Australian
BORDER FORCE

Time Release Study of Goods Imported to Australia 2017–2021

Acknowledgement

The 2017–2021 Time Release Study of Goods Imported to Australia was prepared by Customs Division of the Australian Border Force and the Data and Economic Analysis Centre of the Department of Home Affairs.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword

On behalf of the Australian Border Force (ABF) I am proud to present the *2017–2021 Time Release Study of Goods Imported to Australia* (*2017–2021 TRS*).

The Time Release Study is the culmination of several years' work to compile and analyse more than 225 million records of consignments that entered Australia over the study period. The current Time Release Study is Australia's eighth study since 2007. Australia sees great value in undertaking regular studies in order to provide a baseline for subsequent measurements of our border process performance, identify where barriers might exist in border agency processes, and to be open and transparent with the Australian public, industry and our international partners about the timeframes involved in importing goods to Australia.

Despite the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Australia's border agency and industry performance continues to trend towards faster and earlier clearances. Australia's steadily improving release times would not have been achieved without the hard work and dedication of our staff at the border who efficiently assess and inspect tens of millions of consignments every year. Of course, these results would not be possible without Industry's continued commitment to providing information to government as early in the trade flow process as possible.

Despite the positive results in a domestic context, Australia has slipped in global cross border trade rankings as other economies make significant investments in their border modernisation efforts, bringing about faster and more efficient trade. If we are to remain globally competitive and continue to support domestic productivity growth and resilience we must increase our regulatory reform agenda and invest further in border modernisation initiatives, such as the Government's Simplified Trade System which will deliver a world class system capable of supporting our future trade needs, including how cargo is processed and cleared.

In my role as the World Customs Organization (WCO) Asia/Pacific Vice-Chair, a role I have occupied since 2022, I have encouraged Members of the WCO's Asia/Pacific Region to measure the performance of their border agencies and commit to continually improving and speeding up trade flows. Of course this must not be at the cost of increasing risk to the public that we are committed to protect. Striking this balance is a challenge for all customs and biosecurity agencies around the world, including Australia's. The first step in meeting these challenges is accurate data and measurement of our border processes.

Australia is committed to continually improving our border processes as we forge ahead with ground breaking initiatives including the Simplified Trade System and the new Western Sydney International Airport.

I commend the 2017–2021 TRS to you.

Commissioner and Comptroller-General of Customs Michael Outram APM
Australian Border Force
January 2024

Introduction and context

Australia has produced a Time Release Study (TRS), since 2007[1]. The WCO identifies that Time Release Studies are *"a strategic and internationally recognized tool to measure the actual time required for the release and/or clearance of goods, from the time of arrival until the physical release of cargo, with a view to finding bottlenecks in the trade flow process and taking necessary measures to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of border procedures."*[2]

Australia's TRS has a range of purposes including:

1. To accurately measure border process performance relating to trade flows, in particular the clearance and release of goods;
2. To help identify associated bottlenecks so that appropriate policy decisions to improve performance can be well designed and effectively implemented;
3. To establish a baseline for border management performance measurement; and
4. To provide transparency about Australia's trade processes to the public, industry and our international trade partners.

The ABF is Australia's Customs Service and enforces the Australian government's customs framework, including making industry aware of the legislated reporting timeframes[1] and by enforcing those requirements. Both the ABF and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), which is responsible for administering the Australian Government's biosecurity/quarantine framework, appreciates ongoing industry efforts to prioritise early reporting to border agencies. As the *2017–2021 TRS* demonstrates, the benefit of early reporting of consignments destined for Australia is subsequent early clearance of the goods and minimising of post-arrival delays.

The *2017–2021 TRS* demonstrates an overall improvement against most performance measures compared to the *2015–2016 TRS* (the previous study). In particular, measures across 2018–2019 demonstrated an overall improvement, consistent with trends observed in the previous study. The major disruptor during the study period was the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw almost all indicators reversed as governments and industry around the world grappled with the effects of the pandemic in 2020–2021. Nevertheless, there is a distinct trend towards faster border agency clearance which was expected to continue as trade patterns returned to a 'new normal' in 2022.

The challenges associated with significant increases in volumes of trade and travel, and highly dynamic supply chains as well as increasingly sophisticated transnational criminal organisations and continually evolving national security threats provide a complex environment in which the ABF must work. Meeting these challenges mean that new approaches to how the ABF interacts with traders, industry and overseas customs agencies is required. Over the five-year study period, the ABF continued to reform border security by keeping pace with emerging risks and threats, while implementing initiatives to minimise impediments to trade.

During the study period, opportunities to improve early reporting were explored through greater dialogue with the World Bank, World Customs Organization (WCO), World Trade Organization and industry. At home, Australia continued to explore reforms to customs processes for e-commerce and international mail, saw continued growth of the Australian Trusted Trader program, and initiated the government's Simplified Trade System initiative which continues in 2024 to work towards the development of a new Trade Single Window and seeks to harness new and innovative processes and technology.

[1] https://rb.gy/xmn5g
[2] https://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/instrument-and-tools/tools/time-release-study.aspx

Methodology and scope

Scope

The *2017–2021 TRS* continues the focus on multi-year and year-on-year trends for existing areas of interest by cargo type (for sea cargo), by carrier type (for air cargo), by Australia's major ports (see below), and method of customs clearance. All core data was sourced from the Integrated Cargo System (ICS).

All customs terms used in the *2017–2021 TRS* are defined in the Glossary at Appendix A.

Methodology

The TRS utilises a method endorsed by the WCO for assessing an economy's trade facilitation performance at the border.[3] Primarily, the TRS measures the average time between the arrival of goods at the border and the time that permission is given for the goods to enter home consumption.

Like previous studies, cargo is considered at the lowest consignment level (see ACN 2021/01 — Definition of consignment for the purposes of section 68 of the *Customs Act 1901* (abf.gov.au). In short, for full container load (FCL) cargo, this is a container. For all other cargo types, including air cargo, it is the individual consignments at House Bill level shipped to the actual importer (rather than to an intermediary such as a freight forwarder).

The *2017–2021 TRS* measures time taken from first reports of impending arrival through to clearance for air and sea cargo 'consignments', and the 'time of release' of those consignments over the course of each calendar year. As always, performance timeframes for in-transit and transhipment consignments have not been included in this study.

The *2017–2021 TRS* uses a census approach, rather than a sampling approach (a week-long sample from September) employed by previous studies. The difference in methodologies is particularly visible when comparing the total volume of consignments between the current study and previous studies (e.g. 2017–21 Table 2 vs 2015–16 Table 1). The *2017–2021 TRS* sample sets consist of more than 18.5m sea cargo consignments (Table 1) and almost 207.5m air cargo consignments (Table 10) between 2017 and 2021.

Two notable changes from previous studies is that gate-out performance data, and international comparisons have been removed from this study due to data unavailability and concerns about data accuracy (respectively).

Figures and percentages

In the *2017–2021 TRS*, the majority of figures and percentages are rounded for ease of reading. Due to rounding, there may be circumstances where figures or percentages within a graph or table do not equal 100 per cent. All figures are, however, a true and correct reflection of border activity at the time of data extraction.

Time is recorded on a decimal basis. This means that hours and days are divided by 10. If precision is required, multiply each 0.1 interval by 1440 minutes and divide by 60 when time is expressed in days, or six minutes when time is expressed in hours. For example:

What is the difference between 2.3 days and 2.6 days? Answer 7 hours and 12 minutes.

Working: 2.6 - 2.3 = 0.3 0.3 x 1440 = 432 0.3/60 = 7.2 hours.

What is 0.2 hours? 0.2 x 60 minutes = 12 minutes

[3] http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/instrument-and-tools/tools/time-release-study.aspx

Key events

Key events descriptions are detailed in this section, as well as being summarised in the key events table below. The timing of key events in the movement and clearance cycle of cargo is extracted from data reported to the ABF by express carriers, cargo handlers, traders and service providers. It is important to note that the key events are not linear; consignments will not necessarily move through all stages in a linear manner. Some stages preclude progress to others.

Key Events	Customs Clearance	Biosecurity/AQIS Clearance	Duty
Arrival	**Fixed time point:** Vessel or aircraft arrived in Australia		NA
Available	**Fixed time point:** Discharge of containerised or BLK cargo from vessel by Stevedore or deconsolidation of Less than Container Load (LCL) cargo by Freight Forwarder		NA
Documents	**Fixed time point:** import declaration and linked cargo and arrival reports received from industry		NA
Customs Unimpeded	O	NA	X
Ready to Pay	O	O	X
Customs Release	O	X	O
Clearance	O	O	O

Key: 'O': Clear 'X': Impeded NA: Not applicable

Arrival — The time at which a ship or aircraft arrives and is secured at the discharge port. Arrival time is based on the time reported in the Actual Arrival Report submitted by the aircraft or vessel operator and linked to individual consignments by the (sea or air) cargo report. Negative times in relation to arrival imply the events occurred prior to arrival.

