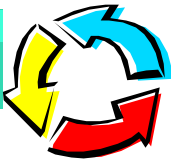




# *Complaints & Compliments*



## **National Report**

**October to December 2001**



## Executive Summary

This is the national report for the Complaints and Compliments Handling System (CCHS) covering the period October to December 2001. The report also contains trend information for the calendar year.

- Total number of complaint issues for the period = 363. This compares to 1826 for the whole of 2001.
- Total number of compliments offered = 215. This compares to 875 for the whole of 2001.
- Complaints about 'Staff Attitude' continue to be a significant issue as the top complaint for Customs this quarter.
- TRS complaints continue to decline – a reduction of 29.6% from the last quarter.
- Complaints that have been referred to other appropriate agencies/ departments continue to account for a significant number complaints received. In this quarter 50 complaints were referred to other agencies (13.8% of total complaints).
- The majority of compliments received highlighted clients' appreciation of "helpful" and "informative" staff.
- Average resolution time for complaints is 8.5 days, compared to 6.5 for the previous quarter.
- Average response time to compliments is 1.1 days, compared to < 1 day for the previous quarter.
- This report introduces two new yearly graphs for comparison purposes:
  - Rate of passenger processing complaints per 100 000 incoming international air passengers, 2001, and
  - Rate of TRS complaints per 1 000 claims, 2001.

## Background

This is the national report for the Complaints and Compliments Handling System (CCHS) covering the period October to December 2001. The report also contains trend information for the calendar year.

The purpose of the CCHS is to provide national coordination of complaints and compliments, analysis and reporting, and identification of opportunities for continuous improvement of our processes and services, based on client feedback. The CCHS is committed to recording and reporting all comments provided by clients about their experience with Customs.

## Business Improvement

Business improvement in which the CCHS has been a contributing factor, are as follows:

- Increased provision of credit card facilities in public contact areas;
- A risk-based approach to the physical verification of goods, to allow staff to assess claims for refund under the Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS);
- Education awareness for clients through new information leaflets such as "*Clearing Your Goods*" and "*You have been selected for a Customs baggage examination;*"
- Improved signage and parking facilities for clients at various Customs sites;
- Improved queuing systems at some airports;
- Extension of operating hours in public contact areas.

The national database for the CCHS, *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**

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 to the content and layout.

Please direct your comments to either:

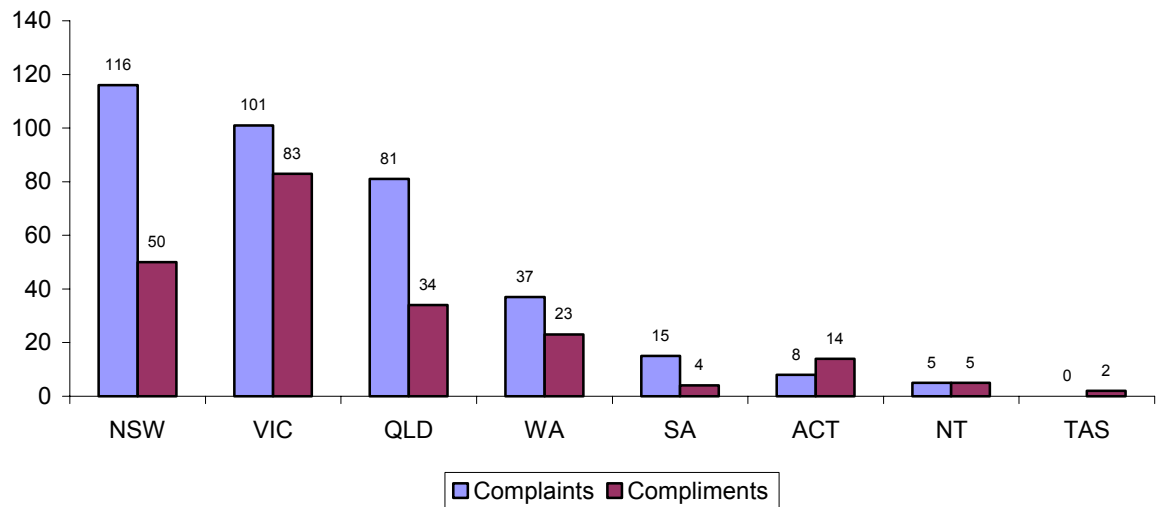
- Kaye Barron 42 5450 (Manager Client Service Policy) or
- Linda Pellew 42 2022 (National Coordinator CCHS).

