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Australian Fauna Stamps, 1959-66: What were they used for?

**Sir Edgar Bertram Mackennal, KVCO (1863-1931) Australian
Sculptor, Medal and Stamp Designer**

New Zealand Loan And Mercantile Agency Co. Ltd

Forge Majeure

Hand-Held Date-Stamp Notes

Australian Fauna Stamps, 1959-66: What Were They Used For?

By John Young

During 1959-62, the Australian post-office issued six definitive stamps valued at 6 pence, 8 pence, 9 pence, 11 pence, 1 shilling and 1 shilling and 2 pence. All were engraved from designs by English-born Eileen Mayo (1906-94). She was a prolific illustrator, and wrote and illustrated several children's books, many based on nature and animals. She lived in Australia from 1953 to 1965, later moving to New Zealand.

Three denominations (6d, 9d and 1/-) replaced earlier fauna stamps dating from the 1930s, and they were printed in the same colours as before, brown, sepia and deep green respectively. The other three denominations were new.

Not since 1951 did the 6d stamp have a designated domestic use, instead paying for airmail postcards to a few places and serving as a make-up value. That continued with the new 6d anteatater stamp, although a couple of specific, if uncommon, uses arose. From 14 July 1958 airmail postcards to south Asia and the south Pacific (excluding New Zealand) cost 6d. In addition, Australian military personnel serving overseas apparently could send airmail letters to Australian for 6d.



Fig. 1 Airmail postcard to Indonesia.

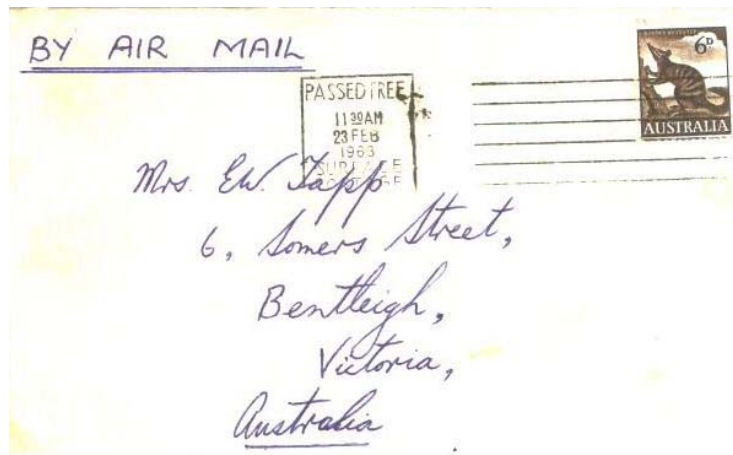


Fig. 2 Armed forces concession: letter from Cdr. E Tapp, HMAS Voyager, to his wife.



Fig. 3 Make-up use: certified mail at 11d rate.

The 8d tiger-cat stamp was new, paying for surface-mail letters and postcards to foreign countries (rate effective 1.10.59), airmail letters to New Zealand (rate effective 1.8.52) and double-weight domestic letters (rate effective 1.10.59 – 5d for first ounce and 3d for next ounce).

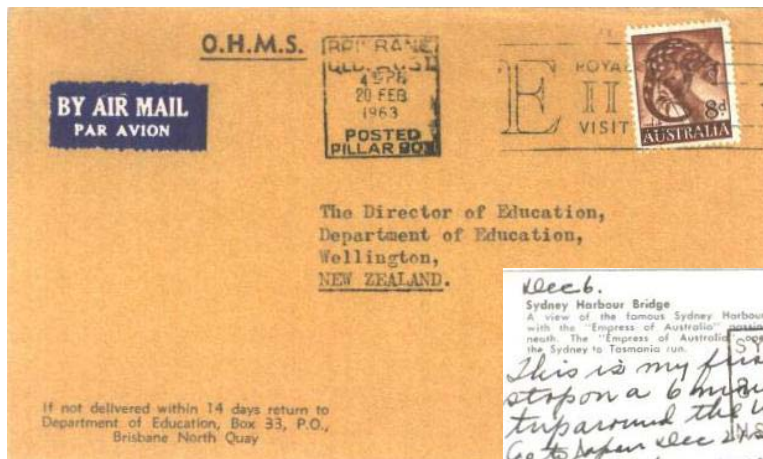


Fig. 4 Airmail Letter to New Zealand.

