



BORDER WATCH

1800 06 1800

Help protect Australia's border

Border Watch Member News

March 2021

Welcome to the first Border Watch Member News for 2021. This edition includes updates from your regional Coordinators, and real stories about Border Watch and the Australian Border Force (ABF) in action.

As we adapt to the 'new normal', we also feature an important update about COVID-19 vaccine imports, and changes to the temporary export control covering personal protective equipment.

As always, thank you for supporting the Border Watch program.

Achieving real results

Between July and December 2020, information provided to the Border Watch program can be linked to the detection of:



Over **115 kilograms** of border controlled drugs (BCDs).



More than **58 million** cigarette sticks, worth over **\$62 million** in potential lost revenue and GST.



Over **13 tonnes** of rough cut tobacco and **5 tonnes** of molasses tobacco, together worth over **\$27 million** in potential lost revenue and GST.

Border Watch members have played a key role in preventing these drugs and smuggled goods from entering the country.

We take all reports of suspicious activity seriously and all reports we receive are acted upon.

Delivery driver helps disrupt plot to import molasses tobacco

In September, a delivery driver working for an express freight company attempted to deliver two air cargo consignments to a residential address, but the occupant said the consignee did not live there. Soon afterwards, the consignee contacted the express freight company and gave authority to leave the consignment at a different address.

A manager at the freight company thought this behaviour was suspicious and reported it to Border Watch. The ABF examined both consignments and located 33kg of molasses tobacco from Indonesia. Officers seized the goods and issued a notice to the importer, effectively disrupting this attempt to exploit border controls.

Importing molasses tobacco for commercial or personal use, without obtaining a permit and paying the relevant duty and GST is a criminal offence.

If you work with cargo, be on the lookout for:

- Last minute change to details, such as delivery addresses;
- Deliveries to a residential address or self-storage facility;
- Goods weight inconsistent with goods description;
- Consignee business inconsistent with goods described on the manifest.



Example of a molasses tobacco detection. Image: ABF Media

Regional updates

New South Wales and ACT

Border Watch NSW has continued to achieve great results throughout the past six months thanks to the continuing support of our members. Once again, we cannot thank you enough.



We have been given the green light to resume our face-to-face visits. Please advise if you would like the team to deliver a presentation at your premises. We are also aware that some business models have changed to accommodate continued working from home arrangements and we are open to reaching out in your preferred format.

We will be advising you in advance of any visits of current COVID-19 protocols. We are always happy to take calls anytime and look forward to catching up once again.

Joanne Cassel, Joanne Vandarakis and Leesa McIntyre
BorderWatchNSW@homeaffairs.gov.au

South Australia



Whilst we still have some restrictions in place, I have been appreciative of SA Border Watch members facilitating Border Watch presentations and meetings.

Fingers crossed that restrictions relax further, and I can continue my focus on shipping agents, ports and marinas around SA.

If now is a good time for Border Watch training, let me know. Stay safe and look forward to seeing you all again soon.

Nick Sincock
BorderWatchSA@homeaffairs.gov.au

Western Australia



I recently conducted a road trip to the South West of WA along the coast from Bunbury to Windy Harbour, along with our Bunbury ABF district office staff Ashton and Justin.

We visited over 50 organisations, providing Border Watch information (with the occasional fishing story courtesy of Justin) and delivering some member and appreciation certificates.

A huge thank you to everyone we were able to stop and see.

Next stop on the WA regional roadshow is Albany for their Port open day on 24 April. If you are in the area, stop by for a visit and see the beautiful region. We will have a marquee and the ABF Detector Dog Unit will be out for the day.

Kath Forward
BorderWatchWA@homeaffairs.gov.au

Queensland

In late 2020, I conducted a road trip from Mackay to Brisbane with two colleagues and we visited ABF district offices located at Mackay, Gladstone and Bundaberg, along with a number of marinas.



We visited a number of our members in those cities as well as Yeppoon and Rockhampton.

We are planning some more visits to regional Queensland this year, so if you are based outside of Brisbane, I hope to see you soon.

Grant Shaw
BorderWatchQLD@homeaffairs.gov.au

Victoria and Tasmania

It goes without saying that we have had a challenging time in Victoria. Yet through it all Border Watch members have continued to look out for suspicious activity and together we have achieved real results.



I am looking forward to resuming visits to industry members within a few weeks. Rest assured, any visits to your location will be scheduled with you in advance to ensure we adhere to your organisation's COVIDSafe Plan.

Jack Clements

BorderWatchVIC-TAS@homeaffairs.gov.au

Northern Region

Northern Region includes the Northern Territory and the top of Queensland, north of Cardwell.



Following last year's cancellation, this year (fingers crossed) we will have a stand at the Darwin 4WD, Boating and Camping Expo again. At this stage, it will be held over the weekend of 26 and 27 June.

I am looking forward to setting the stand up again, seeing some familiar faces and chatting to those that visit. Please call in and say hi if you can.

