

Australian Stamp Variations

David Mallen

Details of the main variations in recent stamp issues

“Impressions” Reprints

With the 2010 “Impressions” catalogue published 3 working days before the mid-November submission deadline of this article I have not been able to give you some of the detail of the variations in this annual release of expensive reprints. The information below is based on the contents of the catalogue. I have been told that the “Impressions” products will not be shipped until mid-December so I should be able to give you more details next month. In an effort to obtain clarification on some of the products so that I could give you accurate information, I emailed the Collector Services department of Australia Post’s Philatelic Group. The questions I asked were, for example: “Are the stamps in the Aeronautical Licence Wallet perforated or imperforate?” “Does each stamp in the National Service sheetlet have a gold foiled logo?” “What is the face value of all the mint stamps in the \$395 Melbourne Cup Presentation Folder?” The answer to 5 out of the 6 questions was the same: “*I don't physically have these products on hand so I am unable to advise.*” This was confirmed with: “*Details regarding these products are unavailable at this time.*” Does this mean they have published a product catalogue but have not finalised what each product contains? Unbelievable! Surely someone in the Philatelic Group knows the answers (e.g. the product designer, the printer, etc.). Is it not the role of a “Customer Service Department” to find out answers to customers queries? It is very frustrating that Australia Post appears to be unwilling to keep us informed about the details of stamps and variations. This is quite obvious by the lack of or incorrect information on their website and in Stamp Bulletin. Maybe they are afraid they will lose a sale if they tell us too much information about a product or issue.

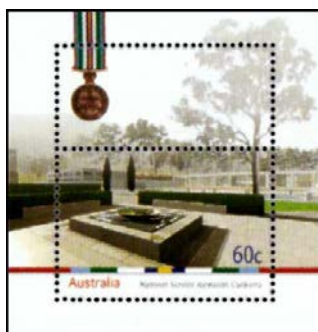
The number of “Impressions” variations for 2010 is about 40 which is down on the 101 in 2009 however the price has gone up by over \$250. As you know, the “Impressions” products contain stamp variations not previously released, incorporated with very expensive “packaging”. Many collectors remove the stamps to put them in their album and dispose of the packaging and other non-stamp paraphernalia. I have listed all the items that contain new variations and have shown the packaging cost separately. Having to pay over \$845 “packaging cost” for these exclusive variations is offset slightly by the ability to sell some of it and spend the \$ notes and coins.

Has Australia Post contravened the UPU Philatelic Code of Ethics? Clause 8 of the Code states: “*Issuing postal authorities shall not produce postage stamps or philatelic products that are intended to exploit customers.*” (Refer www.upu.int/en) Selling stamps well above face value in the “Impressions” range of products appears to fall into this category. The collectors who save one of each Australian stamp and variation, I am sure, feel that they are being exploited. Their alternatives are to continue to pay more than \$1000 every November, change their collection policy and specialise in other types of stamps or variations or stop collecting. Many are choosing the latter.

Some of the interesting “Impressions” variations are:

- **Kokoda minisheet** – A small minisheet containing a se-tenant pair of Kokoda stamps. This is the first time these two stamps have been released as a se-tenant pair.
- **National Service stamplet** – A new word for a minisheet containing one stamp with a tab on the top. (See picture.) What will they think of next?!
- **Melbourne Cup FDCs** – A mark-up of over 14,000% on face value for these two items! I wonder if the silver and gold stamps will be postmarked. The last issue of foil stamps on envelopes (2008 World Youth Day) were mint as the postmark did not touch the stamps. Be careful when you soak off the stamp not to tear the foil and make sure the stamp is completely dry before you put it in your album. Your paper recycle bin will ‘love’ the two \$172 envelopes!

