

Preparations almost complete for Commonwealth Games

Lessons learned from the Sydney 2000 Olympics are helping Customs and other border agencies in prepare for the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games.

Approximately 10,000 Games Family members and up to 40,000 international visitors are expected to attend the event. Among the visitors will be many VIPs including heads of government and State and Commonwealth sports ministers. The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh will visit Australia to open the Games.

It is expected that approximately 25,000 Games visitors will arrive through Melbourne Airport. The other main point of entry will be Sydney Airport. Some teams and visitors may also arrive through Perth and Brisbane.

Border agencies are working closely to facilitate the Games and associated cultural events. This includes implementing innovative solutions to deal with the expected impact of the Games on staff and facilities.

A project team has been formed to plan and coordinate the Customs effort. Among the issues it has considered are: what, when and where cargo arrives, who, when and where Games family arrive and what the Games family may be carrying as personal effects.

Melbourne is expecting at least 400-500 international artists and 60 cultural groups to perform over the duration of the Games providing mainly free public entertainment on cultures from Commonwealth countries. Customs and AQIS interest is in musical instruments that may be made of animal, plant or seed or items that may be deemed dangerous ceremonial weapons.

Analysis of flight schedules and trends relating to events of this magnitude indicate that with flights at near full capacity, approximately 10,000 passengers will depart on each of the two days following the closing ceremony.

From an infrastructure point of view, work on state-of-the-art digital signage (customer information screens) has commenced and will be in place to provide traveller information for inwards passengers at the entry control point. Also, work has commenced on an expanded and updated closed-circuit television capability. This will deliver a more integrated monitoring, surveillance and alert response environment.

