

Huge hauls—drugs by the tonne

Coordination of resources and assets within and outside Customs and with the cooperative efforts between agencies has resulted recently in the seizure of record amounts of narcotics.

A series of drug operations by Customs and the Australian Federal Police (AFP) saw the seizure of more than 1500kg of amphetamines and cocaine in a 10-week period.

Australia's largest cocaine haul was made on 27 July when AFP and Customs officers seized more than a tonne of cocaine on the central Western Australia coast at Dulverton Bay (Operation Feria).

operation – Operation Montego – saw the seizure of 90kg of cocaine off the coast of Brisbane near Moreton Island in May.

The operation was the culmination of nearly two years of investigation by the AFP and Australian Customs and involved significant assistance from the Queensland Police Service, police and customs in New Caledonia and US Customs

The Western Australian drug haul was the result of a two-month investigation by the AFP, which became a joint operation with Customs.

From the time the vessel was first sighted off the Western Australian coast, Customs Coastwatch maintained continuous visual and electronic surveillance. This included the unloading of the drugs on to shore at Dulverton Bay some 45 hours later.

In addition to the seizure of the drugs, five people were charged in relation to the importation.

Operation Barney, on the Sunshine Coast, was the result of an 11-month investigation by Customs. The operation, with the assistance



Just nine days earlier, in a Customs-led operation (Barney), more than 400kg of amphetamine-type substances, including ecstasy and ice, were seized from a yacht moored at Mooloolaba on Queensland's Sunshine Coast. Another joint Customs and AFP

Customs officers involved in Operation Feria (above) took the opportunity to inspect the cocaine haul. More than a tonne of cocaine was seized (right) as the result of the two-month operation by the Australian Federal Police that became a joint operation with Customs.



of the Australian Federal Police, netted a variety of drugs. The haul included: more than a million amphetamine tablets; almost half a million methamphetamine tablets; 152 kg of crystal ice (methamphetamine); and 4000 tablets of methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) - commonly known as ecstasy.

A call about suspicious activity to the Customs Watch free phone number provided a small piece of information that turned into the record seizure of amphetamines.

From the time the information was provided, Customs officers from Cairns to Canberra monitored activities of individuals. This led to the identification of the yacht from which the drugs were seized. The AFP was kept informed of the operation and was called in to assist immediately a link to narcotics was made.



Customs officers spent 11-months investigating activities surrounding a yacht (above) during Operation Barney that was found to contain a record amount of methamphetamine crystals and tablets.



Australian Federal Police forensic scientists (above) inspect the haul of tablets (right) from Operation Barney.



**Report unusual or suspicious activities to customs watch
1800 06 1800**