

Australian
CUSTOMS
Service

National



Complaints and Compliments

National Quarterly Report

October - December 2002

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Executive Summary

This is the Australian Customs Service Complaints and Compliments National Quarterly report for October – December 2002. All information included in this report has been extracted from the Complaints and Compliments Management System (CCMS).

A total number of **268** complaints were reported nationally. This is a **23.2%** decrease from the previous quarter, with **349**.

A total number of **302** compliments were reported nationally. This is a **17%** increase from the previous quarter with **258**.

‘Officer was rude’, features as the most significant complaint issue for Customs in this quarter with **33** complaints reported nationally. The highest concentration of this complaint was located at the NSW Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) counter (**6**) followed by the VIC Primary Line (**4**), NSW Primary Line, QLD Primary line and VIC Baggage (**3 each**).

There were **47** TRS complaints reported nationally for October - December 2002. Analysis of TRS data for the period January – September 2002 revealed an average of **48** complaints reported per month. A downward trend in TRS complaints is noted for the same periods in 2000 and 2001.

A total of **67** complaints and **5** compliments were referred to other organisations.

The most frequent compliment used by clients to describe Customs officers during this quarter was “Appreciate assistance” (**74**). The following Divisions received this praise: ACT Enforcement Operations (**22**) VIC Passengers (**11**) and NSW Passengers (**9**).

The average resolution time for complaints has increased to **6.69** days compared to **5.94** for the previous quarter.

The average resolution time for compliments has decreased to **1.03** days, compared to **6.07** days for the previous quarter.

Background

This is the eighth National Quarterly report prepared by Australian Customs Service, Complaints and Compliments staff. This report provides statistical data for the period October - December 2002, and trend information for the period January - December 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

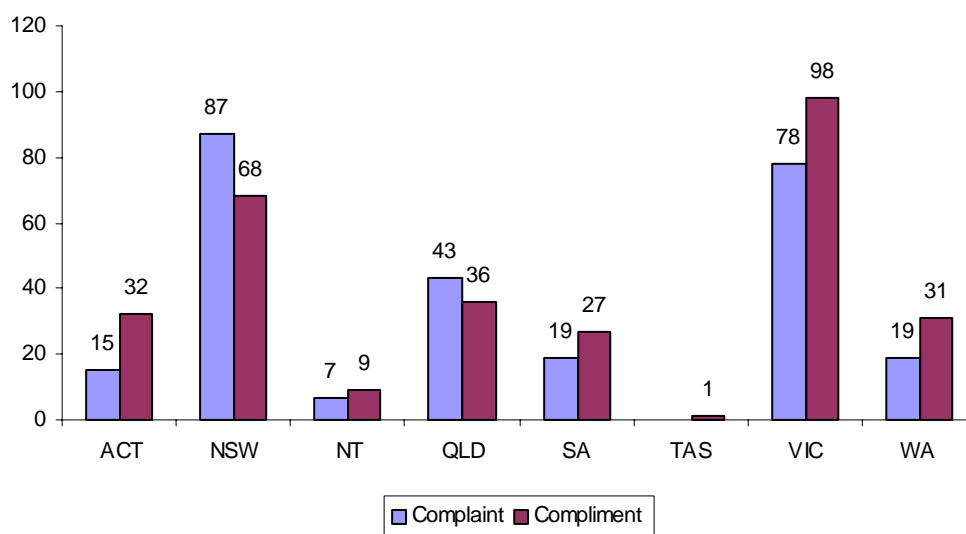
Some changes have been made to the level of reporting and the layout of information. To ensure we meet your reporting needs, we would appreciate any comments you may have about this report and welcome any input you may wish to contribute regarding the content and layout.

