

CUSTOMS TECHNOLOGY ON SHOW

Customs participated in the 2004 Amazing World of Science exhibition held at the National Convention Centre in Canberra.

The exhibition attracted more than 20,000 visitors, predominantly children and school groups. Exhibitors included the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service, St John Ambulance Australia, and Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Australia.

The Customs stand showcased several



technologies that Customs uses to protect Australia's borders from the threat of illegal and harmful goods, including narcotics. Customs officers demonstrated the use of ionscan and "buster" technology. The Detector Dog Unit also conducted demonstrations.

"Buster" detects differences in the density of an item, enabling Customs officers to find cavities in walls where contraband might be hidden. Visitors ran the "buster" over a container wall and watched as it alerted to the presence of a cavity. To the astonishment of children, the wall was then opened up to find the hidden items inside, which included dishwashing power, flour and metal fragments.

Customs officers from Border Technology, Passengers, the ACT Regional Office, and Corporate Communication conducted short ionscan demonstrations showing visitors how Customs uses trace particle detection to detect the presence of narcotics. Clean samples and some contaminated with heroin and cocaine were used to show how the machine reacted to the presence of tiny amounts of narcotics that could not be seen.

The Customs stall also displayed a model of Customs patrol vessel *Roebuck Bay*, various prohibited items, and a mannequin dressed in the Southern Ocean patrol uniform.

The display of prohibited items, which included wildlife products, trademark infringements and an array of weapons, provided a popular addition to the stall, generating numerous inquiries from children and adults. Among the most popular exhibit with children of all ages

was an elephant's foot, which they were given the opportunity to feel.

Demonstrations using detector dog Quincy were conducted, drawing crowds.

Quincy searched a row of parcels and found a parcel containing the scent of narcotics. Quincy then went on to search an enthusiastic crowd of people and identified a child who had been selected from the crowd to wear a jacket impregnated with the scent of a drug.

A detector dog pup, Lacy, and a handler attended the exhibition for a few hours a day for the first three days.