Availability — The time when a FCL, BLK or B/B or air cargo on a straight-line Master Air Waybill consignment has completed discharge or, if shipped as consolidated cargo (Full Container Multiple Suppliers (FCX) or LCL or consolidated air cargo), when it is unpacked at a depot. Consignments can only become 'available' after arrival (and therefore availability will always be a positive number). 'Available' status does not imply goods have been cleared or outstanding charges have been calculated or paid.

Documents — The time at which a consignment is fully reported and declared to the ABF. This is when all required impending arrival report, cargo reports and (if relevant) import declarations have been received by both border agencies (ABF and DAFF), which allows a comprehensive risk assessment to be undertaken.

Customs unimpeded — Indicates that risk assessment, evaluation and processing have been completed by the ABF. Payment of duties, taxes and charges is still required. The goods may remain subject to biosecurity impediments.

Ready to pay — The time at which a consignment becomes free of impediments from either border agency[4] except for the need to pay duties, taxes and charges.

[4] 'Border Agencies' referred to in this report are the Australian Border Force, which administers customs requirements, and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, which administers biosecurity requirements.

Release – ICS consolidated status: 'CONDCLEAR' (see ACCA 2005–09) indicates the consignment has been released from customs control, subject to meeting one or more post-border conditions. For the most part, these will mainly be biosecurity directions and conditions e.g. rural tailgate inspection. In limited circumstances, the ABF may also use CONDCLEAR for:

- the conditional movement to a premises not available for an underbond movement in the ICS e.g. importer's premises.
- non-gateway clearances[5] requiring cleared cargo to be moved underbond between discharge and destination ports.

Clearance - ICS consolidated status: 'CLEAR'. The time at which all border agency requirements have been met, including payment of duties, taxes and charges, and permission is given for the goods to enter home consumption.

Australian ports and locations

The abbreviated names and United Nations Location Codes (UNLOCODE) for the airports and maritime ports referred to in this study are:

- SYD: Sydney (AUSYD)
- MEL: Melbourne (AUMEL)
- BNE: Brisbane (AUBNE)
- FRE: Fremantle (AUFRE)
- ADL: Adelaide (AUADL)

[5] See https://www.abf.gov.au/help-and-support-subsite/CustomsNotices/2021-38.pdf. Please note that Gateway Clearance was only given formal policy approval in late 2021, and therefore was not in place for the majority of the timeframe covered by this report.

Sea cargo results

2017–2021 sea cargo snapshot

The snapshot provides an overview of multi-year and year-on-year trends for the five year period in this study. An explanation of cargo acronyms e.g. FCL, is provided in the acronyms and glossary sections at the end of the report.

Volume — As can be seen in Figure 1, in 2021 container volumes increased by around 13 per cent when compared to 2020. Sea cargo volumes were still showing year-on-year increases during the study period. Another notable trend over the study period is the 11-fold growth in sea cargo LCL consignment volumes between 2019 and 2020, likely reflecting an industry shift from air cargo to sea cargo at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 2). While LCL sea cargo consignment numbers fell from its peak use in 2020, in 2021 it remained significantly higher that pre-2020 trends would suggest.

Reporting performance — As can be seen in Table 6, industry continued its strong early reporting record in 2021. Sea Impending Arrival Reports (IAR) were received around 12 days prior to arrival, which is more than 24 hours earlier than the average reporting timeframe for 2020. Documents (import declarations) were received by the ABF on average almost six days prior to the arrival of goods in 2021.

Customs Unimpeded performance — Table 6 shows that, on average, ABF activities in relation to the cargo were completed two days after documents were received in 2021. There is a trend of increasingly earlier ABF risk assessment completion over the 2017–2021 period.

Clearance performance — Table 6 shows 2020 and 2021 were the first years where sea cargo was 'cleared' prior to arrival of the vessel (on average).

Availability performance — Table 7 shows that the average availability (discharge/outturn) times from arrival at an Australian port in 2021 remained consistent with 2020 at over four days. This is a large jump from the previous five years, where the cumulative average was just over one day.

Availability by cargo type — Table 7 shows that there was improvement against most performance measures for all cargo types in 2021. The average availability times for cargo types — particularly LCL and B/B cargo - saw the most notable increase in 2021, where it took 0.6 and 1.6 days longer respectively for goods to become available. FCX cargo consistently improved in 2020 and 2021 in all measures except for average availability times, which slightly increased by 0.1 days between 2020 and 2021. Of note, FCL cargo made up 35 per cent of cargo lines, an increase of ten per cent compared to 2020.

Availability by port — Table 9 shows that in 2021, the port of Melbourne received 36 per cent of all Australian sea cargo, closely followed by Sydney at 35 per cent. The average availability times for Sydney in 2021 was five days, over 1.5 days longer than the same measure for Melbourne. This may reflect local industrial action that occurred in Sydney in 2020–2021.

Sea cargo overview

***Table 1**: Volume by sea cargo type (2017 – 2021)*

Consignment type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Break-bulk (B/B)	26,579	18,024	24,037	19,640	27,984
Bulk (BLK)	2,581	3,398	3,084	3,148	3,443
Full container load (FCL) consignments	1,712,440	1,823,362	1,709,570	1,568,155	1,962,169
Full container multiple suppliers (FCX)	92,128	94,964	91,434	72,844	92,742
Less than container load (LCL)	363,731	402,856	409,920	4,517,324	3,484,324

***Table 2**: Sea cargo declaration type (2017 – 2021)*

Declaration type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total consignments / unique cargo lines[6]	2,196,900	2,342,148	2,237,588	6,180,904	5,570,441
Import declaration	385,131	419,965	218,006	2,009,146	2,478,466
Self-Assessed Clearance (SAC)	1,818,628	1,929,465	2,021,972	4,171,758	3,091,975

***Table 3:** Supply chain participants (2017 – 2021)*

Supply chain participants	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Importers	80,040	82,326	79,463	83,545	92,661
Customs brokers	434	438	433	439	439
Freight forwarders	802	833	829	832	856

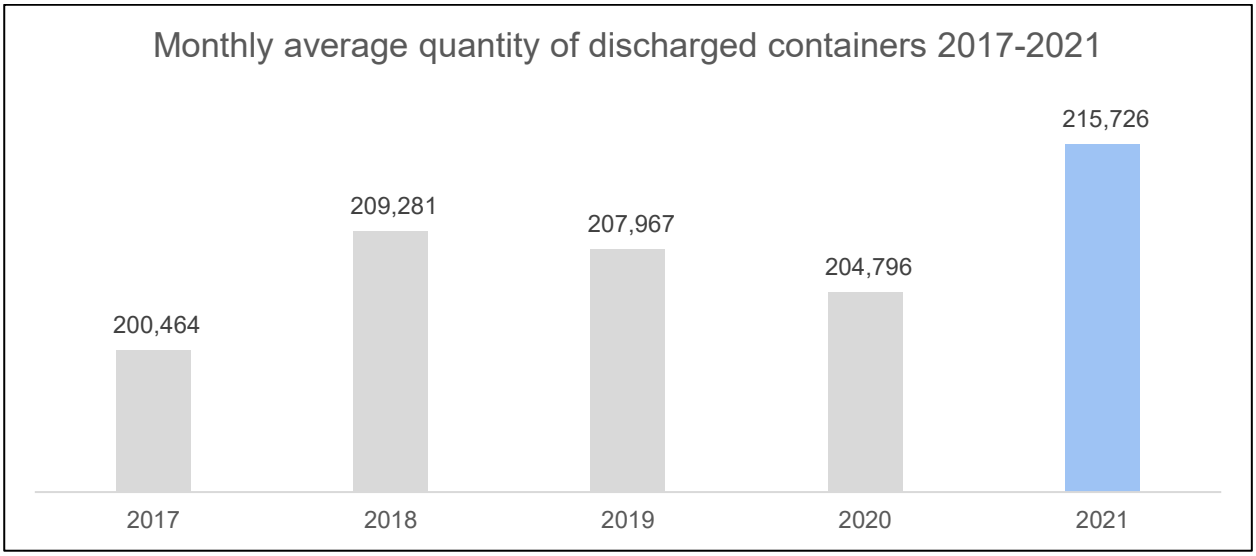
***Table 4:** Vessels and arrivals (2017 – 2021)*

Vessels	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Vessels	1,346	1,470	1,419	1,432	1,420
Arrivals	3,591	3,754	3,537	3,298	3,443

[6] SAC and Import declaration numbers may not equal total consignment numbers due to missing data.

