



MONEY TALK

MODERN photocopying technology is being used by counterfeiters in Australia, but so far not to any large extent.

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Introduction

All genuine Australian notes and Papua New Guinea notes are manufactured by the Reserve Bank of Australia at its Note Printing Branch at Craigieburn, Victoria. A special paper, manufactured in England and incorporating a high quality watermark and a security thread, is used for Australian notes and further devices are included during the printing processes. These security features, combined with a high quality printing, make it difficult for the counterfeiter to produce a deceptive Australian note. Continual research aimed at improving the quality and security of the Australian note is also undertaken by the Reserve Bank of Australia.

Major counterfeiting cases (Australian Currency)

Until 1966, currency frauds in Australia had never been considered a major source of crime. Spurious notes of varying denominations had appeared at regular intervals but were never of high quality or produced in alarming quantity. They were, for the main part, rather clumsy imitations reproduced photographically and hand tinted or by means of the half-tone process. In each case it was found to be the work of individuals rather than the efforts of any organised group.

The first counterfeit of decimal currency was of \$10 Australian notes found in December, 1966. This had the effect of making law enforcement bodies in Australia aware of the threat presented to the monetary system when an organised group was able to make use of modern printing equipment and techniques. This resulted in the formation of the Currency Squad which consisted of a

joint operation by Commonwealth Police and Victoria Police. A number of people, including the printer, were arrested, convicted and sentenced to terms of imprisonment. Some of those notes are still in circulation and several have been detected this year.

On June 11, 1971, five men met in a New South Wales hotel and conspired to utter 2,791 counterfeit \$10 notes. One of the men uttered one note in Queensland and as a result he and his companions were detained and the balance of the notes were recovered.

On August 11, 1983 raids were conducted on premises in the Bendigo area of Victoria and as a result five people were arrested and charged with forging, uttering and possessing counterfeit \$50 Australian notes. A total of \$4,900,000 face value of counterfeit \$50 notes were seized. Three of the offenders were sentenced to heavy terms of imprisonment and the other two were given good behaviour bonds. None of the counterfeit notes were put into circulation.

On September 22, 1984, as a result of information gathered by the Currency Squad over several weeks, a printing works in the Melbourne suburb of Cheltenham was raided and two men arrested, charged and convicted of counterfeiting \$20 Australian notes. A total of approximately \$260,000 face value of counterfeit notes, photographic work and printing plates were seized.

In 1984, a number of counterfeit \$100 notes, all bearing the prefix letters DBR, were detected in Melbourne. As a result of publicity a brief case containing approximately \$200,000 face value of the notes was dumped in a laneway in North

Melbourne. Several hundred of the notes have been uttered, mainly in Sydney. To date only one person has been charged with possession of the notes.

Major counterfeiting cases (Foreign Currencies)

During 1984, eleven people were arrested in New South Wales and were charged with various offences involving the counterfeiting of 100 Deutschmark notes. Simultaneous raids were conducted on several premises in Sydney and Coffs Harbour, New South Wales. A total of more than 500 counterfeit notes were uttered in New South Wales and Victoria. The offenders have yet to come to trial.

Over the years the most common foreign counterfeits to come to the notice of this branch have been of United States currency. The majority of those counterfeit cases have been as a result of tourists innocently bringing the counterfeits into Australia. However in 1973/74 almost US\$13,000,000 face value of counterfeit US currency, together with printing plates and other equipment were seized in Melbourne.

In 1979/80 a group of people in Sydney were detected in possession of a new series of counterfeit US currency. Subsequent enquiries led to the printer who was charged with counterfeiting US\$100 and US\$20 notes with a face value of about US\$1,500,000. The printer had produced the notes in a shed in his back yard. The plates and other printing equipment were seized.

In December, 1983, two Russians offered a Melbourne gold buyer 1,500 'gold' Russian Roubles. The gold dealer bought 750 of the coins for \$71,000. The coins were found to be brass with a gold plating. As a result of publicity and enquiries made by the Currency Branch it was revealed that 140 of the coins had been sold to several people in Sydney.

Conclusion

Since 1984 the bulk of enquiries undertaken by the Currency Branch has involved the counterfeiting of US \$100, \$50 and \$20 notes. Counterfeiting of Australian notes during the same period has mainly been photocopy impressions of \$100 notes in black and white only which was later coloured by simple means using colour pencils or crayon.

The emergence of technology in Australia has also led to counterfeit reproduction of \$50 and \$100 banknotes using colour photocopying and also laser images, but no organised professional counterfeiting of either Australian or foreign banknotes has been detected in Australia since 1984. Samples coming to light are in the main believed to have been produced in Hong Kong, the Philippines, Thailand and South Africa.