



# X-ray training gives PNG a clear vision

**In response to a request by the Internal Revenue Commission of PNG, Australian Customs has provided x-ray training to PNG customs and quarantine officers at Port Moresby's Jackson's International Airport. Through its Enhanced Cooperation Program, the Australian Government also donated x-ray equipment to PNG Customs. Considered one of Australian Customs experts in the x-ray field, national x-ray training coordinator Ramon Quizon was asked to coordinate the training package and make the trip to PNG. Following is his report on time with PNG Customs officers:**

Armed with just a little knowledge of the country and its people, I looked at this rare opportunity to train the Customs staff of our nearest neighbour as an adventure. Port Moresby, the capital of PNG, is about the same size as Canberra but the two capitals are worlds apart culturally and geographically.

The Internal Revenue Commission's Deputy Commissioner for PNG Customs John Kerlin who had been seconded from the Australian Customs Service for a few years, had been briefing me about the security and what to expect, even before I landed in the country.

I was told to expect the unexpected in PNG and was pleasantly surprised that the passport officer who

processed me on the primary line at Jackson's International Airport recognised my name and said that she would be one of the first batch of trainees!

On the first day of the training period, the Commissioner for PNG Customs Paul Iramu opened the course at the IRC building.

The x-ray training was a two-day course split into theory knowledge on the first day and practical skills on the second day.

The first day covered basic radiation safety, occupational health and safety, image interpretation, clue identification, methods of concealment and familiarisation with the Smiths-Heimann cabinet x-ray system.

On the second day, trainees were provided with practical skills in x-ray operation and image interpretation using simulated bags, unaccompanied/mishandled bags and online passenger bags from flight arrivals.

A total of 26 officers were trained, of which four were officers from the National Agricultural Quarantine and Inspection Authority (NAQIA) and 22 were from the Internal Revenue Commission (Tax and Customs operations).

While the training focused on the detection of revenue and quarantine goods, which are the main items of interest to PNG Customs Passenger Processing, x-ray images of other prohibited and restricted items (such as narcotics, wildlife, cash and firearms) were also analysed. These images elicited the most interest.

During the practical sessions with the x-ray equipment at the airport, trainees were able to detect undeclared revenue and quarantine goods as well as a prohibited imports from passenger bags and unaccompanied bags.

The PNG Customs Passenger Processing Airport Manager, Naime Aeava, was very pleased to know that the trainees had already detected narcotic paraphernalia using the x-ray equipment, which was also a first for PNG Customs.

Considering that many of the officers had not seen any x-ray images prior to this training, it is expected that they might take some time to familiarise themselves to see assorted items in a different light.

An assessment program to monitor the image interpretation skills of the staff has been forwarded to the PNG Senior Training Officer Customs Technical, Anna Fairi. I also recommended that x-ray operators should be allowed ample time to build up their image interpretation skills before they get assessed.

Feedback from the staff has been very positive. They appreciated the x-ray images of hits from Australia and the tips that were provided when identifying prohibited and restricted goods.

Despite having very few inbound flights on which to practise, the officers said that the practical sessions were adequate. They were very eager to x-ray as many bags as they could. It is good to have such enthusiastic trainees.



Opposite: Ramon Quizon (left) showing how to interpret x-ray images to PNG Customs and Quarantine officers.

Above: PNG Senior Training Officer Customs Technical Anna Fairi with a class of Customs and Quarantine officers and Ramon Quizon.