



CANNABIS HAUL HIDDEN IN DAMAGED CONTAINER

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Customs officers at the Fremantle container examination facility seized 640kg of cannabis in what is the largest haul of the drug at the Australian border since 1997.

The Minister for Justice and Customs, Senator Chris Ellison, said Customs, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and private industry had worked together to keep a massive quantity of narcotics off the streets.

"An alert employee at a container repair facility had reason to believe that a particular container could contain a false floor," Senator Ellison said.

"The repair company notified the shipping company responsible for the container, who contacted Customs through their membership of the Customs Frontline program," he said.

Customs took the shipping container to its examination facility in Fremantle where it was x-rayed, revealing anomalies in the floor consistent with a concealed substance.

Customs and AFP officers then deconstructed the container and discovered approximately 300 plastic-wrapped bags of cannabis leaf hidden beneath the flooring.

"This is the biggest seizure of cannabis at the border since the introduction of the Australian Government's *Tough on Drugs* strategy in 1997," Senator Ellison said.

"In particular, the Frontline referral highlights the importance of industry and Government working together to protect the Australian community.

"The company is to be congratulated for reporting its suspicions to Customs. Unusual damage to containers is just one aspect that Frontline members are educated to look out for."