# Behind the scenes of Harry and Meghan’s 2018 royal tour: the tensions that foreshadowed Megxit



The 2018 royal tour by Prince Harry and Meghan Markle was heralded as a spectacular success, encapsulating the youthful energy that the couple brought to the British monarchy. Encompassing Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, and Tonga, the tour unveiled a couple seemingly destined to capture hearts globally. With Meghan recently revealing her first pregnancy, the media's enthusiasm labeled this event as 'Megxit's' prelude, igniting a phenomenon described as 'Meghan-mania'.

However, amidst the public adulation lay a storm brewing behind the scenes. According to royal biographer Christopher Andersen, in his book *Brothers and Wives*, tensions were beginning to fracture the couple's relationship with their aides. Andersen noted that several staff members found Meghan's behaviour challenging, describing incidents where she allegedly snapped at them during the stress of the tour. "The once-easygoing Harry was scrambling to make her happy," Andersen wrote, highlighting a dynamic that would later contribute to their departure from royal duties in 2020.

Despite the outwardly positive press coverage, which praised the pair's engagement with the public, insiders revealed a more complex reality. Tom Bower, another royal biographer, indicated that under the surface, the mood within their camp was anything but jubilant. Harry was reportedly preoccupied with social media critiques, often pressuring staff to neutralise any negative comments. This constant scrutiny further stressed an already strained partnership between the Sussexes and their support team.

Not only did Meghan reportedly struggle with the representational aspects of her role, questioning the purpose behind public engagement events, but she also expressed confusion over the expectations of being a royal. A former palace staff member revealed that she found traditional walkabouts "pointless" and was baffled about why she wasn't being compensated for these engagements. This disconnect between Meghan's aspirations and the established royal protocol bred additional resentment, as she appeared more invested in championing her causes than in understanding the monarchy's duties.

The undercurrents became more explicit as tensions escalated among the royal family itself. Allegations of Meghan's tempestuous interactions with her aides began to circulate, leading to heated exchanges between Harry and his brother William. According to Robert Lacey’s *Battle of Brothers*, William became furious upon learning of complaints concerning Meghan’s treatment of staff, seeing it as a breach of a family tradition that valued staff as kin. After receiving a concerning report on the couple's conduct, William sought immediate dialogue with Harry, who stood firmly by his wife.

This familial friction was compounded by public incidents, including Harry’s comment on a flight back from Australia where he admonished reporters for attending without invitation, further straining Sussex relations with the media. Additionally, reports surfaced of a visibly distressed staff member after a tense engagement in Fiji, showcasing the emotional toll the tour exerted on those behind the scenes.

As interest in Meghan’s conduct grew, so did the narrative of escalating discontent within the royal circle. For Meghan, the tour's success marked a bittersweet homecoming, leading her to feel sidelined upon returning to the UK. Reports of rifts between her and Kate Middleton began to emerge, amplifying the scrutiny faced by the couple.

By early 2020, the culmination of these tensions led to Harry and Meghan's announcement to step back from their royal roles. The once-celebrated tour, while initially perceived as a triumphant introduction, would retrospectively become a symbol of the chasm developing between the modern ideals that Harry and Meghan embodied and the traditional values upheld by the royal institution. As the Sussexes have since settled in Montecito, the shadows of their royal tour continue to haunt their narratives, magnifying a disconnect that neither they nor the family seem prepared to reconcile fully.

