Australian Customs Notice 1996 53

**INTRODUCTION OF CONTROLS ON THE DRUG "FANTASY" AMENDMENT TO THE CUSTOMS (PROHIBITED IMPORTS) AND (PROHIBITED EXPORTS) REGULATIONS AND CUSTOMS (NARCOTIC SUBSTANCES) REGULATIONS**

The abuse of the substance known as "Fantasy" has recently come to attention following a recent incident in Queensland in which eight people were hospitalised after taking a mixture believed to contain the substance. In order to address public safety issues, the Minister for Health and Family Services has requested the immediate introduction of controls on the drug as it has no approved therapeutic purpose in Australia and limited use in some overseas countries as an anaesthetic.

Regulation 5 of the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations controls the importation of certain drugs by operation of Schedule 4 to the Regulations. Regulations 10 to10F of the Customs (Prohibited Exports) Regulations control the exportation of certain drugs by operation of Schedule 8 (Parts 1 to 4) to the Regulations.

Schedule 4 of the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations and Schedule 8 of the Customs (Prohibited Exports) Regulations have therefore been amended to prohibit the importation and exportation of the class of substances "4-hydroxybutanoic acid, its salts and esters" which includes the substance commonly known as "Fantasy" or "GBH" (Grievous Bodily Harm).

Section 235 of the Customs Act 1901 prescribes penalties (including imprisonment) for offences in relation to trafficable quantities and commercial quantities of "narcotic substances". Therefore, the Schedule to the Customs (Narcotic Substances) Regulations has also been amended to prescribe the class of substances "4- hydroxybutanoic acid, its salts and esters" as a "narcotic substance" for the purposes of Section 235 of the Act.

The amendments to the Regulations are effective on and from 24 October 1996. Special Gazette No. 395 refers.

Should you have any queries regarding the controls on "Fantasy", please contact Gary Morris, Department of Health and Family Services, Canberra on 06 2897277. Enquiries regarding this Australian Customs Notice can be directed to Julie Thorp, Cargo Facilitation on 06 2756695.

R J MITCHELL

National Manager CARGO FACILITATION

for (L B WOODWARD)

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER CANBERRA

28 October 1996

(Cargo Facilitation : C94/09008)