



Concession Stamps 2014

Australia Post's most costly and controversial stamp issue



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Concession Stamps 2014

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On 20th February 2014 Australia Post's application for an increase in postage prices was approved. The increase was effective from 31st March. To soften the blow of this 17% increase in the basic letter rate from 60c to 70c, Australia Post launched the **MyPOST** Concession Account. "This account ensures that Australia Post's services remain affordable for low income groups. It enables the 5.7 million eligible Australians to post domestic letters at a cheaper rate and have access to other products and services at a discount."

The **MyPOST** Concession Account is available to holders of the following Federal Concession cards:

- Pensioner Concession Card
- Health Care Card or Commonwealth Seniors Health Care Card
- Department of Veteran's Affairs Card or Veteran's Repatriation Health Card

Australia Post's Managing Director and CEO, Ahmed Fahour, said, "It is vital that Australia Post ensures we provide an affordable and accessible letters service for all Australians. We remain mindful of the impact to the cost of living of an increase to the stamp price, particularly for those groups who are more dependent on our traditional services." It assumes that the people in these groups wish to continue to post letters. If this is true it is strange that one of the discounted services offered is a Digital Mail Box. If low income groups with Concession Cards require a discount to post a letter, why would they need a Digital Mail Box? They need a computer to access their Digital Mail Box and would then send emails not letters!

Many Licensed Post Office managers thought this new system was a "fiasco". It was very expensive to set-up and could cost Australia Post over \$28 million per year in lost revenue. It would have been cheaper and easier just to "send every pensioner a free booklet of ten 70c stamps".

5.7 million card holders x
10c discount per stamp x
50 stamps per year =
\$28.5 million

From 12th March, booklets of 20 sheetlets were delivered to Post Offices, together with a 23 page instruction manual on how to set-up a **MyPOST** Account. There was no information regarding the sale of the stamps. (It is rumoured that some of the sheetlets or individual stamps were sold to the public and the stamps used as 60c stamps, the basic postage rate (BPR) at the time.) The Australia Post computer system allowed **MyPOST** Accounts to be set-up on-line from 24th March. This could be done at Post Offices and once a customer had an Account Number they could immediately buy the Concession stamps. A **MyPOST** plastic card and a free sheetlet of stamps were received in the post about a week later. The stamps could be used for postage from 24th March but it is not known if this is what Australia Post intended. The BPR was increased to 70c on 31st March. From this date "Concession Post" came into effect for **MyPOST** Account holders.



2 non-denominational self-adhesive Concession stamps were released. One had an image of a 'Kangaroo on a beach', the other a 'Map of Australia in the sand'. Each stamp had an orange 'Concession Post' signifier. They were supplied in sheetlets of 5 stamps (3 Kangaroos and 2 Maps) and cost \$3 per sheetlet (60c each stamp). **MyPOST** Account holders can only buy 10 sheetlets (= 50 stamps) per year. These stamps are only for use on domestic letters. There are instructions on the back of the sheetlet regarding the number of stamps required according to the type of letter.

There were 4 separate releases of these stamps during 2014:

24th March:

A limited edition “Collectable Stamp Pack” was released. (Limited to 10,000 packs.) It was available to anyone for \$3.95 and contained a (Type 1) sheetlet of 5 self-adhesive stamps (3 Kangaroos and 2 Maps, costing 79c per stamp). The sheetlet was 124 x 85mm and had a cut edge on all 4 sides. The stamps in this pack were “collectable stamps” hence not valid for postage. (Refer to Stamp Bulletin 327, Page 17.)

People could apply for a MyPOST Account on-line at a Post Office and were able to buy up to 10 sheetlets immediately. These (Type 2) sheetlets of “postage” stamps were identical to the “collectable stamps” sheetlets from the Stamp Pack (124 x 85mm) except they had a rouletted edge on the right side – where they had been torn out of the booklet.




Collectable concession stamp pack
\$3.95
 SKU #1514825
 Issue date: 24/03/2014

Please note: This is a collectable Philatelic product only and the MyPost concession discount does not apply.

The issue date of the Collectable Stamp Pack was 24th March. This was shown in the Stamp Bulletin and on Australia Post’s ‘Stamp Issues’ website. “Postage” stamps were also sold on the same day. Australia Post did not specify a “precise date” for the Concession Stamps “to be released for sale” nor did they provide an ‘official’ First Day of Issue postmark. The Australia Post “Archived Stamp Issues” webpage lists the Concession stamps under 31st March 2014. (See below.) This was the date “Concession Post” came into effect. No wonder Post Office staff, Concession Card holders and stamp collectors were confused.