Despite the challenges faced during those formative engagements, their determined advocacy for mental health and social causes remains indelibly linked to their initial public foray into royal duties, marking an enigma that stirs both admiration and critique.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/royals/article-14706593/royal-insider-reveals-set-Harry-Meghan-path-Megxit.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.marieclaire.com/celebrity/royals/meghan-markle-australia-walkabout/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/royals/article-14706593/royal-insider-reveals-set-Harry-Meghan-path-Megxit.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/royal/1641665/prince-harry-meghan-markle-australia-tour-royal-family-tom-bower), [[3]](https://www.herfamily.ie/news/palace-source-says-reason-meghan-staff-upset-338403)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/royals/article-14706593/royal-insider-reveals-set-Harry-Meghan-path-Megxit.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.marieclaire.com/celebrity/royals/meghan-markle-australia-walkabout/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/royals/article-14706593/royal-insider-reveals-set-Harry-Meghan-path-Megxit.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/royal-family/2021/03/03/prince-harry-meghans-2018-tour-stressful-staff-left-one-aide/), [[6]](https://www.hellomagazine.com/royalty/514448/prince-harrys-unbelievably-rude-comment-to-journalists-on-a-plane-after-lengthy-tour-with-meghan-markle/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/royal/1641665/prince-harry-meghan-markle-australia-tour-royal-family-tom-bower), [[3]](https://www.herfamily.ie/news/palace-source-says-reason-meghan-staff-upset-338403)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/royals/article-14706593/royal-insider-reveals-set-Harry-Meghan-path-Megxit.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.herfamily.ie/news/palace-source-says-reason-meghan-staff-upset-338403)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/royals/article-14706593/royal-insider-reveals-set-Harry-Meghan-path-Megxit.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.hellomagazine.com/royalty/514448/prince-harrys-unbelievably-rude-comment-to-journalists-on-a-plane-after-lengthy-tour-with-meghan-markle/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/royals/article-14706593/royal-insider-reveals-set-Harry-Meghan-path-Megxit.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/royal/1641665/prince-harry-meghan-markle-australia-tour-royal-family-tom-bower> - Royal biographer Tom Bower claimed that despite the Sussexes receiving an 'ecstatic' reception during their 2018 Australia tour, the mood within their camp was 'miserable.' He alleged that Prince Harry spent each night trawling social media for negative comments, and both he and Meghan would bombard their staff with demands to remove any criticism. Bower also suggested that Harry compared Meghan to his late mother, Princess Diana, inflaming emotions within the team. The couple's behavior reportedly led to tensions with their staff during the tour.
3. <https://www.herfamily.ie/news/palace-source-says-reason-meghan-staff-upset-338403> - A royal insider revealed that Meghan Markle's frustration with losing her independence led her to snap at staff during the 2018 royal tour. The source recounted an incident in Sydney where Meghan was reportedly yelling at her hairdresser while someone else was ironing her dress. Longtime royal correspondent Duncan Larcombe noted that the couple was 'high maintenance' during the tour, with Harry being protective of Meghan and taking the lead in demanding on her behalf, which added pressure on the staff.
4. <https://www.marieclaire.com/celebrity/royals/meghan-markle-australia-walkabout/> - During the 2018 royal tour, Meghan Markle reportedly expressed confusion over the purpose of public walkabouts, questioning why she wasn't being paid for such engagements. A former palace employee recounted that Meghan found the traditional royal activities 'pointless' and didn't understand the purpose of the crowds gathering to see them. This perspective highlighted a disconnect between Meghan and the traditional representational role of the British monarchy during the tour.
5. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/royal-family/2021/03/03/prince-harry-meghans-2018-tour-stressful-staff-left-one-aide/> - The Duke and Duchess of Sussex's 2018 tour of Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, and Tonga was described as 'stressful' for staff, with at least one aide visibly upset after a discussion with Meghan. An engagement in Fiji's capital, Suva, was abruptly cut short, leading to confusion among palace aides. Reports suggested that Meghan was upset upon seeing branding for UN Women at the market, although the exact reason for her departure was unclear. The incident highlighted tensions and challenges faced by the staff during the tour.
6. <https://www.hellomagazine.com/royalty/514448/prince-harrys-unbelievably-rude-comment-to-journalists-on-a-plane-after-lengthy-tour-with-meghan-markle/> - After a 16-day tour of Australasia in 2018, Prince Harry reportedly made a 'rude' comment to journalists on the plane back to the UK. Royal correspondent Valentine Low recounted that Harry thanked the press for attending 'even though you weren't invited,' which was perceived as disrespectful by the media. This incident added to the tensions between the Sussexes and the press during the tour.
7. <https://www.vanityfair.com/style/2018/10/meghan-markle-royal-tour-australia-new-zealand-recap-speeches> - Meghan Markle's first major royal tour in 2018 showcased her commitment to causes like women's empowerment and women's suffrage. She delivered multiple public speeches, a rarity for royals, and engaged with local communities, such as baking banana bread for farmers in Australia. Despite the public success, the tour highlighted Meghan's active approach to her royal role and her focus on advocacy.