

CARGO MANAGEMENT RE-ENGINEERING UPDATE

Customs has announced that the first stage of one of Australia's largest public sector e-business projects, the Integrated Cargo System (ICS), will 'go live' on 22 September 2004. After a two-week transition period, during which EXIT and the ICS will both operate, EXIT will be turned off.

From 6 October all export transactions will have to be reported through the ICS.

The announcement was made after senior Customs officers met with industry software developers on 13 May. The meeting followed last year's decision to delay the previous cutover date, 1 March 2004, until Customs and key software developers were confident of the system's reliability.

In announcing the date Customs Chief Executive Officer Lionel Woodward said all parties had agreed that it was now appropriate to set a date to change over to the ICS.

"As there is a small number of outstanding items yet to be resolved, Customs will continue to hold regular meetings with developers to monitor progress in the lead up to the introduction of ICS," Mr Woodward said.

"While Customs priority is to develop a reliable system that better meets clients and Customs needs, border security cannot be compromised. The introduction of the ICS will further improve both Customs ability to detect illegal-cargo movements and the streamlining of legitimate cargo movements."

The announcement will give industry four months to complete the necessary preparations for the cutover to the ICS. Customs will run free refresher workshops in all capital cities and major regional centres over the coming months.

The imports component of the ICS is built and is in the final stage of user acceptance testing. Customs anticipates that it will be available for industry testing in late July, with cutover planned for early 2005.

NEW CUSTOMS CLIENT SERVICE CHARTER

A new Client Service Charter and a revised Complaints and Compliments brochure are now available for Customs clients throughout Australia.

The Client Service Charter outlines the service level that the community can expect from Customs. It sets out service standards, expectations of clients, and lets clients know how to comment on the service they receive.

Changes to the Client Service Charter include a section on increased mass screening of people and cargo at the border, information on the rebadged Customs Hotline, and updated contact and publication details.

The changes to the Charter are the result of consultation within Customs over the past year.

A revised Complaints and Compliments brochure is also available. The new brochure incorporates both general advice and a response form, combining the two former brochures.

The amalgamation of the two brochures will provide simplicity and encourage clients to provide feedback about Customs performance.

The new brochures are available from the Customs website at www.customs.gov.au under complaints and compliments, or by contacting a Customs Information Centre on 1300 363 263.

