# Inside the 2018 royal tour that set Harry and Meghan on the path to Megxit



In 2018, during a whirlwind tour of Australia, Fiji, Tonga, and New Zealand, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle captured the world's attention as the vibrant, youthful representatives of the British monarchy. This tour marked a pivotal moment for the couple, serving as a launching pad for what would later be termed “Meghan-mania.” Just as Meghan announced her pregnancy, public fascination soared, with the press portraying them as a radiant couple deeply committed to royal duties. Yet, beneath the surface of this seemingly flawless display, tensions were brewing that would ultimately culminate in their dramatic departure from royal responsibilities in 2020.

Christopher Andersen, in his book *Brothers And Wives,* reveals that despite the tour's outward success, a reputation for being "high maintenance" began to take root within royal circles. Staff members reportedly expressed concerns over Meghan's occasional sharpness during interactions, while Harry, previously considered easygoing, reacted with palpable anxiety as he sought to keep her happy. Notably, an incident prior to Meghan’s Invictus Games speech illustrated this dynamic, where she was observed giving multiple commands to her hairdressers while her dress was being handled by another aide. Royal correspondent Duncan Larcombe remarked on the sudden shift in their dynamic: “All of Harry's staff have always thought he was fantastic. But the two of them together are high maintenance.”

While the couple’s engagements received adulation from the press, simmering discontent among their staff foreshadowed deeper issues. Andersen claims that leaks began to emerge from Kensington Palace, hinting at troubling accounts of Meghan's interactions with her aides, including allegations that she rang staff members at 5 a.m. Such leaks contributed to an onslaught of unfavourable press, which painted the couple in an increasingly negative light. The fallout intensified familial tensions, notably between Harry and his brother, Prince William, who reportedly reacted with outrage upon learning about the alleged mistreatment of staff. William’s insistence on treating aides with familial respect clashed with the allegations surrounding the Duke and Duchess's conduct.

This tour was laden with moments of both triumph and turmoil. Meghan’s apparent disinterest in the role expected of a royal became evident; several accounts reveal her frustration with traditional engagements. For example, she reportedly questioned the motivations behind public appearances, finding events like walkabouts perplexing and unnecessary. Insiders shared that she did not perceive the purpose of these gatherings, leaving her with a sense of being disconnected from the representational aspect of royalty. Reports also emerged emphasising that Meghan felt unrecognised in terms of her standing within the royal hierarchy, despite the public’s enthusiastic response to her presence.

The discord continued to resonate after their return home to the UK. Stories circulated regarding a rift between Harry and William, exacerbated by longstanding issues with the media and support structure surrounding them. By early 2020, amid increasing pressures, Harry and Meghan announced their decision to step back as senior royals, a move that shocked the public and sent ripples through the royal family. In subsequent interviews, Harry recounted tense exchanges with his brother, particularly during the infamous Sandringham summit, where escalating conflicts came to a head.

As the Sussexes settled in Montecito, fresh revelations about their royal tour began to surface. Historical accounts painted a picture of Meghan who, while projecting a public image of engagement, struggled with the mechanics of the royal machine. Biographer Tina Brown noted that Meghan’s experience left her feeling overwhelmed, and the realities of life as a royal contrasted sharply with her aspirations for personal fulfilment. It seems beyond the facade of glamour, there lay a complex interplay of expectations, frustrations, and ultimately, a longing for autonomy that drove the couple away from their royal duties.

In hindsight, the 2018 Australian tour was not just a high point in public perception but also a turning point, marking the beginning of the end for Harry and Meghan's official roles within the royal family. As they continue on their chosen path, the echoes of that tour resonate, reminding the public of the sudden shifts within the monarchy as it grapples with modernity in the face of tradition.

