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Gold panning activity during the Euroz Big Walk event in 2019.



Gold mine site visit.



Fifth stop on the Kalgoorlie Heart of Gold Discovery Trail.

GOLDEN STORIES:
Ask an adult to share your favourite gold facts and experiences on Facebook or Instagram, tag @heartofgoldaus and use #heartofgold

GOLD HEART OF GOLD

Gold is a vital thread in the fabric of Australia's past, present and future, shaping our nation, supporting our communities, keeping our economy strong and transforming our tomorrow

A truly "lucky country", Australia is a wide-open land rich in many natural resources but perhaps none has ever been so highly sought after than the glittering prize of gold.

HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Discoveries of this most precious of metals sparked some of the biggest gold rushes in history, emboldening people from all over the world to travel Down Under and try their luck in the goldfields of Oz.

In just one year in the 1850s, more than 500,000 people, nicknamed "diggers", rushed from around the world to the Australian goldfields to seek their fortunes. These new arrivals brought different skills and ideas that instantly changed the fledgling colony, reshaping and redefining our national identity.

CULTURE AND IDENTITY

These original gold diggers endured a harsh climate and difficult working conditions. Life was tough, especially in some of the most remote areas of Australia. Their shared experiences created a close bond that we now call "mateship" and today we are still recognised across the globe for our strong bonds of equality, loyalty and friendship, as well as our industrious work ethic.

Indigenous Australians were instrumental in the original gold diggers' survival. Their shelter constructions became the models to use for these early miners and there are many stories of the assistance they gave to gold miners who had become lost in the bush or had run out of food and water. In many contemporary accounts, Indigenous Australians also participated in the early goldfields' economy, selling food and clothing to diggers and providing information about tracks and water sources.

Australia's cultural identity was further shaped by the thousands of people who arrived to try their luck on the goldfields, some from countries as far flung as China and Afghanistan.

As "gold fever" hit, Victoria experienced an unprecedented population boom that crowned Melbourne as one of the world's biggest and most cosmopolitan cities in the 1880s. On the other side of the country Western Australia's 1890s gold rush unearthed the now-famous "Golden Mile" and home to Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

Thanks to the early gold rushes Australian colonies were no longer seen as only places of convict exile. They were now respectable destinations for immigrants and investment.

FUN WITH GOLD
For gold-related activities, visit goldindustrygroup.com.au/gold-activities

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Australia's gold miners use a wide variety of new technologies and innovative practices to increase productivity and eliminate health and safety risks.

Some of the technologies used include remote-controlled operating systems and autonomous machines, for example, transport vehicles such as mine site haul trucks and mine-to-port ore trains. Robotics such as drones, used for exploration and field work, help geologists to survey and map potential gold mine sites.

Australia's gold companies have also adopted other innovations to better power their mine sites and reduce their carbon footprint. This includes building renewable energy microgrid and hybrid projects that combine wind, solar and gas energy with battery storage. Many gold companies also partner with local environmental groups in their rehabilitation efforts so at the end of the gold mine's lifespan the surrounding land can be returned to its original state or better.

The companies are always on the lookout for the "next big thing", with some crowdsourcing a solution or even helping to fund smaller companies and start-ups with new ideas to fix industry problems or improve efficiencies. Some gold companies also partner with or help to sponsor major breakthroughs and advancements in medical treatments, including equipment such as new low-cost ventilators and medical research.

CONSIDERABLE CONTRIBUTION

The value of gold to Australia's national prosperity is significant.

- Australia is the world record holder for the biggest alluvial gold nugget to ever be found. "Welcome Stranger" was unearthed in central Victoria in 1869, weighing a whopping 72kg.
- Australia has the biggest share of gold resources in the world, totalling 18 per cent.
- Australia's gold industry is the second-biggest employer in the mining sector, providing jobs for more than 55,000 Australians.
- Australia is the second-biggest gold producer in the world, producing more than 325 tonnes in 2019.
- Western Australia accounted for 67 per cent of our nation's total gold production (328 tonnes) in 2019-2020.
- Gold is Australia's fourth-biggest export industry – to more than 55 countries – and generated \$23.3 billion in 2019.
- Australia's gold industry is critical to regional development and in many country towns gold mining is the main source of economic activity.

