs was in Melbourne Airport in International Arrivals.

- The service was adequate, but staff are not very customer oriented. Very official and strict. Not that pleasant towards children.
- Also you should consider making passport stamps easier to obtain for children's passports.
- The queuing system is poor and the red line enforcement a bit over the top.

Selected client comments - Compliments

Postal Operations

Case 106930

I am just conveying my gratitude for your reimbursing payment for goods taxed inappropriately. It is good to know some government services do have a human face. Once again thankyou very much.

Case 106731

I was satisfied because the Customs employee I dealt with was extremely helpful, and, I was impressed by their level of service.

Cargo Examination

Case 106445

I was very happy with the great service that I received from everyone at Cargo Examination. The three staff members I dealt with, were very helpful with any questions that I had. It's great to come to a place and always get a smile.

Air Cargo Compliance

Case 106554

I was extremely satisfied with the service I received in Melbourne at the Tullamarine facility.

The Customs officer made it a pleasant experience for me. This Customs officer is a very knowledgeable, helpful, and customer oriented person. I believe his professional attitude and exceptionally high standard of customer service makes him one of the best employees in his department.