

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TEAM



WINS NATIONAL TITLE

Customs Cargo Automation Help Desk Quality Improvement Team from Sydney won Australian Quality Council National Team Award in August 1997.

The winning team. From left Geoff Wainwright, Gloria Harrison, Robyn Carr, Grace Goddard (Quality Improvement facilitator), Paul Zalai and Wanderli Moura.

The five members of this team will represent Australia at the International Exposition of Quality Circles 1997, to be held in Singapore in November.

In 1995, the team was the first to be formed and trained under the Customs Quality Management Program. Since completing their project and reporting in August 1996, they have become a benchmark for all other Customs Quality Improvement Teams. The team also won the NSW Regional Director's 1997 award for excellence and the 1997 Australian Quality Council's NSW Teams Event.

Team members are Paul Zalai, Senior Inspector Cargo Systems and team leader; Geoff Wainwright, Inspector Cargo Systems; Gloria Harrison, Customs Officer Band 3, Cargo Automation Help Desk, Wanderli Moura, Customs Officer Band 3, Cargo Control, Port Botany; Robyn Carr, Inspector, Cargo Operations.

The project sponsor was Alan Walsh, Senior Manager, Cargo Management, and the regional facilitators were Doug Nicoll and Grace Goddard. The team was one of the first to use the Australian Quality Council's Quality Tools training package customised in Canberra by Sergio Riveros, Assistant Director, Quality and Survey Management.

The Cargo Automation Help Desk was established in 1995 to support importers using the relatively new Air and Sea Cargo Automation systems. Customs uses

the cargo automation systems to help improve detection of prohibited goods such as narcotics, firearms and goods subject to quarantine. At the start of the project, the Help Desk was receiving up to 3000 phone inquiries a month about difficulties in lodging required information. This was likely to rise with rapid increase in importers using the systems.

The team's improvements to their work has:

- Made more resources available in peak periods and saved staffing costs.
- Eliminated basic causes of client problems.
- Improved morale and job satisfaction for staff.
- Speeded up response times and reduced the number of 'help' calls.
- Substantially increased use of Cargo Automation systems.
- Improved the efficiency of Customs processing.
- Increased detections of prohibited imports.

Footnote: A new version of Sea Cargo Automation released in September 1997 provides enhanced diagnostic facilities for brokers and simpler procedures for freight forwarders and shipping companies.