

Out of Luck: Poor Australians and social welfare 1788-1988 (Australian experience)

Stephen Garton



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Out of Luck: Poor Australians and social welfare 1788-1988 (Australian experience) Stephen Garton The distribution of wealth is far more equal. To begin with, there is no poor class in the colonies. Comfortable incomes are in the majority, millionaires few and far between.'

This opinion, voiced a century ago by a British journalist on a tour of the colonies, sums up the widely-held and long-lived view that Australia was a working man's paradise, an egalitarian society free of the poverty afflicting other countries.

Such a view could only persist if the poor were ignored or treated as objects of charity, targets of condemnation, or merely useful allies in political campaigns. For the realities of Australia's social structure as it developed were always very different from the claims of the proponents of the 'Australian way of life'.

Out of Luck uncovers the history of the many who have always had to struggle hard to survive in this 'lucky' country and who have seldom shared in the rewards of a well endowed society. In telling the story of the poor, Stephen Garton draws on the findings of social history, welfare history and women's history and the writings of many others to present a lively account of an important feature of Australia's history - and present, and future.



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