



AUSTRALIAN PHILATELIC FEDERATION LTD

## WHERE DO I GET STAMPS FOR MY COLLECTION?

*“The fun is in the chase”*

**F**inding stamps and other material for your collection can be one of the hardest parts of collecting. If you just collect new issues from the post office then your task is easy. But if you collect anything a little bit different or an unusual country your task is that much harder.

**T**here is no one solution to this issue but it must be said that half the fun of collecting is the chase. One of the thrills of collecting is filling that gap that has eluded you for years, or finding an unusual variety in an unexpected way.

**T**his brochure outlines 20 ways to find those stamps and covers you need. It's not exhaustive but until you've tried you never know what may turn up.

### ***Postal Administrations (Post Offices)***

If you collect the new issues of any country it pays to have a standing order account with the post office. A standing order can involve giving the post office a deposit and they send you all the new stamps/covers as they are issued. They will also remind you when your account is running low. Nowadays, most postal administrations request credit card details to simplify the standing order process.

A standing order is the best way to ensure you receive all the new issues of a country and not have to chase them up later through dealers or eBay.

### ***Stamps Dealers***

Yes stamp dealers are in a business to make a profit but they are also one of your best sources of material for your collection. The yellow pages list stamp dealers and it is worth the effort to contact your local dealer and let them know what you collect. They can let you know what they have in stock, and more importantly, keep an eye out for material for you. Once you develop a level of trust in a dealer or dealers you will find that they are one of your best sources of new material, and the start of a lifelong association. After all, they are the ones that travel to stamp shows (often worldwide) and actively seek stamps for your collection. It is strongly recommended that you deal with stamp dealers who are members of recognised trade organisations as this gives you a level of protection. In Australia there are three reputable trade associations –

- Australian Philatelic Trader's Association (APTA) [www.apta.com.au](http://www.apta.com.au),
- Stamp & Coin Dealers Association of Australasia (SCDAA) [www.scdaa.com](http://www.scdaa.com), and
- Australasian Numismatic Dealers' Association (ANDA) [www.anda.com.au](http://www.anda.com.au).

However, you are not restricted to Australian dealers, with the internet and very powerful search engines you virtually have access to dealers all around the world. If you are uncertain about using an online dealer seek a reference from your fellow collectors, or try a small order initially to test the service.

### ***Auctions***

There are a huge range of auctions - public, postal and of course eBay. They are a great source of material, particularly for rare or unusual items, but they may not be for novice collectors. The best thing to do is get advice from fellow collectors, your local stamp club or your local stamp dealer. As you get confidence you will find them a great source of material. In this area, the internet gives you unlimited access to stamp auctions all around the World, greatly increasing your chances of success.

Always remember with auctions, that the greater your need for the particular item, the more aggressive you need to be in your bidding to be successful. When bidding on overseas auctions, take care to establish the Australian value of your bid to ensure you are comfortable with same.

When bidding on auctions always keep in mind that the actual cost of the item may be up to 30% more than your bid. This added cost can vary between auctions, and covers such things as commission, postage, handling, any fixed costs and insurance. Always read the conditions of sale before bidding to ensure that you are fully aware of what the final cost may be.

If you use eBay it is recommended that you register to use PayPal for the added protection that it offers. If you are interested in an item, the seller of which does not accept PayPal, be very cautious.

### ***Stamp Clubs***

Join your local stamp club. Your fellow club members are a great way to acquire material for your collection. Besides auctions, most clubs have CIRCUIT BOOKS - where members put their duplicates up for sale. These books are circulated either by post, by hand or at meetings and offer you the chance to buy stamps often at good prices, and sometimes in the comfort of your home.

### ***Specialist Societies***

There are hundreds of specialist societies catering for a wide range of interests - everything from postal stationery to birds on stamps. These are often internationally based and have a newsletter or journal, annual auctions, a library and sometimes exchange circuits. They are a must for anyone with a specialised collection and a great way to contact and meet people with similar interests to yourself.

### ***Fellow Collectors***

Let your fellow collectors know what you collect. Don't treat them as competitors. Most will be more than happy to pass on material of interest, or at least let you know that they have seen something that may be of interest. They also often let dealers know that you have an interest, further increasing your chances of finding that elusive item. It can be surprising how often you receive emails from fellow collectors advising of items which they have seen that may be of interest to you.

### ***Stamp Magazines***

Most newsagents stock at least one magazine, or try your local stamp dealer. Check all of the advertisements and write or e-mail those that may have material of interest. Magazines are also a good source of information on new issues, the stamp market and other philatelic areas of interest. Most magazines allow you to advertise for material, either generally or very specific.

