If you've ever wanted to leave school early and get a job, you would have loved to be around in 1914. Back then, secondary school was not compulsory. It cost a lot of money to go to secondary school so many families could not afford for their children to be educated beyond the age of 13.

But don't get too excited about jumping into a time machine—in 1914 there were no computers, no electronic games, no TVs, and certainly no Internet. Cars were only just replacing the horse and cart, telephone calls required operators to manually connect the caller and the receiver, and food was kept fresh in boxes filled with ice, rather than in refrigerators.

Signing up

Today, TV, movies and the Internet have given everyone a better sense of what war involves. People are also able to travel to other countries quite easily. But this was not the case in 1914. When World War I broke out, young, fit Australians and New Zealanders saw an opportunity for some adventure, to see other places and experience other cultures. So they signed up to fight.
Men from all backgrounds fought in World War I. They came from the city and the countryside, though country boys were more likely to join the Light Horsemen because they were often experienced horse riders. Labourers signed up, as did engineers and bankers. There were boys in their teens and men in their forties. Those who fought at Gallipoli were among the first who enlisted. Australia's official war historian, Charles Edwin Woodrow Bean, described these first volunteers as, “All the adventurous roving natures that could not stay away, whatever their duties and their ties; all those who plunged heads down into war, reckless of anything else, because it was a game to be played and they were players by nature!”