

AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION NOTICE NO. 2011/24

Amendment to the Customs Act 1901

Last week Parliament passed the Customs Amendment (Serious Drugs Detection) Bill 2011, which is now awaiting Royal Assent.

**Customs Amendment (Serious Drugs Detection) Bill 2011**

Commences on a date to be fixed by Proclamation or within 6 months of the Bill receiving Royal Assent.

The amendments will allow, with the consent of the detainee, an initial non-medical internal scan of a person to be carried out by a Customs and Border Protection officer using body scan technology that is to be prescribed in the regulations. This technology produces a computer image of a person’s internal cavities within a skeletal structure, as opposed to images of external body parts.

Such images may serve to allay an officer’s suspicion that a passenger is internally concealing a suspicious substance, in which case the detainee would be released immediately from detention for internal search. Where, however, a body scan image supports a suspicion of an internal concealment, the existing regime governing internal searches by a medical practitioner will apply.

The Bill’s primary focus is to enable the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service to exercise its border responsibilities more efficiently and effectively.

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The Bill and the Explanatory Memorandum are available on the Australian Parliament House website on the Bills page - <http://www.aph.gov.au/bills/index.htm>

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