### **Regional Coordinators**

More detailed information about a particular region can be obtained from contacting dedicated Complaints and Compliments Coordinators in each region – refer to Attachment A.

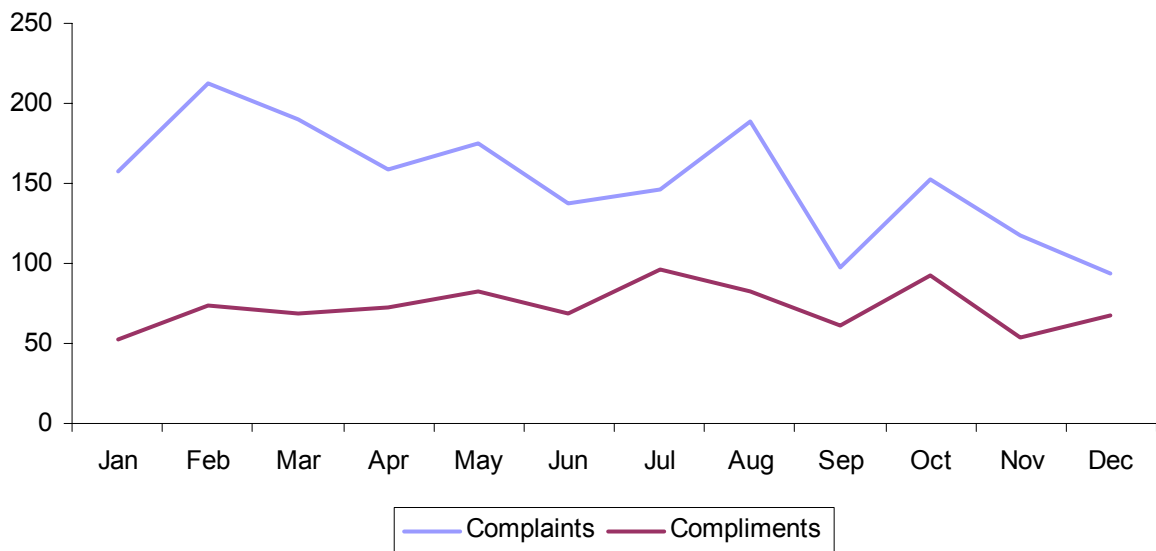
## Complaint and Compliment Issues

### Issues by Region

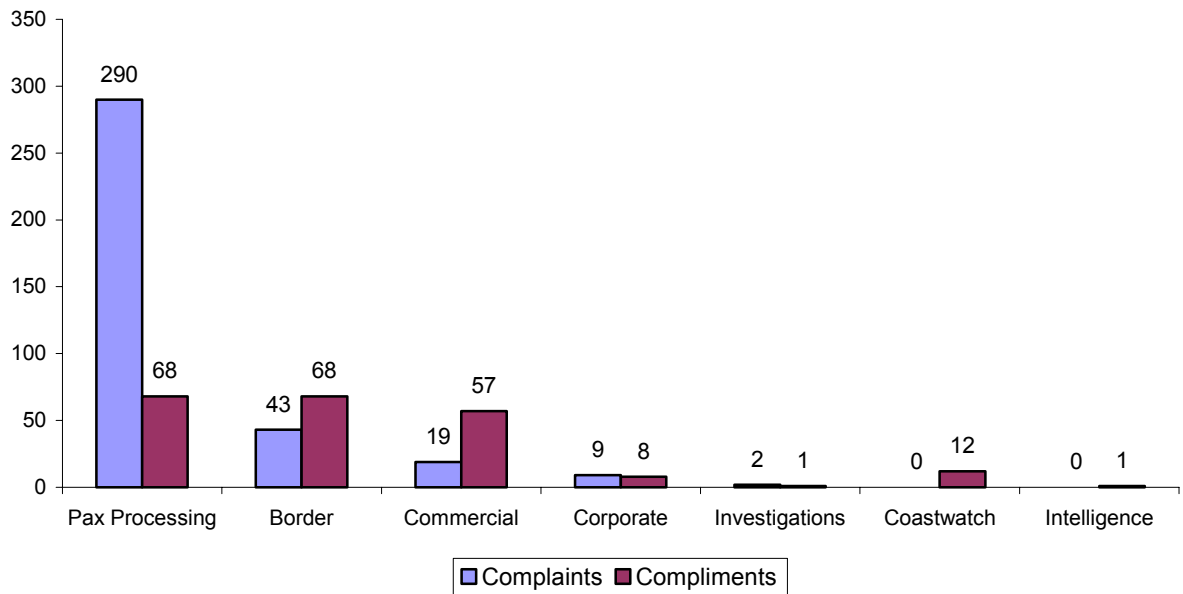


Total complaint issues received for this quarter is 363, compared to 433 for the previous quarter. Total compliments offered for this quarter is 215, compared to 244 for the previous quarter.

