

Fast Facts

- The First Australians didn't use money as we know it. They used a barter (trading) system.
- Coins have an obverse (heads) and reverse (tails) design. The obverse side of all Australian decimal coins features Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the year the coin was minted.
- The Royal Family are usually the only living people depicted on circulating coins (coins issued for everyday use), but the Mint may decide to celebrate other people who have done important things for Australia on coins too.
- In 1963 the Australian Government decided to change to decimal currency. The new type of money had to be named. The Prime Minister of the day, Sir Robert Menzies, wanted to call it the 'royal'. Other suggestions were the 'austral', the 'kanga' and the 'dinkum'. Eventually 'dollars' and 'cents' were selected.



- In 1966, Australia started to use decimal coins, featuring uniquely Australian animals.
- On 21 August 1990, the then Treasurer, Paul Keating, announced that one and two cent coins would not be made in Australia anymore.
- Australia officially stopped using the one and two cent coins in 1992.
- You might have heard people talk about 'circulating' and 'uncirculating' coins. Circulating coins are the ones that move through the population and that we all use to buy things. Uncirculating coins are ones that do not get sent into the population to be used. They are often collectors' items and can be worth a lot of money.



Investigating Australian Coins

- Did you know that the 50 cent coin was once circular like our other coins? It changed its shape in 1969 because it looked and felt too much like the 20 cent coin.
- The \$2 coin was brought out in 1988. Finding a new size was not easy. People had to be able to tell which coin it was by feeling it, and it had to be easy to make on the Mint's machines.
- Have you ever seen a different picture on the reverse of a \$1, 50 cent or 20 cent coin? Many different designs have been made to commemorate important events in our nation's history.
- The Mint can produce up to two million coins each day. Wow, that's a lot of coins! Each coin stays in circulation for about 30 years.



- Do you ever think of coins as works of art? Skilled artists carefully design the pictures on them, and they have good reason to be proud of their work.
- The 1930 Australian penny is one of the rarest and most valuable Australian coins.
- The Mint employs several robots, including Titan and Robbie. They make coin production very efficient.
- The staircase at the Mint contains 15,000 five cent coins. Can you work out how much money that is?
- In 2012 Australia was introduced to its first coloured circulating coin. This \$2 coin commemorated Remembrance Day, and had an image of a red poppy on the reverse side. Only half a million of these were produced so they are quite rare.
- The Mint is always looking for ways to make ground-breaking new coins. In 2013, a dome-shaped \$5 coin depicted the night sky and a triangular \$5 coin marked the 25th anniversary of the Australian Parliament House. These coins are both treasured collectors' items.



The Mint staircase