Sea cargo container volumes

Figure 1: *Sea cargo — total containers discharged per month (2017 – 2021)*



- Figures are based on stevedore reporting to the ABF.
- Discharge totals show numbers of containers only, and do not account for different container size.
- Discharge counts include both full and empty containers.
- BLK and other non-containerised shipments (i.e. B/B) are excluded from these counts.

The 2017–2021 TRS uses the total number of containers discharged per month as a broad indicator of activity levels.

Over the study period, there is a general trend of year-on-year increases in sea container volumes. Table 5 shows that the lowest volume during the period (2,405,571) was in 2017, whilst in 2021 a historic record 2,588,711 units were discharged. In the study period, the largest number of containers discharged in a single month at Australian ports was more than 234,000 in November 2021 (Table 5).

According to previous TRS[7], total number of containers discharged prior to 2017 never exceeded 200,000 per month. As can be seen in Figure 1, monthly averages for container discharges began exceeding 200,000 in 2017.

[7] https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/research-and-stats/files/time-release-study-2016.pdf p.13, Figure 1.

Table 5: Discharged container volumes by month and year (2017 – 2021)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Jan	202,940	216,193	219,950	204,796	228,439
Feb	157,121	196,513	193,534	173,287	203,504
Mar	181,695	190,959	181,117	170,245	218,495
Apr	195,735	177,942	205,808	194,303	205,180
May	193,002	215,434	204,281	192,171	220,716
Jun	197,858	206,217	198,831	215,812	205,458
Jul	203,149	210,749	210,817	209,586	219,536
Aug	215,103	220,586	207,038	218,644	208,400
Sep	216,360	226,787	217,246	205,018	211,152
Oct	215,214	220,502	231,835	229,292	208,468
Nov	216,881	218,875	220,691	227,980	234,892
Dec	210,513	210,612	204,453	216,413	224,471
Total	**2,405,571**	**2,511,369**	**2,495,601**	**2,457,547**	**2,588,711**

There was a slight fall in the monthly average of container numbers between 2018 and 2020. However, as can be seen in Figure 2, this was more than compensated by an 11-fold increase in LCL volumes between 2019 and 2020, which was likely a consequence of COVID-19-related border restrictions on passenger flights (and thereby air cargo capacity) from April 2020 and through much of 2021. By 2021, relative proportions of FCL, FCX and LCL containers appear to be returning towards pre-COVID-19 shares.

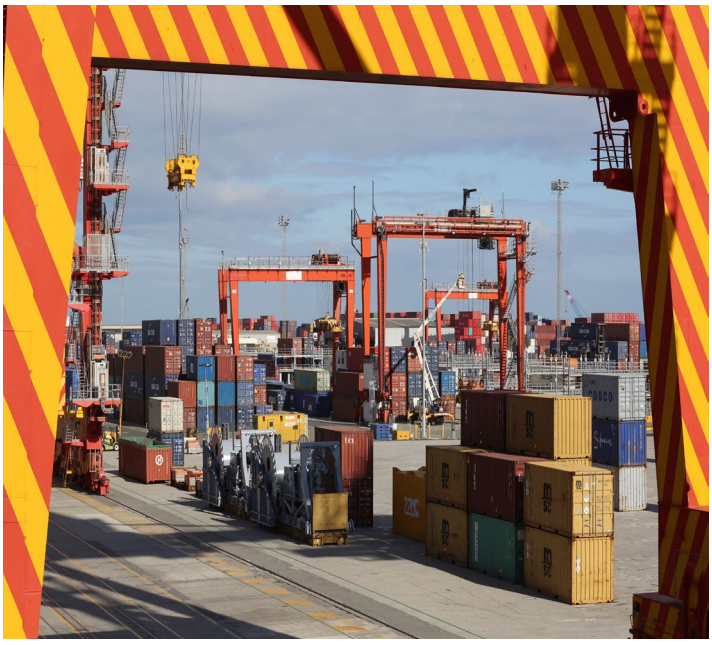
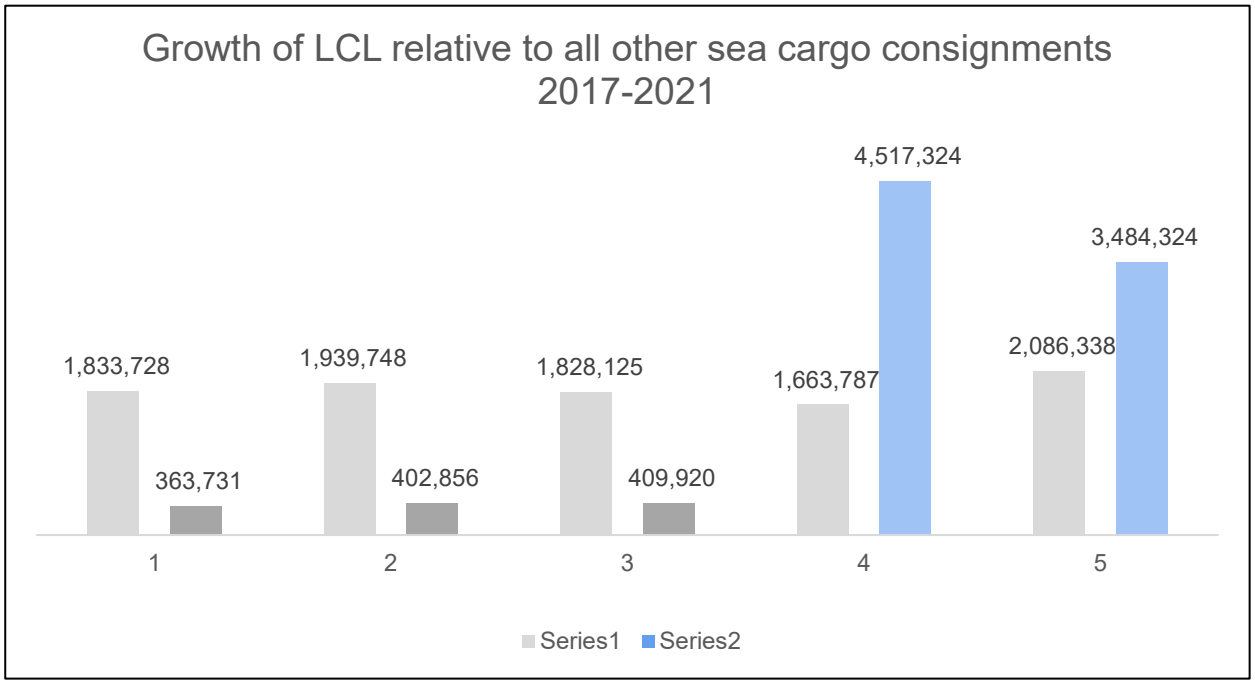


Figure 2: *Volume of LCL sea cargo consignments vs other sea cargo types (2017 – 2021)*



Average times between the arrival of cargo and other key events

Table 6: *Sea cargo — average times from documents (days) (2017 – 2021)**

Key Event	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Documents to Arrival	3.4	3.8	3.9	5.4	5.7
IAR to Arrival	9.6	10.1	10.1	10.6	11.9
Sea Cargo Report to Arrival	8.1	8.7	8.5	9.0	9.6
Documents to Unimpeded	3.1	1.4	0.9	2.4	2.0
Documents to Ready to Pay	2.4	1.4	1.2	2.6	2.3
Arrival to Clearance	0.3	0.3	0.1	-1.7	-1.8

Table 6 displays some key indicators of border agency performance from the time that documents are received from industry.

In 2021, industry continued its strong early reporting record with documents received almost six days prior to the arrival of goods and clearance times roughly 0.3 days earlier when compared to 2020. This continues to highlight the important link between the early reporting of goods and early clearance.

In 2019, the time taken by the ABF to resolve the status of a consignment from the time documents were received peaked at less than one day. This had doubled in 2020 and 2021 to two days. Similarly it took 2.3 days on average in 2021 for a sea cargo consignment to be cleared by both order agencies and be 'ready to pay'. This was almost twice the time it took in 2019.

Table 6 shows that industry continues the trend of early reporting of impending arrival, cargo reports and import declarations for goods. In 2021 all the necessary reports and documents required to assess cargo

were received 5.7 days prior to arrival, more than two days earlier than they were in 2018. As a result of early reporting, cargo achieved 'customs unimpeded' and 'ready to pay' status only 2 and 2.3 days respectively after documents were received in 2021. Consignments were 'ready to pay' 3.4 days prior to arrival in 2021.