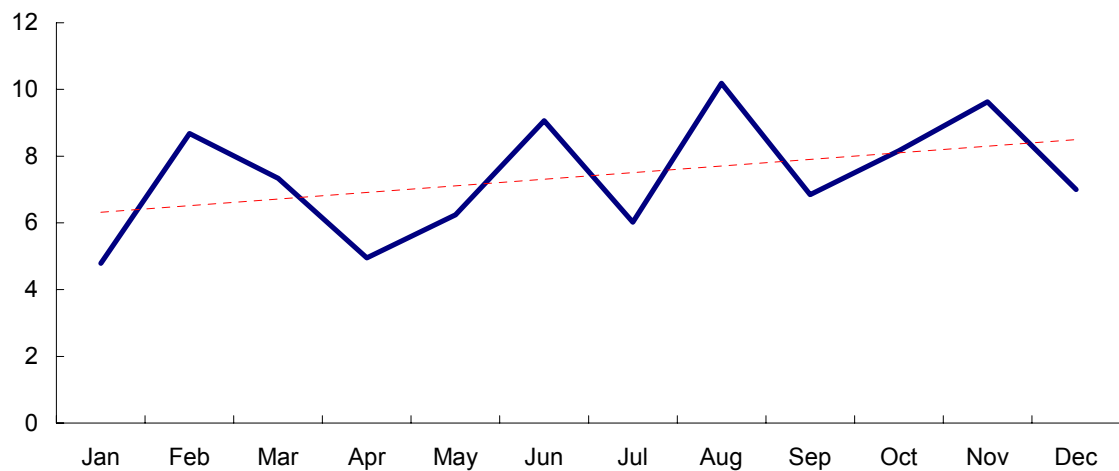
### Trend by Issues



## Issues by Division



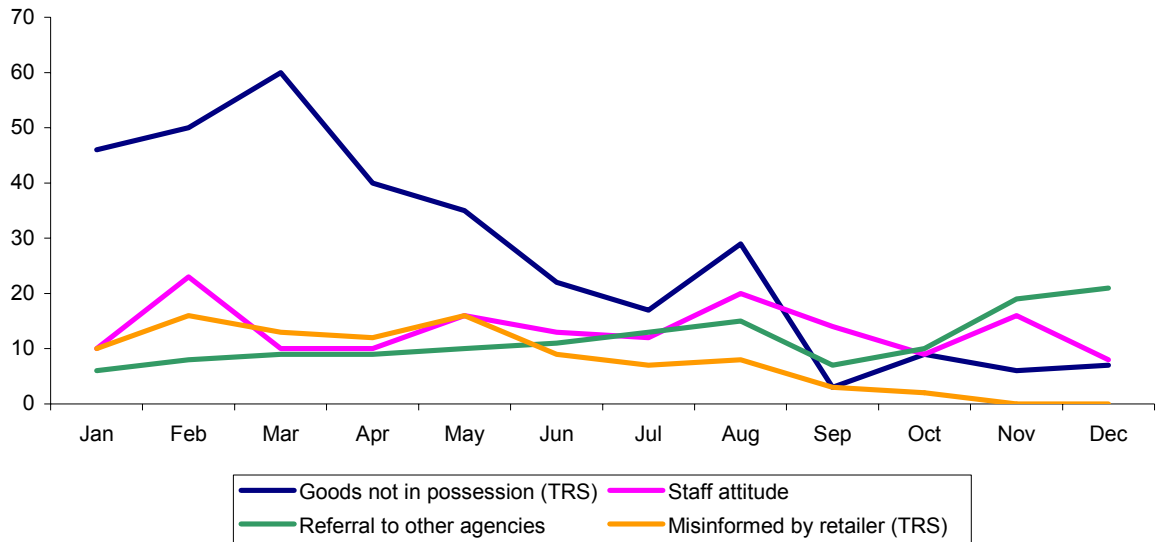
## Rate of passenger processing complaints per 100 000 incoming international air passengers, 2001



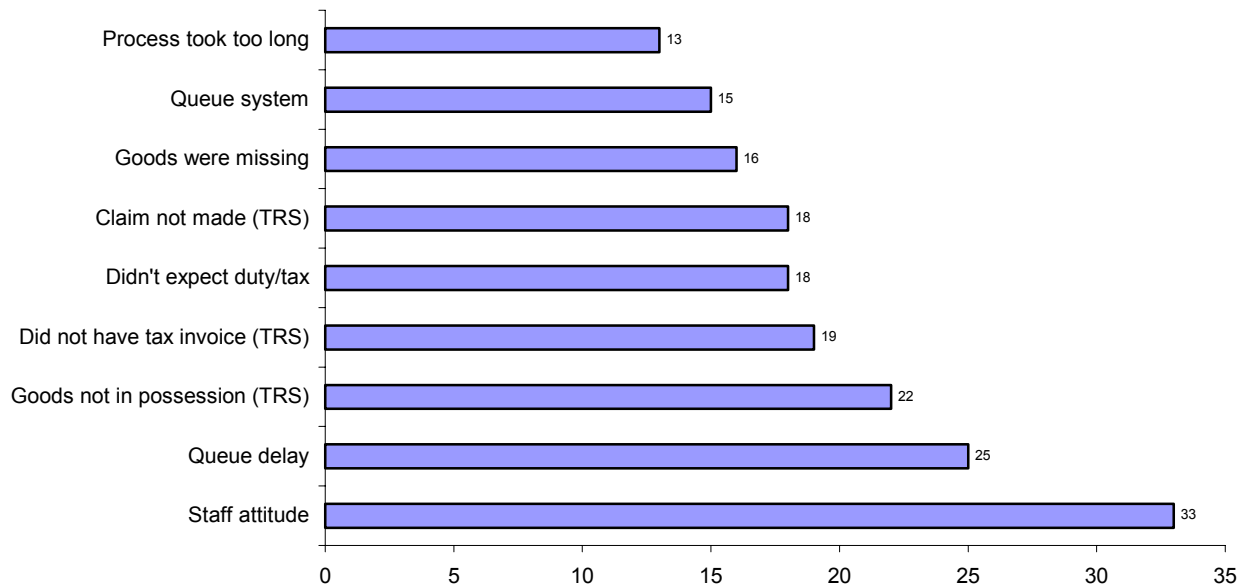
The rate of passenger processing complaints per 100 000 incoming international air passengers during 2001 has ranged from 4.79 to 10.18 and has increased slightly over the period.

## Complaints

### Trend by Complaint Issues



### Main Customs Complaint Issues



### **Staff Attitude**

The main complaint for Customs this quarter was 'Staff attitude', with a total of 33 complaints (9.1%), compared to 46 in the previous quarter. Of these, 29 related to various process areas in Passenger Processing. As illustrated in the Trend graph on page 7, complaints about 'Staff attitude' are a recurring theme, although the actual number of complaints has declined for this quarter.