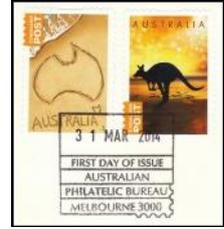
Some Post Offices inadvertently sold the Concession stamps to the public as a 60c stamp! Many innovative collectors made their own First Day Covers and had both the “collectable” and “postage” stamps cancelled and postmarked on 24th March. Despite the stamps not showing a value, they cost 60c which was still the current standard letter rate and were therefore accepted for postage. A set of Floral Emblems stamps was issued on 24th March. First Day Covers exist with both the Floral stamps and the Concession stamps on the same envelope with “First Day of Issue 24 Mar 2014” cancellations.




31st March:

The new 70c Basic Postage Rate and “Concession Post” took effect from this day.

Many envelopes exist with the Concession stamps cancelled or postmarked on 31st March. These cancellations did not have the text “First Day of Issue”. However the Australian Philatelic Bureau’s Postmarking Service was obliging and cancelled “private” covers with a “31 Mar 2014 First Day of Issue” cancellation upon request.



3rd April:

Plastic MyPOST Account cards were received by those Concession Card holders who had applied for them. Included with the card was a free (Type 3) sheetlet of 5 “postage” stamps. (This sheetlet was 136 x 85mm. It was longer on the right and contained a roulette perforation 12mm from the right edge. Obviously an unbound sheetlet from the booklet.)

[3rd April is the date the free sheetlet and plastic MyPOST card were received by a person who applied for the MyPOST Account on-line at a Post Office on 24th March. Some may have been received a day or two earlier.]

4th November:

A minisheet containing a gummed se-tenant pair of these 2 stamps was included with the annual ‘2014 Collection of Australian Stamps’. (Refer to Stamp Bulletin 331, Page 12.) These gummed stamps could be bought by non-MyPOST Account holders and used for discounted postage!



References:

Stamp News – May 2014:

“Australia Post’s Concession Stamp Fiasco” article. (It is available at issuu.com/asvcat/docs/asv2015sn.)

Australia Post – Archived Stamp Issues:

<http://auspost.com.au/education/stamps/students/stamp-issues-archive.html>

Licensed Post Office Group – Concession Stamps and MyPOST Accounts:

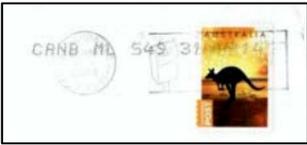
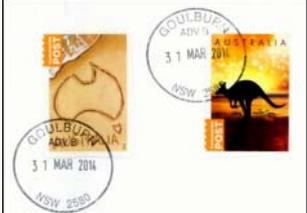
<http://lpogroup.com.au/content/mypost-concession-account-fiasco>

<http://lpogroup.com.au/content/concessional-stamp-discount-survey>

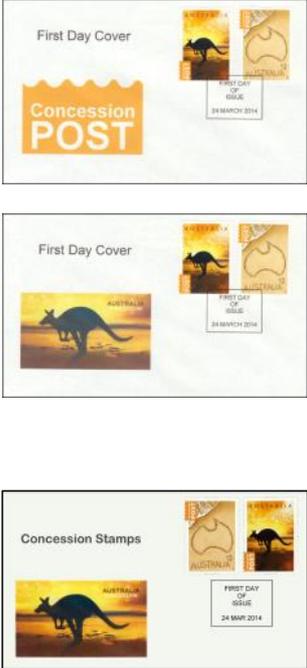
2014 Concession Stamps on Envelopes

Date	Description	Image
12 th March	<p><i>Booklets of 20 sheetlets delivered to Post Offices, together with a 23 page instruction manual on how to set-up a MyPOST Account.</i></p> <p>It is rumoured that some of the sheetlets or individual stamps were sold to the public and the stamps used as 60c stamps, the basic postage rate (BPR) at the time. If any stamps postmarked prior to 24th March are found I shall add them here.</p>	
24 th March	<p><i>Sheetlet of 5 "collectable" stamps in Collectable Stamp Pack released. This was a "philatelic item" and the stamps were not valid for postage. Cost = \$3.95.</i></p> <p><i>Sheetlet of 5 "postage" stamps sold to MyPOST Account holders. Cost = \$3. (The Post Office computer system allowed the sale provided the MyPOST Account No. was entered.)</i></p> <p>Many envelopes had either the above "collectable" or "postage" stamps affixed and cancelled or postmarked with 24th March cancellations. They were treated as 60c stamps which was the BPR.</p>	
	<p>Interesting cover with text stating the significant 24th and 31st March dates and no cancellation.</p>	
	<p>"A multitude of Australian firsts" cover. Bright</p>	
	<p>Cover with "First Day of Issue" cancellation. Canberra Parliament House Post Office</p>	
	<p>"Mixed issue" cover containing Floral Emblem and Concession stamps with "First Day of Issue" cancellation. 24th March was the First Day of Issue of the Floral Emblem set of stamps. Canberra Parliament House Post Office</p>	
	<p>Cover with "First Day of Issue" cancellation. Canberra Parliament House Post Office</p>	
	<p>Cover with "First Day of Issue" cancellation. Canberra Parliament House Post Office</p>	
	<p>Cover with "First Day of Issue" cancellation. Campbelltown</p>	

