

## Extract from "KING GEORGE VI - 2006"

### INTRODUCTION

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#### INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION (2006)

This second edition of the King George VI section of the Australian Commonwealth Specialists' Catalogue appears some ten years after the first. This is a period in which there has been little new significant research into these issues, and the listings remain essentially the same as those of the earlier edition. That said, new work has been incorporated where this seemed appropriate. A number of new plate varieties have been added, as well as a number of new shade listings. The most significant new listing is the unissued 2d King Edward VIII stamp, whose existence only became apparent to the philatelic world at large in 1996.

A number of new plate numbers have been recorded. The listings of all these plate numbers have been revised, to differentiate between those with or without dots or dashes, which are now separately listed.

The most significant changes to the text result from the last ten years' researches into the Note Printing Branch archives held at the Reserve Bank of Australia, Sydney. The earlier edition incorporated the printing instrument data for most of these issues, enabling an exact assessment of the printing plates used for each stamp for the first time. A number of corrections and additions have been made to this information. New records, unavailable in 1995, have now made it possible to identify the quantities printed of every stamp of this period. These figures provide quantities for a large number of stamps for the first time, and supplement the quantities issued which have been known for most stamps.

This new edition is some 35 pages larger than the previous one, largely due to the new illustrations of plate varieties that have been incorporated. All these illustrations have been re-scanned and printed in larger size. As a result, it is believed that much clearer images of all of the plate flaws are included in this new edition.

#### The Market

The King George VI issues have not been immune from the spectacular market activity through which Australian Commonwealth material has passed in the last few years.

There has been surprisingly little movement in the prices of basic stamps since the first edition, a sign of the new sophistication of the market, which has tended to concentrate on the rare and unusual rather than the key "investment" stamps of previous decades.

Proof material is in considerable demand. The presentation sunken die proofs available for most post-war stamps have seen significant rises, although levels here are somewhat dependent on condition, which is very variable. Earlier die proofs are of such rarity, and appear on the market so infrequently, that their current market value is difficult to gauge.

The rare plate numbers on King George VI issues were once the domain of a few specialists, but are now attracting a wider audience, and the numbers in existence are generally insufficient to meet the demand. The price increases in this area have been in some cases extraordinary, with valuations eight to ten times the 1995 levels. The rarest numbers, many of which are "one-offs", especially those on what are considered more important issues, are now being traded in the \$5000-\$7500 range. There have been some realizations for the "commoner" plate numbers in this flurry of activity which are unlikely to be maintained in the near future.

There is also a new appreciation of the limited numbers available of imprint blocks of various scarce printings, such as the thin paper varieties, and also of the no imprint blocks of the later period. An overall strengthening of the market for most plate varieties is also apparent, and the scarcity of many of the most important and significant of these is now becoming appreciated.