Please direct your comments to either:

Kaye Barron 42 5450 (Manager Client Service Performance)
Andrew Williams 42 6441 (National Coordinator CCMS)

Complaints and Compliments

Issues by Region



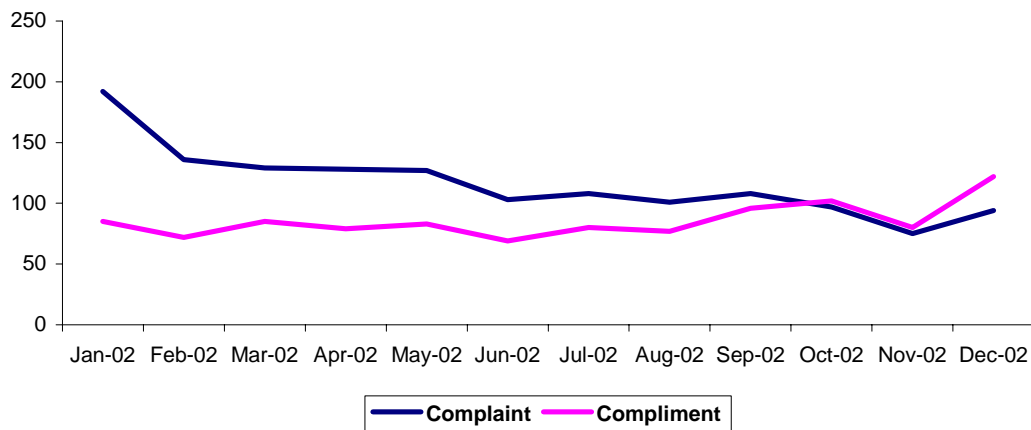
The total number of complaints reported for this quarter was **268**, compared to **349** for the previous quarter. The total number of compliments reported for this quarter is **302**, compared to **258** for the previous quarter. Trends noted in this quarter have been a decrease in complaints and compliments for most states except SA and WA.

The compliments reported in SA and WA originated from Adelaide Airport (**24**), Port Adelaide Head Office (**3**), Fremantle Head Office (**16**), Perth Airport ITB (**11**), WA Postal Operations (**1**) and WA District Offices in Albany, Bunbury and Port Headland (**1 each**).

The compliments reported in SA and WA from the previous quarter originated from Adelaide Airport (**7**), Port Adelaide Head Office (**5**), Fremantle Head Office (**4**), Perth Airport ITB (**3**), WA District Offices in Geraldton (**3**), Bunbury and Carnarvon (**1 each**).

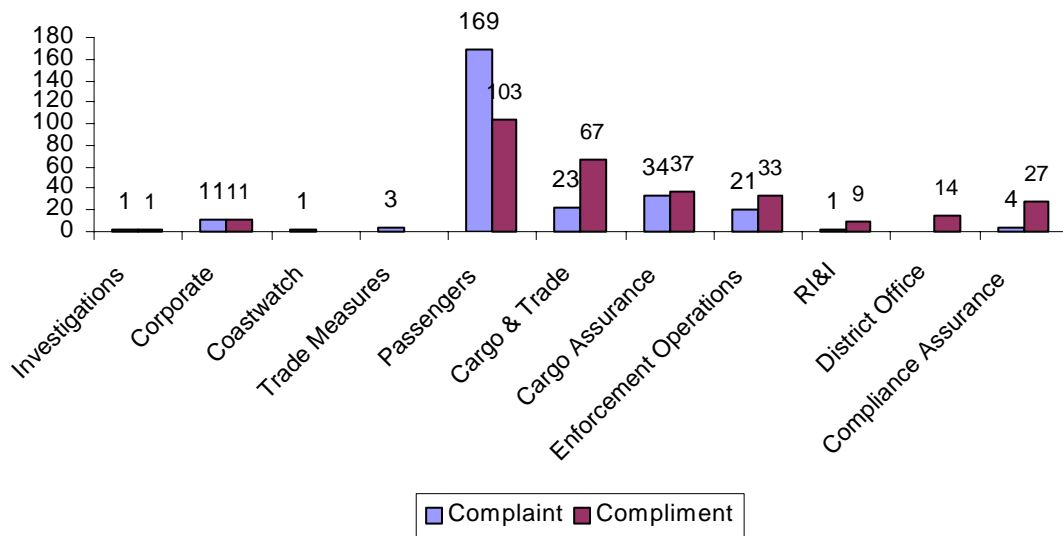
Complaints for this quarter in SA originated from Adelaide Airport (**16**) and Port Adelaide Head Office (**3**). From the previous quarter; Adelaide Airport (**12**) and Port Adelaide Head Office (**1**).

Trend by Issues



This is the first time since the recording of complaints and compliments statistics that Customs has received more compliments than complaints in a quarterly period.

