

PM'S AWARD FOR CONTAINER X-RAY PROJECT

The accolades keep rolling in for Customs container x-ray project. The initiative has been awarded the prestigious Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Sector Management for 2003.

The Prime Minister's Awards aim to encourage and recognise better practice and innovation in government. They are an initiative of the Institute of Public Administration Australia and are designed to honour the achievements of public sector work groups and teams, rather than individuals.

Customs entry was evaluated, along with the 15 other nominees from a total of 11 Commonwealth agencies, by the three judges according to the award criteria:

- demonstrated use of innovative approaches to develop and deliver products and services
- demonstrated commitment to and achievement of improved client satisfaction
- demonstrated high standard of leadership, planning, management and collaboration.



This achievement recognises Customs success in implementing an unprecedented objective in cargo examination - a more than twenty-fold increase in inspection of sea cargo nationally. The award also underscores Customs dedication to the continuous improvement of business processes, particularly in minimising the impact of dramatically heightened inspection rates on legitimate trade.

The award capped off what was an extremely busy 12 months for the project. From November 2002, Customs commissioned four of the massive examination facilities, in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and, most recently, Fremantle.

The \$35 million Fremantle CEF will increase by fifty-fold the number of containers which Customs will be able to examine in Fremantle every year. The facility also incorporates the use of an advanced mobile container x-ray system - the only system of its kind in Australia.

CUSTOMS CO-OPERATION NABS STEROID SMUGGLER

An alert visiting Customs officer from Norway and his Australian counterparts at Perth Airport joined forces recently to stop 3000 steroids entering the country.

The Norwegian Customs officer was travelling to Perth for a holiday when he became suspicious of a passenger during a stopover in Thailand. His suspicions were raised while in the restrooms, when he heard the sound of packing tape being ripped coming from an adjacent cubicle.

The Norwegian officer made a note of the passenger's appearance and later, to be certain, took a couple of digital photographs of the suspect in the transit area.

On arrival at Perth Airport, the Norwegian officer identified

himself to Australian Customs officers and informed them of his suspicions. Australian Customs officers had already selected the man for examination. However, combined with information from the Norwegian officer, a body search was requested.

Approximately 3000 blue pills, later identified as steroids, were found taped to the man's body and hidden in his underwear.

While surprised that the man was taping steroids to his body rather than heroin, the Norwegian officer was thrilled that he was able to assist Australian Customs.

It just goes to show that Customs officers are the same the world over.