



Q7.

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An egalitarian society is one where all persons have equal access to opportunities and equal outcomes.

Assessing the value of Australia's relationship to this, there are many areas such as technology, discrimination and socioeconomic status which can constrain access to socially valued resources such as education, healthcare and the legal system.

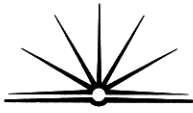
~~Take~~ Gender roles is indeed an area of inequality within Australia which has both evolved and still remains discriminatory. Take for example the workforce. In the past women were the 'homemakers', but since WWII, they have been increasingly involved in the workforce. Such laws as the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act 1972 (Cth) and the Anti-Discrimination Act 1984 (NSW), have presented them equal opportunity to the workforce, however due to the discretionary powers of the employer, women are still unable to reach equal socio-economic status in their jobs to men. The 'Glass Ceiling Effect' is still prevalent today, and laws, as much as



goodwill intended, remain un-enforceable.

Medicare is another government funded scheme which provides Australians basic medical and healthcare services. However, society is still faced with an ineffective access to this. Take for example private funded healthcare. Due to a variety of socio-economic status within Australia, the higher class can afford the luxury of better and more efficient medical services and doctors, whereas the average Australian is forced to the government funded Medicare scheme.

Access to medical essentials due to environmental circumstances is another issue which challenges access to socially valued resources. People who reside interstate have a limited ability to access satisfactory medical treatment, as well as other urbanized luxuries such as shopping centres and schools. Due to



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environmental constraints, access can also be restrained.

With respect to this education is another barrier against access to socially valued resources, also providing grounds for social barriers and discrimination. Government funded 'free education' is compulsory until 14 years and available to all persons. However the introduction of private schools has allowed people of greater socio-economic status to challenge this 'ideal', and provide a higher quality of education. This provides a barrier between Australia's social classes, and their hierarchy.

The legal system is another respective component in restraints of access to resources, and a form of discrimination. Due to the 'separation of powers' between state and federal law, state law prevails, and this can be seen to discriminate against types of people. Take for



example homosexual couples and single women. In NSW the law permits the use of IVF (In Vitro Fertilisation) for these minority groups. However it can be seen that in Victoria, these persons are restricted access to such values of a family. The Infertility Treatment Act 1999 (VIC) discriminates against these minorities, not allowing them to gain access to this resource.

The concept of socio-economic status in Australia is another ideal which prevents certain individuals and minority groups access to valuable resources. The legal system is another explicit example of this barrier. People who are of a higher social class are able to afford education about the legal system, attorneys and court fees. Whereas a person of a low socio-economic situation who is more inclined to commit a crime to survive, is unable to afford these essential resources.



Technology has enabled society, and environments of a restricted nature to access common resources. For example the internet and computers allow for a common ability to research, speak globally to people and access data. However the socio-economic barrier in Australia can sometimes prevent this. For example a person of a low income may not be able to keep to date with Australia's fast paced technologically changing society, and may not be able to afford this resource.

As Australia is not a totalitarianism society or a capitalist one, the socio-economic situation of its residents and citizens creates a barrier of equal access to essential and valued resources. These resources include medical, education, the legal system and basic luxuries, and due to influential environmental and moral factors, these resources become limited in their availability to all persons in Australia.