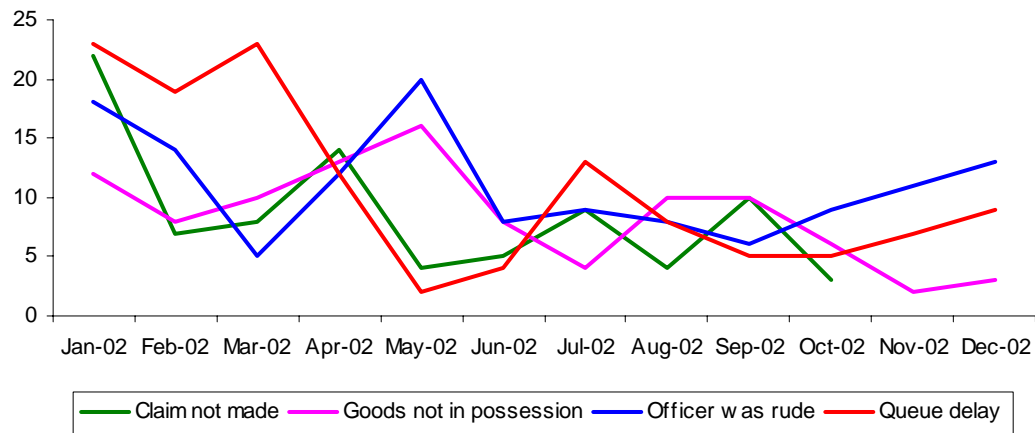
Issues by Division



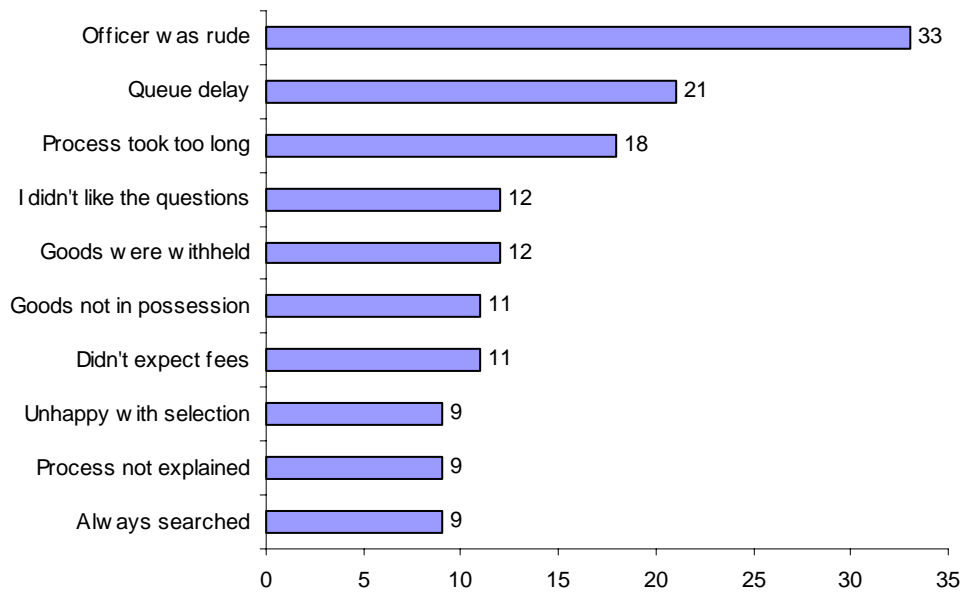
This chart reflects the new Customs internal structure, hence the departure from the previous naming conventions used to describe Customs Divisions.

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, both Commonwealth government and private industry. In this quarter, **67** complaints were referred to other organisations. This compares to **31** in the previous quarter.

State	Organisation	Occurrence
NSW	Airline	4
	Airport operator	1
	AQIS	12
	Broker	3
	DIMIA	1
QLD	Airline	1
	AQIS	7
	Australia Post	1
	Broker	1
	Security operator	3
VIC	Airline	3
	AQIS	18
	Australia Post	2
	DIMIA	2
SA	Airport operator	3
	AQIS	2
	Broker	1
WA	DIMIA	2
Total		67

Officer was rude

The main complaint issue for this quarter was '**Officer was rude**' with a total of **33** complaints reported nationally. This is a **30.3%** increase on the previous quarter (**23**). Analysis of the **33** complaints revealed; NSW Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) counter (**6**), VIC Primary Line (**4**), NSW and QLD Primary Lines and VIC Baggage (**3 each**).

