LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Customs - Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Research Project

Dear Sir,

First, let me say that it is with regret that I hear about the closure of the Australian Association for Maritime Affairs (AAMA). I have been a member and supporter of AAMA since 2005, so it is really sad to see the closure of the Association.

I would like to thank you for all your efforts and for your significant personal contribution to AAMA, especially after taking the position of Chairman of AAMA. I also would like to express my compliments and those of my colleagues here at the Centre for Customs and Excise Studies (CCES), Charles Sturt University, to the AAMA Board and the Editorial Board of the Australian Journal of Maritime and Ocean Affairs (AJMOA) for their work and for the decision to keep AJMOA alive.

I also would like to take this opportunity to update you and the readers of the Digest on the outcomes of the Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Research Project undertaken by CCES. You will recall that last year I wrote a Letter to the Editor about this project, which was subsequently published in the August 2013 issue of the Digest.

The project was designed to develop an industry position for presentation to Government on the various forms of AEO schemes that are in place, under development, or being considered by Australian agencies, including recommendations on how they may be progressed within Australia in order to guard against any possible erosion of the industry’s competitive position in the global marketplace. The research project was completed in April 2014. A copy of the Final Report is available at:

http://newcustomscentre.files.wordpress.com/2014/05/review-of-ao-schemes-final-report.pdf

Two significant events impacted on the research project during the period of the study. First, the release of the ‘Blueprint for Reform 2013-2018’ by the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (ACBPS) and subsequent announcements by the ACBPS executive signalled the proposed introduction of some form of ‘Trusted Trader’ (AEO-like) program in Australia. Second, a momentous Trade Facilitation Agreement, which includes specific reference to trade facilitation measures for ‘Authorized Operators’, was settled by the members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its Ninth Ministerial Conference in Bali in December 2013.

CCES would like to thank those who provided assistance in completing the project, including representatives of the Australian International Trade and Transport Industry Development Fund, the Customs Brokers and Forwards Council of Australia Inc., the Export Council of Australia, the Australian Federation of International Forwarders, the Conference of Asia Pacific Express Carriers, Shipping Australia Limited, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Customs Trade Advisory Group, the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service, the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the World Customs Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Maritime Organization, IBM Australia Limited, Shooters Wholesale Warehouse Pty Ltd, Inland Trading Co (Aust) Pty Ltd, Aspen Medical Pty Ltd, Sanger Australia Pty Ltd, and all others who assisted with this study including those who participated in the industry focus groups and surveys.

Sincerely,

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