

QUEENSLAND CARDS 'SUITABLE FOR HAND PAINTING'

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On 17 December 1908, the Secretary of the Postmaster-General's Department (PMGD) asked the Deputy Postmasters-General (DPMGs) in each state about the desirability of providing "white official postcards in order that they may be more suitable for hand painting", the cards to have a rough or 'matte surface'.

This request provoked a range of responses from the DPMGs of the various states, depending in part on the arrangements for producing postcards in each state and whether the cards were to be printed by the Commonwealth Stamp Printer in Melbourne or the local state government printer.

The 'card for hand painting' or 'artist' postcards issued for each state have been the subject of much discussion in the philatelic literature as collectors have tried to identify which card from each state was the 'artist' card. For earlier discussion on the Queensland card see Brian Pope *PSC* February 2000 and Bernard Beston *PSC* February 2000. National Archives of Australia (NAA) file NAA MP341/1 1913/18731 on the 'cards for hand painting' provides insights on the arrangements for the issuing of the cards in each state. The challenge of which card is the 'card for hand painting' in each state, however, remains a challenge. This article explores the responses of the Queensland DPMG and the issue of the card 'for hand painting' in Queensland.

On receiving the request from the Secretary of the PMGD, the Queensland DPMG sought advice from the [Queensland] Government Printer who was responsible for printing postcards for use in Queensland. The postcards in use in Queensland at the time were the 1906 pictorial postcards with views on the front and a four-line heading (Figure 1, right). The cards were printed on a buff card in a range of colours. Once 'hand painted' these cards would have had no space for correspondence. The issues for most other states included 'plain' cards which could simply be printed on a 'white matte' paper to meet the request from PMGD.



In a memorandum dated 29 January 1909, the Acting Deputy Postmaster General, J McConachie, replied to the Secretary PMGD saying that the Queensland Government Printer had replied that:

I have the honour to submit herewith samples of white card-board (printed and plain) the extra cost of which will be as follows:

Sample 1	1/9	per	1,000
" 2	1/6	"	"
" 3	9d	"	"

As we have a large supply of the buff coloured postcards on hand, and a large supply of the same card on order, I would like an early reply as to whether you intend to adopt the white card, so that I can cancel the balance of the contract, The attached samples have been tested for hand-painting by our artist with satisfactory results.

(2). I have to forward the samples herewith attached [Figures 2-4] for your inspection, and to inform you that over 750,000 penny post-cards were issued in this state during last year. If it is decided to substitute a white card for the buff coloured one now in use, the increased cost will be for No. 1 £65-12-6, for No. 2 £56-5-0 or for No. 3 £28-2-6, according to the card selected.



Interestingly, the Queensland DPMG had interpreted the request as meaning that all future postcards should be printed on 'white paper', which was not the intent of the request. Also, the samples provided, while lighter in colour than most of the buff card used for the pictorial cards, were hardly 'white' and (even after taking into account the process of digitisation of records) could best be most generously described as cream. Following the reply from Queensland, the PMGD asked the other state DPMGs about the extra cost of using white paper for the cards from their states. Following replies from each of the DPMGs including discussions regarding

issues affecting other states, for example the size of the postcards and the size of the bundles that postcards were supplied in, the PMGD wrote to the DPMGs authorising the issue of white postcards with rough or 'matte' surface suitable for hand painting'.

15th April, 1909

GENERAL MEMORANDUM No.163 to all States.

The Deputy Postmaster General.

Subject. WHITE POSTCARDS SUITABLE FOR HAND-PAINTING

With reference to previous correspondence relative to the proposal to issue white postcards with rough or 'matte' surface suitable for hand painting, I am to inform you that approval has been given for a supply of such postcards - full size, viz 5½" x 3½" - to be obtained for issue in your State, to the value of about *.