Fig. 5 Surface-mail postcard to USA.

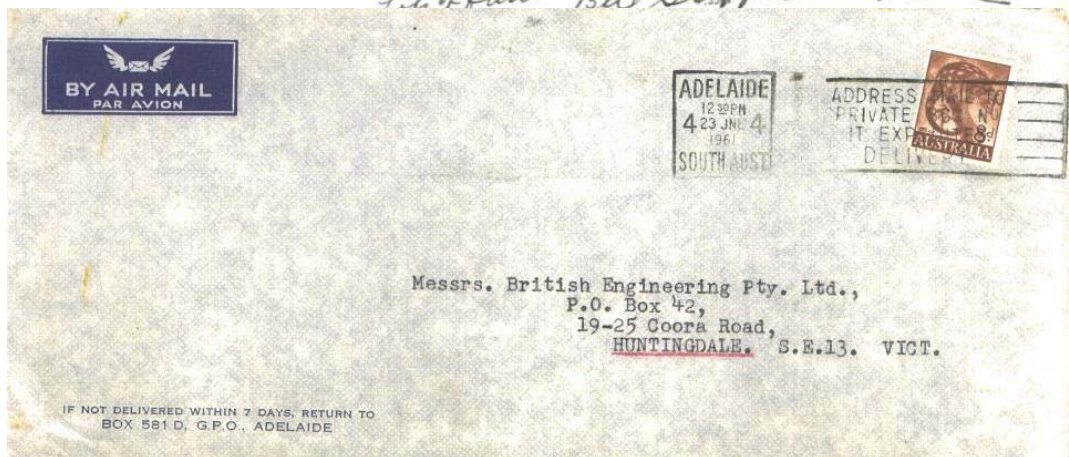
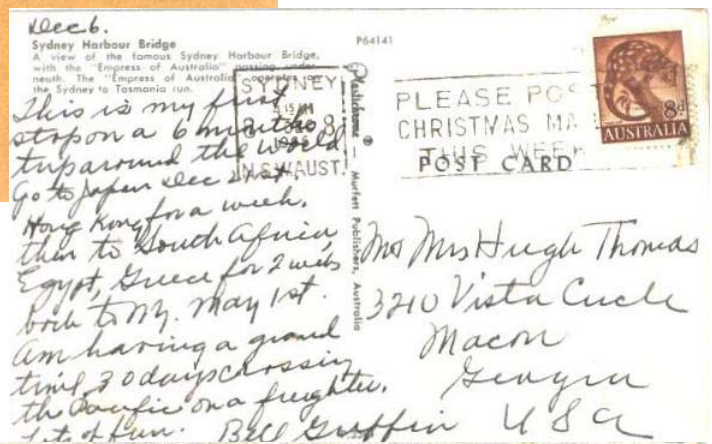


Fig 6 Double-weight letter within Australia

The 9d kangaroo stamp was almost exclusively a make-up value, although it did pay for airmail postcards to north Asia, Hawaii and the north Pacific (rate effective 14.7.58). It is not often found on commercial mail, and nearly always for make-up purposes.

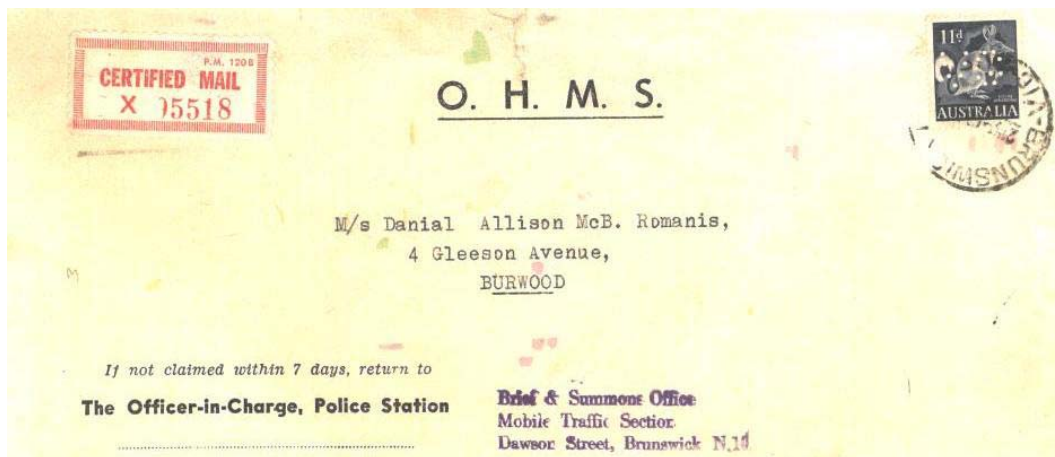


Fig. 7 Make-up use for airmail postcard to UK at 1 shilling and 2 pence rate. Card addressed to Nina Christesen head of Russian Studies at Melb Univ, when she was at Oxford in 1961.

