

# Australia in Depth (Article #92) ‘Census on Australian Kangaroo and KGV watermark error rarities’ By Simon Dunkerley © Updated 3rd December 2004

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The popularity of watermark errors, both inverted and sideways was very strong from the early days of collecting Australian Commonwealth stamps. This is evidenced by catalogue values and prices achieved compared to normal stamps in the early editions of the *Australian Commonwealth Specialists' Catalogue* (ACSC). This interest continues to grow today.


The aim of this article is to bring readers of *Stamp News* up to date with further information that has come to light in this area in recent times. This is done primarily by creating tables for the Kangaroo issues for the first time, updating the KGV watermark inverted table and adding a table for other KGV errors.

Many of Australia's rarest watermark inverted errors are to be found in either the Kangaroo or the KGV series, and each of the different watermarks contributes to the list of items, which are tabulated below. This is a complete list of those catalogued, or known and as of yet not catalogued where a total of about *twelve or less* examples in private hands are known either mint or used.

The first number recorded for each item in the table is based on the figures given in the 1999 edition of the ACSC Kangaroo volume and 2001 edition of the ACSC KGV volume. In addition, some *newly discovered* examples have come to light since then. These are indicated in ( ). Unless otherwise mentioned, all items listed are in *used* condition. In addition, the first watermark 9d, single watermark 1d violet and 4½d violet are *only* recorded perf "OS". In the case of the KGV single watermark 2d scarlet and 2d orange, the reference here is to stamps without the 'OS' puncture. In both cases, the majority of the watermark inverted stamps were found and punctured; whilst scarce, the latter are not rarities.

Note that with the catalogues being five and three years old respectively, the listed prices are *way* behind the current market for these items. Recent sales for most of these items have generally been between three and five times catalogue value. An update on the Kangaroo prices will be done in the review of the new Kangaroo catalogue when that is available.

**Table (1) Kangaroo issues watermark inverted**

Watermark	Issue	Number Known	ACSC 1999	Comments
First	9d	6 (about)	1500	Perf large 'OS' only
Second	2d	10 (about)	1000	
Second	6d untramarine	3	3000	One in Royal Collection
Third	2d Die IIA	1	-	Recently discovered
Third	6d chestnut 	1	4000	
Small Multiple	1/-	2 (+1)	3000	Two with perf faults
CofA	2/- (redrawn die)	2 (+1)	3000	Includes a pair

**Table (2) Kangaroo issues watermark sideways**

Watermark	Issue	Number Known	ACSC 1999	Comments
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First	½d (crown to right)	2	6000	Both examples are imperfect
First	½d (crown to left)	1	8000	Very fine condition
Third	5/-	1	10000	
Third	10/-	2 mint, 10 used	4000	Used price listed
Third	£1	1 mint, 12 used	5000	Used price listed




**Table (3) KGV issues watermark inverted**

Watermark	Issue	Number Known	ACSC 2001	Comments
Single	1d Carmine-red single line perf	2 (+2 at least)	4000	One has a small tear; possibly more than four known
Single	1d Violet	1	8000	Perf "OS" only (reported in 1996)
Single	1½d Green	3	3500	One has a small corner fault
Single	2d Orange	4 (+4)	3500	Non 'OS' stamps; one creased; includes a (reinforced pair with faults)
Single	2d Scarlet	1	4000	Non 'OS' stamp; mint only



**Table (4) KGV issues watermark sideways and other items**

Watermark	Issue	Number Known	ACSC 2001	Comments
Large Multiple	½d (crown to left)	1	8000	
Large Multiple	½d (crown to right)	1	-	Only recently discovered

				
No Watermark errors	1d Red (smooth paper)	uncertain	-	Must have no trace of any part of the watermark or any marginal line. Only one mint example recorded; number of used is uncertain
No Watermark errors	2d Orange	2 (+1)	3500	Includes a pair
No Watermark errors	2d Scarlet, Die I	1	4000	Without single watermark
No Watermark errors	2d Golden-scarlet, Die III, postally used	1	3000	Without small multiple watermark. Price is for the one genuine postally used example recorded (cancelled at Abbotsford, Victoria). About 60-80 mint examples appear to have survived
No Watermark errors	2d Deep Golden-scarlet, mint	1	-	One mint example is recorded in an intense shade of the deep golden-scarlet

As noted in the comments above, a number of the known examples are in less than perfect condition, and that generally speaking this has not been a hindrance in selling them. Very few of these items are in what could be described as superb condition, although there are some. Realistically, if you are after a perfect example of some items, you may never find one, and many of these watermark errors fall into that category.