Complaints	ACT	NSW	QLD	SA	VIC	WA
Baggage		1		1	3	1
Cargo Exams		1				
CIC/Helpdesk		1	1			
Enforcement		2			1	
Enquiry Counter		1			1	
Entry Processing		1				
Executive	1					
Primary Line		3	3		4	1
TRS		6				
Total	1	16	4	1	9	2

Comment: Customs staff located at the NSW Tourist Refund Scheme counter processed 46,064 claims made by travellers during the period, October - December 2002.

Queue delay

The second top complaint for this quarter was '**Queue delay**', with a total of **21** complaints reported nationally. This is a **23.8%** decrease in complaints from the previous quarter, with **26**.

State	Branch	Jul - Sep	Oct- Dec
NSW	Primary line	2	2
QLD	Baggage	1	3
	Primary line	1	2
	TRS	1	-
VIC	Baggage	12	1
	Primary line	6	5
	TRS	1	1
SA	Baggage	1	4
	Primary line	-	-
	TRS	-	1
WA	Baggage	-	-
	Primary line	-	2
	TRS	-	-
NT	Baggage	1	-
Total		26	21

During this reporting period, it is noted that complaints against the Baggage area in Victoria have reduced from **12** to **1**.

Process took too long

The third top complaint for this quarter was '**Process took too long**', with a total of **18** complaints reported nationally. This is a **16.7%** increase in complaints from the previous quarter with **15**.

State	Branch	Jul - Sep	Branch	Oct- Dec
ACT	Postal Operations (Ministerial)	1		
NSW	Postal Operations	3	Entry Processing	1
			Postal Operations	2
QLD	Air Cargo	1	Cargo Exams	1
	Baggage	1	Import Clearance	1
	Postal Operations	1	Postal Operations	2
VIC	Postal Operations	1	Baggage	2
			CXF	4
			Enquiry Counter	1
			Postal Operations	1
SA	Baggage	3		
	Import Clearance	1	-	-
	Primary Line	1		
WA	Baggage	2	Baggage	1
			Other Activity	1
			Primary Line	1
Total		15		18

Container X-ray Facility

The following complaints and compliments have been included to provide an indication of client response to the Victorian Container X-ray Facility, which commenced receiving feedback in December.

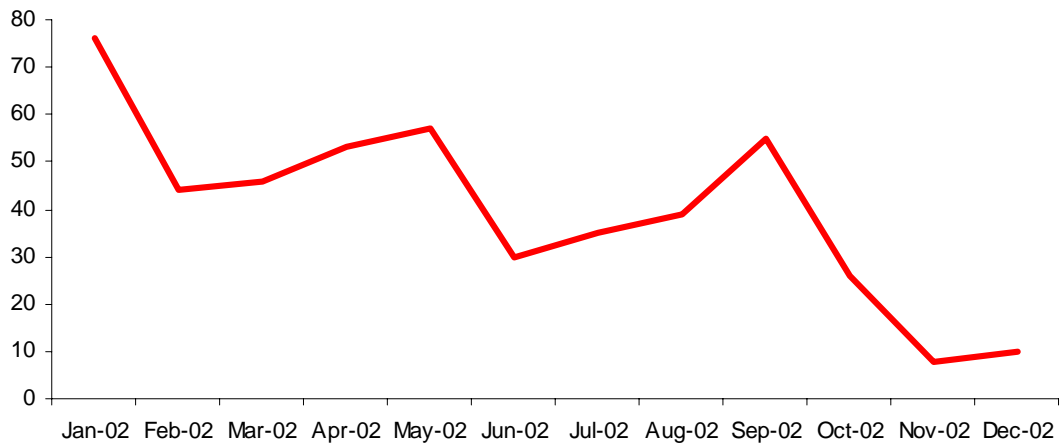
Complaints		Compliments	
Didn't expect fees	6	Appreciated assistance	1
Goods were not repacked	1		
Goods were damaged	2		
Goods were withheld	7		
Process not explained	1		
Process took too long	4		
Total	21		1

Tourist Refund Scheme

In the fourth quarter of 2002, **47** complaints relating to TRS were entered into the Complaints and Compliments Management System (CCMS). When broken down into entries per month; **27** were made in October, **9** in November and **11** in December.

