



FILE NUMBER: C07/00625

INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

Media procedures October 2007

THIS INSTRUCTION AND GUIDELINE REFERS TO:
PRACTICE STATEMENT NO: 2007-13 Media Procedures
PUBLISHED DATE: 3 December 2007
AVAILABILITY: Internal

INTERNAL USE ONLY

BCS CLASSIFICATION: Publications – Procedures – Instruction Guidelines
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SUBJECT:	Media procedures.
PURPOSE:	To provide instructions and advice on the way in which Customs deals with the media.
OWNER:	National Director People and Place
CATEGORY:	Corporate
CONTACT:	Customs Media 02 6275 6793

The electronic version published on the intranet is the current Practice Statement.

SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS

Media coverage is a key factor in determining public perception of the agency.

Customs Media is the central point of contact for all media inquiries. Individual officers should not initiate contact with the media.

INTRODUCTION

Customs has procedures for dealing with the media and responding to requests for information.

The procedures outlined below are detailed in the publication “Dealing with the Media: Procedures” available from Customs Media and on the Intranet.

INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

Why Customs must respond to media inquiries

The media is one of the most powerful forces affecting the environment in which Customs operates.

The media is interested in Customs, its officers and the way Customs goes about its business. Media coverage is a key factor in determining how the community, stakeholders, partner agencies and the Government perceive Customs.

Positive media coverage increases support for the work of Customs and its role at the border. Dealing with the media can also be risky—media issues have the potential to damage Customs reputation if not handled correctly.

The role of Customs Media

Customs Media is the primary point of contact between Customs and the media. It is responsible for:

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- using the media to enhance stakeholder understanding of, and compliance with, Customs regulations
- proactively identifying opportunities for positive media coverage for Customs (media releases in relation to seizures and court cases, major events, etc) to support community confidence in our operations
- ensuring the Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chief Executive Officers, other relevant senior executives and the Minister's Office are aware of potentially sensitive or controversial media issues
- responding directly to inquiries from the media or arranging other appropriate forms of response
- liaising with the Minister's Office on relevant media issues
- coordination, clearance and distribution of media responses and releases
- coordinating interviews and briefings with journalists
- ensuring appropriate Executive approvals are gained before statements or releases are made or interviews are given by Customs staff
- coordinating approval of text (except paid advertising such as job advertisements) intended for publication to external audiences to ensure the information is appropriate and relevant.

Significant incidents and seizures

Customs Media should be informed as soon as practicable of significant incidents, seizures and case outcomes which:

- may offer potential for positive media coverage for Customs
- have the potential to damage Customs reputation through negative media coverage, whether or not it is apparent the incident has, or could, become public or media knowledge.

Customs Media can be contacted by emailing communication@customs.gov.au or 24 hours a day on (02) 6275 6793.

Speaking to the media

Individual officers should not initiate contact with the media.

Officers giving interviews or making comments must have the appropriate expertise, skills, experience and authorisation to speak on behalf of Customs.

Officers in the following positions are authorised to speak to the media:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Deputy Chief Executive Officers
- National Directors
- National Managers
- Director, Customs Media
- Regional Directors (on matters relating to their regions)
- Regional Managers (on matters relating to their regions and areas of responsibility)

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- District Managers (on non-controversial matters relating to their districts).

All other officers must have authorisation from an appropriate supervisor listed above before dealing with the media.

What to do when the media calls

Officers should direct media inquiries to Customs Media. A team member can be reached 24 hours a day by calling (02) 6275 6793.

In some limited cases officers may be specifically authorised to deal directly with the media on issues relating to a designated area of expertise or responsibility. This contact should also be reported to Customs Media via email (communication@customs.gov.au)

Determining what should be done, why, how and by whom, are important decisions. These must be made in consultation with Customs Media. Options could include:

- provision of a limited response (talking points)
- provision of background information, articles, photographs or video footage
- an interview with a Customs spokesperson
- preparation of a media release or statement
- arranging an event or photo opportunity.

Preparation and clearance of material for media distribution

Officers must consult Customs Media before responding to a media inquiry.

Officers with operational knowledge or expertise in the area relevant to the media inquiry are responsible for drafting any notes or points for inclusion in a media statement, response or release, or otherwise providing Customs Media with this information.

Customs Media will clear material, as appropriate, with the Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chief Executive Officers, National Directors, National Managers, Regional Directors, the Minister's Office and/or partner agencies. Operational areas will also be given an opportunity to review draft material for accuracy.

If an interview is to be given, or a statement or release issued, Customs Media and an appropriate spokesperson will coordinate it. Wherever possible, the spokesperson will have undergone a Customs media-training program.

Customs will respond to media inquiries promptly with regard to the nature of the inquiry, its origin and the potential for damage to Customs reputation. However, the accuracy of the information is of primary concern.

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RELATED POLICIES AND REFERENCES

PRACTICE STATEMENTS

- PS 2007-13 Media Procedures

CONSULTATION

INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable

INTERNAL CONSULTATION

Not applicable.

APPROVAL

Approved by:

Linda Smith
DCEO CO
16 November 2007

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