

# NEW ZEALAND LIFE INSURANCE LIGHTHOUSE STAMPS

**UNIQUE** among stamps of the world, are the 56 issued by the New Zealand Government Life Insurance Office. For almost 100 years (1891 to 1989) the New Zealand Government Life Insurance Department issued their own stamps. Since the symbol of the Insurance Department was a lighthouse, **ALL** Government Life Insurance Department stamp designs have **featured lighthouses**. While the Life Insurance Department was using the stamps, no other stamps depicting lighthouses were issued by the New Zealand Post and Telegraph Department. This helped ensure the stamps were used only for their intended purpose.

In 1869 New Zealand initiated a government supported life insurance plan with insurance policies sold through post offices nationwide. All government services payed an annual amount to the Post and Telegraph Department to cover the cost of postage on their correspondence. The decision to issue the lighthouse stamps was the result of a dispute between the two Departments regarding the calculation of postage costs. All stamps were printed by the Post Department but only the Insurance Department used the lighthouse stamps. Other departments used "official" stamps or regular postage.

Initially the stamps were restricted to mail delivered in New Zealand. In 1969 this restriction was lifted to allow for mail posted overseas and was authorized until the stamps were withdrawn from use in 1989. At that point the office was privatized and became Tower Corporation. *This exhibit will show the 56 stamps in Issue order, all the varieties I have and include a representative cover from all but the 1905/06 series.*

1891 Series attached pair 2d Red-Brown on Wellington to Christchurch cover dated 17 November 1897.  
Perf 10 1893 Issue stamp with correct rate for 1 oz.

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Red border indicates material difficult to get.

Blue text explains adjoining material.

**Abbreviations:**  
WM = Watermark  
Perf = perforation



2d Red-Brown @ approx. 4X normal for detail and comparison. All 1891 issues looked like this with only the denomination and color different.

VR stands for "Victoria Regina".  
Latin: Queen Victoria