

Snappier Service

A GUARANTEE FROM

Customs has produced four service charters guaranteeing the level and quality of service to business groups and travellers to promote a more open and customer-focussed public service.

Work on a fifth charter, aimed at the Diesel Fuel Rebate Scheme is planned to commence in early 1999, following the review of the implementation of the Diesel Fuel Modernisation Project.

The charters, for the first time, formalise benchmarks for Customs client service standards.

The standards give industry a clear statement from Customs regarding the service they can expect to receive particularly as outlined in the Industry Support, Cargo and the Excise Service Charters. The fourth charter is for travellers.

The charters also outline how people can access Customs services and provide feedback on the charters and services provided.

Another essential element of the charters is an invitation to industry clients to voice their complaints about the service provided by Customs.

For the first time, a centralised service has been established in Sydney to handle feedback, complaints and compliments. Operating since April this year, the ratio of complaints to compliments has been two to one.

The performance achieved by Customs throughout the year will be reported against the charters' published service delivery standards in the Annual Report. Every three years there will be an independent, external review of the charters.

The charters were produced following principles developed by a task force of consumer, business and government representatives.

To make sure they met the needs and approval of Customs, industry clients' peak representative bodies were asked to comment on the draft charters.

Customs received strong supporting responses from industry.

Importers and exporters who access government programs administered by Customs reviewed the Industry Support Charter. They included groups affected by the following programs:

- anti-dumping and countervailing
- tariff - including tariff advices, valuation advices, and Rules of Origin which includes preference
- the Tariff Concession System
- the project By-law Scheme
- Drawbacks
- Tariff Export Concessions (TEXCO)
- automotive industry arrangements to the year 2000
- the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Import Credit Scheme
- the Petroleum products Freight Subsidy Scheme
- bounties and cheese and curd quotas
- intellectual property rights, and
- licensed warehouses.

Importers, exporters, agents and representatives with an interest in moving cargo across Australia's border reviewed the Cargo Service Charter.

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Overall, comments were positive with clients saying they felt the service they received was professional, courteous and helpful, and that Customs was already meeting the service standards.

Where appropriate, individual criticisms were considered and changes were made to the final product.

The charters have been made available to peak representative bodies and can be obtained on request at Customs Information Centres or by phoning 1300 363 263 for the cost of a local call from anywhere in Australia.

Clients can also send an email request to information@customs.gov.au or read the charters on <http://www.customs.gov.au/corp/charters/index.htm>

As part of the ongoing client assessment of Customs services, reply paid complaints and compliment sheets have been developed and can be obtained from Customs.