Since 2020, sea cargo is cleared on average just under 48 hours prior to arrival, which is the first time pre-arrival clearance has been achieved by Australia. This is illustrated in Table 7 which shows negative or 'zero' time differences between arrival and clearance for all cargo types in 2020 and 2021. A key factor in this achievement is because the required documents and reports were being received from industry increasingly earlier:

- In 2021, the IAR was received almost 12 days prior to arrival (Table 6). This is more than 24 hours earlier than the average time the IAR was received in 2020.
- In 2021, the Sea Cargo Report was received 9.6 days prior to arrival, just over half a day earlier than in 2020.

The increasingly close coordination between border agencies, industry and brokers means that in 2021:

- customs risk assessment and any evaluations were completed, on average, 3.6 days prior to arrival, and consignments were 'ready to pay' an average of 3.4 days prior to arrival. These are the earliest recorded timeframes in the study period. Consignments that reached ready to pay, were settled within 1 day of billing (on average).
- biosecurity clearance was taking, on average half a day longer than customs clearances, with the gap between biosecurity and customs processes appearing to be decreasing over the study period.

Negative clearance or release times mean that, from a border agency perspective, most cargo types arriving in Australia can be delivered to the importer straight from the port (with LCL being the major exception). While this should lead to prompt delivery of most consignment types, a limiting factor in the 2020–2021 period was increased availability times. Extended availability times in 2020 and 2021 may reflect the impact of government imposed movement restrictions on the logistics workforce in response to COVID-19.

Performance by sea cargo type

Table 7 shows average performance times by container type in sea cargo for 2017 to 2021. Note that negative value denotes events occurring prior to the consignment arriving in Australia.

Table 7: *Sea cargo — average times by container type from arrival (days) (2017 – 2021)**

2021	All	FCL	LCL	FCX	B/B	BLK
Documents	**-5.7**	-5.3	-6.0	-4.2	-6.6	-5.6
Customs Unimpeded	**-3.6**	-4.3	-3.2	-3.7	-5.9	-5.0
Ready to pay	**-3.4**	-3.9	-3.2	-2.8	-5.2	-4.6
Availability	**4.0**	1.2	5.9	1.2	4.9	3.3
Release	**-2.4**	-1.8	-2.7	-1.8	-2.8	-4.3
Clearance	**-1.8**	-0.5	-2.7	-0.9	-2.1	-3.3
% cargo lines		35%	63%	2%	1%	0%

2020	All	FCL	LCL	FCX	B/B	BLK
Documents	**-5.4**	-5.1	-5.6	-3.7	-6.4	-5.5
Customs Unimpeded	**-3.0**	-4.1	-2.5	-3.2	-5.8	-5.1
Ready to pay	**-2.8**	-3.8	-2.5	-2.6	-5.3	-4.8
Availability	**4.1**	1.2	5.4	1.1	3.3	3.4
Release	**-2.0**	-1.7	-2.2	-1.6	-2.8	-4.5
Clearance	**-1.7**	-0.4	-2.2	-0.8	-2.3	-3.4
% cargo lines		25%	73%	1%	0.3%	0.1%

2019	All	FCL	LCL	FCX	B/B	BLK
Documents	**-3.9**	-4.5	-2.1	-3.5	-6.3	-5.7
Customs Unimpeded	**-3.1**	-3.7	-0.3	-3.2	-5.8	-5.2
Ready to pay	**-2.7**	-3.4	-0.2	-2.5	-5.2	-5.1
Availability	**1.3**	0.8	3.9	0.7	3.1	3.2
Release	**-0.9**	-1.4	2.2	-1.7	-2.7	-4.8
Clearance	**0.1**	-0.1	2.5	-0.8	-2.3	-3.7
% cargo lines		76%	18%	4%	1.1%	0.1%

2018	All	FCL	LCL	FCX	B/B	BLK
Documents	**-3.8**	-4.3	-2.3	-3.3	-5.5	-5.6
Customs Unimpeded	**-2.4**	-2.9	0.0	-2.4	-4.5	2.7
Ready to pay	**-2.4**	-2.9	-0.2	-2.2	-4.1	-4.3
Availability	**1.2**	0.8	3.6	0.8	3.5	3.1
Release	**-0.8**	-1.2	2.0	-1.3	-1.8	-4.0
Clearance	**0.3**	0.1	2.2	-0.5	-1.4	-2.5
% cargo lines		78%	17%	4%	0.8%	0.1%

2017	All	FCL	LCL	FCX	B/B	BLK
Documents	**-3.4**	-3.8	-2.0	-2.9	-5.7	-5.2
Customs Unimpeded	**-0.3**	-0.6	2.0	-1.0	-2.7	8.4
Ready to pay	**-1.0**	-1.4	1.4	-1.4	-2.9	-4.2
Availability	**1.2**	0.8	3.4	0.8	4.5	2.9
Release	**-0.6**	-0.9	2.1	-1.2	-2.1	-4.1
Clearance	**0.3**	0.2	2.3	-0.4	-1.6	-1.9
% cargo lines		78%	17%	4%	1.2%	0.1%

* Percentages have been rounded to whole figures and may not sum to 100 per cent.

The following observations about cargo type reflect data provided in Table 7. Observations about specific ports may be based on data not displayed in this report.

Full Container Load (FCL) cargo

In 2021, FCL cargo made up 35 per cent of all sea cargo consignments, an increase of ten percentage points compared to 2020, but still less than half that of its share in 2017–2019. The 2021 results for FCL cargo showed improvements across almost all performance measures compared to 2020.

Full Container Multiple Suppliers (FCX) cargo

FCX cargo release performance improved consistently across almost all measures between 2020 and 2021. In 2021, the ABF was receiving 'documents' for FCX consignments, an average of 4.2 days prior to arrival. Consequently consignments were attaining customs unimpeded status a record average of 3.7 days before arrival and being cleared just under a day prior to arrival.

Less than Container Load (LCL) cargo

Reflecting the COVID-19 related shift from air to sea cargo for small consignments, LCL cargo were the most common cargo type used in 2020 and 2021, at 73 per cent and 63 per cent respectively. The shift is likely due to the near-shutdown of passenger airline traffic (thereby restricting on the availability of these aircraft for air freight) during the COVID-19 pandemic. LCL cargo was still cleared by border agencies a record 2.7 days prior to arrival in 2021. This is five days earlier than the time achieved in 2017–2019. However, LCL cargo was not unpacked (available) until almost 6 days post-arrival in 2021, which is almost double the time it took in 2017.

B/B cargo

Clearance of B/B cargo took slightly longer in 2021 compared to 2020, although this was still achieved more than two days prior to arrival. Early pre-arrival clearance was largely assisted by the fact that documents were received on average 6.6 days prior to arrival. Discharge of B/B consignments took five days on average in 2021, reversing the trend from 2017–2020 of shortening discharge times for this kind of cargo. Of particular note, in 2021 it took more than 7.5 days to discharge B/B cargo in Melbourne, which was almost seven times longer than it took to discharge B/B cargo in Adelaide in the same year.

BLK cargo

Clearance times for BLK cargo remained in excess of three days pre-arrival in 2021, continuing a trend seen over 2017–2019. The worst performing port for BLK goods was Fremantle, where it took more than seven days to outturn BLK shipments in 2021. This was more than twice the national average.

Port performance

Table 8 provides total container discharge volumes for Australia's top five ports. While the top five has remained unchanged since Australia's first TRS, in 2018, Melbourne overtook Sydney in terms of number of containers discharged. In 2021, Melbourne discharged 36 per cent of all containers arriving in Australia, closely followed by Sydney at 35 per cent. Together with Brisbane, these three ports account for almost nine out of every ten containers discharged in Australia.

Table 8: *Sea cargo — top five ports of discharge (2017 – 2021)*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
SYD	672,206	701,276	664,106	614,196	750,568
MEL	659,525	694,161	653,305	582,246	727,591
BNE	263,508	313,047	277,449	266,991	344,285
FRE	163,803	174,807	162,339	154,896	193,032
ADL	66,130	57,748	71,871	47,660	62,112

Overall post-arrival availability times have remained relatively steady—only increasing by about ten per cent between 2017 – 2021. One of the more notable features of the port-comparison data is that the average availability times for Sydney in 2021 was five days; almost two days longer than Port of Melbourne (3.2). Reduced Sydney performance may reflect ongoing industrial action in late 2020 that continued into 2021.

