

# Breaking d

## THE TRADE

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*Customs is continuing to improve advice and services to Australian businesses involved in international trade. Customs now provides guaranteed service standards in dealing with clients and is improving its advisory services. With assistance from AusIndustry, Customs has developed a module to provide information on its services via the Internet.*

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## Doing Business with Customs Goes On-line via BizLink

An internet module update of BizLink, released in March this year, provides immediate access to information about customs duties, documentation and procedures, as well as details of industry support measures to importers, exporters, manufacturers and producers.

The Australian Customs Service (Customs) module, called *A Guide to Customs*, was developed as a joint project between the Customs Commercial Advisory Service (CCAS) and the Office of AusIndustry who manage BizLink.

The impetus for its development followed a survey of more than 3000 BizLink subscribers which showed that Customs is an area of significant interest to small business and their advisers.

Exporters and importers needing information can also approach the CCAS which has regional coordinators

across Australia who can assist almost any business or industry.

The CCAS also manages Customs Information Centres which provide easy access to information on matters as diverse as import and export requirements and restrictions, rates of duty and sales tax, travellers' concessions, the private importation of vehicles and yachts, and goods subject to quarantine.

The Information Centres have access to BizLink to assist their business clients.

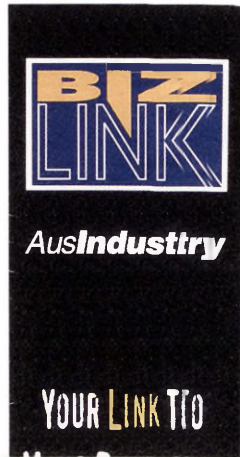
The expanded Customs information module for business explaining import and export requirements, assistance schemes and other services to business and industry, is available through BizLink on disk and online.

The online version of the Customs module is designed to be easily navigated. Users are initially asked

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# NEWS

## Customs and super information in BizLink

**B**izLink can now help Australian businesses with more information on Customs and on superannuation. Two new modules on these topics were released in March 1998. If you subscribe to BizLink, you don't have to ring, you don't have to visit, the information you need is on your computer.



Customs Information Centre in Sydney.



The module lists employer obligations that arise at the various stages of employing a member of staff, hiring a new person, looking after existing staff and knowing what to do when someone leaves.

**Point and Click Superannuation for Employers** includes the latest information on what employers must offer staff in terms of the choice of super funds. This information will be updated as new developments occur. It also has a handy glossary which explains superannuation terms.

**What business needs to know about Customs**



The Australian Customs Service does more than enforce border controls at international airports and ports. It oversees import and export requirements and restrictions, collects duty, sales tax and excise, and handles matters

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whether they import, export, manufacture goods, travel overseas, or use diesel fuel. Depending on the answer, users are advised on how Customs may help their business.

While BizLink has always provided some Customs information, the new Customs information module on BizLink will provide Australian businesses, particularly small to medium-size enterprises, with information about a wide range of Customs activities, procedures and industry assistance measures.

Peter Connell of the CCAS hopes that increasing awareness of Customs requirements and operations will help BizLink users better plan their business dealings with Customs.

"The aim of Customs is to facilitate trade and this can be achieved through providing business with a

better understanding of how they can comply with Customs requirements," Peter said.

### Footnote

Visit Customs on BizLink at <http://bizlink.ausindustry.org.au> or go direct to the Customs home page at <http://www.customs.gov.au>

For more information on BizLink phone 13 28 46, to speak with a Customs Information Centre phone 1300 363 263 for the cost of a local from anywhere in Australia.

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## A Quality Service, Says Business Consultant

A positive response from industry has greeted development of the Customs module, with one business consultant describing it as “user-friendly” and a “quality service”.

Ms Maria Lambides made her comments after using the module in her work to prepare a series of importing information folders for the South Pacific Trade Commission (SPTC), an agency of the South Pacific Forum which assists in the economic development of island countries.

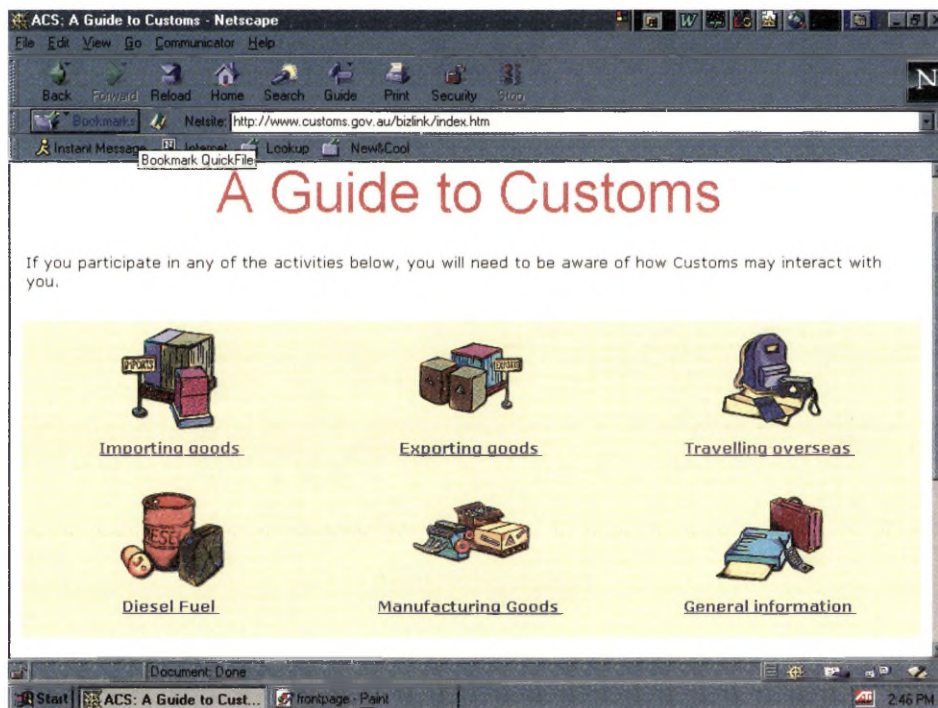
Its task is to identify opportunities in the Australian market for island firms and organisations, to facilitate export and industry development, and to attract investment into the region.

The SPTC receives hundreds of enquiries each month about the import of island products to Australia.

To assist marketing officers, a series of Importing Information Folders were compiled that contained information on importing regulations and requirements. Subjects covered included Australian Quarantine Service, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points, EAN (International Article Number Association) numbering systems and the range of services provided by Customs.

With the assistance of the Customs module via BizLink, the most accurate Customs information, along with fact sheets and contacts within Customs, were compiled.

“The user-friendly BizLink module has saved hours in compiling relevant information and is a convenient facility enabling instant access to the most current Australian Customs Service Information – this is a quality service,” Ms Lambides said.



## 18 000 calls a month

According to the latest survey conducted by Customs, enquiries from business organisations and the general public to Customs Information Centres related to the following categories:

Category	Per cent
Importing	34
Tariff / Duty rates	20
Passenger concessions	12
Motor Vehicles	11
Other *	23

\* Includes shipping, passenger processing, diesel fuel, exports etc.