As noted above, most of the recent realisations for items from these tables in fine condition have generally been about *three to five times* the 1999 and 2001 catalogue prices. When you look at how many are recorded, this illustrates how market forces operate in an area that is both very popular and available in very limited numbers. I for one would never have expected the prices to reach current levels; however, the same could be said for other areas as well. As to future prices, it is unlikely that the prices of these will rise in similar proportions to recent times. A realistic prediction of where they will be in five to ten years time is simply not possible.

## **Recent examples of KGV Watermark inverted rarities sold**

The following is a complete list of the examples that I know to have sold in the last six years. All of the prices quoted include the buyer's premium and any other charges where appropriate.

### **Single watermark:**

1d Carmine, single line perf (Status International July 2004). A total price of \$39,610 was achieved for this item.

1½d Green (Premier Philately, July 2003). A total price of \$14,150 (plus GST of 10% if the buyer was an Australian resident).

2d Orange: Six examples, comprising two sold at auction (Rodney A. Perry March 1999 for \$2,760 and Prestige Philately January 2004 for \$18,112), and four sold privately for undisclosed amounts including a reunited pair with slight faults (one of these was also first auctioned overseas).

4½d violet: Remarkably, no less than *four* different examples of this error have been offered at auction inside the four years to January 2003, after none appear to have been offered during the preceding twenty-five years or so. The first two are believed to be among the three original examples found; the third was a new find in 2001, whilst the fourth, cancelled at Thornberry rather than Preston as the other three are, appears to also be a relatively new find.

(1) Status International (April 1999) \$3,520

(2) Status International (May 2000) \$2,875

(3) Michael Eastick and Associates (June 2001) \$4,747

(4) Premier Philately (January 2003) \$9,056 (in contrast to the others, this example is centred significantly

towards the right)

Small Multiple watermark (Perf 14) 1/4d greenish-blue (Premier Philately, January 2003) \$15,282. As previously reported, this example had been acquired by the vendor for a mere \$24 at a Harmers auction in the late 1960's!

Small Multiple watermark (Perf 13½x12½) 3d Die II perf 'OS' mint: One recently found example was auctioned overseas and then sold privately in Australia for an undisclosed amount. A used example was sold last week as I write, by Status International for a total price of \$26,795. The same stamp was last sold in March 1999 by Stanley Gibbons for a total price of \$1,980. Another used example with a rounded top-right corner and in a deeper shade sold at auction in 1997 for a paltry \$198!

CofA Watermark 5d Brown:

- (1) Sold privately for an undisclosed amount. This example has a couple of shortish perfs at top, and *may* be a new find
- (2) Stanley Gibbons (Melbourne, October 2002) \$7,465
- (3) Premier Philately (March 2003) pulled perf at left and believed to be a new find \$5,943
- (4) Millennium Philatelic Auctions (June 2004) slight staining and appears to be a new find \$15,145

CofA Watermark 1/4d Turquoise:

- (1) Prestige philately (May 2004) \$15,400
- (2) Status International (Oct 2004) with a significant tear \$6,990

In addition, a used example of the small multiple watermark perf 13½x12½ 3d ultramarine Die 1, in type 'B' sold at Robin Linke's August 2004 auction for \$7,992. This very same stamp had sold a couple of times only a few years ago for approximately \$400. Until the 1970's this was recorded in used condition only, and was a rarity, although it is uncertain how many examples are recorded. However, at least three mint sheets were discovered, rendering mint examples relatively plentiful by comparison.