Table 9*: Sea cargo — top five ports of discharge comparison (days) (2017 – 2021)**

2021	ADL	BNE	FRE	MEL	SYD
IAR to Arrival	15.9	13.9	8.9	12.7	11.4
Sea Cargo Report to Arrival	12.8	11.1	5.8	10.4	9.3
Arrival to customs unimpeded	-5.2	-4.6	-2.8	-2.7	-4.0
Customs unimpeded to ready to pay	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.1
Arrival to ready to pay	-4.7	-4.1	-2.3	-2.3	-3.8
Ready to pay to release	3.0	2.0	1.6	1.4	0.6
Arrival to release	-1.7	-2.0	-0.8	-0.9	-3.2
Release to clearance	1.5	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.3
Arrival to clearance	-0.2	-1.1	0.0	0.0	-3.0
Arrival to available	1.4	1.5	2.0	3.2	5.0

2020	ADL	BNE	FRE	MEL	SYD
IAR to arrival	14.3	12.0	7.9	11.4	10.4
Sea cargo report to arrival	12.0	9.9	4.7	9.5	8.9
Arrival to customs unimpeded	-4.5	-2.9	-2.0	-3.1	-3.0
Customs unimpeded to ready to pay	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1
Arrival to ready to pay	-4.2	-2.4	-1.8	-2.9	-2.8
Ready to pay to release	2.7	2.1	1.3	1.4	0.4
Arrival to release	-1.5	-0.4	-0.5	-1.5	-2.4
Release to clearance	1.4	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.2
Arrival to clearance	-0.1	0.5	0.4	-0.6	-2.3
Arrival to available	1.1	2.4	1.4	3.0	4.8

2019	ADL	BNE	FRE	MEL	SYD
IAR to arrival	14.7	9.1	7.2	11.6	9.3
Sea cargo report to arrival	12.5	7.7	4.8	10.2	7.9
Arrival to customs unimpeded	-4.8	-3.2	-2.2	-3.6	-2.6
Customs unimpeded to ready to pay	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.3
Arrival to ready to pay	-4.3	-2.7	-1.9	-3.2	-2.3
Ready to pay to release	2.7	1.7	1.2	2.0	1.7
Arrival to release	-1.7	-1.1	-0.7	-1.2	-0.6
Release to clearance	1.5	0.9	0.8	1.3	0.9
Arrival to clearance	-0.1	-0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3
Arrival to available	0.9	0.7	1.0	1.1	1.8

2018	ADL	BNE	FRE	MEL	SYD
IAR to arrival	13.0	9.1	6.5	11.4	10.0
Sea cargo report to arrival	11.5	7.9	4.5	10.0	8.7
Arrival to customs unimpeded	-2.5	-2.4	-1.4	-2.5	-2.5
Customs unimpeded to ready to pay	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.1
Arrival to ready to pay	-2.5	-2.2	-1.3	-2.7	-2.4
Ready to pay to release	1.9	1.4	1.0	1.8	1.6
Arrival to release	-0.6	-0.8	-0.3	-0.9	-0.8
Release to clearance	1.6	0.9	0.9	1.3	0.9
Arrival to clearance	1.0	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.1
Arrival to available	3.4	0.9	1.3	1.0	1.4

2017	ADL	BNE	FRE	MEL	SYD
IAR to arrival	13.9	9.0	6.5	10.7	9.2
Sea cargo report to arrival	12.3	7.2	4.2	9.3	8.0
Arrival to customs unimpeded	-2.3	-0.8	0.6	-0.1	-0.4
Customs unimpeded to ready to pay	-0.5	-0.3	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4
Arrival to ready to pay	-2.9	-1.1	0.2	-1.3	-0.9
Ready to pay to release	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.5
Arrival to release	-2.3	-0.7	0.4	-0.7	-0.4
Release to clearance	1.1	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.8
Arrival to clearance	-1.2	0.1	1.2	0.3	0.4
Arrival to available	1.1	0.9	1.9	1.1	1.3

*Interval measures show the average (mean) time difference between named key events for all consignments in the sample.

Negative figures indicate that key events occurred prior to the arrival of cargo at Australia's border.

Air cargo results

2017–2021 air cargo snapshot

The snapshot provides an overview of the multi-year and year-on-year trends for air cargo over the study.

Reporting performance — the majority of performance measures for air cargo improved in 2021, indicating that government and industry practices continue to be responsive to increasing volumes. Average pre-arrival reporting times for Self Assessed Clearance (SAC) Declarations improved to -4.1 hours but declined to 9.6 hours for Full Import Declarations (FID) compared to the previous year.

Customs impeded performance — air cargo consignments attained customs unimpeded status within 2.1 hours of the arrival of goods at an airport in 2021. For both SACs and FIDs, this was slightly faster than in 2020.

Availability performance — Average availability times for SACs increased from 36 to 96 hours between 2019 and 2021. Availability performance for consignments entered on a FID also almost doubled over this period but peaked in 2020 and fell back towards the historical average in 2021.

Express carriers — In 2021, the proportionate share of air cargo consignments carried by express carriers decreased by four per cent compared to 2020. The performance of express carriers improved in 2021 compared to 2020, particularly with availability times decreasing from 99 hours to 61 hours for all express carriers.

Volume — When compared to year-end 2017, there was an increase in air cargo consignment numbers of more than 40 per cent by year-end 2021. This growth was despite COVID-19-related restrictions on passenger flights for 18 months between mid-March 2020 and September 2021. The impact of these restrictions can be seen in the >50 per cent decline in flight numbers in 2020 and 2021 in Table 13.

General cargo providers — Non-express cargo carriers accounted for 73 per cent of air cargo consignments in 2021, a four per cent increase from the previous year. Non-express cargo carriers generally maintained and often improved performance results in 2021 when compared to 2020. The notable exception was ‘availability’ results, as goods were not made available until an average of 106 hours after arrival in 2021 — more than twice the 2020 average. In 2021, 23 per cent of cargo reports submitted by general cargo providers were late.

Air cargo overview

Table 10: *Volume by air cargo type (2017 – 2021)*

Measure	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Air straight line consignments	8,853	6,201	7,726	12,953	14,950
Consolidated consignments	28,986,289	32,979,733	40,252,284	43,113,539	62,114,744

Table 11: *Air cargo declaration type (2017 – 2021)*

Measure	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Import declaration	1,592,114	1,767,556	1,785,014	1,823,965	2,225,596
SAC consignments	27,403,028	31,218,378	38,474,996	41,302,529	59,904,099

Table 12: *Air cargo supply chain actors (2017 – 2021)*

Measure	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Registered importers	169,017	189,365	207,645	278,250	344,212
Customs brokers	429	427	424	429	426

Table 13: *Air cargo supply chain (2017 – 2021)*

Measure	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Origin economies	218	212	215	218	217
Discharge airports	10	9	12	11	9
Flights	56,048	58,715	56,927	26,512	23,200
Airlines	64	68	68	81	67

Air cargo volume

The vast majority of air cargo is consolidated, with individual consignments reported on a cargo report at the House Air Waybill (HAWB) level. Therefore, the number of reported HAWBs provides a sound indicator of total activity.

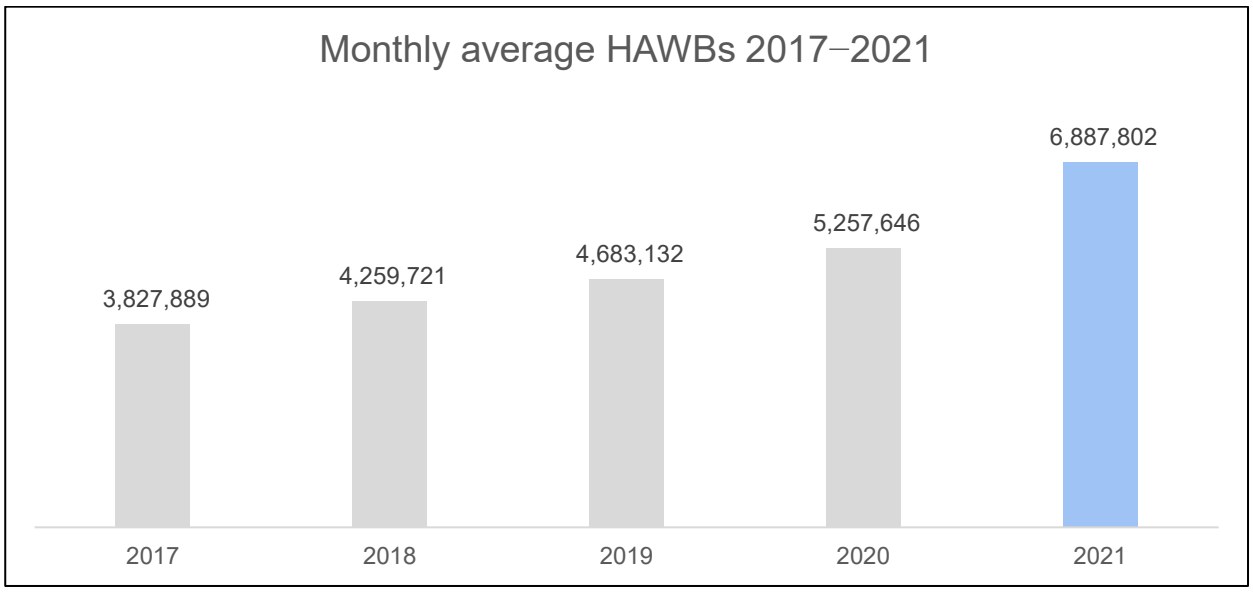
The number of air cargo consignments more than doubled between 2017 and 2021 from 28 million to more than 62 million consignments—see Table 10. Figure 4 shows that Australian airports were discharging an average of just under seven million air cargo consignments per month in 2021 (noting that it is not uncommon for there to be a 40 per cent difference in volumes between peaks and troughs in any given year (Table 14)).

