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**Amendments to the Australian Customs tariff and the Australian harmonized export commodity classification**

The International Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HCDCS), forms the basis of Australia's commodity classifications for traded goods. These classifications are contained in the Australian Customs Tariff (the Tariff) for imports and the Australian Harmonized Export Commodity Classification (AHECC) for exports.

The World Customs Organization, which sponsors the HCDCS, has requested that signatory parties, including Australia, implement approximately 300 amendments to the six digit HCDCS classification. This will result in changes to Australia's more detailed import and export classifications which are extensions of the HCDCS. The Tariff and the AHECC will be amended to incorporate the necessary changes from 1 January 2002. This will result in approximately 800 changes to the Tariff, affecting 12% of commodity classifications.

A similar exercise was conducted in 1996, at the time of the introduction of the Customs Tariff Act 1995. As previously, the aim of this exercise will be to maintain existing duty rates. In many cases however, this will require the creation of new domestic tariff splits.

The necessary legislation is now being prepared and it is expected that a Proposal will be tabled in the House of Representatives in August 2001.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) will issue proposed changes to the eight digit export statistical codes in March and will then consult with interested parties in respect of the proposals. A similar process will be followed for the ten digit import statistical codes, once Customs has determined the eight digit tariff codes.

[The ABS will make detailed information concerning these changes available on its website (www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au/) - select Themes \ International Trade \ Classifications \ Harmonized System Review 2002).

Users who wish to directly receive information or make submissions regarding these changes to the import and [export statistical codes, should contact Marion Hall at the ABS on (02) 6252 6379 or email hsreview@abs.gov.au.](mailto:hsreview@abs.gov.au)

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for

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