

# Australian Postal History & Social Philately



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## THE CHARITY STAMPS of NEW SOUTH WALES

The Post Office in New South Wales was responsible for several innovations in the philatelic area, and the two Charity Stamps of June 1897 influenced other countries to issue similar items. This included the two Charity stamps of Victoria which were issued in October 1897. The 1990 issue of the Australasian Stamp Catalogue (A.S.C.) gives the best historical information of these stamps which were designed by C. Turner and typographed by the Government Printing Office in Sydney.

The A.S.C. description (page 77) will be paraphrased: They were issued on June 26, 1897 [but Stanley Gibbons states that the lower value was issued on June 22 and the higher value on June 28] to raise funds for the Queen Victoria Homes for Consumptives" [tuberculosis, which was more prevalent in those times]. The 60th Anniversary of her reign was greeted with enthusiasm and the citizens wanted to commemorate her reign by a philanthropic service project. The various hospitals for consumptives were in need of funds.

Under the patronage of the wife of the N.S.W. Governor (Viscountess Hamden) a committee of influential people requested that the Postmaster General of N.S.W. (Mr. Brinker) issue postage stamps 'surcharged' to raise funds, the request being made in late May, 1897. After some debate, it was agreed to issue a stamp with a postage value of 1d, with an additional 1/-, and a 2½d with an additional 2/6d, both charity charges being considerable in 1897. The stamps were issued in sheets of 40, and the sales period was set as 2 months. The quantities issued were as follows: 1d 40,000 and 2½d 10,000. The initial sales were slow and were never popular with the general public.

However, the organizing committee from the Queen Victorian Home for Consumptives acted as a broker to stimulate sales to business firms of Sydney and the sales were eventually a major fund raiser for the Fund with a profit of £2,928/16/6d. The profit realised is consistent with all the stamps being sold. No additional charity stamps were produced in either N.S.W. or Victoria after these 1897 issues.

The 1d plus 1/- stamp portrayed "an angel supporting an exhausted human being with a portrait of Queen Victoria in the upper right. Across the top appears the inscription 'Consumptive Home'" (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Click to enlarge.

This auction cover with the 2½d plus 2/6d stamp shows "the motif of restoration typified by two figures draped in white, the strong gently leading the weak and pointing (to) the motto 'Redifico'. The vignette is placed in a diamond shaped frame surrounded by flowers with the inscription 'Consumptives Home' directly above." The portion in quotes for both stamps is the official description of the design. I have not been able to obtain a translation of the motto 'Redifico'! The local Sydney suburb cover is addressed to Mrs Arthur, Military Road, Mosman and has the Mosman duplex with MOSMAN/ JY 5/ 4.30.PM/ 97/ N.S.W and the numeral '1348'. Hopson & Tobin classify this postmark as a Type D3(iii), which should have a full-stop after the 'W', but this is not apparent. This particular cancel has a documented use from 1894-1906 (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Click to enlarge.

The author acknowledges that this paper relies heavily on the A.S.C. article mentioned above.

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