<b>Staff Attitude</b>	<b>Jul to Sep</b>	<b>Oct to Dec</b>
Baggage	21	13
Primary line	8	9
TRS booth	10	4
Sierra	3	1
Entry Processing	2	1
Clearing Office (Pax)	0	2
Postal Operations	1	1
Cargo Exams	0	1
Cargo Systems	1	0
Import clearance	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>33</b>

### **Queue Delay**

A total of 25 complaints (6.9%) were received about 'Queue delay' and is the third top complaint for this quarter. Complaints about 'Queue delay' emanate mostly from Passenger Processing, with the majority relating to the Primary Line process.

<b>Queue Delay</b>	<b>Jul to Sep</b>	<b>Oct to Dec</b>
Primary line	17	13
Baggage	1	9
TRS	2	1
Entry Processing	0	1
Postal Operations	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>

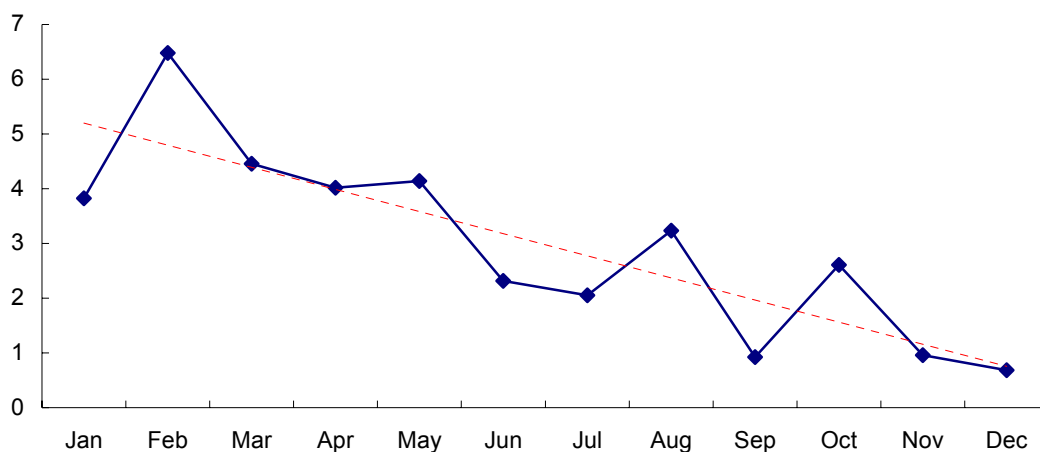
## Tourist Refund Scheme

Complaints about TRS continue to decline. Last quarter, TRS complaints (162) accounted for 37.4% of total complaints, compared to 114 or 31.4% for this quarter. This represents a reduction in TRS complaints of 29.6%.

Complaints about “Goods not in possession” have reduced significantly; 22 this quarter compared to 49 last quarter (refer to Trend graph on page 7). These figures support the business improvement initiative, introduced in August/September 2001, which allows officers to risk assess claims for refund.

TRS Issues	Jul to Sep	Oct to Dec
Goods not in possession	49	22
Claim not made	16	18
Unhappy about \$300 limit	17	8
Misinformed by retailer	18	2
Did not have tax invoice	8	19
Unhappy about 30 day limit	12	8
Staff attitude	10	4
Unhappy about 30 minute rule	6	8
Unhappy about refund	4	6
Lack of information	3	6
No refund for services	3	2
Goods exported unaccompanied	3	2
Misinformed by Customs	3	1
Signage	3	1
Unhappy about mail back facility	0	3
Queue delay	2	1
Crew not entitled	2	1
Misinformed by airline	2	0
Process not explained	1	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>114</b>

### Rate of TRS complaints per 1 000 claims, 2001



The rate of Tourist Refund Scheme complaints per 1 000 claims during 2001 has ranged from 6.48 to 0.69 and has reduced considerably over the period.

