

## About our coins

Coins have an 'obverse' (heads) and 'reverse' (tails) design. The obverse side of all current Australian decimal coins has an image of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. This side also shows the year the coin was minted.

On 14 February 1966, Australia's first decimal coins (and dollar notes) were introduced. They were brought in to replace the pounds, shillings and pence which had been used until this date.

These first coins' reverse sides all featured our unique native fauna and these animals are still seen on our coins today. However, many newer coins have also featured designs to commemorate special people or events from Australian history.

### The five cent coin

The reverse of the 5 cent coin features an image of an echidna. Designed by Stuart Devlin, it has not changed since 1966.

The coin is made of 75% copper and 25% nickel. It is circular in shape, and has a milled edge. It weighs 2.83 grams and is 19.41 millimetres in diameter.



### The ten cent coin

The reverse of the 10 cent coin features an image of a lyrebird. Designed by Stuart Devlin, it has not changed since 1966.

The coin is made of 75% copper and 25% nickel. It is circular in shape, and has a milled edge. It weighs 5.65 grams and is 23.60 millimetres in diameter.



### The twenty cent coin

The reverse of the 20 cent coin features an image of a platypus which was designed by Stuart Devlin. This image has been used since 1966, but a number of commemorative designs have also been released.

The coin is made of 75% copper and 25% nickel. It is circular in shape, and has a milled edge. It weighs 11.3 grams and is 28.65 millimetres in diameter.



## The fifty cent coin

The reverse of the 50 cent coin features the Australian Coat of Arms. Designed by Stuart Devlin, it has had some important changes made to it since 1966.

The original 50 cent coin was made of 80% silver and 20% copper. It was circular in shape, and had a milled edge. It weighed 13.28 grams and was 31.65 millimetres in diameter.

Silver prices quickly increased and this coin became too expensive to produce, so and it was not made after 1966. There had also been complaints from people who were confused by its similar size to the 20 cent coin.

After two years without 50 cent coins being made, a new 50 cent coin was introduced in 1969. It was both a new shape and made from a different alloy. It is still used to this day. The current 50 cent coin is made of 75% copper and 25% nickel. Its shape is dodecagonal (12 sided), and it has a plain edge. It weighs 15.55 grams and measures 31.65 millimetres across flats.

Many different commemorative 50 cent coins have been produced.



## The one dollar coin

The \$1 coin was first introduced on 14 May 1984. Its reverse side features an image of five kangaroos, designed by Stuart Devlin. This image is still used today, but a number of commemorative designs have also been released.

Planning for a \$1 coin began in the mid-1970s. It was decided that Australia needed a higher value coin which could be used in coin-operated machines and replace the paper \$1 note which wore out quickly due to its frequent use.

The \$1 coin is made of 92% copper, 6% aluminium and 2% nickel. It is circular in shape and has an interrupted milled edge. It weighs 9 grams and is 25 millimetres in diameter.



## The two dollar coin

The \$2 coin was first introduced on 20 June 1988. Its reverse side features an image of an Australian Aboriginal elder, the Southern Cross and an image of Australian flora. This image was designed by Horst Hahne and inspired by a drawing by Ainslie Roberts. This image is still used today, but a number of commemorative designs have also been released.

Like the \$1 coin, the \$2 coin replaced a note, which wasn't lasting long because it was used so often.



The size of the \$2 coin was decided after much consideration about:

- the needs of those in our community who are visually impaired
- security considerations (cannot easily be copied)
- the need to avoid shaped coins
- the best size and thickness of the coin
- allowing for the future possible introduction of new coins.

The \$2 coin is made of 92% copper, 6% aluminium and 2% nickel. It is circular in shape, and has an interrupted milled edge. It weighs 6.6 grams and is 20.5 millimetres in diameter.

## The one and two cent coins

The 1 and 2 cent coins were first introduced with decimalisation on 14 February 1966.

The reverse side of the 1 cent coin had an impression of a feather tailed glider and the two cent coin an impression of a frilled-neck lizard.

On 21 August 1990, it was announced that these coins would no longer be produced. This was because these coins were losing value due to inflation, and there was a high cost mining the coins.

At the time it was stated that:

*“1c and 2c coins will continue to be legal tender, can still be used to purchase goods and can be deposited with financial institutions in the normal manner.”*

Both coins were taken out of circulation at the beginning of February 1992.

Do you have any of these old coins still sitting in a container or drawer at home?



1c coin



2c coin