

Was australia a working man's paradise in the 1900s? essay sample

[Parts of the World](#), [Australia](#)



During the early 1900s in Australia, life was harsh but for those who worked effectively, they became prosperous. Australia was in fact one of the most secure and economical places to find work, that is a working man's paradise.

Australian workers were, in many ways, considered much better off than their counterparts. They were given higher wages, and much more fringe benefits. Social Security legislation passed in 1905 meant that from July 1909, people aged over 65 years were given a pension of \$52 per year. New South Wales had already started paying their aged citizens a pension since Federation.

Shorter working times, workers compensation, maternity allowances, invalid pension and increased leisure time all helped create Australia as an image of a working mans paradise. Also, those who served in the Boer War were given an additional pension for their commitment.

In the 1890s, Australia experienced an economic depression, where the lower class citizens were opting to strikes for higher pay and shorter working hours. One of the most infamous strikes was made by the Queensland shearers. This strike lasted over six months and only ended after their union leader was arrested.

The end of the shearer's strike had a big impact on the working class and Australia's political system. The unions fighting for their workers eventually resolved to political methods to try and reform the system. On August 1890, the Australian Labour Force was set up. This political group was governed by the working class and for the working class.

The Australian Labour Force introduced many laws that are still currently in power today. The force introduced a law that forced employers to limit their worker's to a 48 hour week, on a principle of 8hours work, 8 hours sleep, 8 hours rest. One of the most important achievements by the government in power was the introduction of a minimum wage. In 1907, the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration administered 42 shillings a week as the minimum wage of Australia.

Australia by the 1900s was now one of the most socially progressive countries in the world. The workers were protected by the Immigration Restriction Act and a series of tariffs progressively to protect the Australian industry. In 1912, another step in the form of a maternity allowance, helped advertise Australia as a worker's paradise. The " baby bonus" was introduced and mothers were paid \$10 following the birth of each child.

The phrase " working man's paradise" was used by politicians and employer groups who wanted to attract new workers to Australia. This remark lived up to its name.

Workers in Australia generally enjoyed a better diet than their counterparts. Meat and tea were part of the daily diet in Australia, but luxuries to other workers in other countries. The climate was also better in Australia than other countries.

Female workers were considered inferior and " only good as housewives" in many countries.

However in Australia, female workers were a valuable asset to the Australian economy. They made up almost one third of the Australian workforce and more than half of them worked as domestic servants or factory workers. Women also worked in the retail, farming, nursing and education sector. Australia depended on working women as demands grew higher for products such as garment and clothes. Australia had now proved to be a “ worker’s paradise” for both men and women.

Australia, today, is now a thriving and developed country. Australia has a rich and diverse economy and is one of the leading exporters in the world. Australian workers are also one of the most highly paid in income and fringe benefits. This proves to show Australia was and will continually be “ a worker’s paradise”.