

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION (2006)

This second edition of the Queen Elizabeth II section of the Australian Commonwealth Specialists' Catalogue is some 80 pages larger than the first edition of 1996. In the period since the first edition 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 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, regarding the printing quantities of each stamp have now been incorporated, and supplement the quantities issued which have been known for most stamps.

The listing of all plate numbers have been revised, to differentiate between those with or without dashes or crosses, which are now separately listed.

New illustrations have been prepared for all plate varieties that have been incorporated. These enlarged illustrations are a great improvement on those in the first edition.

A new feature of this edition is the inclusion of the pre-decimal issues of Australian Antarctic Territory and Cocos (Keeling) Islands, which were placed on sale at Australian post offices and valid for postage.

### The Market

The market for Queen Elizabeth II issues has seen many spectacular rises for all rare and unusual material since the publication of the first edition. There has been little movement in the prices of basic stamps since the first edition, a sign of the new sophistication of the market.

Proof material is in considerable demand. The presentation sunken die proofs have seen significant rises, although levels here are somewhat dependent on condition, which is very variable. Other proof and essay material is of such rarity, and appears on the market so infrequently, that its current market value is difficult to gauge. There is also a much greater appreciation of the publicity cards which exist in limited numbers for most issues.

The plate numbers on Queen Elizabeth II issues, although not as numerous as those of King George VI have, like those of the earlier period, experienced spectacular rises, especially for those rarities of which only a few examples exist.

Another area of major market movement has been the major production errors of printing and perforation. All these items are in great demand on the isolated occasions they appear on the market. In particular, the small group of pre-decimal missing colour errors has seen spectacular price rises as the real difficulty in acquiring many of these has been appreciated.