

Kalgoorlie

Kalgoorlie is a city located 595 kilometres east-northeast of Perth. Kalgoorlie in combination with its twin town Boulder has a population of approximately 28,300, making it the largest urban centre in the Goldfields-Esperance region and the fifth-largest in Western Australia.

The town was founded in 1893 during the Yilgarn-Goldfields gold rush, and is located close to the so-called "Golden Mile". There are 25 historical hotels and pubs in Kalgoorlie which are still operating today. There are also a couple of dedicated backpacker hostels. We can advise you on availability and make bookings. The busy times are school holidays and 3 or 4 events that are scattered throughout the year.

History

In 1893, gold prospectors Patrick (Paddy) Hannan, Tom Flanagan, and Dan O'Shea were travelling to Mt Youle when one of their horses cast a shoe. Forced to halt their journey for a short period of time, to repair the shoe, the three men soon noticed signs of gold in the rich red dirt and decided to stay. Hannan quickly filed a Reward Claim, leading to hundreds more men swarming to the isolated area in search of gold and fortune. The remote town of Kalgoorlie was born.

Following the lucky find by Hannan and his friends, the mining of gold and other precious metals such as nickel, has become a major industry in Kalgoorlie. Today approximately one-quarter of Kalgoorlie's workforce is employed within the mining industry generating a significant proportion of Kalgoorlie's income. Considered by some to be the "richest square mile of earth on the planet" the concentrated area of large gold mines surrounding the original Hannan find is often referred to as the "Golden Mile".

The prosperous Goldfields area boomed during the gold rush period, with an area population exceeding 200,000, mainly comprised of hardy prospectors. Kalgoorlie soon gained a notorious reputation for being a "wild west" secluded frontier town with bandits and prostitutes. The sudden rapid increase in population during the gold rush led to calls for a new state of Australia to be created, however the population rapidly decreased once again after the initial gold rush and these plans fell through.

In 1896, three short years after the discovery of gold, the narrow gauge Government railway line reached Kalgoorlie. Until the 1970's the main railway service from Perth was the overnight sleeper train The Westland. In 1917, a standard gauge railway line was completed, which connected Kalgoorlie to the city of Port Augusta, in South Australia, across 2,000 kilometres of desert. Consequently Kalgoorlie was linked to the rest of the eastern states of Australia.

In 1968 the railway connecting Perth (previously still a narrow gauge route) to Kalgoorlie was standardized and this completed the infamous Sydney to Perth railway, making it possible for rail travel across the

Australian continent. The Indian Pacific rail service commenced soon after and still runs today.

Sights & Attractions

Kalgoorlie is well-known for its water pipeline, designed by C. Y. O'Connor, which brings in fresh water from Mundaring Weir near Perth; its Hay Street brothels (the street itself was supposedly named after Hay Street, Perth); its two-up school; the goldfields railway loop line; the Kalgoorlie Town Hall; the Paddy Hannan statue/drinking fountain; the Super Pit; and Mt Charlotte lookout. The main street of Kalgoorlie is Hannan Street, named after the town's founder. One of the brothels also serves as a museum and is a major national attraction.

The main sight to see in Kalgoorlie has to be the Super Pit, an open-cut gold mine approximately 3.5 kilometres long, 1.5 kilometres wide and 360 metres deep. A Perth businessman first had the idea for the Super Pit, buying a number of old mine leases in order to get the land area required for the Super Pit. New digging often reveals an old mine shaft containing abandoned equipment and vehicles from the earlier mines. Operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, the Super Pit has a visitor centre and viewing platform overlook the open cut mine. The mine blasts at 1:00 pm every day, unless prevailing winds are expected to carry dust over the town. Each massive truck within the mine is capable of carrying 225 tonnes of rock and the round trip takes about 35 minutes. The mine is expected to be productive until the year 2017. At that point, the super pit will be abandoned and groundwater shall be permitted to seep in and fill it. It is estimated it will take about 50 years to fill completely.

Climate

Kalgoorlie has an annual rainfall of 250mm, which falls predominantly during the winter months of June, July and August. The average daytime temperature in winter is 17°C, though it gets as cold as 2°C at night. During summer (December through to February), Kalgoorlie, being out in the desert can get quite hot with a daytime average of 34°C, 18°C at night.

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