2. Please note and act accordingly.

* Sydney	£50
Melbourne	£50
Brisbane	£30
Adelaide	£30
Perth	£30
Hobart	£20

Thus the Queensland DPMG had been approved to issue £30 worth of postcards 'suitable for handpainting', amounting to 7,120 postcards. Information on the Queensland issue of the cards can be found in a memorandum from the DPMG to the Secretary of the PMGD dated 16 June 1910 asking whether further issues of 'white "matte" surface postcards should be made':

FROM DPMG Brisbane 16 June 1910 (signed by H B Templeton on 20 June 1910)

Whether further issues of white "matte" surface postcards should be made – H. O. No. G. 2073/09

Consequent on the advices contained in the Secretary's General memorandum 163 of the 15th April 1909, action was taken here (when funds become available) to obtain from the Government Printer, Brisbane, a supply of the above-described postcards to the authorised postcards to the authorized value, £30 0 0.

This supply was in due course distributed among this and the principal post-offices (15) of this state, £1 worth being issued to each on the 25th November 1909.

2. On the 15th December it was reported that the stock on hand at this Office only amounted to £6 worth, and enquires of the Postmasters concerned were then instituted with a view to ascertaining whether further supplies were likely to be required. Action was also taken for the return to this office of any supplies not required.

3. From the reports which have been received, it has been made clear that there has been little demand for these cards at the great majority of the offices – only four having requisitioned for further supplies.

Of these one (Cairns) requisition, on further enquiry would seem to have been merely preferred as a guard against a complete exhaustion of stock; on the other hand, however, it is admitted that at that station also there is very little demand by the public for these articles.

At Bundaberg, the same condition of affairs may be said to prevail; when (under instructions from this office) the first issue of these cards was notified through the local press, two packets were sold, but on the 6th January the Postmaster reported that 2 packets (10/-) worth were still on hand and that a further supply was not likely to be required for some months.

Only at two of the four post offices referred to above has there been a marked demand, viz. At Dalby and at Toowoomba to supply the requirements of the last named office, portions of supply were recalled on the 20th January from other offices (Cairns £4, Mt Morgan 30/-, Gympie, Rockhampton, and Bowen 10/- each.)

4. In view of the results of the enquiries made in this state, I shall be glad to be favoured with advice as to whether it is proposed to continue with the issue of the cards under notice.

Following the receipt of the memo from the Queensland DPMG, the PMGD wrote to the other state DPMGs on 5 July 1910 asking them to report as to their experience in connection with these cards. Not receiving a reply from the PMGD, on 24 August 1910 Queensland wrote saying 'relative to the question as to whether further issues of white "matte" surface postcards should be made, shall be glad if you will kindly favour me with a reply'. Although all states had replied by the 8 August 1910, Queensland (and the other states) were not to receive a reply until 30 March 1911 when they were advised that 'no further issues of these cards be obtained'. Most of the other states noted that there had been practically no demand for the cards with New South Wales still having about two-thirds of their allocation of £50, although Victoria had only £2/10/1 left of their original allocation of £50 of cards. The memo seeking approval for the response has the hand written notation on 20 March 1911 that 'This file should have been submitted earlier'.

In a final follow-up on these cards, at least from Queensland's perspective, the Secretary of the PMGD wrote on 5 February 1913 to the DPMG of all states in General Memorandum No 43:

With references to General Memorandum No 163 of 15th April 1909, and subsequent correspondence on the above-mentioned subject, and to general Memorandum No 179 of 1 April 1911, I am to inform you it has been reported by the Deputy Postmaster General in one of the states that a quantity of such cards is still in stock.

If a similar condition prevails in your states, please bring the act of these postcards being for sale prominently under the notices of the public by means of the insertion of a notice in the daily papers or by a printed notice being placed in some conspicuous positions at offices where the cards are available, and furnish me with a report in six months' time as to the effect of such an action and nay recommendation as to the disposal of any balance then remaining unsold.

