

names of sports people visiting in relation to the Olympics and we are able to use our information systems to decide if any are known or potential risks to our border.

"It is not that Customs has a network of countries that give us information about people who use performance-enhancing drugs. In many countries, it's legal to have some of these products in your possession. It's just that any risks of sports-drug importation by members of the Olympic family are, generally speaking, already known to us and sports federations.

"We focus our attention on them if we know they are coming to Australia but, where a person is known internatio-

nally to be using sports-enhancing drugs, it is unlikely that a country would include that person in a team.

"Outside the Olympic family members, we use a combination of both targeting—where you look for people you are aware of that are a threat or risk—as well as profiles," Les said.

When Customs becomes aware of breaches involving sports people, if appropriate it notifies the Australian Sports Commission and the Australian Sports Drug Agency and the Australian Federal Police if a Commonwealth offence has been committed. On Customs success rate so far, Mr Jones was not prepared to speculate on what proportion of imported product was

being caught at the border. "But our seizures over the past few years have been rising incredibly so I am optimistic that we've got the matter reasonably well under control", he said.

"The difficulty for us is that there's a lot of legitimate goods crossing the border that are later diverted into some illicit use. They might be veterinary products that are quite lawfully imported with all the appropriate certifications but they are later diverted and fall into the wrong hands.

"Unfortunately, there's quite a bit of that going on, but I'm pretty optimistic that we're getting a very good proportion of what's arriving at the border."

Not random, targeted

Many people assume that, because of the enormous volume of people and goods entering Australia, Customs can only manage random checks to detect illegal activity. This is far from the truth.

"**W**e don't do random checks. Random checks don't produce outcomes," says Les Jones, National Director, Border Division. "All our examinations and interventions are risk-based, which allows us to target our resources more effectively, and to minimise impact on low-risk situations.

"The payoff for industry and the public is that those who are compliant face fewer hassles—they have an incentive for compliance. The pay-off for Customs is less wasted effort and better results."

Mr Jones said there had been a belief in the past that the more you examined, the more you would find. That was not necessarily correct.

"We are most successful by targeting the highest-risk consignments or

people, and then investigating that concern using the best available technology. Our seizures have been increasing every year, so we believe we are on the right track.

"If we believe there's a large volume of cannabis, then the best technology to deploy is a dog. We let the dog tell us whether there's any cannabis in there. You don't need to go to the expense and time and disruption to the importer of unstuffing and repacking the container. If we think there's other drugs we use an ion scanner and back-scatter X-ray.

"As a consequence, we're seeing an increased volume of seizures because of improved technology and better educated officers who are getting more experienced at being able to examine suspect goods very

quickly—thus making for better targeting.

"Technology means the prospects of us having to intervene are getting less and less. We are able to look at what it is we think we need to look at.

"We know that less than two per cent of people represent any threat or risk to the border—immigration, customs, prohibited goods, revenue, quarantine or whatever. The other 98 per cent are genuine tourists or visitors who are here to boost our economy and we want to make sure that they come through the border with a positive experience.

"For cargo, the risk percentage is higher and without targeting you could spend an awful lot of time and effort and money in pursuing the wrong consignments."