

The Queen Elizabeth 1966 Definitives

From the early stamp issues by the various states, Australia has had a tradition of showing a portrait of the reigning monarch on its stamps. This display looks at the low-value definitives issued with the introduction of decimal currency in 1966 and featuring the portrait of Queen Elizabeth II.

The portrait common to all four denominations was a modified version of the Anthony Buckley portrait, first used in 1963 for the 5d base letter rate definitive. An undenominated master die was engraved by Bruce Stewart, of the Note Printing Branch, and individual denominations were added when secondary dies were created.

The initial release, put on sale on 14 February 1966, comprised 1c, 2c, 3c and 4c stamps in sheets of 100; 3c and 4c coil stamps in rolls of 1,000 (for PO vending machines); and a 4c booklet stamp (in a 60c booklet comprising 3 panes of five stamps, each pane having an advertising tab in the top left position). The 4c stamp was the base letter rate, and the other denominations were used as make-ups, and occasionally as Postage Dues.

All except the 4c sheet stamps were printed on heleccon paper. The 4c sheet stamps were initially printed on plain paper with heleccon ink, but from January 1967 were printed on heleccon paper. Mintages, as would be expected, were large:

1c: 203.9m

2c: 69.6m

3c sheet: 52.1m

3c coil: 2.4m

4c sheet: 917.4m

4c coil: 17.9m

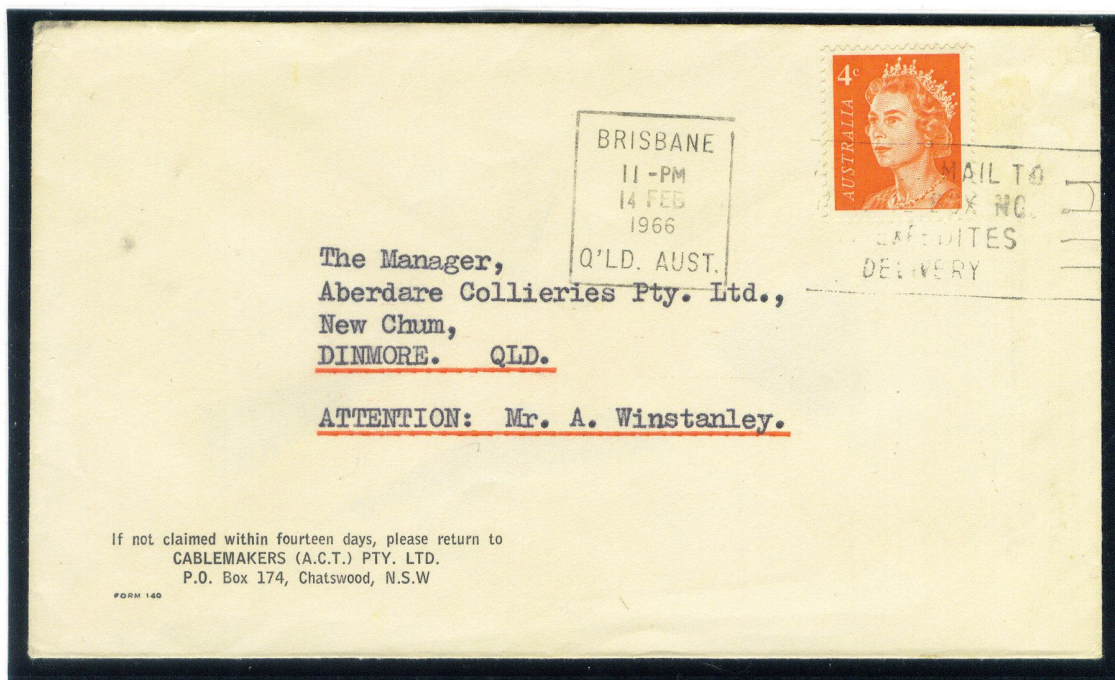
4c booklet: 287.8m



Sheet stamps



Coil stamps



An example of commercial use of the 4c sheet stamp on the First Day of Issue, 14 February 1966