Fig. 8 Make-up use for certified mail, 1962.



Eleven pence was an odd denomination (was UK the only other country with an 11d stamp?), but it paid for certified mail in Australia: certification was 6d, plus ordinary letter postage of 5d (effective 1.10.59). The 11d rabbit-bandicoot stamp was issued on 3.5.61, but its useful life ended the next year when certification was increased to 9d.



Certified mail from Dawson Street Police, Brunswick. Stamp punctured VG.

One shilling definitive stamps had been green and faunal since 1913 for Australia, and had nearly always paid for one or more parcel rates, the telegram rate and, since 1947, the airmail letter rate to south Asia. By 1959 only the airmail rate survived, although there were numerous instances where 1/- served for make-up uses. One shilling carried an airmail letter to the Malaya-Indonesia region or an airmail postcard to the Middle East, USA and Canada (rate effective 14.7.58). The 1/- Colombo Plan stamp (30.6.61) served the same uses.

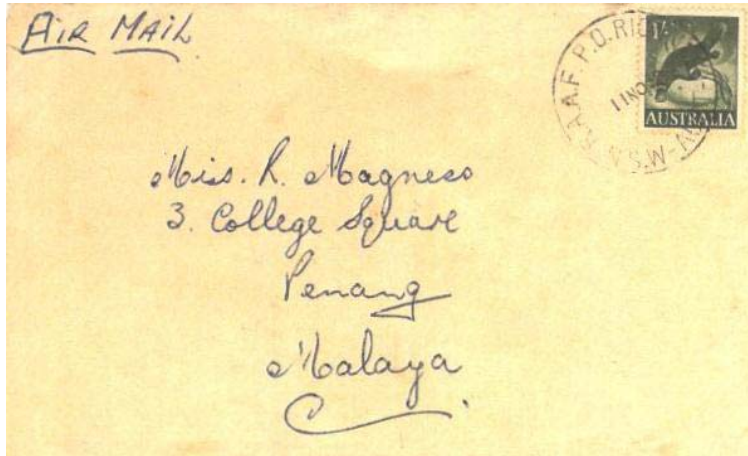


Fig. 10 Airmail letter to Malaya.