The trend of year-on-year air cargo volume growth continued despite COVID-19 restrictions on air travel[8] which restricted flight numbers in 2020 and 2021 (see Air Cargo Overview). Nevertheless, the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on air travel can be seen in a lower level of air cargo volume growth from 2019–2020 – less than half of what it was from 2018–19 and 2020–21.

The impact of COVID-19 restrictions appears to have been somewhat offset by increased volumes of international trade that may be the natural result of the implementation of a number of trade agreements and the continuing growth in international online shopping by individual consumers in the study period.

Despite the large growth in air cargo consignments over the study period, Table 11 shows that the proportion of SAC declarations and FIDs submitted for air cargo consignments remained relatively consistent between 2017 and 2021, with SACs being submitted for upwards of 95 per cent of all air cargo consignments.

Figure 4: *Air cargo — average monthly HAWB volumes (2017 – 2021)*



Notes: Figures are based on reporting to the ABF by airlines and freight forwarders. Master Air Waybills are not counted.

[8] https://www.anao.gov.au/work/performance-audit/management-international-travel-restrictions-during-covid-19

Table 14: *Air cargo — Monthly and yearly HAWB volumes (2017 – 2021)*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Jan	3,006,618	4,072,968	4,463,409	4,725,472	5,996,856
Feb	2,871,565	3,362,558	3,546,992	3,722,560	4,960,824
Mar	3,526,030	4,176,588	4,414,416	4,107,129	6,010,079
Apr	3,245,965	3,860,593	4,058,368	4,228,363	5,877,283
May	3,635,435	4,172,960	4,386,528	4,502,008	6,003,771
Jun	3,715,717	4,138,154	4,222,304	4,251,155	6,362,979
Jul	3,819,332	4,002,510	4,501,753	5,330,469	7,203,851
Aug	4,151,318	4,262,361	4,801,003	6,504,763	8,427,139
Sep	3,954,233	4,005,145	4,493,664	6,140,983	8,408,065
Oct	3,999,558	4,370,726	5,102,466	6,276,774	8,648,505
Nov	4,953,178	5,229,111	5,850,417	6,262,465	7,621,797
Dec	5,055,724	5,462,980	6,356,269	7,039,607	7,132,475
Total	**45,934,673**	**51,116,654**	**56,197,589**	**63,091,748**	**82,653,624**

Average times between the arrival of cargo and other key events

Table 15 indicates that most key performance measures have improved over the 2017–2021 timeframe. Taking customs unimpeded results as an example, in 2021 customs assessments were completed by the ABF in around one-sixth of the time it took in 2017. Clearance was also provided around 2.5 hours faster than the 2017–19 average.

Crucially however, availability times during 2020 and 2021 increased significantly over the study period, though most growth is in the COVID-19 period. In 2021 it took almost four days (93.7 hours) post-arrival for air cargo to be made available for delivery, more than twice as long as the <40 hours achieved pre-COVID-19.

Table 15: Air cargo — average times from arrival (hours) (2017 – 2021)

Event	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Availability	39.6	38.1	35.8	65.4	93.7
Documents	-1.9	-3.0	-3.6	-3.3	-3.6
Customs unimpeded	13.4	8.4	0.9	2.6	2.1
Ready to pay	13.5	9.0	1.1	3.4	2.8
Release	5.6	6.6	1.5	3.6	3.0
Clearance	5.7	6.7	1.5	3.7	3.1

Performance by declaration type

Table 16 shows that in 2021, documents for SACs were submitted on average four hours prior to arrival, but were not submitted for FID consignments until an average of 10 hours post-arrival.

Customs unimpeded status for low value (SAC) goods declined from 13 hours post-arrival in 2017 to two hours post-arrival in 2021. As clearance of low value goods was also two hours post arrival in 2021, the goods were theoretically available for delivery very soon after arrival.

In the same period, the time taken from arrival for goods entered on a FID to attain customs unimpeded status reduced from 27 to 15 hours post-arrival.

These improved clearance times were offset by overall increases in availability times, with average availability times for SAC consignments increasing by almost 30 hours between 2020 and 2021 to 95 hours. FID consignments were taking an average of 59 hours post-arrival to become available.

Overall, in 2021, FID consignments were becoming available for delivery earlier than SAC consignments on average, the reverse of historical patterns.

Table 16: *Air cargo — average times by declaration type from arrival (hours) (2017 – 2021)**

	2017			2018			2019			2020			2021		
	All	**FID**	**SAC**	**All**	**FID**	**SAC**	**All**	**FID**	**SAC**	**All**	**FID**	**SAC**	**All**	**FID**	**SAC**
% of cargo lines	**100%**	**5%**	**95%**	**100%**	**5%**	**95%**	**100%**	**4%**	**96%**	**100%**	**4%**	**96%**	**100%**	**4%**	**96%**
Availability	40	29	40	38	26	39	36	32	36	65	76	65	94	59	95
Documents	-2	12	-3	-3	11	-4	-4	10	-4	-3	9	-4	-4	10	-4
Customs unimpeded	13	27	13	8	20	8	1	16	0	3	18	2	2	15	2
Ready to pay	13	25	13	9	21	8	1	16	0	3	20	3	3	17	2
Release	6	27	4	7	26	6	1	22	1	4	25	3	3	22	2
Clearance	6	28	4	7	27	6	2	22	1	4	25	3	3	23	2

* Interval measures show the average (mean) time difference between named key events for all consignments in the sample.

Key events are defined at page 7.

Percentages have been rounded to whole figures. As a result, these figures may not always equal 100 per cent.

Negative figures indicate that key events occurred prior to the arrival of cargo at Australia's border.

Performance by air cargo provider type

This section compares average performance times of express carriers and general cargo providers.

Table 17: *Air cargo — average times by service type from arrival (hours) (2017 – 2021)*

	2017			2018			2019			2020			2021		
Express Carriers	**Exp.**	**FID**	**SAC**	**Exp.**	**FID**	**SAC**	**Exp.**	**FID**	**SAC**	**Exp.**	**FID**	**SAC**	**Exp.**	**FID**	**SAC**
% of cargo lines	29%	14%	86%	29%	14%	86%	25%	13%	87%	31%	11%	89%	27%	11%	89%
Availability	26	26	26	26	25	26	34	31	35	99	84	101	61	62	61
Documents	-3	9	-5	-4	6	-5	-4	3	-5	-4	6	-5	-4	7	-5
Customs unimpeded	3	21	0	1	12	-1	0	8	-2	2	13	1	0	12	-2
Ready to pay	3	20	0	1	13	0	0	9	-1	3	15	2	1	14	-1
Release	3	20	0	2	17	0	1	13	-1	3	18	2	1	17	-1
Clearance	3	21	0	2	17	0	1	13	-1	4	19	2	1	18	-1

General Carriers	**Gen.**	**FID**	**SAC**	**Gen.**	**FID**	**SAC**	**Gen.**	**FID**	**SAC**	**Gen.**	**FID**	**SAC**	**Gen.**	**FID**	**SAC**
% of cargo lines	71%	2%	98%	71%	2%	98%	75%	1%	99%	69%	1%	99%	73%	1%	99%
Availability	45	38	45	43	29	43	36	33	36	50	39	50	106	45	106
Documents	-1	22	-2	-3	29	-3	-3	30	-4	-3	25	-4	-3	23	-4
Customs unimpeded	18	42	17	11	44	11	1	38	1	3	40	2	3	31	3
Ready to pay	18	41	17	12	44	12	1	39	1	4	41	3	4	32	3
Release	7	44	6	9	54	8	2	49	1	4	52	3	4	46	3
Clearance	7	46	6	9	56	8	2	50	1	4	54	3	4	48	3

Historically, air cargo arriving into Australia was dominated by express carriers that typically carried high volume low value cargo entered on SAC declarations. It was noted in the *2016 TRS* that express carriers accounted for less than 50 per cent of air cargo consignments in 2012. Figure 5 shows that by 2021, their proportionate share decreased further to 27 per cent in 2021. General cargo providers increased from 69 per cent to 73 per cent between 2020 and 2021.

