

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST GOLD RUSHES

Most gold rushes in Australia happened during the mid to late 1800s. When people heard about a new gold discovery, many of them rushed to the area. They hoped to find gold and become rich. People looking for gold were known as prospectors. Those digging for gold after the prospectors discovered a deposit came to be known as 'diggers'.

Australia's first gold rushes started in 1851. On 12 February 1851, Edward Hammond Hargraves found gold in Summer

Hill Creek, near Bathurst in New South Wales. Soon, a gold rush to the area started. The area became known as Ophir.

By August 1851, about 800 people were digging for gold at Ophir. All the gold near the surface was soon found. By 1852, the number of diggers at Ophir had dwindled to 50.

▼ *Edward Hammond Hargraves was the first person to find gold in Australia.*



VICTORIA'S FIRST GOLD RUSHES

Meanwhile, gold rushes had also started in Victoria.

James Esmonds found gold near Clunes, west of Melbourne, in June 1851. The first major gold rush was to Buninyong, also west of Melbourne. James Hiscock found gold there in August 1851. Soon, the track from Geelong to Buninyong had a steady stream of diggers on the way to try their luck. Two of them, J. Regan and J. Dunlop, found gold under some wattle trees at a place that came to be known as Ballarat.

Other people found gold in areas northwards and westwards from Clunes and Buninyong. As prospectors began to find their riches in Ballarat, Bendigo, McIvor, Mount Alexander and beyond, it seemed like Victoria was one big gold rush.

▼ *Soon after James Esmonds found gold near Clunes, there was a steady stream of diggers on their way to the goldfields.*