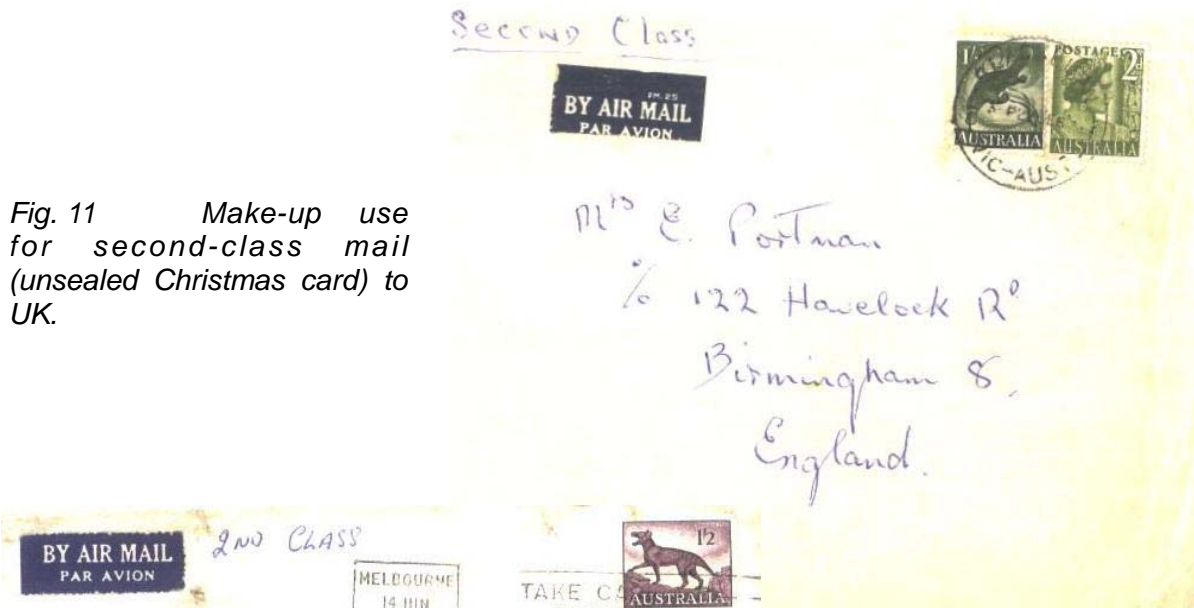


Fig. 11 Make-up use for second-class mail (unsealed Christmas card) to UK.



The last illustration (1/- platypus stamp + 2d stamp) brings the story up to the 1 shilling and 2 pence Tasmanian-tiger stamp issued on 21.3.62. It paid for airmail postcards to Europe and Africa, second-class airmail to those places (usually unsealed envelopes for greetings cards), and certified letters in Australia.

Fig 12 Second-class mail (unsealed card) to UK.



Fig. 13 Airmail Postcard to England.

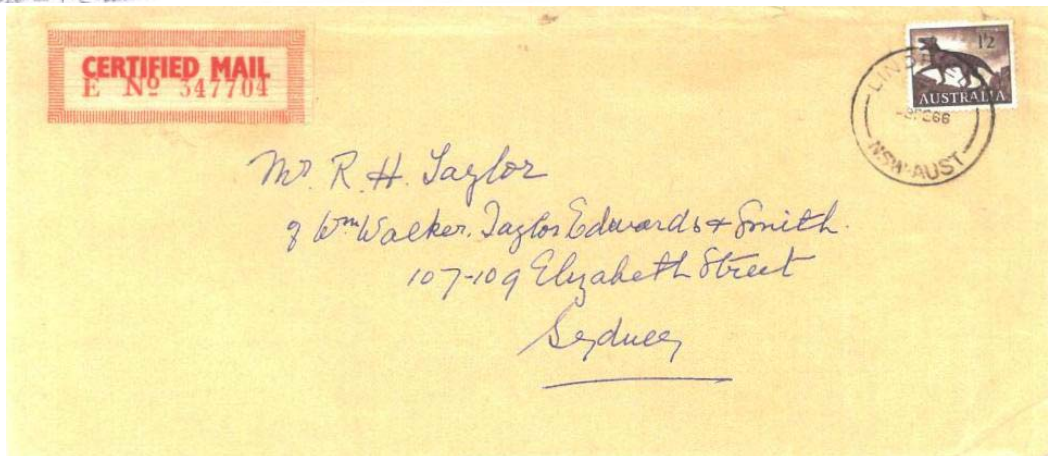
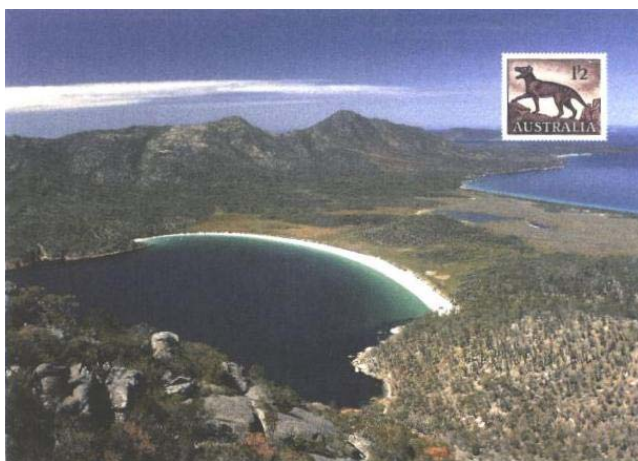


Fig. 14 Certified mail, 1966.

Some of the postcard uses are elusive, but can probably be found in collectors' hoards, and more likely overseas in dealers' boxes and in private hands. Perhaps a much later emission, postally used, might also turn up: in the 1990s Australia Post issued three pre-paid postcards showing the Tasmanian-tiger stamp –



POSTAGE PRE-PAID AUSTRALIA



Photographic: Australian Picture Library/R. Eastwood
Tasmania/No. Wellington

Figs. 15 & 16 Front and back of Australia Post worldwide airmail postcard.