

## From the CEO

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**Lionel Woodward**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Australian Customs Service

The year 2000 has been a particularly challenging one for Customs.

For several decades now, Customs has been at the forefront among Australian government agencies in adopting modern advances in electronic data processing to provide better 'on-line' access to many of its services.

Customs is therefore well placed to meet the Government's 1997 Online Strategy commitment that, as far as possible, all federal agencies will be providing appropriate government services via the Internet by 2001.

During 1999, in the lead-up to the new millennium, the possibility of Y2K computer problems disrupting Customs and its clients was of considerable concern.

But all Customs Y2K preparation and planning paid off handsomely.

Similarly, in the lead-up to and during the recent 2000 Sydney Olympic and Paralympic Games, years of Customs planning and preparation, in collaboration with other Australian border agencies, also paid off.

This was evident in the smooth processing of the many tonnes of Olympic cargo, including competition horses and masses of media and electronic equipment, being temporarily imported. Not forgetting the thousands of Olympic athletes and their equipment - plus thousands of Olympic officials, media representatives and visitors.

Another challenge is the extensive Customs initiative, Cargo Management Re-engineering (CMR), that we are undertaking, in collaboration with

industry, to modernise all Customs business, computer and Internet policies and practices.

I have recently established an internal review to examine Customs current business processes in the light of opportunities that CMR is presenting. The work will be at a strategic level and will continue over the next few months.

The CMR process is now well advanced. User requirements for the integrated IT system are nearing finalisation and we expect that the amending legislation to support CMR will be introduced into Parliament later this year.

CMR represents a major change which goes much further than replacing our IT systems. It will also involve changes to many of our business practices.

How we manage these changes will be important, not just to Customs itself, but also to the many people who interact regularly with us. An essential element in managing such a large change is to try to foresee the impact that CMR will have on our own business and on traders' businesses.

We are now identifying issues crucial to CMR's smooth implementation. Such issues will include new training and skilling requirements, new or changed roles and responsibilities for staff and/or changes to the way we do our work.

Finally, I was very grateful to read, in the story on page 15, that Customs played a significant part in the colourful life of Ned Trickett - Australia's first world champion.