

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

Question No. 123

Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 17 February 2006:

For 2004-05 and 2005-06 (to date), how many complaints have been received in respect of the number of containers which have no free storage days remaining, broken down by port?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

The Customs Complaints and Compliments Management System does not automatically collect information detailing how many storage days are remaining for each complaint. Customs responds to complaints about storage charges and investigates these on a case-by-case basis. Customs is able to provide data captured by three categories of complaint that may indicate that there were no free storage days remaining:

1. payment of unexpected fees;
2. dissatisfaction with the length of time the process took; and
3. three free days of storage is inadequate.

It is important to note that one complainant may make more than one complaint at one time which will then be allocated against more than one category. This means that, for example, although 100 people make complaints, the number of complaints received may be 120. Customs does not record complaints against individual ports but rather the region where the complaint was managed. The following provides information about complaint category by region:

CEF complaints about storage fees/time – 2004-2005

Region	Didn't expect fees	Process took too long	3 days of storage free time is not enough	Total
ACT*	2	0	7	9
NSW	11	30	0	41
QLD	5	17	0	22
VIC	12	22	1	35
WA	2	16	0	18
Total	32	85	8	125

CEF complaints about storage fees/time – 2005 – 2006 (To date - 31 January 2006)

Region	Didn't expect fees	Process took too long	3 days of storage free time is not enough	Total
ACT*	1	1	2	4
NSW	10	17	0	27
QLD	4	12	0	16
VIC	3	15	2	20
WA	2	6	0	8
Total	20	51	4	74

*Complaints relating to national policy issues are referred to Customs, ACT for a response.