

## Hannan's from Mt Charlotte, 1894



### Description

This is a black-and-white print of Kalgoorlie taken from Mt Charlotte in 1894. The small township, at that time called Hannan's, appears in the background on a flat, arid and treeless plain. The dwellings are mostly constructed of canvas, though some are made from local timber. In the foreground is a collection of small buildings surrounding a mine head. An inscription reads 'Hannan's from Mt Charlotte 1894'. The image measures 14 cm x 19 cm.

### Educational value

- This asset shows the site of a major gold rush following the find at Coolgardie in 1892 - Paddy Hannan, Tom Flanagan and Dan Shea picked up over 3 kg of gold at this spot on one day in June 1893, the equivalent of an average year's wages at the time; the find led to the beginning of the Western Australian gold rush, with over 750 prospectors arriving on the field within a week of the find.
- It shows a view of Hannan's, later known as Kalgoorlie, in 1894 - Hannan's at that time was still little more than a camp with hessian-covered frame buildings either side of a track; this same track is now Kalgoorlie's main road, Hannan Street, lined with impressive and ornate buildings from the 'gold boom'; at the height of its gold-prospecting era in the mid to late 1890s the population grew to 30,000; today the population has again reached this size with the discovery of nickel deposits to the north of the original gold fields; the Kalgoorlie area remains one of the world's richest and most enduring gold deposits.
- It gives a view of the area named Karlkurla by its Indigenous people - the name Karlkurla is said to mean 'silky pear bush', a common plant growing in the area at the time; the area was inhabited by the Maduwangka Aboriginal people before the discovery of gold in the region changed its landscape forever; contemporaneous accounts describe Aboriginal people as begging for water and food because the gold rush had destroyed their traditional way of life; they had to



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compete with prospectors for scarce water resources and, in the early days when food shortages prevailed, prospectors shot game for food, robbing Aboriginal people of their traditional food sources; old documents sometimes include the term 'Kalgurli', which could be a derivative of Karlkurla.

- It is an image taken from Mount Charlotte, a hill on the eastern edge of Kalgoorlie - the hill was chosen as the end-point for the water supply pipeline in 1903 when the Coolgardie Water Supply Scheme, later known as the Golden Pipeline, was extended to Kalgoorlie and completed; because of its elevated position, water from a receiving tank here could run down to service the town.
- It reveals evidence of the search for gold - mounds or mullock heaps, shafts and diggings on the slope in the photograph are evidence of prospectors' searches for alluvial or 'poor man's gold' and reef gold; alluvial (surface or near-surface) nugget and speck gold mining required little equipment, as prospectors took what they could from exposed reef gold with a pick and shovel, while following the reef down needed capital; gold-bearing formations, not visible on the surface, were discovered 3 miles (4.8 km) south of Hannan's find and are known today as the Golden Mile.
- It gives an impression of the harsh conditions on the early WA gold fields; during the early 1890s gold was discovered hundreds of kilometres from the coast in WA's arid interior; within two years thousands of people descended on an area with no permanent sources of fresh water and no permanent settlements, often on foot or by camel train; scorching summers exacerbated by insufficient water, and geographic isolation coupled with poor communications were the norm; the railway did not arrive until four years after the first gold discovery, and with such long and poor supply lines the threat of famine was very real in the early days.

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**Identifier** Battye Library number 008937D

**Source** National Trust of Australia (Western Australia), <http://valuingheritage.com.au>



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