

Air Mail Rates from Australia to the United States

by Jay Stotts

One of the challenges of collecting a new specialized area, when you include postal history along with the stamps and their production related material, is to learn the proper postal rates.

Collecting the postal history that reflects the proper usages of the stamps is a great opportunity to enhance and expand these new collections, and this article treats Australian air mails, specifically to the United States.

To date, probably the biggest challenge to this end is to quantify the international air mail rates, especially the early period and the World War II time frame.

The chart at the right is an attempt to simplify this group of rates and present them in a useful format for collectors to use as a resource.

The information comes from three primary sources as listed below. All three turned out to be a bit confusing and incomplete as they existed alone:

- Richard Breckon's five parts series, *Australian Commonwealth Postal Rates, 1901-1966* as serialized in *The Australian Philatelist* journals of November 1987 to Winter, 1989.
- Martin Walker's *Air Mail Postage Rates*, a two volume work published in 1988.
- *Airmail Operations During World War II* by Thomas H. Boyle, Jr., published in 1998.

A survey of all the air mail covers from Australia to the U.S. that are in my collection to date proved 100% correlation with the chart when it was completed, so if you have a nonconforming cover, please let me know.



1952
4/6
franking
at three
times the
1/6 rate.

Note	From	Weight	Fee	Add'l Wt.	Fee	Postcards	Air Route
1. Four options	Dec. 1934	1/2 oz.	1/7	1/2 oz.	1/6	10d	via QUANTAS from Brisbane to Singapore, on to London on Imperial Airlines, by surface from London to U.S., surface within U.S.
		1/2 oz.	2/2	1/2 oz.	2/1	1/1	same as above but with air within U.S.
		1 oz.	10d	1 oz.	2d	6d	surface all the way to U.S., air within U.S.
		1 oz.	1/1	1 oz.	2d	9d	air within Australia and the U.S., surface between the two
2. As an alternative to 1.	19 Apr. 1937	1/2 oz.	4/8	1/2 oz.	4/7	2/4	QUANTAS to Singapore, Pan American from Hong Kong to U.S.
3. Rate increase to 1.	3 Sep. 1939	1/2 oz.	3/2	1/2 oz.	3/2	1/7	via QUANTAS from Brisbane to Singapore, on to London on Imperial Airlines, by surface from London to U.S., surface within U.S.
Pan-Am service to Hong Kong suspended	17 July 1940	1/2 oz.	4/0	1/2 oz.	4/0	2/0	via Tasmanian Empire Airlines to Auckland, NZ, Pan-Am from Auckland to San Francisco, the California Clipper
	8 Dec. 1941						Pacific route suspended
	May 1942	1/2 oz.	9d	1/2 oz.	8d	5d	Air in U.S. only
	March 1945	1/2 oz.	6d	1/2 oz.	6d	5d	Air in U.S. only
		1/2 oz.	2/6	1/2 oz.	2/6	?	Air to U.S., then surface
		1/2 oz.	4/0	1/2 oz.	4/0	?	Air to U.S. and within
	1 June 1947	1/2 oz.	1/6	1/2 oz.	1/6	9d	
	1 Aug. 1952	1/2 oz.	2/0	1/2 oz.	2/0	1/0	
Decimal currency	14 Feb. 1966	1/2 oz.	20¢	1/2 oz.	20¢	10¢	Air to U.S. and within
	1 Oct. 1968	1/2 oz.	25¢	1/2 oz.	25¢	13¢	
	1 Oct. 1971	1/2 oz.	30¢	1/2 oz.	30¢	15¢	
	1 Oct. 1973	10 grams	25¢	10 grams	25¢	?	
	1 Oct. 1974	10 grams	30¢	20 grams	30¢	?	
	1 Sep. 1975	10 grams	40¢	20 grams	40¢	?	10 gram rate applies through 50 grams then the 20 gram rate
	1 July 1978	10 grams	50¢	10 grams	30¢	?	Rate returns to a per 10 grams rate structure
	31 Mar. 1980	10 grams	55¢	10 grams	30¢	?	



1964 air mail postcard, 1/0 platypus.