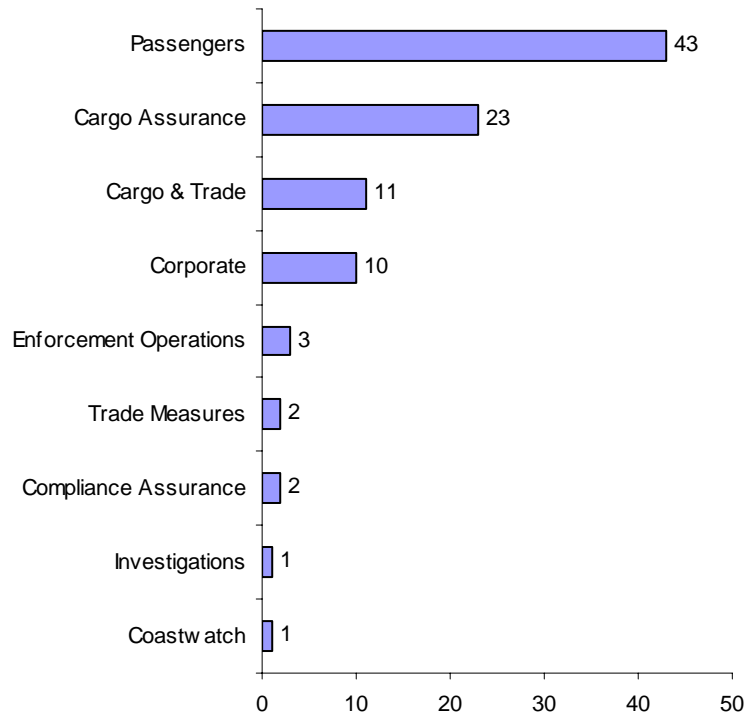
TRS Issues	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec
Claim not made	23	3
Crew not entitled		2
Did not have tax invoice	18	5
Good exported unaccompanied	5	2
Goods not in possession	24	11
Lack of information	4	3
Misinformed by airline	1	1
Misinformed by Customs	2	1
Misinformed by retailer	-	1
No refund for services	2	-
Officer was rude	6	6
Process not explained	3	1
Queue delay	2	2
Unhappy about \$300 limit	2	2
Unhappy about 30 day limit	14	1
Unhappy about 30 minute rule	21	4
Unhappy about refund	2	2
Total	129	47

Trend for TRS Complaints



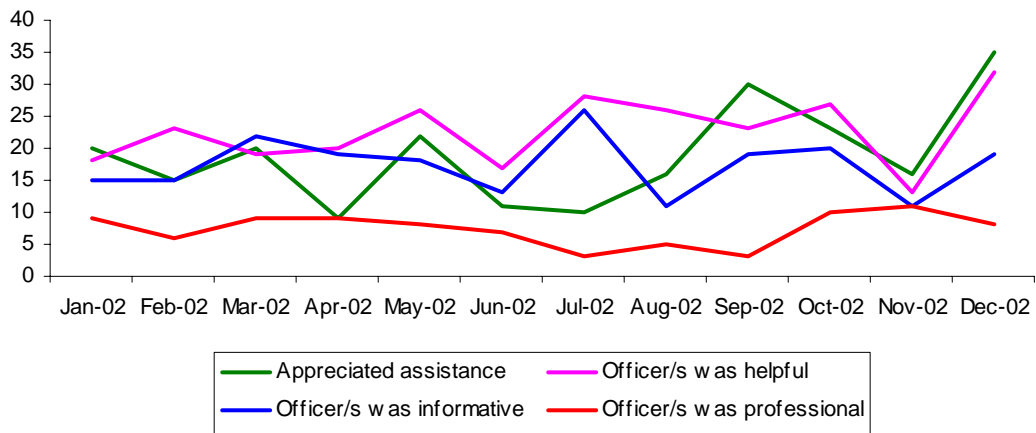
Other Complaint Issues

The remaining **96** complaints are classified over the following Divisions.

