COUNTERFEIT DETECTION

Australia’s banknotes include a number of security features. To determine if a suspect banknote is a counterfeit, it is best to compare it with a banknote that is known to be genuine.

All Australian banknotes have similar security features, although their location on a particular banknote can vary. It is important to check a range of features rather than relying on only one or two.

The Reserve Bank can provide counterfeit detection brochures free of charge, for more information contact us. The Reserve Bank's Counterfeit Detection Guide, New $5 Banknote Security Feature Flyer and New $10 Banknote Security Feature Flyer are also available for download.

The main features to help determine whether a banknote is genuine are:

**Polymer substrate**
Australian banknotes are printed on polymer, a type of plastic, and they have a distinctive feel. A genuine banknote should return back to shape after it is scrunched up.

**Top-to-bottom window**
There are multiple security features in the clear top-to-bottom window. The window should be an integral part of the banknote and not an addition. Check that the security features in the window cannot be easily rubbed off.

**3D image**
Tilt the Banknote to see a three-dimensional image with a colourful border. The image will appear raised or recessed.

**Flying bird**
Tilt the banknote to see a bird move its wings and change colour in the top-to-bottom window.

**Colourful bird**
Tilt the banknote to see colours changes within a bird.

**Reversing number**
Tilt the banknote to see a number change direction within the building. The number alternately appears forwards, disappears, then appears backwards.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Call 1800 633 220 (8.30 am – 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday) Email banknotes@rba.gov.au Website banknotes.rba.gov.au
To validate the UV fluorescent features on Australia’s banknotes, it is recommended that a UV black light with a wavelength that is centred around 365nm be used, and that it is done so in low ambient lighting conditions. Many UV black lights that use Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) emit wavelengths between 395 – 400nm, which are not suitable for viewing the UV features.

**Rolling colour effect**
Tilt the banknote to see a rolling colour effect. On one side of the banknote it is a prominent patch near the top corner; on the other side it is within a bird shape.

**Image in small window**
Look for an image in a small clear window. The image is embossed and has a light and dark effect. The window should be an integral part of the banknote and not an addition.

**Intaglio print**
Feel the distinctive texture of the dark printing. The slightly raised print can be felt by running a finger across the portraits and numerals.

**Background print (offset)**
Multi-coloured and multi-directional fine-line patterns appear on each side of the banknote. This background printing should be very sharp. Check for irregularities such as less clearly defined patterns, thicker or thinner lines, or colour differences.

**Microprint**
There is microprint, or tiny, clearly defined text, in multiple locations on the banknote.

**Fluorescent ink**
A bird, the serial number and year of print fluoresce under UV light.

To validate the UV fluorescent features on Australia’s banknotes, it is recommended that a UV black light with a wavelength that is centred around 365nm be used, and that it is done so in low ambient lighting conditions. Many UV black lights that use Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) emit wavelengths between 395 – 400nm, which are not suitable for viewing the UV features.
COUNTERFEIT DETECTION

Polymer substrate
A genuine Australian banknote is printed on polymer (plastic). A suspect banknote may feel excessively thick or thin compared to a genuine banknote. It is difficult to start a tear along the edge of a genuine banknote. Try scrunching the suspect banknote – if it is polymer, it should bounce back.

Clear window
The clear window should be part of the banknote and not an addition. Check that the white image printed on the clear window cannot be easily rubbed off. There should also be embossing present in the window (except on the $5 banknote).

See-through registration device
Diamond-shaped patterns are printed inside a circle on both sides of the banknote. If you hold the banknote up to the light, the patterns should line up perfectly to form a seven-pointed star.

Shadow image
Australian banknotes have a shadow image feature, which is sometimes called a watermark. If you hold the banknote up to the light, the Australian Coat of Arms should be visible, under other printing.

Intaglio print
On a genuine banknote, the dark print is produced with a slightly raised ink called intaglio; you should be able to feel the intaglio with your finger.

Microprinting
Under a magnifying glass, tiny, well-defined words on the top left corner of the $5 banknote and near the portraits on the other banknotes will be seen.

Fluorescent ink properties
If you look at a genuine banknote under UV light, the majority of the banknote should not fluoresce (‘light up’). However, the serial numbers should fluoresce and, in addition, there should be a patch on the $5 banknote and a patch on the $20, $50 and $100 banknotes that shows the value of that banknote.

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