**AURORA AUSTRALIS**
- Found 1938 at Lightning Ridge, NSW.
- Considered the world’s most valuable black Opal.

**HALLEY’S COMET**
- Found 1986 at Lightning Ridge, NSW.
- Found about the time Halley’s Comet appeared in Australian skies.
- Recorded as the world’s largest uncut Opal.

**FIRE OF AUSTRALIA**
- Found 1989 in Jundah, QLD.
- One of the largest and finest quality boulder Opals ever mined.

**GALAXY Opal**
- Found 1989 in Jundah, QLD.
- One of the largest and finest quality boulder Opals ever mined.

**In Aboriginal dreamtime stories, the Opal was created when the colours of the rainbow touched the earth.**

**Australia is the only place in the world where you can find Opalised animal fossils, there are also many examples of Opalised plant fossils.**

**On 23 July 1993 – the Governor-General, the Hon Bill Hayden AC, proclaimed the Opal as Australia’s national gemstone.**

**The Australian Women’s basketball team adopted the nickname ‘The Opals’.**

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**SCIENCE KEY FACTS**

Opal has a **play-of-colour** due to millions of tiny silica spheres of different sizes.

- **Chemistry:** SiO₂·nH₂O

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**THE START OF OPAL MINING IN AUSTRALIA**

- **1890** Precious Opal mining begins in NSW.
- **1896** Precious Opal mining begins in QLD.
- **1912** Precious Opal mining begins in SA.
- **1926** Minnie Berrington was one of Australia’s first female Opal miners.

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**AUSTRALIA’S ICONIC OPALS**

- **1915** Pride of Australia AKA Red Emperor
  - Found 1915 at Lightning Ridge, NSW.
  - Shaped like Australia.
  - By 1954, it had toured at least five World Fairs as “the greatest Opal of Australia”.

- **1938** Aurora Australis
  - Found 1938 at Lightning Ridge, NSW.
  - Considered the world’s most valuable black Opal.

- **1946** Fire of Australia
  - Found 1946 in Coober Pedy, SA.
  - World’s finest uncut Opal.
  - Weighs 998g – size of two cricket balls.

- **1986** Halley’s Comet
  - Found 1986 at Lightning Ridge, NSW.
  - Found about the time Halley’s Comet appeared in Australian skies.
  - Recorded as the world’s largest uncut Opal.

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**REFERENCE:** Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet, Geoscience Australia, Opals Down Under & SA Museum.