

That lachlan
macquarie was a
good governor essay



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Whether Lachlan Macquarie was a good governor of Australia is debated regularly. Many state his positive aspects in support, while others turn to his mistakes in rebuttal.

Regardless of stance, it is accepted that during his period of governorship, the colony was significantly more productive than it had ever been before that time¹. There was also little civil unrest, and it remained in a state of peace and tranquillity². To develop and maintain such conditions, the governor would have to be of a visionary nature, fair, and devoted to keeping law and order, and that is what will constitute “good” in this essay. With that in mind, it can be said that Lachlan Macquarie was a good governor, as his actions were evidence of all of those qualities. First, his extensive improvements to the colony’s infrastructure and the numerous economic reforms that he put into place lead to an era of prosperity.

He introduced coinage to the colony³ and commissioned the building of hospitals and housing. He improved the roads and bridges⁴. The impacts that these improvements had were the introduction of a stable economy and social well-being. He also established new towns, commissioned the journey over the Blue Mountains, and encouraged early exploration⁵. He did all of these actions to further the realisation of his vision.

“Lachlan Macquarie (1762-1824) has been described by historians as a visionary and realist...”⁶ His vision was shown in his program for building the public works and infrastructure that established the colony.

The exploration that he had commissioned had expanded far into the west, where new towns were built. Macquarie’s actions clearly show him as a

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visionary, and as a man possessing the qualities of a good governor. Second, Macquarie came to Australia under strict instructions. These instructions stated that he had to reduce corruption and restore law and order to colony⁷. He quickly laid down societal rules, and reduced the number of establishments licensed to sell alcohol, which was the leading cause of crime in the colony.

He also re-instated Sydney's police force in 1811. His belief was that if people lived in a positive environment, devoid of evils such as alcohol, they would become hard working and law-abiding citizens of the colony⁸. This belief reflected the reforms, and, by the end of his time as governor, the number of emancipists far out-numbered the number of convicts. This was due to the decrease in crime and the willingness of the convicts to become better citizens, which was just as Macquarie predicted. These actions were done in the way that Macquarie personally believed was the way to reduce crime in the colony, and this shows a devotion to maintaining law and order, which is a sign of a good governor.

Finally, Macquarie regarded emancipists as members of society who had the potential to become hard-working, law-abiding citizens⁹. When he arrived in Australia, he began to integrate them into society. He invited four emancipists to his residence for dinner, fostering relationships with them. ¹⁰ He later appointed ex-convict Andrew Thompson as magistrate, making him the first emancipist to achieve such a position. In his third letter back to Castlereagh, he wrote: I have, nevertheless, taken upon myself to adopt a new line of conduct, conceiving that emancipation, when united with rectitude and long tried good conduct, should lead a man back to that rank <https://assignbuster.com/that-lachlan-macquarie-was-a-good-governor-essay/>

in society which he had forfeited, and do away, in as far as the case will admit, all retrospect of former bad conduct..

. “ 11 His efforts in allowing the emancipists, who the majority of the colony deemed as of the same class as convicts, the opportunity to enjoy the same status as free settlers is an example of fairness. He did not allow the prejudice that stemmed from the exclusivists to sway his dream of a moral, equal society, and this is clear evidence of him being a fair governor. However, it must be taken into account that Macquarie did make mistakes. His attitude towards emancipists earned him many enemies amongst the exclusivists of the colony.

These enemies were often stifled by Macquarie¹², and it was their meddling that eventually led to the removal of Macquarie as governor. In addition, his attempts at educating and civilising the Aboriginal population of the area failed. It must be remembered, however, that he only made enemies of the exclusivists that wished to manipulate the larger convict and emancipist populations, and that his attempt at civilising the Aborigines was merely an effort at fostering good relations between the two ethnic groups. Whether these fallacies happened because Macquarie was incompetent or because these visionary acts were not considered properly, it must be said that Macquarie did what he did with the colony's best interests at heart.

In conclusion, it can be said that Lachlan Macquarie was a good governor of Australia. His industrious and extensive work on expanding the colony demonstrated his visionary nature, and his devotion to maintaining law and order was shown through his beliefs and his reformations. His attitude

towards emancipists displayed him as a fair governor. Although he made mistakes, they were all brought about by his attempts at bettering the colony, which was his principal aim as governor¹³. When the evidence is looked at, it must be said that Lachlan Macquarie was a good governor, as his actions are confirmation of his possession of the qualities that constitute what a good governor must be.