## ***Referral to other agencies***

There is a perception by clients that Customs is responsible for a number of functions that are actually performed by other agencies/organisations. Complaints that have been referred to other appropriate agencies/ departments continue to account for a significant number complaints received. In this quarter 50 complaints were referred to other agencies (13.8% of total complaints). This compares to 34 received in the past quarter. As stated in the previous national reports, this is a recurring problem.

When Customs receives these complaints, the client is notified of the correct authority and the matter is then referred to the appropriate agency/organisation.

## **Other Complaint Issues**

The remaining 84 complaints are spread over 19 separate issues. When combined, these issues cover a number of Customs processes including:

- **Search / Examination**

Comments from clients were about why they were selected for baggage examination; racist selection; why they were repeatedly selected for examination; or that the examination was too thorough (eg examining personal documents).

- **Processing of Goods**

This related to clients expressing dissatisfaction about goods missing, or being damaged, withheld or seized.

- **Payment Issues**

Complaints from clients included the unexpected requirement to pay fees.

- **Customs Questions**

Officers' attempts to risk assess individuals through questioning resulted in clients perceiving the questions as being too intrusive or irrelevant.

Other issues of note, which are not necessarily specific to any one area, include comments about "Unhappy about process"; "Process not explained"; "Misinformed by Customs"; "Documentation issues" and "Signage".

More specific information is available from the Complaints and Compliments Unit or from dedicated coordinators in each region (Refer Attachment A).

## **Selected Client Comments – Complaints**

### **Staff Attitude**

#### **Case 104469**

*“Customs Officer was arrogant and patronising which detracted from the otherwise pleasurable experience at Perth Airport. Customer Service!”*

#### **Case 104494**

*“Officer was very rude, sarcastic, condescending and manner very crappy. I had declared everything and do not mind at all being searched but one would prefer some form of politeness and a nice manner.”*

#### **Case 104843**

*“I was speaking to a customs officer... who works in your Sydney office. I was displeased by his unprofessional approach to my simple request for assistance.”*

### **Queue Delay**

#### **Case 104430**

*“At the GREEN door in the baggage check out area there were two queues each at least 150 metres long trying to get through 1 door with 1 attendant checking baggage. At the RED door there was 1 queue with at least 4 attendants. The RED queue was moving faster than the GREEN queue which is absolutely ludicrous. This level of service is a joke.”*

#### **Case 104615**

*“It was a sham - 1 hr + queue at Customs who sent me to red zone for another 1 hr + queue. Queue was so long it had to wrap around luggage conveyers. Just what you need after 27 hours from UK.”*

#### **Case 104741**

*“It took me 2 hours to get through Customs & Immigration, after traveling 23 hours and arriving at 4:30 am on a flight. I understand the extra security at this time, but feel that was not the reason it was so slow.”*

### **Goods Not in Possession**

#### **Case104544**

*“I just got the TRS brochure, and after reading through it, there is something I don't understand. How do you expect me to carry the purchased goods in my hand luggage as proof to you???”*

