

## Paddy Hannan's Miner's Right, 1893



### Description

This is a copy of Paddy Hannan's Miner's Right, which was issued to him on 11 August 1893. The text reads 'WESTERN AUSTRALIA / 911 Fee One Pound / Yilgarn Goldfield. / MINER'S RIGHT. / Issued to Patrick Hannan / under the provisions of "The Goldfields Act 1886", to be in force until / 10th August 1894 / Date of issue 11 Aug 1893 / [Not Transferable] [signature unreadable] Warden'. The image is black and white and measures 10 cm x 16 cm.

### Educational value

- This asset is a significant original document connected with the history of Western Australia - this document was issued to Paddy Hannan, giving him Miner's Rights at what was later to be named Kalgoorlie, WA; Hannan, Dan Shea and Tom Flanagan prospected 50 km east of Coolgardie after Bayley and Ford had found over 15 kg of gold there the previous September; the three prospectors found 3 kg, which was equivalent to more than an average year's wages, in one day in June 1893; within a week of Hannan's claim being made on 17 June 1893, a gold rush began, and over 750 prospectors arrived at the site.
- It displays the earliest Miner's Right issued to Paddy Hannan still in existence - Hannan, who is credited with finding the first gold at Kalgoorlie, took out this Right while mining his reward claim when the area was still part of the Yilgarn Goldfield; this Miner's Right was presented to the Municipality of Kalgoorlie in 1899 by the then Mayor, Mr J W Fimister, and is incorporated into an elaborate illumination etched with a portrait of Paddy Hannan and showing four mining scenes; the framed illumination now hangs in the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder's Council Chambers.
- It shows the date of issue of the Miner's Right as 11 August 1893 - Hannan, Shea and Flanagan made the original gold find in June and Hannan returned to Coolgardie to claim a reward on 17 June 1893; the 1899 presentation document



**Categories:** Gold; Key Players

incorporating this Miner's Right includes the explanation that 'It will be noticed that the date of the above Miner's Right is subsequent to the discovery of gold at Kalgoorlie (Hannans). This is explained by Mr Hannan who states that the Right held by him when pegging out the reward claim was lost'; a Mines Department Register confirms that both Hannan and Flanagan held current Miner's Rights when Hannan registered the claim for their discovery 30 miles east of Coolgardie.

- It is an example of a Miner's Right, for ownership over a mining claim, that was required by law - a number of stipulations applied, including the requirement to work the claim and not leave it for any length of time; however, because of water shortages in WA's eastern gold fields the warden often declared an exemption in summer, which meant that men would not forfeit their claims if they left them unattended; they could 'retreat' and move to more well-watered places such as Southern Cross to wait for news of rain in the gold fields; as long as they returned before the end of the exemption they would not forfeit their claims.
- It has a connection to the 'White Australia Policy', which was becoming entrenched at this time - the Goldfields Act provided that any person, other than an Asiatic or African alien, could apply for a Miner's Right; the predominance of Anglo-Celtic names on the 1898 census of holders is evidence of the effectiveness of this policy; wardens were also instructed not to issue Miner's Rights to Aboriginal people, although by law an Aboriginal person who paid the fee could demand one; these government policies were based on racial grounds and the fear of alienating European miners, who claimed Aboriginal people could swamp the fields and be a threat to white labour.
- It is evidence of government control over gold-mining operations introduced to assert the rights of the Crown - according to the Western Australian Goldfields Act of 1886 prospectors were required by law to hold a current Miner's Right; they were issued for a year on payment of £1 each; WA copied this system of issuing Miner's Rights from Victoria, but thanks to the low cost of their version and poor conditions on the fields, WA did not experience the unrest that occurred in that colony; the Victorian Government had to modify its original licensing system because of an uprising when the high cost and harsh enforcement on Victorian gold fields contributed to the rebellion at the Eureka Stockade in 1854.

**Copyright** Reproduced courtesy of Battye Library

**Creator** Western Australia Government Photographer, photographer, 1893

**Identifier** Battye Library number 001281D

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



**Categories:** Gold; Key Players