

From the CEO

The cover of Manifest shows Customs latest sea-going vessel, the ACV *Roebuck Bay*, which was recently commissioned in Western Australia by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Mr Tim Fischer. The *Roebuck Bay* is the first of eight new vessels that will undertake taskings on behalf of a range of government agencies to protect Australia's interests at our marine border. The new fleet will all be delivered by August 2000 and will progressively replace the six smaller vessels now in use.

This issue contains articles demonstrating Customs wide-ranging responsibilities from the latest techniques in the fight against illicit drugs to the creation of new computer systems that will help speed our world trade as we move into the 21st century.

In the fast-developing area of information technology, Customs is constantly developing and upgrading its own information systems.

The latest development is the planned introduction, in 2001, of a new Cargo Management Re-engineering program which will help cut costs to business and, among other things, assist Customs to identify illegal imports, including drugs.

We believe this program will provide a world's-best cargo clearance system which will greatly benefit the tens of thousands of Australian businesses trying to compete both here and overseas.

An article in this edition of Manifest describes the benefits the new program will provide.

Another article describes how our electronic systems are speeding up trade and the processing of international travellers and the development of our use of the Internet.

There are also two articles outlining aspects of Customs role in the Government's Tough on Drugs strategy and describing the sophisticated techniques and technology used to advance the fight against illicit drugs. They also emphasise the value we place on cooperation with other law enforcement agencies.

Our international cooperation with the Customs organisations of other countries is of great importance to us and I am particularly pleased that the Chief of German Customs, Siegmur Kunas, has contributed an article giving detailed information of his vast organisation and the challenges German Customs faces post-reunification.

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