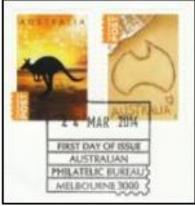
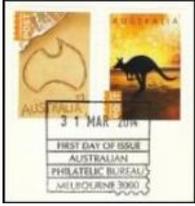
2014 Concession Stamps on Envelopes

Date	Description	Image
24 th March (contd.)	Cover with 24 th March postmark. Dandenong	
	Collectable Stamp Pack sheetlet and 24 th March cancellation. Baulkham Hills	
	Cover with sheetlet and 24 th March cancellation. This is probably the sheetlet from the Collectable Stamp Pack containing 5 stamps that were not valid for postage. GPO Melbourne	
	Cover with sheetlet and 24 th March cancellation. This is probably the sheetlet from the Collectable Stamp Pack containing 5 stamps that were not valid for postage. Carole Park	
26 th to 29 th March	Map stamp postmarked on 26 th & 27 th March. Whitburn (26 March) Dandenong Letter Centre (DLC) (27 March) Dandenong (Received 28 March)	
	Map stamp postmarked on 29 th March. Northgate	
31 st March	<i>Basic Postage Rate increased to 70c and "Concession Post" came into effect.</i> Cover with "First Day of Issue" cancellation. Blue sticker states: "First day of valid use". Canberra Parliament House Post Office	
	Kangaroo stamp postmarked on 31 st March. Canberra	
	Map and Kangaroo stamps cancelled on 31 st March. Goulburn	

2014 Concession Stamps on Envelopes

Date	Description	Image
31 st March (contd.)	<p>“Postage” stamp sheetlet and 31st March cancellation.</p> <p>Baulkham Hills</p>	
3 rd April	<p><i>First known date that the larger free sheetlet of 5 “postage” stamps was received with the MyPOST plastic card.</i></p> <p>No cancelled free sheetlets have been found.</p> <p>Kangaroo stamp postmarked on 3rd April.</p> <p>Dandenong and Dandenong Letter Centre (DLC)</p>	
6 th April	<p>'Non-authentic' 'private' envelopes offered for sale on internet auction and for sale websites with the following description:</p> <p><i>“These covers were produced by me and are not an official Australia Post product. The “cancellation” was printed at the same time as the photo and text and provides a record of the First Day of Issue.”</i></p> <p>Despite this description, one stamp dealer claimed that the text box was actually a rubber cancellation and began using 'f' words like “fake”, “forgery” and “fraud”!!! He even wrote about these envelopes in <i>Stamp News</i>, on a popular on-line stamp forum and on his own website.</p> <p>Comments from dealers and collectors from on-line forum websites and emails include:</p> <p><i>“WYSIWYG - He is not claiming they are anything that they aren't. What's the problem???”</i></p> <p><i>“Given that the description includes this, I'm amazed at the fuss on here. It's not a forgery, as no official product exists to forge. It's not a fake; it might be described as a bogus postmark on a genuine stamp? Intent to deceive? not with that description.”</i></p> <p><i>“The cover being discussed is much more attractive than the awful smudged roller cancel FDC's someone else is offering.”</i></p> <p><i>“No one has the right to tell me what I shall collect and what I shall not collect. This is a typical dealer's outlook on our hobby!”</i></p> <p><i>“What an amazing statement from a dealer that calls collectors (his customers) 'bunnies'.”</i></p> <p><i>“I have stopped reading that forum because that obnoxious person 'pollutes' so many posts.”</i></p>	

2014 Concession Stamps on Envelopes

Date	Description	Image
~28 th April	Stamps cancelled by Australian Philatelic Bureau's Postmarking Service with "24 Mar 2014 First Day of Issue" cancellation.	
	Stamps cancelled by Australian Philatelic Bureau's Postmarking Service with "31 Mar 2014 First Day of Issue" cancellation.	
28 th July	<p>Mixed use. Concession stamp with extra 10c stamp.</p> <p>Possibly used by a non-MyPOST Account holder to cover the new 70c standard letter rate. The Concession stamp may have been obtained from a MyPOST Account holder or bought at a Post Office for 60c.</p>	

These images have been sourced from the internet or received by email. It is assumed that they exist on paper. All names and addresses have been removed for privacy reasons.



Australian Stamp Variations

Melbourne
Australia

www.asv.net.au
issuu.com/asvcat