- **Emergency Services gutter strip** – The catalogue indicates these stamps will be gold-foiled. The illustration shows 55c stamps but they were issued as 60c stamps on 13th July 2010. It will cost you \$69.95 to find out if you get 55c stamps. Quite a bargain with the \$20 note cashback.
- **Great Australian Railway Journeys gold foil stamps** – We had 4 Songbirds gold foil stamps issued in 2009. These 4 Railways stamps are similar and are also thin enough to put in your album. The 4 paper stamps can be used for postage and the \$92 wooden box may be handy for jewellery or something!
- **Macquarie Bicentenary minisheet** – This \$2.20 minisheet is slightly larger than the one issued on 16th February 2010. Although it is accompanied by a special \$1 coin, the cost of \$89.95 is outrageous!
- **Melbourne Cup presentation folder** – This is probably the biggest ‘loss item’. I shall confirm this when I find out and compare the face value of the stamps in the 4 minisheets, 1 maxisheet (another new word) and some previously released stamps, with the cost of \$395!



"Impressions" Variations : November 2010									
AFO	Product	Stamp Set	Stamps	V	Variations	FV	PKG	Price	
11 Nov	Melbourne Cup presentation folder	Melbourne Cup	60c Cup, Carbine, Phar Lap & Saintly	?	Maxisheet: Three blocks of 4 x 60c	\$7.20	?	\$395.00	
		'Past Cup winners'	?	?	4 Minisheets: (Gold-foiled stamps?)	?			
					Stamps ?	?			
11 Nov	Melbourne Cup FDCs	Melbourne Cup	60c silver foil	1	Silver foil stamp (postmarked ?)	60c	\$22.35	\$22.95	
17 Nov			60c gold foil	1	Gold foil stamp (postmarked ?)	60c	\$149.35	\$149.95	
24 Nov	Melbourne Cup half sheet	Melbourne Cup	4 x 60c	6	4 Stamps, Se-tenant strip of 3 and Minisheet (imperforate CS)	\$21.60	\$55.35	\$109.95	
	Commonwealth Coinage half sheet	Commonwealth Coinage	55c & \$2.75	3	2 Stamps, Se-tenant pair and Minisheet (imperforate CS)	\$33.00			
11 Nov	Darwin Defenders	Australia Under Fire	45c, 75c, 75c & \$1.05	6	4 Stamps, Block of 4 & numbered Minisheet	\$3	\$86.95	\$89.95	
11 Nov	Kokoda Trail boxed cover	Kokoda	2 x 55c	2	Se-tenant pair & Sheetlet	\$1.10	\$88.85	\$89.95	
11 Nov	National Service stamplet pack	National Service	10 x 60c 60c + tab	3	Digitally printed stamp, Stamp + tab & Stamplet	\$6.60	\$9.35	\$15.95	
11 Nov	National Service presentation box	National Service	10 x 60c	2	Stamp and Sheetlet with gold foil logo in corner	\$6.00	\$123.00	\$129.00	
11 Nov	Aeronautical Licence Wallet	Centenary of Powered Flight	2 x \$1.45	2	Pearl foiled stamp & Minisheet	\$2.90	\$47.05	\$49.95	
11 Nov	Great Australian Railway Journeys gold foil set	Great Australian Railway Journeys	3 x 55c & \$2.10 (paper) 3 x 55c & \$2.10 (gold foil)	4	Gold foil stamps and paper stamps	\$7.50	\$91.50	\$99.00	
11 Nov	Emergency Services gutter strip + \$20	Emergency Services	10 x 55c ?	5	55c foiled stamps & Gutter	\$5.50	\$83.95	\$89.95	
11 Nov	Macquarie Bicentenary presentation product	Macquarie Bicentenary	4 x 55c	1	Large minisheet	\$2.20	\$87.75	\$89.95	
TOTAL				36+	TOTAL		\$97.80+	\$845.45+	\$1331.55

AFO = Available For Order date = The date the product was first available to order from Philatelic Mail Order. (On-Sale Date unknown.)

V = Number of new variations. FV = Face value of the stamps. PKG = Cost of packaging and other non-mint stamp paraphernalia.

