



**Above:** Taking refuge behind the safe boots of a National Marine Unit mannequin.



**Right:** School students with Customs officer Keith Parker trying their hand at being a "Customs officer" during a baggage examination activity

# World-leading technology on show

**Ever wanted to know what it would be like to be a Customs officer working at an international airport? Well, in Canberra at the annual Amazing World of Science festival, thousands of children (and their parents) got the opportunity.**

Visitors got to use world-leading technology and learnt a lot about how this technology is important in assisting Customs officers in protecting Australia's borders.

Encouraged by last year's success, Customs again exhibited an exciting range of fun interactive activities for people of all ages to take part in. This included drug investigation activities, where participants used the Itemiser3 and the handheld Sabre 4000 to test for drugs.

Visitors had a great time using closed circuit television (CCTV) surveillance technology trying to locate a suspicious item hidden at the event using a powerful surveillance camera. Enthusiastic participants continued their investigations, searching for hidden contraband in tight and difficult spaces of an air cargo container using a snake-eye camera.

The baggage examination activity was extremely popular where keen visitors took on the role of a Customs officer. Detections included plastic

snakes, scorpions, spiders, guns, daggers and some particularly insidious washing detergent. Children explained the risks posed by these items and on completion were rewarded with a stamp for their "Customs Passport".

The ever-popular detector dogs and learner puppies were swamped by children and adults who loved their frisky and energetic nature. Like last year's festival, children were also given the opportunity to win a trip for their class to the Detector Dog Training Facility. More than 250 entries were counted.

The visual extravaganza was complemented by a range of prohibited items. Curious visitors inundated Customs officers with questions about wildlife seizures, illegal weapon imports and intellectual property rights.

The Amazing World of Science festival was held at the Australian Institute of Sport, Canberra, from 15–19 August.

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