



NEW PAYMENT OPTIONS FOR CUSTOMS CLIENTS

Customs has introduced a new range of payment options for its clients. Customs invoices can now be paid over the Internet, over the phone or by BPAY in addition to existing options such as mail and cashier payments. Currently these options are limited to travel overpayments, various sea/air cargo charges and departmental debts. All invoices will clearly detail which payment options are available for that transaction.

The introduction of Internet payments is in line with the 'best practice' model for government business. Customs online payments offers clients a secure and convenient way to pay their invoices. Clients can pay single invoices or register as regular users, allowing them to view their account information online and structure their payments according to their needs. Customs online payment is accessible via the Customs website and is hosted by Westpac.

BPAY is a facility offered by most financial institutions whereby accounts can be paid directly out of a nominated bank account. Clients need to set this up with their financial institution and quote the Customs biller code which is printed on the invoice.

Payments can now be made over the phone using any of the following credit cards; Visa, Mastercard, American Express and Bankcard. Phone payments can be made 24 hours per day on 1800 008 174.

The next step is to expand the new payment options to the rest of Customs clients. This will coincide with the release of the Integrated Cargo System (ICS) Release 4.

The online payment system can be found at the Customs website at www.customs.gov.au.

FRIGHTENING GLOVE SEIZED

Customs officers at Melbourne International Mail Centre got a startling surprise when they discovered a glove with knife blades attached to its fingers.

The glove was found in a parcel that was returned to Australia from the UK as unclaimed mail in February.

Customs Regional Director Victoria Jenny Peachey said, "Customs officers made the detection following an x-ray examination of the parcel which clearly revealed the knife blades, each approximately 12-15cm in length.

"This is the second glove of this type that Customs officers in Melbourne have seized," said Ms Peachey.

Customs officers in Melbourne have also recently seized a Samurai sword with a concealed knife in the handle. The contents of the parcel were declared as a toy, but x-ray examinations identified the hidden knife.

The gloves and sword are restricted imports under Customs Regulations. A permit to import a restricted item can be applied for before importation and is subject to approval by the Minister for Justice and Customs.

Customs has also recently prevented a number of other dangerous weapons from reaching the streets of the Australian community. These include a container load of weapons in Brisbane, more than 1,400 BB guns in Sydney and a myriad of daggers and knives in Adelaide.



One of the frightening gloves discovered at the Melbourne International Mail Centre.