## 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), [[2]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/royal-family/2021/03/03/prince-harry-meghans-2018-tour-stressful-staff-left-one-aide/)
* 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), [[3]](https://www.marieclaire.com/celebrity/royals/meghan-markle-australia-walkabout/), [[4]](https://www.foxnews.com/entertainment/meghan-markle-difficult-duchess-complained-not-getting-paid-royal-tour-book-claims)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://www.hellomagazine.com/royalty/514448/prince-harrys-unbelievably-rude-comment-to-journalists-on-a-plane-after-lengthy-tour-with-meghan-markle/), [[6]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/royal/1641665/prince-harry-meghan-markle-australia-tour-royal-family-tom-bower)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.marieclaire.com/celebrity/royals/meghan-markle-australia-walkabout/), [[4]](https://www.foxnews.com/entertainment/meghan-markle-difficult-duchess-complained-not-getting-paid-royal-tour-book-claims), [[7]](https://www.her.ie/celeb/palace-source-says-reason-meghan-staff-upset-447241)
* Paragraph 5 – [[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.telegraph.co.uk/royal-family/2021/03/03/prince-harry-meghans-2018-tour-stressful-staff-left-one-aide/), [[3]](https://www.marieclaire.com/celebrity/royals/meghan-markle-australia-walkabout/)

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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.telegraph.co.uk/royal-family/2021/03/03/prince-harry-meghans-2018-tour-stressful-staff-left-one-aide/> - An article from The Telegraph discusses the stress experienced by staff during Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's 2018 tour of Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, and Tonga. It highlights an incident in Fiji where Meghan abruptly left a market visit, leading to confusion and concern among aides. The piece also touches upon the lack of clear communication from Kensington Palace regarding the reasons behind the Duchess's departure from the engagement.
3. <https://www.marieclaire.com/celebrity/royals/meghan-markle-australia-walkabout/> - Marie Claire reports on claims that during the 2018 royal tour, Meghan Markle expressed frustration about not being compensated for her public engagements. The article cites Valentine Low's book 'Courtiers: The Hidden Power Behind the Crown,' which alleges that Meghan questioned the purpose of walkabouts and remarked on not being paid for them. The piece also mentions her desire to bring in her own team instead of relying on traditional Buckingham Palace staff.
4. <https://www.foxnews.com/entertainment/meghan-markle-difficult-duchess-complained-not-getting-paid-royal-tour-book-claims> - Fox News covers allegations from Valentine Low's book 'Courtiers: The Hidden Power Behind the Crown,' suggesting that Meghan Markle complained about not being paid for royal engagements during the 2018 Australian tour. The article also discusses reports of Meghan being 'overly harsh' and 'cold' towards staff, as well as her clashes with staffers over accepting free gifts, highlighting tensions between the Duchess and her team.
5. <https://www.hellomagazine.com/royalty/514448/prince-harrys-unbelievably-rude-comment-to-journalists-on-a-plane-after-lengthy-tour-with-meghan-markle/> - HELLO! magazine recounts an incident during the 2018 royal tour where Prince Harry made a 'rude' comment to journalists on a plane after a 16-day tour of Australasia. The article details how Harry thanked the press for attending, despite them not being invited, and mentions that aides later informed him of the negative reaction to his remark, to which he responded sharply.
6. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/royal/1641665/prince-harry-meghan-markle-australia-tour-royal-family-tom-bower> - Express.co.uk reports on claims from royal biographer Tom Bower's book 'Revenge: Meghan, Harry and the War Between the Windsors,' stating that Prince Harry was reportedly trawling social media for negative comments during the 2018 Australian tour. The article highlights how the couple received an 'ecstatic' reception, but the mood within their camp was described as 'miserable,' with Harry seeking out criticism online.
7. <https://www.her.ie/celeb/palace-source-says-reason-meghan-staff-upset-447241> - Her.ie reports on claims that Meghan Markle's frustration with losing her independence led her to snap at staff during the 2018 royal tour. An insider described an incident in Sydney where Meghan was reportedly 'bawling at her hairdresser' while someone was ironing her dress. The article also mentions that Harry's staff found the couple to be 'high maintenance' during the tour.