



Tuesday 27 May 2008

MEDIA RELEASE

PERTH MINT STRIKES 25th ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTE TO *AUSTRALIA II*

The Perth Mint has launched an Australian legal tender commemorative coin celebrating *Australia II*, which became the first challenger ever to win the America's Cup on 26 September 1983.

Struck from 1oz of 99.9% pure silver in proof quality, the coin depicts the celebrated 12-metre yacht with a coloured representation of her spinnaker bearing the famous identification number KA-6. The design, which cleverly incorporates *Australia II*'s revolutionary keel line, also includes the number '25' to mark the quarter-century that has passed since her famous victory.

The Perth Mint will release just 5,000 coins, each housed in presentation packaging with a fragment of sailcloth taken from *Australia II*'s genoa. Previously in the possession of crewman John Longley AM, it was the headsail worn by *Australia II* as she crossed the finishing line at the end of the decisive seventh race to end the United States' 132-year domination of the America's Cup.

Speaking in front of *Australia II* at the Western Australian Maritime Museum, John Longley AM said, "Although the victory was won 25 years ago, it still seems like yesterday to me and the crew. So, for The Perth Mint to honour our efforts with the release of this magnificent coin, so long after the event, it is quite humbling."

The success remains one of the most significant of all Australia's sporting triumphs. With the series tied at three-apiece after six encounters on Rhode Island Sound, off Newport, the final race was nothing less than extraordinary. US yacht *Liberty* won the start and despite conceding the lead midway up the first leg, was 57 seconds ahead at the fourth mark. Not until the ultimate spinnaker run were the challenger's hopes resurrected. Brilliant tactics by John Bertrand and his crew saw *Australia II* turn for home first. At the end of the 47-tack final upwind battle, just 41 seconds separated the yachts at the finish line, where a breathless Aussie contingent erupted in an unbridled chorus of elation.

The Perth Mint *Australia II* anniversary coin retails at \$95 and is available from the Western Australian Maritime Museum Shop, The Perth Mint Shop located at 310 Hay Street, East Perth or on FREECALL 1800 098 817, at Australia Post outlets, and leading coin distributors. Alternatively, collectors can purchase the coin via The Perth Mint's online store at www.perthmint.com.au

END

PICTURE EDITORS: Images of the 25th Anniversary of *Australia II* America's Cup Victory 1oz Silver Proof Coin can be downloaded from <http://www.perthmint.com.au/product-photography-distributors.aspx>

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Ron Currie, Sales and Marketing Director, The Perth Mint
Tel (08) 9421 7269 Mobile 0412 559 067 Email ron.currie@perthmint.com.au