+ = to be updated next month.

2010 Annual Collections

The Annual Collections were also listed in the “Impressions” catalogue. They were available with mint stamps and the special Fishes reprints minisheet/sheetlet or with printed postmarks on the stamps as the “CTO Collection”. (I wonder if Australia Post will issue an Annual Collection of self-adhesive stamps?) Collecting printed postmarks is becoming more popular. The 2010 postmarked set cost \$79.95. \$99.95 for the mint collection will get you one gummed stamp of each design. Variations included in the mint collection were 7 minisheets, 12 strips & pairs and 6 blocks of 4. It always puzzles me why some se-tenant strips of 5 stamps are separated into a pair and strip of 3. Collectors save single stamps or full strips, not separated strips. (I wonder when the last time Australia Post’s Collector Services department did a Philatelic Customer Survey.) The Long Weekend se-tenant strip is supplied separated in this way, so you will have to get another one to replace it. Also the \$5 Queen Victoria stamp is supplied in the minisheet. This stamp is different from the sheet stamp. What do collectors at your Stamp Club do with their Annual Collection? I have heard many put the special sheetlet in their album, the book in the recycle bin and use the stamps for postage! You can pick-up old Annual Collections books for 50c reserve at most Club auctions.

Fishes of the Reef				
Type 2 Reprints OSD: 1 November 2010	Stamps		Variations	
Gummed stamps: (Perf = 14 x 14.4)	No.	FV	No.	Cost
60c Crown Triggerfish 60c Spotted Sweetlips 60c Golden Damsel 60c Regal Angelfish	4*	\$2.40		
Se-tenant pair: 60c Golden Damsel 60c Regal Angelfish			1*	\$99.95
Sheetlet: 4 x 60c			1	\$99.95
Totals	4	\$2.40	2	\$199.90
* Not included in Variations Statistics as they have been released previously				



Melbourne Cup Reprints

This issue combined four new stamps with five Type 3 reprints. (Type 3 Reprints have the year code in the image corresponding to the year they are reprinted.) The reprints were released in minisheets in the prestige booklet and had printed perforations. (This is not the first time gummed mint reprints have been released without perforation holes.) As such, they are Collectable Stamps, hence only the minisheet can be used for postage, not the individual cut-out stamps. The pre-decimal 5d Archer stamp and minisheet are not valid for postage. The other minisheets in the prestige booklet contained blocks of 4 of the same 60c stamp. The prestige booklet contained \$13.58 worth of stamps at a cost of \$13.95. This is good value if you would like to use the minisheets containing the reprinted decimal stamps as postage. A separate unbound minisheet was also issued with the Cup stamp and a se-tenant strip of the three 60c Carbine, Phar Lap & Saintly stamps. The self-adhesive variations were limited to the three 60c stamps. For more variations related to this issue refer to the “Impressions” list above.



150 th Melbourne Cup				
Stamp Issue No. 27 FDI: 1 November 2010 Type 3 Reprints OSD: 1 November 2010	Stamps		Variations	
Gummed stamps:	No.	FV	No.	Cost
Perforations: Cup = 14.6 x 13.9 Carbine, 60c Phar Lap & Saintly = 13.9 x 14.6 Printed perforations: Archer = 14.8 x 14.6 Rising Fast & Might and Power = 13.9 x 14.7 50c Phar Lap = 13.6 x 13.3 Peter Pan = 13.3 x 13.6				
60c Cup 60c Carbine (1890) 60c Phar Lap (1930) 60c Saintly (1996) Reprints: (Collectable stamps) 5d Archer (1861 & 1862) 45c Rising Fast (1954) 45c Might and Power (1997) 50c Phar Lap (1930) 55c Peter Pan (1932 & 1934)	9	\$4.43	5	\$13.95
Se-tenant strip: [sheet & minisheet] 3 x 60c Carbine, Phar Lap & Saintly			1	\$1.80
Block of 4 of the same stamp: [minisheets] 4 x 60c Carbine 4 x 60c Phar Lap 4 x 60c Saintly			3	\$13.95
Minisheets: 4 x 60c Cup, Carbine, Phar Lap & Saintly 4 x 60c Cup 4 x 60c Carbine 4 x 60c Phar Lap 4 x 60c Saintly 2 x 5d Archer (Not valid for postage) 2 x 45c Rising Fast 2 x 45c Might and Power 2 x 50c Phar Lap 2 x 55c Peter Pan			10	\$16.35
Self-adhesive stamps: (IDC simulated perforation: 11.2 x 11.5)				
3 x 60c Carbine, Phar Lap & Saintly [booklet]	3	\$1.80	3	\$6.00
Totals	12	\$6.23	22	\$52.05



