Australian Customs Notice 1997 70

**CUSTOMS AND THE YEAR 2000 COMPUTER BUG**

By December 1998, the Australian Customs Service is aiming to be in a position to confirm that its major computer systems accord with Year 2000 standards.

The Year 2000 problem affects most computers and 'intelligent' machinery and arises where equipment has been programmed to store dates with the years as two digits, such as '99' and cannot recognise '00' as '2000'.

Because of the high levels of computer-based interaction between Customs, industry clients and other government agencies, there are substantial threats to business efficiency if organisations reliant on these interfaces have not ensured their own systems are capable of handling the date change.

The Customs' Year 2000 Project is well advanced and has, as a major objective, the aim of providing our clients with a high level of confidence in the Customs systems. It is imperative that clients afford a high priority, over the next 12 months, to ensuring that their systems are Year 2000 compliant.

Customs plans to upgrade all its core business systems by June 1998. From September 1998, a separate testing service will be available for several months. Clients will be able to send and receive test data to assist in proving that both the Customs systems and the clients system will remain fully functional at the turn of the century.

All Customs systems should be fully Year 2000 compliant by December 1998. This will provide a 12 month period during which to remedy any remaining problems which may arise.

Customs will assist industry with information sessions. Individual clients should liaise through their industry associations who may contact either their usual Customs contact officer or the Customs Year 2000 Project Manager, Noel Mungovan, on 02 6275 5754.

A Year 2000 component has been added to the Customs World Wide Web site

at [**http://www.customs.gov.au/y2k.**](http://www.customs.gov.au/y2k) Other useful Y2k information can be obtained from the Office of Government Information Technology at [**http://www.ogit.gov.au**](http://www.ogit.gov.au/)

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CANBERRA ACT

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