Figure 5: *Air cargo — percentage of cargo lines by service type (2017 – 2021)*

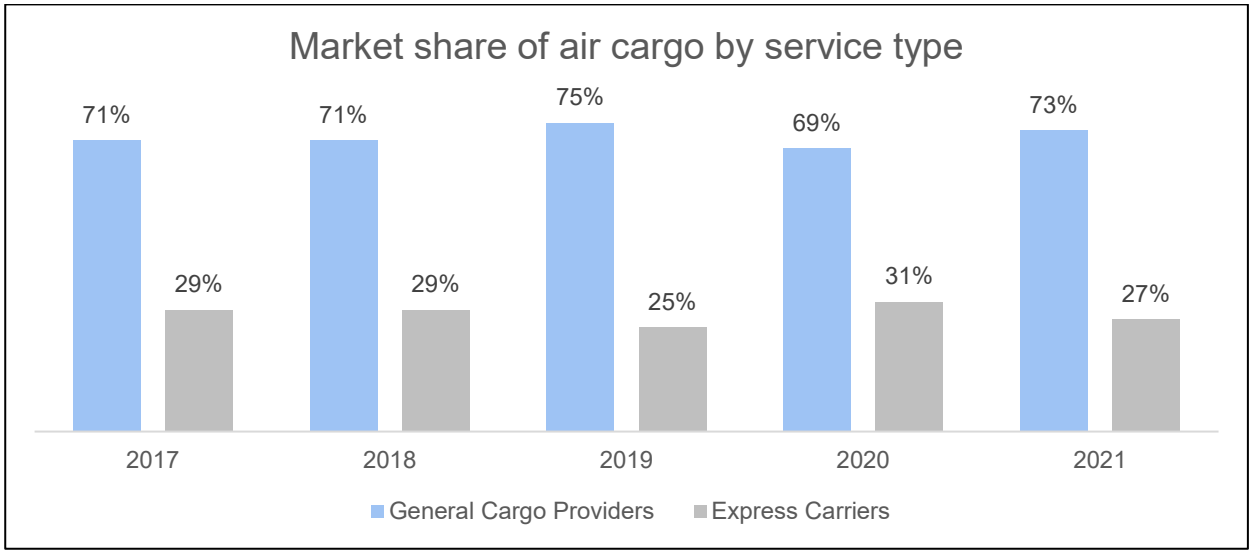


Figure 6 shows that increased volumes of air cargo over the study period appears to have mainly been due to general cargo providers, rather than express carriers. During the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021 in particular, there was a remarkable 50 per cent increase in volumes of air cargo carried by general providers. This could be due to restricted passenger numbers on flights during COVID-19, which led to general carriers having increased cargo capacity.

Figure 6: *Air cargo — volume of cargo lines by service type (2017 – 2021)*

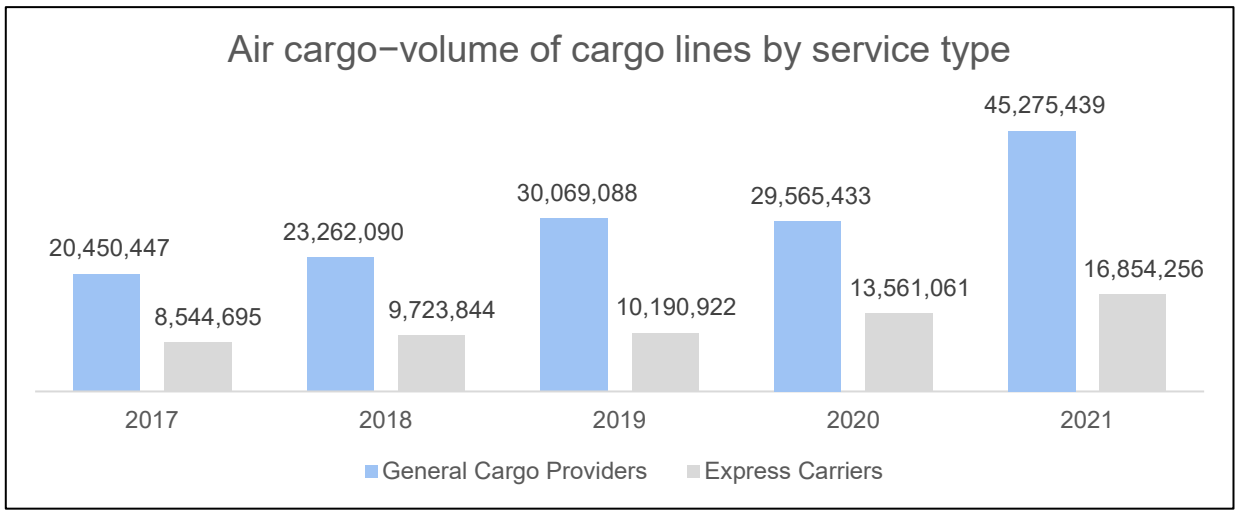


Table 17 shows the average times from arrival to other key events for express carrier and general cargo providers in 2017–2021.

The performance of express carriers improved in 2021 compared to 2020, particularly with availability times decreasing from 99 hours to 61 hours for all express carriers. Non-express cargo carriers generally maintained and often improved performance results in 2021 when compared to 2020. The notable exception was that in 2021 availability times for SAC consignments carried by non-express carriers were an average of

106 hours—more than twice the 2020 average. In contrast, these same consignments were provided clearance within three hours of arrival.

As a result, there was a slight shift in the percentage of goods reported by express carriers as opposed to general cargo providers since 2017, with express carriers peaking at 31 per cent in 2020 but overall observing a downward trend—see Figure 6.

Compliance with legislative reporting timeframes by service type

The *Customs Act 1901* requires a cargo reporter to report the details of all goods (except for accompanied personal items and baggage of passengers and crew, aircraft stores and domestic cargo) that they have arranged to be carried to Australia on an aircraft, that are intended to be:

- unloaded from the vessel or aircraft at a port or airport in Australia; or
- kept on board the vessel or aircraft for shipment to a place outside of Australia ('in-transit').

This information must be submitted to the ABF on an Air Cargo Report (ACR). The ACR must be submitted a maximum of two hours prior to the arrival time indicated on the Impending Arrival Report or the actual arrival time (whichever is later).

There was a considerable increase in the number of late ACRs submitted across the board in 2020 and 2021 compared to the previous years. Notably the percentage of late ACRs submitted by general cargo providers doubled between 2017 and 2021 from 12 to 23 per cent—see Table 18.

While there is no legislated timeframe either before or after arrival within which an import declaration must be submitted to the ABF, the study considers 'late' import declarations to be those submitted after the cargo has arrived. Table 18 shows that overall, the number of 'late' import declarations reduced slightly in 2020 and 2021. It should be noted that importers and their customs brokers, are responsible for submitting import declarations for their imported goods.

Table 18: *Air cargo — Percentage (%) of cargo reports and import declarations that were 'late' (2017 – 2021)**

Type of report	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Cargo report	11%	11%	15%	18%	19%
Express carrier	6	5	5	8	8
General cargo provider	12	13	17	22	23
Import declaration	11%	10%	10%	9%	9%
Express carrier	9	7	6	7	8
General cargo provider	19	20	21	19	18

* Interval measures show the average (mean) time difference between named key events for all consignments in the sample.

Under section 64AB of the *Customs Act 1901*, with some exceptions, air cargo reports be lodged at least two hours prior to the latter of the estimated time of arrival for the aircraft specified in the Section 64 Impending Arrival Report or its actual time of arrival (as specified in the Arrival Report made under section 64AA). As such, 'late' would be defined as any electronic reporting that falls outside of this prescribed timeframe.

