

Colorful Southern Lights on Australia Stamps



Southern Lights, the spectacular atmospheric phenomenon that create rainbow-like light displays in the southern Tasmanian skyline at night, are being showcased on a new stamp release by Australia Post.

Australia Post Philatelic Manager, Michael Zsolt said the stamp designs included colorful photographs that capture the unique and naturally occurring auroras taken in Tasmania. “The new stamp release celebrates a true wonder of nature — Southern Lights, formally known as the Aurora Australis — which light up the night sky and are an astounding sight for those fortunate enough to witness them. We trust these stamps will appeal to those interested in natural phenomena, collectors and photographers alike.”

Auroras originate from interactions between charged particles ejected from the Sun’s atmosphere and the Earth’s magnetic field. The main discernible forms of aurora are a diffuse glow, arcs and curtains that stretch from east to west as well as rays that may run upward from the horizon. The most commonly seen colors are green, red and violet. Sometimes the lights move and change fairly quickly and sometimes they are stable for hours.

The Southern Lights are best seen from the islands of the Southern Ocean, such as Macquarie Island, as well as Antarctica. In Australia, they are occasionally observed in the southern skies of Tasmania, although they can sometimes be seen from southern locales on the mainland.

The Southern Lights stamps were designed by Hobart-based Lynda Warner and feature photographs by Tasmanians Ron Verdouw, James Garlick and Luke O’Brien.

The new stamp issue comprises two domestic base-rate (Australia 70c) stamps and two large-letter-rate (A\$1.40) stamps. The associated products are a miniature sheet, first day cover, stamp pack, maxicard set of four, booklet of 10 x 70c self-adhesive stamps, two postcards and a medallion cover. Of particular interest to collectors is the miniature sheet, which has a tête-bêche configuration of stamps.

The Southern Lights stamp issue is available from August 26, 2014 at www.auspost.com.au/stamps or contact Australia Stamp Agency in North America toll free (USA and Canada) on 1-800-443-4225 while stocks last.