

THE AGE

Customs strikes weapon detection deal

January 18, 2006 - 10:34AM

The Australian Customs Service has entered into a multi-million dollar deal with a technology company to develop a weapons detection system for international mail and packages.

Experts in the next generation technology of quadrupole resonance, QRSciences, expect to garner \$2.5 million in revenue from the deal.

However, Customs would not disclose what the entire deal was worth.

QRSciences chief technology officer Dr Timothy Rayner said detecting firearms in packages was a natural fit with the company's existing explosives detection technology.

"We believe our expertise in developing robust, highly sensitive detection systems is well suited to address the needs of Australian Customs and other organisations interested in improving the detection of weapons within mail, packages and baggage," he said in a statement.

"The technology should assist in detecting and intercepting attempted importation of illegal weapons and their components."

Customs denied the acquisition of new technology was connected to rising statistics of weapons smuggling, or because current systems were under-performing.

"To meet the challenges faced by Customs administrations around the world, the Australian Customs Service has been exploring developments in detection systems such as that proposed by QRSciences," a spokesman said.

"This trial technology will be complementary to Customs existing equipment."

Customs said a trial of the new technology was expected to begin later this year.

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