Appendix A – Glossary

Term	Definition
Air cargo report (ACR)	An Air Cargo Report, made under section 64AB of the *Customs Act 1901,* details all goods (except for accompanied personal items and baggage of passengers and crew, ship or aircraft stores and domestic cargo) that a cargo reporter has arranged to be carried to Australia and intended to be either: • unloaded from the vessel or aircraft at a port or airport in Australia; or • kept on board the vessel or aircraft for shipment to a place outside of Australia ('in-transit'). The ACR must be provided no later than two hours prior to the estimated or actual arrival of the aircraft (whichever is later). An ACR is made on the basis of an Air Waybill.
Air Waybill	Refer to House Air Waybill or Master Air Waybill.
Air Cargo Outturn	A report to customs that provides information on the date and time air cargo is received at a customs place: • on discharge from an aircraft • on being moved to that place underbond • once deconsolidated (unpacked) It is also a report that identifies any surpluses or shortages in the cargo received.
AQIS	AQIS is the acronym for the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, a former name for the biosecurity agency. As the term is still used in the ICS, it is included for clarity.
Australian Border Force (ABF)	The Australian Government's lead border agency and an operationally independent agency under the Home Affairs Portfolio.
Biosecurity	Controls to minimize the risk of exotic pests and diseases entering the country, administered by DAFF (previously known as the Department of Agriculture (2017–2020) and the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (February 2020 – July 2022)).
Break-bulk cargo (B/B)	Non-containerised cargo shipped as units such as bundles, pallets, vehicles and drums.
Bulk Cargo (BLK)	Goods that conform to the shape of the vessel hold that the cargo is being transported in, and do not have any external packaging, for example, gas, grain or petroleum.
Carriers	Owners of shipping and airlines responsible for the carriage of goods.
Consignment	A specific shipment of goods presented by a consignor to a carrier for delivery to a consignee.
Consolidation	A number of smaller consignments combined for shipment into a larger consignment or container load to avail better freight rates. It must be deconsolidated at a place subject to customs control prior to release into home consumption.

Term	Definition
Container Terminal Operator	A person or organisation operating at a port to load and unload cargo. They may be referred to as a Cargo Terminal Operator or 'Ground Handling Agent'.
Customs broker	A person authorised in accordance with the *Customs Act 1901* to act on behalf of an owner of goods to undertake activities such as arranging for the clearance of goods into home consumption by making an import declaration.
Discharge	The unloading of cargo from an aircraft or vessel. • Containerised cargo that is discharged at a port by a stevedore must be reported to the ABF on a PRODIS — Progressive Discharge Report (abf.gov.au) every three hours. • Bulk cargo discharged at a port by a stevedore must be reported to the ABF on a SEAOUT — Sea Outturn Report (abf.gov.au) once discharge is complete. • Ground Handling Agents must lodge an AIROUT— Air Waybill Outturn Report (abf.gov.au) at the Master Air Waybill level, specifying in relation to cargo discharged from a cargo-carrying aircraft that was specified on the ACR, short landed or surplus cargo, or contain a statement that there is no shortage or surplus cargo.
Economy	A country, economy or autonomous region that has an independent trade relationship with Australia.
Express Carrier	Integrated logistics suppliers of expedited door-to-door transport and delivery of time-critical air cargo shipments including documents, parcels and merchandise goods.
Flight	A particular aircraft arrival.
Freight forwarder	A service provider that arranges the carriage of goods for importers and exporters. A forwarder prepares documents, contracts and arranges transport and insurance.
Full Container Load (FCL)	Container/s loaded with goods for one consignee only from one consignor with one House Bill of Lading covering the entire consignment.
Full Container Multiple Suppliers (FCX)	A container loaded with goods for one consignee only, but from different consignors. Consignments on multiple House Bills of Lading are consolidated into the container/s.
Full Import Declaration (FID)	A detailed fiscal and statistical declaration required for the clearance of consignments valued above $1,000 or more, or where goods of any value require a permit for import.
Gate-out	When imported cargo exits the wharf or terminal where it was imported. This time point is recorded by the terminal operator rather than by the ABF.
General Carrier	Commercial or passenger airlines that deliver freight on a 'non-express' basis. General carriers may use either specialised freighter aircraft or excess capacity in the hold of a passenger aircraft to transport freight airport to airport (as opposed to door-to-door). Customers are expected to arrange their own customs clearance and transport of goods to and from the airport.

Term	Definition
Home consumption	The commerce of Australia.
House Air Waybill (HAWB)	An Air Waybill issued by a freight forwarder, provides details of the goods to be shipped. It includes terms and conditions of carriage.
House Bill of Lading (HBL)	A Bill of Lading issued by a freight forwarder, provides details of the goods to be shipped. It includes terms and conditions of carriage.
Impending Arrival Report (IAR)	A report to the ABF that provides information about the expected arrival of a ship or aircraft on a voyage or flight to Australia. The report provides advance notification of the ship or aircraft's estimated time of arrival and the intended ports to call. Timeframes for the submission of the IAR are detailed at Cargo reporting compliance (abf.gov.au).
Integrated Cargo System (ICS)	An integrated software application that allows for the movement of vessels, aircraft and cargo to be electronically recorded and declared to border agencies by traders and service providers. It enables these agencies to risk assess cargo and craft; collect trade statistics; assess and collect revenue; and determine and advise owners of the release status of their cargo.
Less than Container Load (LCL)	A container loaded with goods for multiple consignees originating from multiple consignors. These containers must be deconsolidated at a depot prior to being released from customs control. Multiple House Bills of Lading and multiple FIDs are required for entry into home consumption.
Manifest (main)	A document issued by a shipper covering all cargo stated to be in a ship or aircraft for delivery at a particular port or airport.
Master Air Waybill (MAWB)	An Air Waybill issued by an airline or a code share partner. If the master bill has been issued to a freight forwarder then the freight forwarder will issue the House Air Waybill for the goods they have contracted to freight.
Ocean Bill of Lading (OBL)	An Ocean Bill of Lading is issued by a shipping company or slot-charterer. If the ocean bill has been issued to a freight forwarder, then house bills will be issued for the goods they have contracted to freight.
Outturn	A report on the discharge and receipt or unpacking of cargo.
Progressive Discharge Report	The discharge of containerised cargo from a vessel is reported to Australian Border Force on a Progressive Discharge Report (PDR).
Sea cargo report (SCR)	A Sea Cargo Report (SCR), made under section 64AB of the *Customs Act 1901,* details all goods (except for accompanied personal items and baggage of passengers and crew, ship or aircraft stores and domestic cargo) that they have arranged to be carried to Australia and intended to be either: • unloaded from the vessel or aircraft at a port or airport in Australia; or • kept on board the vessel or aircraft for shipment to a place outside of Australia ('in-transit'). The SCR must be provided no later than 12 hours prior to the estimated or actual arrival of the **vessel** (whichever is later). The SCR is based on a Bill of Lading.

Term	Definition
Self-Assessed Clearance (SAC) Declaration	A simplified declaration for consignments valued at less than $1,000. There are three types of SAC declarations: 1. Cargo Report SAC declaration, which is a tick-box and declaration on the cargo report. The description of the goods must not include a word in the SAC Thesaurus; be alcohol, tobacco or subject to a restriction or permission under Commonwealth law; and are not being referred to DAFF. 2. SAC Declaration (full format) which is used if: o an exemption or other concession applies, and / or o a permit or approval is required, and / or o duties and taxes are payable because the goods include alcoholic beverages or tobacco products; or the goods are part of a larger consignment or commercial reasons. 3. SAC Declaration (short form) is used if only minimal information is required, to pay duties and taxes for imported goods that include alcoholic beverages and / or tobacco products.
Sea Cargo Outturn	A Sea Cargo Outturn (SCO) Report is used to report details of BLK and B/B sea cargo that has arrived in Australia and has been discharged from a vessel or when containerised cargo (FCL, FCX, LCL) that has moved underbond to a depot under section 77G of the *Customs Act 1901.*
Service type	Service types in air cargo are broken down by express service carriers or general cargo.
Stevedore	Entities responsible for loading and unloading ships on behalf of shipping companies.
Time Release Study	A method designed and endorsed by the World Customs Organization for measuring border agency performance in trade facilitation.
Unpack	The process of unpacking cargo from an LCL container.

Appendix B – Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
B/B	Break Bulk
B/L	Bill of Lading
BLK	Bulk
FCL	Full Container Load
FCX	Full Container Mixed consignors
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
HAWB	House Air Waybill
HBL	House Bill of Lading
HVLU	High volume, Low value cargo
IAR	Impending Arrival Report
ICS	Integrated Cargo System
LCL	Less than Container Load
MAWB	Master Air Waybill
OBL	Ocean Bill of Lading
RTP	Ready to Pay
SAC	Self-Assessed Clearance declaration
TRS	Time Release Study
UCL	Unique Cargo Line
WCO	World Customs Organization

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