#### **Case 104694**

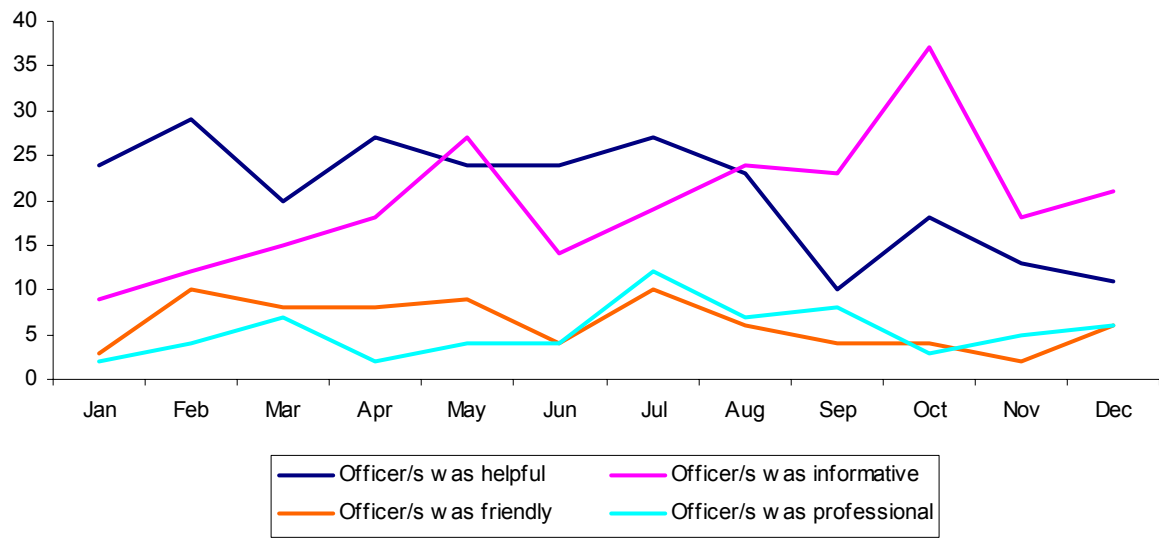
*“GST refunds should be available before check-in and not at the departure lounge. We bought so much stuff that naturally it will go in our checked-in luggage and could not possibly take it to the departure hall.”*

#### **Case 104689**

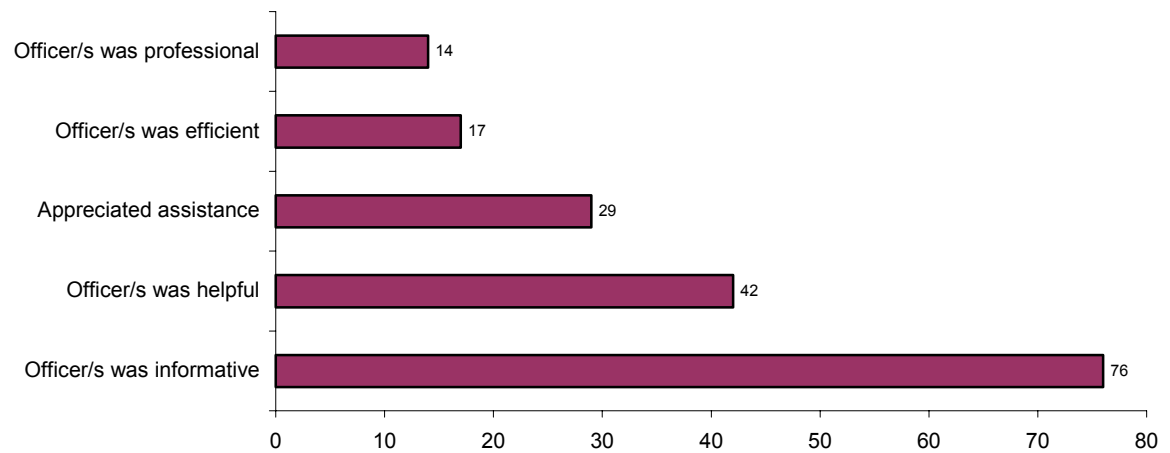
*“I departed Australia and I phoned Customs to ascertain how I could claim GST refund. I was told that provided I had appropriate receipts, it was in order, to put items in checked baggage but my claim was rejected for goods not sighted.”*

# Compliments

## Trend by Compliment Issues



## Main Compliments Offered



### ***Officer was informative***

The main compliment offered this quarter was 'Officer was informative', with a total of 76 (35.3%). These compliments are usually for presentations delivered by Customs Officers or for tours of designated work areas, to individuals and groups outside the organisation.

<b>Officer was informative</b>	<b>Jul to Sep</b>	<b>Oct to Dec</b>
Commercial	31	39
Border	17	19
Coastwatch	0	7
Pax Processing	10	5
Corporate	6	5
Intelligence	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>76</b>

### ***Officer was helpful***

The second top compliment was 'Officer was helpful', with a total of 42 (19.5%).