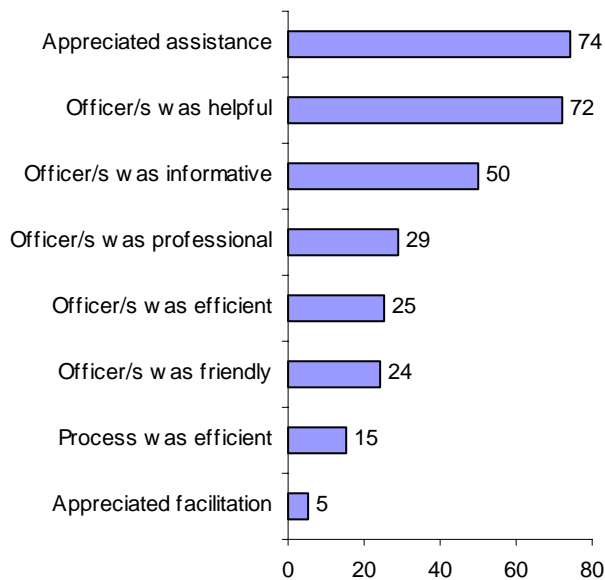


Compliments

Trend by Compliment Issues



Main Compliments Offered



Referral to other agencies

In this quarter, **5** compliments were referred to AQIS. Figures from the previous quarter indicate there were **4** referred compliments reported nationally. These were referred to DIMIA (**2**) and AQIS (**2**).

Appreciated assistance

The top compliment offered this quarter was '**Appreciated assistance**', with a total of **74**. The following table demonstrates that Enforcement Operations provided a high level of assistance to Customs client groups.

Division	Jul - Sep	Division	Oct - Dec
Coastwatch	1	Cargo & Trade	1
Corporate	2	Corporate	4
District Office	9	District Office	11
Enforcement Operations	28	Enforcement Operations	30
Passengers	16	Passengers	26
		RI&I	2
Total	56		74

Officer/s was helpful

The second top compliment offered this quarter was '**Officer/s was helpful**', with a total of **72**. The following table demonstrates that the Cargo & Trade Division received the most praise for its level of service provided to client groups.

Division	Jul - Sep	Division	Oct - Dec
Border	29	Cargo & Trade	27
Commercial	24	Cargo Assurance	21
Pax processing	25	Compliance Assurance	9
		Passengers	15
Total	78		72

Officer/s was informative

The third top compliment was '**Officer was informative**', with a total of **50**. The following table demonstrates that Cargo & Trade also received the most praise for providing Customs clients groups with information.

Division	Jul - Sep	Division	Oct - Dec
Commercial	39	Cargo & Trade	20
Border	9	Cargo Assurance	1
PAX processing	7	Compliance Assurance	10
Corporate	1	Enforcement Operations	2
Intelligence	1	Passengers	10
		RI&I	7
Total	57		50

Officer/s was professional

The fourth top compliment was '**Officer/s was professional**', with a total of **29**. The following table demonstrates that Passengers received the most praise for providing professional service to Customs clients groups.

Division	Jul - Sep	Division	Oct - Dec
Cargo & Trade	2	Cargo & Trade	4
Cargo Assurance	1	Cargo Assurance	4
Compliance Assurance	5	Compliance Assurance	5
Enforcement Operations	1	District Offices	3
Investigations	1	Enforcement Operations	1
Passengers	1	Passengers	12
Total	11		29

Performance Against Service Standards

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

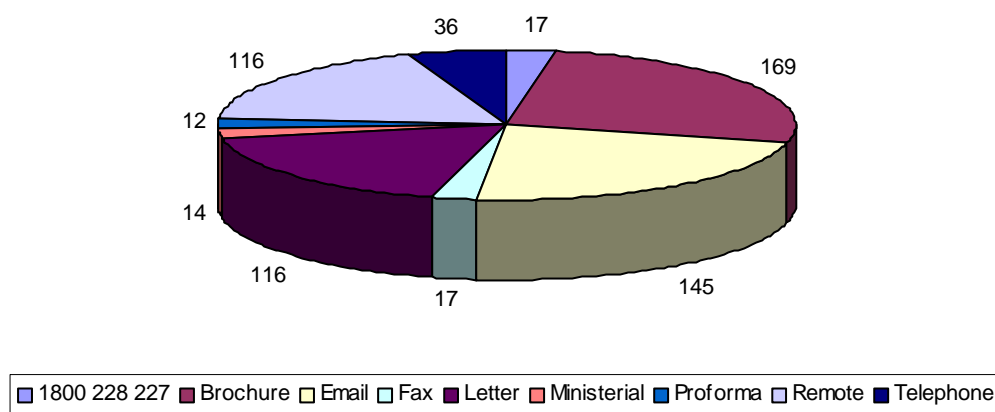
“We aim to acknowledge your communication within 5 working days and to respond within 15 working days of receipt of your email or written correspondence. If we cannot fully answer your query in that time, we will give you an interim response and advise as to when a final response can be expected.”