Christmas x 2

Two Christmas stamp issues this year. One for the majority who share presents, the other for the minority who believe there is some other supernatural meaning to this time of year. Both were issued on the same day. The Dear Santa set had 8 different stamps of 2 designs with 10 variations. The self-adhesive sheetlet stamps came with a plain image in the booklet and were embellished with red & green foil and embossing in the sheetlets. They were also available with personalised tabs (P-stamps) in sheets of 20 (12 Santa + 8 Little Girl stamps per sheet). The minority Christmas set had 4 stamps of 2 designs and 3 self-adhesive variations.



Dear Santa				
Stamp Issue No. 28 FDI: 1 November 2010	Stamps		Variations	
Gummed stamps: (Perf = 14.6 x 13.9)	No.	FV	No.	Cost
55c Little girl writing a letter 55c Santa reading a letter	2	\$1.10		
Se-tenant pair: 2 x 55c [sheet]			1	\$1.10
Gutter strip: 10 x 55c (Different letters on the tabs in the gutter)			1	\$5.50
Self-adhesive stamps: (IDC simulated perforation: 11.5 x 11.2)				
2 x 55c [booklet]	2	\$1.10	2	\$11.00
Sheetlets: (embellished with red & green foil) 55c Little girl (green background) 55c Santa (red background)	2	\$1.10	2	\$11.00
Image variation: [sheetlets] 2 x 55c (embellished with red & green foil)			2	\$11.00
Semi-imperf self-adhesive P-stamps with tabs: 2 x 55c	2	\$1.10	2	\$24.00
Semi-imperf self-adhesive P-stamps with tab removed: 2 x 55c			2	
Imperforate variations: 2 x 55c			2	
Tab variations: 2 x 55c			2	
Totals	8	\$4.40	16	\$63.60



Christmas 2010				
Stamp Issue No. 29 FDI: 1 November 2010	Stamps		Variations	
Gummed stamps: (Perf = 14.6 x 13.9)	No.	FV	No.	Cost
55c Madonna and child \$1.30 Angel and shepherds	2	\$1.85		
Self-adhesive stamps: (IDC simulated perforation: 11.5 x 11.2)				
55c [booklet] \$1.30 [sheetlet]	2	\$1.85	2	\$17.50
Sheetlet: 5 x \$1.30			1	\$6.50
Totals	4	\$3.70	3	\$24.00



Variations Statistics : 22 nd Jan – 1 st Nov 2010		
Statistic	No.	Cost
New issues	29	–
New designs	108	–
New stamps	296	\$224.68 FV
Variations	484	\$2115.50
New 55c/60c stamps	231	–
Average issue rate of 55c/60c stamps	1 every 26 hours	

The stamp information shown above is based on stamps and variations bought at my local Post Shop or from Philatelic Mail Order. This may differ from other Australia Post outlets. If you find any differences please let me know. Find out what decimal stamps Australia Post actually issues at www.asv.net.au.

FDI = First Day of Issue, OSD = On-Sale Date
FV = Face Value, IDC = Interrupted Die Cut.

Australian Stamp Variations

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