<b>Staff Attitude</b>	<b>Jul to Sep</b>	<b>Oct to Dec</b>
Commercial	23	15
Border	21	14
Pax Processing	17	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>42</b>

## **Selected Client Comments - Compliments**

### **Case 104439**

*"Fantastic- the exact helpful response I was after. You've identified clearly what needs to be done and who to contact. I'm grateful! Yours is an unusual level of service."*

### **Case 104604**

*"Thank you very much for your prompt reply regarding our questions, and concerns, pertaining to the wedding gift for our godchild... My husband and I were very impressed with how quickly we heard back from you."*

### **Case 104526**

*"Thank you for being prepared to speak to our members yesterday. It was most enjoyable and enlightening session and your willingness to respond to the many questions was much appreciated." (TAFE Tasmania)*

### **Case 104591**

*"Congratulations!!! It's my first visit to this so very kind and lovely country. The way you all treated me at the airport confirmed my expectations."*

### **Case 104270**

*"I would like to thank you for your assistance in providing a placement (work experience). Without the support of businesses and establishments willing to accept and train these young people the program would not give them an understanding of the world they are about to enter into."*

### **Case 104685**

*"Neville (Templeman) was very courteous in his explanations as well as clear. He and Darren (Kimmerley) went beyond the call of duty to give us information we needed as new tourists to Australia. Since they were some of the first Australians we came in contact with, we are sure we have landed in one of the best countries in the world." (Bundaberg)*

### **Case 104815**

*"This is a little complimentary note to express my gratitude to the Australian Customs in general. The assistance provided by them is far beyond my expectations in getting released my medicines brought with me on 26 October 2001."*

### **Case 104027**

*"I want to record how impressed I am with the outstanding level of service and advice provided by officers in the Canberra Diplomatic Office... Without exception, officers have been positive, helpful and highly efficient. They are a credit to Customs."*

## Performance Against Service Standards

The Complaints & Compliments Unit monitors performance against the following two timeliness measures :-

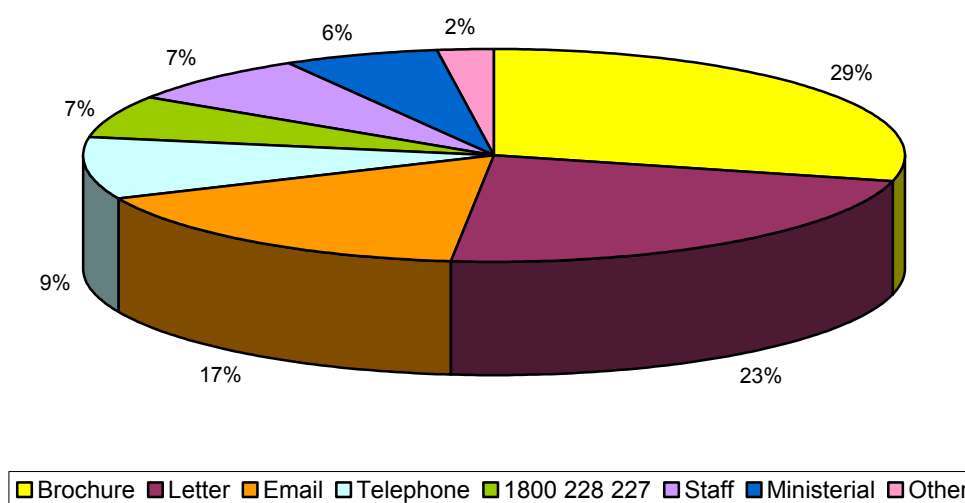
- We will acknowledge receipt of a complaint within five working days; and
- We will issue a full response within 15 working days of receipt and, if we cannot, we will explain why there is a delay and advise the client when we will reply in full.

In acknowledging complaints, the CCU met the time standard in every case during the quarter.

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

	October	November	December	Average
Complaints	9.1	8.9	7.1	8.5
Compliments	1.2	1.3	< 1	1.1

## How People Contact Us



Written communication is the most popular form by which people provide feedback, with brochures, letters and emails accounting for 69%, as illustrated above.