On 17 February 1913, the Queensland DPMG replied that 'I have the honour to inform you that none of these cards are now held in stock here'. (For the other states New South Wales still held £39/8/5 worth of the postcards and Victoria £2/25/4. On 9 November 1913 approval was sought within the PMGD to deal with these cards: *There has never been any great demand for these cards which*

are sold at 1d each and is recommended that those still in stock be sold as ordinary cards. This was approved on 9 November 13 and the relevant states were informed on 19 November 1913). The saga of the 'cards suitable for handpainting' had long ended as far as Queensland was concerned but continued for a time with New South Wales – but that's another story.

Issue of Postcards 'suitable for hand painting' in Queensland

The memo from the Queensland DPMG date 16 June 1910 indicates that 7,200 cards 'suitable for hand painting' were printed and received by the Post Office. Cards were distributed to the GPO Brisbane and each of 15 country post offices in Queensland on 25 November 1909 with each post office receiving 240 postcards.

There had been marked demand for the cards at Dalby and Toowoomba. As at 15 December 1910, there were 1440 postcards held at 'this Office' (presumably the GPO).

As at 16 June 2010, four post offices had ordered additional supplies. One, Cairns had ordered additional postcards only as a precaution of running out'. Bundaberg had 120 cards left. Cards had been recalled on 20 January 1910 from Cairns (960 cards), Mt Morgan (360), Gympie, Rockhampton and Bowen (120 cards each) for transfer to Toowoomba where there had been a 'marked demand'.

As mentioned in the memo, local post offices had advertised the availability of the cards in local newspapers. A typical advertisement is shown (Figure 3) from the Queensland Times (Ipswich) 27 November 1909 which reads: *POST-CARDS FOR HAND-PAINTING The Postmaster-General has approved of the issue of a post-card on plain white card-board, suitable for hand-painting etc. These cards may now be purchased at the General Post-Office and the principal country post-offices. We learn that the issues will be extended to all post-offices as the postmaster's requisition for them in order to meet public requirements.*



These advertisements can be found on Trove where I have located many of them. Based on the post offices in the report of 16 June 1910 and the advertisements found on Trove, the cards were issued at the GPO Brisbane, Toowoomba, Dalby, Gympie, Maryborough, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Bowen, Cairns, Mt Morgan, Ipswich, Charters Towers, and Warwick. They were most likely also issued at Townsville and Gladstone (and based on population at the time possibly Roma).

Presumably, all of the cards were sold by February 1913 (and most likely much earlier). The 7,200 cards produced represented less than 1% of the annual production of 1d cards at the time, so it clear that the card would be scarce.

Identifying the Queensland Artist Card

Unfortunately, there seems to be no information in the file which specifically identifies the Queensland Artist Card. At the time of the request from the PMGD, the postcards being issued in Queensland were the 1906 pictorial postcards (Figure 1) on buff paper.

Over the period 1909-1911 a number of 'plain' postcards with no view were issued using the Queen Victoria Sideface Indicum with numerals in four corners. (See Reference 5: Queensland: Queen Victoria 'Numerals In 4 Corners' Postal Cards 1908-1912 <https://postalstationeryaustralia.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/qld-pcs-1909-1912-consolidated-V3-r.pdf>. The period appears to have involved a number of 'innovations' in postal card design as the Queensland issues moved from the use of the 1906-08 pictorial cards to the issue of 'plain cards' with no illustration and the 'more modern' 1910 cards with black and white views on the reverse including various ways of dealing with changes in regulations which allowed correspondence to be written on the left-hand side of the front of the card. A range of essays without views were produced in 1909 (or 1908). This complicates the identification of the 'artist' card.

Also note that the samples provided by the Queensland Government Printer to be white paper were clearly not on white paper such as that used on the 1910-1913 1d postcards 'with ADDRESS' (Figure 8) suggesting that the artist card was on a card lighter than that used for the 1906-08 pictorial cards which might be described as cream rather than white.