### ***Approvals***

A number of dealers offer approvals where they send you individually priced stamps to your home. You choose those you want and send the remainder plus payment back to the dealer. This can be useful when first starting a new collecting interest, but given the overheads, this can be a costly way of buying stamps in the long run.

### ***Mail Out to Stamp Dealers***

Obtain a list of stamp dealers from a suitable dealer association and write to them all, or at least those that look promising, and let them know your interests. You never know what may turn up. These days, most dealers have email which greatly speeds up communication.

### ***Stamp Shows, Fairs and Exhibitions***

Never miss a stamp show or fair if you can help it, particularly if it is local. They are a great way to see a lot of stamp dealers at one time, and more importantly a great way to establish a rapport with the dealers whom you deal with on a regular basis. There are also a number of regular large stamp fairs which attract interstate as well as local dealers. Don't forget to let the dealers know your interests, not everything they have will be at the stamp show.

Stamp, or Philatelic, exhibitions usually have many great exhibits which will not only give you further collecting ideas, but a great chance to meet fellow collectors. National exhibitions also attract dealers from interstate as well as from overseas. International exhibitions will also attract many overseas postal administrations.

### ***Private Treaty Lists***

Many dealers and auction houses sell material on private treaty. This is often on behalf of a collector and can be a great way to acquire a whole collection and all of the effort that went into putting it together. A private treaty listing is fixed price and saves on the pressure of an auction. It is a great way to start a new collecting interest. It can pay to get on the mailing list of dealers offering material by private treaty.

### ***Friends***

Let your non-collector friends know your interest in stamps. Many are happy to let you have stamps from their mail or other sources.

### ***Advertise***

If you can't find what you need advertise to buy or swap the material you collect. Stamp magazines are the best but your local paper can also be useful.

### ***Exchange Partners***

Many international collectors offer to swap stamps of their country for those of yours. This can be a great way to get new issues and recent issues used, but care is needed. It pays to establish ground rules and a level of trust before any in-depth exchanging.

### ***Other Societies***

Your local historical society comes to mind as a source of information. It's not unusual for historical papers to contain a number of envelopes. The society may be interested in the contents and you what's on the envelopes.

### ***Buy a Large One Country Collection***

This is a good way to start a new country. Many stamp dealers sell whole collections they have bought or sell remaindered collections, for a reasonable price, rather than spend the time to break them down. You not only get the stamps cheaper than buying them individually but you also often get the previous collector's knowledge, and most likely an album.

### ***Correspond/Offer to Help***

Corresponding with fellow collectors or offering to help with research projects, can be a good way to winkle out some useful material, particular with your fellow specialists. Their swaps may be just what you need.

### ***Publish***

Write an article or a note for your society's journal or newsletter. You will find that people start to correspond with you, dealers may seek you out and that hard to find material starts to find its way to you.

### ***Non-Philatelic Sources***

Secondhand dealers and bookshops often sell postcards. Check them out as you will be surprised what you find sometimes. It also never hurts to ask them whether they have any stamp albums which may also have stamps in them.

### ***Create Your Own***

If you can't find a used example of something, then create one and send it to yourself. Philatelic usage is better than no usage at all.

### **For Further Information**

[www.apf.org.au](http://www.apf.org.au)

or

Contact your State Council

- ACT: ACT Philatelic Council,  
GPO Box 980 CANBERRA ACT 2601
- NSW: Philatelic Development Council - NSW  
PO Box 220 Darlinghurst NSW 1300
- QLD: Queensland Philatelic Council  
PO Box 941 Wynnum Plaza PO  
WYNNUM WEST QLD 4178
- SA/NT: South Australian Philatelic Council  
GPO Box 9800 ADELAIDE SA 5001
- TAS: Tasmanian Stamp Council  
GPO Box 9800 HOBART TAS 7001
- VIC: Victorian Philatelic Council  
GPO Box 9800 MELBOURNE VIC 3001
- WA: Western Australian Philatelic Council  
GPO Box 9800 PERTH WA 6001

(Further contact details, including e-mail addresses, are available on the APF website.)

Other brochures in this series are available from the Australian Philatelic Federation or your State Council:

- 1 *New to Collecting Stamps*
- 2 *Why Join a Stamp Club?*
- 3 *I have just inherited a stamp collection - Where do I go from here?*
- 4 *I have just rediscovered my old stamp collection – where do I go from here?*
- 6 *Beyond Australia!*
- 7 *How can I identify and value my stamps?*
- 8a *An introduction to exhibiting – Part 1*
- 8b *An introduction to exhibiting – Part 2*
- 9 *Thumbnail Descriptions of the Exhibition Classes*
- 10 *An introduction to stamp collecting*