SUPPORTING REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

In times of national crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the bushfires of 2019, gold companies have backed government recovery plans, pledging their own workers to help while donating millions of dollars to fund essential services.

Because many gold mines operate near remote and regional communities, Australian gold companies know how important it is to support education and employment opportunities in these outback towns and cities. This can sometimes be in the form of student scholarships and other financial assistance for schools, clubs, and groups, or by providing new infrastructure and equipment.

Forming a strong link to community is vital because it helps to educate the next generation of gold leaders. The industry is a wide-ranging sector, operating in every State and Territory, with a variety of diverse jobs that require workers with different skills and expertise. Gold companies encourage new applicants from all backgrounds, ages, and abilities to explore a career in gold, offering training and apprenticeship programs.

Australian communities are proud of their gold heritage, often celebrating and showcasing their town's connection to our flourishing gold industry in the form of fun events and interesting tourist attractions. Some of our country's most iconic sites such as The Perth Mint, Sovereign Hill and the Australian Museum present captivating exhibitions and tours about gold.

SCHOOL SESSIONS

The Gold Industry Group's National Gold Education Program provides WA schools with access to free, interactive gold demonstrations delivered in the classroom by workers in Australia's gold industry. Schools nation-wide also have access to free, exclusive Gold Resources Kits, which contain a range of tools linked to the Australian Curriculum and big rock and gold samples from gold mines in Australia.

To sign up: education.goldindustrygroup.com.au

SOURCES/FURTHER LEARNING

- goldindustrygroup.com.au
- education.goldindustrygroup.com.au

DID YOU KNOW?

Gold is used in a wide variety of ways in our everyday lives.

- **Aerospace:** Gold is used to coat the inside of space vehicles and astronaut helmets, to protect against heat and infrared radiation.
- **Awards:** Olympic gold medals were made of solid gold until 1912. Today, Olympic gold medals are plated with just 6gm of gold.
- **Body:** Our bodies contain about 0.2mg of gold, mostly in our blood. Gold also plays a role in the health and maintenance of our joints.
- **Dentistry:** Some rappers wear gold "grills" made from 10 to 24 carat gold over their teeth as a symbol of status.
- **Electronics:** Gold is found in almost all electronic devices due to its conductive properties ensuring they work smoothly.
- **Environment:** Gold nanoparticles are used in green solutions, to help improve the breakdown of contaminants in groundwater.
- **Finance:** Gold is a store of wealth and can be traded and invested in the form of coins, bullion bars, or gold certificates.
- **Food:** Since ancient times, edible gold has been used to decorate food and drinks.
- **Jewellery:** Almost half of the world's mined gold is made into jewellery, making it the #1 use of gold.
- **Medicine:** Some pacemakers are coated in gold, making the expression "heart of gold" a reality.
- **Phones:** One tonne of mobile phones can yield more gold than one tonne of ore.
- **Transport:** Aeroplanes have a thin gold coating on their windshields to reflect infrared radiation.

Play the Discover Gold Game on the free Heart of Gold Australia app to uncover more gold facts.

EXPERIENCE GOLD

In Western Australia, visitors can learn about those wild, vibrant early days and today's modern operations through a wide variety of heritage tours and attractions across outback towns in the Goldfields region, which is home to the iconic Super Pit, Heart of Gold Discovery Trail, historic buildings, character pubs and ghost towns, Leonora and Gwalia. Discover the many ways in which our gold industry has advanced by visiting one of the world's biggest, functioning open pit gold mines – the Super Pit – and discover how today's gold miners use modern technology and innovation to produce gold in a safe and environmentally responsible way.

EXPLORE MORE

Embark on your own golden adventure from anywhere in Australia using the free Heart of Gold Australia app (download it from the App Store or Google Play).

Unearth the nation's golden secrets on the Perth and Kalgoorlie Heart of Gold Discovery Trails, and explore more than 30 interactive gold experiences, including guided and self-guided trails, tours and attractions, and virtual games.

Explore this story further with online activities at mediaeducation.com.au/schools.



Perth Heart Of Gold Discovery Trail community event. Pictures: Gold Industry Group



Tiffany Thomas Kane won a gold medal (with 6gm of gold) at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. Picture: Hagen Hopkins



The Gold Industry Group has a National Gold Education Program.