

# Official Stamps of South Australia

## Part A – Departmentals

Abuse of privilege was suspected involving the supply of stamps for official use. To combat this, the South Australian authorities decided that such supplies were to be overprinted with the letter or letters which indicated the department of the administration to which the stamps had been supplied. (Hence the name "Departmentals")

The recommended system was introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1868 using overprints struck in red. Later in the same year the colour of the overprint was changed to blue. It was again changed to black in the latter months of 1869. It stayed as black until 1874. One source of information has indicated that the red and blue overprints are of greater scarcity due to the reduced period of usage.

The Robson Lowe Ltd auction catalogue of 12th September 1978 of the Harry Napier collection quotes the following:- "South Australia Departments overprints were applied to rouletted or perforated stamps. The colours of the overprints and the variety of shades can make a carefully selected collection a pleasure to sell. However PERFECTION is almost unobtainable because so many of the stamps which were overprinted had been withdrawn from public sale because they were considered unsuitable to issue. Appalling centering was often remedied by severing the stamps with scissors as if they were imperforate, so to my eye, if the design is complete and the stamp is pleasing it is highly collectable.

Less than 1,400,000 of all the departmental overprints were overprinted. In the new volume of Mr A R Butler's *The Departmental Stamps of South Australia* there are 634 stamps catalogued. Of these there are 21 stamps of which only one copy is known. The average number of each stamp overprinted was under 2200, and if one omits the 2d, then the average is under 1000."

Some examples of the various departmental issues are displayed on the following pages :-



A.O. (Audit Office)

Applied to both rouletted and perforated stamps in all three colours.