



MARGARET MCATEER

GOLD

Element Symbol: **Au**

Atomic Number: **79**

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International Year of
CHEMISTRY
2011



Royal Australian Chemical Institute

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This well known and sought after metal is eternally shiny, highly malleable & ductile, inert, and typically alloyed with other metals to improve strength.

Besides jewellery, gold or gold plating is used widely from Olympic medals to dentistry, electronics, nanotechnology, as a catalyst and even as a coating in the aerospace industry.

Gold has been highly valued since earliest times and, unlike other metals, it maintains its lustre. The Egyptian artefacts made from gold, including King Tutankhamen's gold mask, will remain as shiny as the day they were sealed in the tomb.

Early chemistry is often depicted as the quest of the Alchemist to turn base metals into gold and the desire for gold led to stories such as King Midas who everything he touched turned to gold. These days we appreciate that the only way to obtain gold is to extract it from the ground, or from the jewellers.

In 1851 during the Australian gold rush it was not uncommon to find nuggets. The largest nugget ever found was called the "Welcome Stranger", found in Victoria in 1869 and weighed ~ 70 kg. The search for gold continues today on a huge scale with large amounts of earth dug up and processed in the quest for this desirable element.

Provided by the element sponsor Jason Smith

ARTISTS DESCRIPTION

This is a screen print.

I drew on the history of gold in Australia.

The Eureka Stockade was fought on the 3rd December 1854 in Ballarat, Victoria. It occurred because gold miners opposed government miners' licences; they had to be paid even if no gold was discovered. Set inside a gold ring is part of the flag from the Eureka Stockade and an image of a miner.

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