I am visiting Batchelor in April so if you are based there and would like me to call in, please contact me for the dates. I can coordinate dates/times for those in other areas too within the Northern Region, please contact me to arrange an information session or visit for you and your staff using the details below.

Vicki Byster

BorderWatchNT@homeaffairs.gov.au

Cocaine filled vessel seized off NSW coast



The 'daughter' vessel that was intercepted. A larger 330m 'mother' ship is docked in Port Botany. Image: NSW Police

On 11 March 2021, approximately 200 kilograms was seized after it was allegedly located on board a vessel off the New South Wales coast. The detection resulted from a joint operation between AFP, ABF and NSW authorities.

Through Maritime Border Command, ABF officers provided ongoing monitoring of cargo vessel as it made its way to Sydney. Aerial surveillance observed the launch of a small vessel that met with the cargo vessel.

Police allege that 11 crates containing 199 blocks of cocaine were offloaded from the cargo vessel and transported to the smaller vessel where it was intercepted by NSW Police Force on its return to shore. The seized cocaine has an estimated street value of \$90 million.

If you live or work near the coast, be on the lookout for:

- vessels anchored or operating in an unusual area;
- vessels meeting at sea with other vessels;
- vessels operating without navigation lights, departing at unusual times or in unsuitable weather conditions;
- vessels damaged on return to the dock;
- vessel operators who lack knowledge about local conditions or lack ability to operate their vessel;
- unusual activity on beaches or in remote areas (such as hidden campsites or fuel dumps).

To keep up to date with news and information, subscribe to the ABF Newsroom at newsroom.abf.gov.au

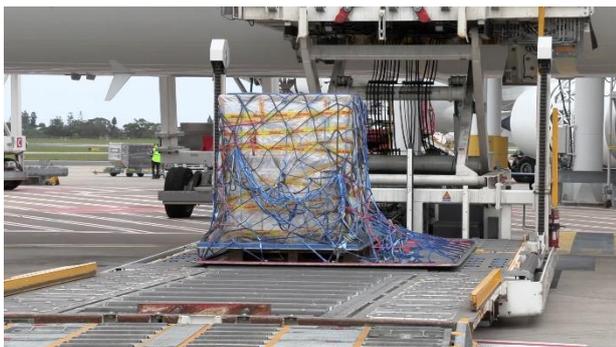
COVID-19 vaccines

The ABF is working with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to ensure goods, including COVID-19 vaccines, medicines and medical devices can enter Australia as quickly and efficiently as possible, while meeting import requirements.

Registered COVID-19 vaccines can only be imported by the Sponsor listed on the [Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods](#).

Be on the lookout for people trying to import unapproved or counterfeit vaccines, or import legitimate COVID-19 vaccines without approval. It is possible that some criminals may seek to 'piggyback' the details of legitimate COVID-19 vaccine importers, in order to move illicit goods into Australia.

Remember, vaccines have special storage requirements (for example, the Pfizer vaccine needs to be stored at minus-70 degrees Celsius), so be particularly vigilant around cold chain or temperature-controlled goods.



The first doses of Pfizer vaccine arrived at Sydney Airport in February. Image: ABF Media

The TGA is publishing the latest information about COVID-19 medicines and medical devices on its website: www.tga.gov.au. However, the situation will continue to develop, and if you still cannot find the information you need, contact the TGA.

If you are in doubt report it to Border Watch on 1800 06 1800 or complete a report online at www.abf.gov.au/borderwatch.

Export control repealed

Regulation 13GI and regulation 13GJ of the *Customs (Prohibited Exports) Regulations 1958* have been repealed. On and from 11 December 2020, it is no longer prohibited to export certain goods that help prevent the spread of COVID-19, including disposable face masks, gloves, gown, goggles, glasses or eye visors, alcohol wipes and hand sanitizer.

For further information, refer to the legislation at: www.legislation.gov.au/Series/F1996B03403.

Useful contacts

Border Watch: Call 1800 06 1800 (open 24/7) or use the webform at www.abf.gov.au/borderwatch

Report an immigration offence: Use the webform at www.abf.gov.au/borderwatch

Cargo Systems Support: Enquiries relating to the status of cargo should be sent directly to Cargo Systems Support (CSS) via cargosupport@abf.gov.au or 1300 558 099

General Enquiries: For general information about travel or trade, including bringing goods in or out of Australia, phone 131 881 or visit www.homeaffairs.gov.au

Compliments, complaints and suggestions: The Global Feedback Unit receives compliments, complaints or suggestions. Phone 133 177 or visit www.homeaffairs.gov.au

Report a scam: Contact Scamwatch via www.scamwatch.gov.au/report-a-scam

Next issue

If you have any comments or queries about this newsletter, or would like to see a particular topic covered in the next edition, please email your Border Watch Coordinator, or use the member enquiry form at www.abf.gov.au/borderwatch.



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