In responding to clients, there were **36** cases where Customs did not respond within 15 working days.

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

	Oct	Nov	December	Average
Complaints	5.03	8.64	6.50	6.69
Compliments	0.52	1.70	0.95	1.03

How People Contact Us



During this quarter, Brochures (**169**) proved to be the most popular feedback format used by clients. This was followed by Email, (**145**) written communications, (**116**) and Remote (Complaints and Compliments icon) entries (**116**), made by Customs officers.

Selected client comments - Complaints

Case 107375

A. The staff were clearly not trained well enough to do the job efficiently, which was an embarrassment to them and frustrating to travellers.

B. How can we show sharp objects e.g. cheese knives and bottle openers when they have to be packed in the aircraft hold for security reasons.

What I would like to see happen is a much improved training and supervision program implemented before they meet the general public."

Case 107309

Officer spoke rudely to client. She didn't say good morning or thank you and then was very rude when she asked the client to fill out a form.

Case 107266 (Extract)

I write to express my discontentment of the management of your GST refund counter at the Sydney Airport. We are aware that your authority only allows receipts accompanied with the goods for all claims, but we are not able to do so as we had purchased bulky items, such as Sports Shoes (a total of 12 pairs), clothing (NIKE, Addidas, Mambo etc. a total of up to 30 pieces or more), also we have with us perfumes and other hand made crafts. To make things worse, we were "entertained" by cranky Customs staff, brushing us off by asking us to go lodge a complaint instead of hearing us out! Their attitude was bad and rude! We were very offended, but we kept our cool, as we did not wish to stir up any commotion.

With such assistance, we are not sure how many visitors had already been offended (please note that I also witnessed 2 Taiwanese tourists being brushed off). As a tourist, we would like to be treated with respect and not with a poor attitude from your Customs staff. They could have explained to us in a nicer manner that we are not able to make a claim instead of brushing us off.

We are not petty individuals that a few hundred dollars will not make us richer, but we can't help but question the authority if we are allowed to bring in such items as hand luggage to make the claim? If it doesn't, why are we given the impression by your retailers that we are able to do so, just because they want their sales when we visit their outlets?

Selected client comments - Compliments

Case 107544 (Extract)

Please accept my thanks for the support your office provided for the recent anti-drug campaign conducted by this Brigade. The provision of your ion-scan technology and operators was a key element of our campaign and it contributed greatly to its success.

I would like to highlight the efforts of your officers (names supplied). They provided a very effective demonstration of the technology to our soldiers and then made themselves available to conduct a series of tests within the barracks, including one that extended from 1130pm – 0200am one evening. They conducted themselves in a professional manner and proved to be top-drawer ambassadors for your office and the Australian Customs Service.

Case 107478

Thanks for recent involvement with Santa flight for underprivileged children. " The children have never been more excited about anything in their lives"

Case 107351

To: The staff of the Australian Customs Service
Just a short note to thank all of you, for your kindness and concern in re-directing my folder that was lost at the Melbourne Airport on 18 October 2002, upon my arrival from Singapore.

Once again, thanks very much.

Case 107080

Just a note to personally thank you sincerely and all your competent and friendly staff for their assistance last evening in handling our requirement. Your cooperation and efficiency ensured everything was achieved. My State Manager asked that his thanks and appreciation also be extended to all concerned, including your senior management.

Case 107571

I wanted to let you know about the exemplary attitude of one of your airport staff, his name is (name supplied). Without doubt he is the most helpful Customs officer I have ever had the pleasure of dealing with. Frankly I can't speak highly enough of him and wish he was working for me.