

DINOSAUR FOSSILS SEIZED IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Customs officers at the Adelaide mail centre detected three dinosaur fossils exported illegally from China.

Officers using x-ray technology found the fossils, which included specimens from the Triassic and Cretaceous periods, in an airmail parcel. This discovery was referred to the Department of the Environment and Heritage to determine its authenticity.

Customs Regional Director for South Australia Virginia Lynch said Australia was one of the first countries to take direct action to help China deter the illegal trade in fossils and artifacts.

"This is another example of how Customs vigilance at the border is preventing prohibited goods from entering Australia and how we are assisting the Chinese to retrieve and protect their heritage," she said.

"Customs works closely with other government agencies to prevent the illegal trade of goods such as these," Ms Lynch said.

This seizure followed a ceremony held in Canberra where the Minister for Justice and Customs, Senator Chris Ellison, returned 32 dinosaur fossils to the Chinese Ambassador, Madame Fu Ying, on behalf of the Australian Government.



TEN YEARS IN JAIL FOR DRUG SMUGGLER

The sentencing of a foreign national to ten years imprisonment should serve as a warning to anyone who attempts to smuggle quantities of drugs into Australia.

Tullio Lenti, aged 37, received the sentence, with a six-year-four-month non-parole period, in Downing Centre Court in Sydney after pleading guilty to importing 1.8kg of heroin. He will be eligible for parole in 2010.

Lenti arrived at Sydney Airport, having travelled from Nairobi, Kenya, via Dubai. Customs officers selected him for a baggage examination, during which two packages wrapped in

aluminium foil containing the heroin were found inside his suit bag.

Customs Regional Director NSW David Collins said the lengthy sentence handed down by the court was a reflection of the seriousness with which drug smuggling was viewed by the Australian community.

"Customs officers are charged with preventing prohibited imports from entering the country, and this case is an example of the professionalism and efficiency with which officers successfully carry out their duties," he said.