Some of the possibilities are:

1. A card of the same design as the 1906 pictorial postcards (Figure 1) but on a 'whiter' paper as per the samples provided by the Queensland Government Printer or possibly (1a) a similar card with no picture.
2. 1d Queen Victoria Sideface with Numerals in Four Corners Postcard with 4 Line Heading on cream paper (Figure 4) use recorded by 16 March 1910.
3. 1910 Issue with a Three-Line Heading (Figure 5), use recorded by 22 December 1910
4. 1910 Divided Front Issue (Figure 6), single used copy 29 December 1910
5. 1910 Issue with Address Added, cream Paper (Figure 7).
6. 1910 Issue with Address Added, white Paper (Figure 8), use recorded by 9 October 1910

No cards of Type 1 or 1a have been reported.

Type 2 is a possibility as it has the earliest reported date of use. It appears to have been the first of these cards to be issued based on its format (similar to the 1909 essays – see Reference 5) and the use of the pre-1910 indicium (all of the cards Types 3-6 use a different indicium which was also used for almost all of the 1d lettercards (see Reference 5 with the earliest known use of a card with this indicium was September 1910). It is a very scarce card with only about four used cards known. In addition, three of the cards are known used from Gatton which is near Toowoomba which had the largest sales of the artist cards.

Card Type 3 is a possibility but appears to have been issued too late. Many of the used cards of this type were used commercially by banks and other companies. Card Type 4 is a possibility but only one used copy is known to date in late 1910, a year after the Artist card was issued. While not much is known about card Type 5, it seems likely to be an early printing of Card Type 4 and likely to have been issued too late to be the Artist card. Card Type 6 (favoured as the artist card by many earlier authors) appears very unlikely to be the Artist card as it was no issued until late 1910 and continued on sale until 1913, the paper is much whiter than the samples provided and there is specific separate approval for the issue of this card in 1910 (see below).



Figure 4

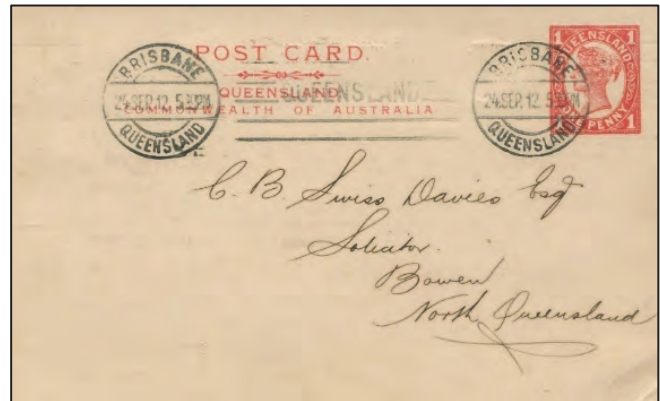


Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

1910 Postcard with 'Address Added', White Paper

Also contained in the file is a memo from the DPMG at Brisbane dated 17 September 1910 advising that *I have the honor [sic] to inform you that the Government Printer, Brisbane advises the use of white instead of buff coloured paper for postcards. I recommend accordingly – A sample is enclosed herewith*. On 17th October 1910 the A/g Secretary PMGD replied that *I am to inform you that approval has been given to the recommendation referred to in your memorandum of the 19th ultimo on the above mentioned subject C/9118/10.*

The printing of regular postal cards then commenced on a bright white paper (Figure 8, right) with use recorded by 9 October 1910. The cards remained on sale until 1913 when they were replaced by the 1d Kangaroo & Map cards although Coronation cards were issued in Queensland in 1911 as a commemorative issue (although unsold stock were later sold as 'ordinary' cards).

References

1. NAA MP341/1 1913/18731 Postcards - White Matte Cards
2. Carl Stieg *Australian Colonials* No 4 Sept 1984 reprinted in *Sydney View* No 17
3. Brian Pope *The 'Handpainting' Cards for Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania*. PSC February 2000
4. Bernard Beston *Handpainted Postal Cards: Queensland*. PSC February 2000
5. *Queensland: Queen Victoria 'Numerals In 4 Corners' Postal Cards 1908-1912* <https://postalstationeryaustralia.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/qld-pcs-1909-1912-consolidated-V3-r.pdf>

