

Dictionary work, to be done BEFORE you read.

What is a Mining **Claim**?

What would a mining licence entitle you to do?

What does **Alluvial** mean, or you may prefer to explain what alluvium is?

Crown Land means that it belongs to the government. (No need to look up)

What role do you think a warden does?

An **institute** building is a building a big room, where people got together to dance, have meetings and watch shows. Next time you're in Gawler, find it in the main street.

What is a gold **battery**?

Draw a **Windlass**:

Draw a **Mine Shaft**:

When were the **Depression Years**?

Within a week of the first discoveries in the Barossa Goldfields, early October 1868, about 2000 people had rushed the area, a block of unsold Crown Land was proclaimed an official goldfield, and a Warden of Goldfields and police trooper were dispatched to issue gold licences and settle disputes. At its height within the first few weeks, the rush attracted up to 4000 people. The township of Barossa was soon established and consisted of a narrow lane of stores and hotels. An institute and school were added later and the township survived until the 1950's. By late 1870, only 100 miners remained working old claims, many having moved to the newly discovered fields of Mount Pleasant and Birdwood. New discoveries brought diggers back to the field at Sims Rush in 1887 and Yatta Hill Rush in 1889 near the northern end. Between 1887 and 1891, several companies were formed to explore and test the deep alluvial ground at the northern extremity of the field. The principal mines were the Barossa Enterprise and Barossa Deep Lead, but the operations were unsuccessful.

During the 1890's, companies were formed to work quartz reefs between Victoria Hill and the South Para River. In 1894, the Comet Syndicate took up a lease on the northern side of the Lady Pearce Mine and commenced tunnelling. In 1896, an American mining authority, Mr Menzies, acquired these leases and formed the Menzies Barossa gold Mining Company. A tramway linking the various tunnels and shafts to a 40 head battery was constructed and extensive machinery was installed. Menzies planned to make the mine the largest in Australia and in 1898, 100 men were employed. The first crushing of ore in early 1898 was, however, an economic disaster and operations were suspended immediately. The alluvial desposits on the field were reworked during the depression years.

Talk about what you have just read with your partner. Use these questions to generate discussion.

- Why did so many people come at first?
- Why did the companies come?
- What happened?

