

CASEY REI

2016 Europe Grand tour,
Epsom Girls Grammar
School

France, Italy, Greece

April 15 – May 6, 2016



Report to Te Atiawa O Te Waka-a-Maui Trust

Personal statement

My trip to Europe was an amazing opportunity and I am extremely thankful for the kind and generous financial support provided by Te Atiawa O Te Waka-A-Maui Trust. Without this support, the ability to get to Europe would have been that much harder.

I am proud to be able to whakapapa to an iwi that truly supports and encourages their rangatahi to succeed.

My experience in Europe

In April 2015, my school, Epsom Girls Grammar School, announced that a Grand Tour of Europe was being organised for year 12 and 13 Classical Studies students. Mum and I attended meetings to gain more information about the trip and, during those meetings, I made the decision to commit to working hard and saving money to land me a spot on the Grand Tour. Over the 2015 summer holidays I worked as many hours as I could, at my part time job as a lifeguard, to save for the trip. During the first term of school, I also worked four afternoons a week, after school, and most Saturdays and Sundays. The trip would cost \$9,000 (without spending money!) so it was quite a significant commitment.

When April 15th, 2016 finally arrived I was excited to see what the other side of the world had to offer in terms of culture, art and traditions. After our first flight we had a stopover in Shanghai, and were greeted by intense humidity and a whole new world of shopping and business. After our five hour stopover we jumped on a plane and flew 11 hours to our first European destination, Paris, France.

The weather in France was cold and a little rainy, because it was the beginning of spring, however the streets were just as crowded as they would be during summer and the weather didn't deter people from joining long queues to visit world renowned art galleries and museums.

In France, we visited several museums including the Musee D'Orsay, which used to be a WW2 train station, The Louvre, which holds the famous Mona Lisa by Leonardo Da Vinci, and The Pompidou Centre. My favourite place on the French leg of the Grand Tour was visiting Montmartre because the weather was absolutely beautiful and everywhere we turned there were endless art stores, cafes and markets which allowed us to enjoy the full French experience.

The next leg of the Grand Tour was Italy. I had always dreamed of someday visiting Italy and walking along the cobblestone streets, looking at the vibrant buildings and bartering with the locals for souvenirs. During this part of our journey, we began to learn a lot more about sculpture and architecture as we visited historical sites such as The Arena Chapel, which had frescoes painted by Giotto adorning the interior, the Galleria Accademia, that held the famous sculpture of David sculpted by Michelangelo, The Colosseum and the Roman Forum, where ancient Roman emperors such as Augustus walked, and the resurrected ruins of Pompeii.

It is hard to say what my favourite part of the Italian leg was because everything was so full of life there. Rome was one of my favourite places to visit because of the endless sculptures scattered throughout the streets, and the ancient ruins being showcased and being so easily accessible to touch and walk on. I also really enjoyed Venice; I had seen photos of this beautiful sea town and dreamed of jumping on a gondola. The weather in

Venice was very warm; all the streets looked the same so it was very easy to get lost, but we didn't complain because it meant more time to take pictures and admire the beauty of the city.

Our last leg of the Grand Tour was in Athens, Greece. We viewed sculptures such as the Kritios Boy, the famous Erectheon Karyatids and architecture such as the Parthenon and the Temple of Athena Nike. These were all works I had studied in my year 12 Classical Studies course; and had developed a strong connection with after writing about them in my NCEA level 2 exams. The Greek culture was very easy going, and my favourite part was hopping on a ferry and travelling to the Greek island of Aegina. The Greek Island was so serene, it looked like a painting. Boats moored in the port, café's lined the streets and the weather was beautiful. Aegina is supposedly where the world's best pistachios are harvested so the majority of us walked away with bags of pistachios, pistachio butter...anything pistachio we bought. The food in Greece was very different, in comparison with French and Italian food. It was a lot fresher; more exotic fruit and salads rather than breads and pasta. Greece was the shortest leg of the Tour but it was so surreal to stand in front of buildings and sculptures that I had previously studied. Seeing these in real life and not just in text books simply blew me away.

I took a lot away from the Grand Tour, it taught me to appreciate the beauty of our own culture, and the importance of preserving Maori art, language and architecture as it is a part of New Zealand's identity, just like the Parthenon for Greece preserved for centuries, the Eiffel tower preserved since 1887, and the Colosseum preserved since 70 AD. I would also like to thank my mum for helping me to go on this trip of a lifetime, it has truly been one of the best experiences of my life and I have come away with memories and friends that I will cherish forever.

Europe itinerary (April 15 – May 6, 2016)

April 15 – April 20, France

- **Paris:** Notre Dame, Pompidou, Musee d'Orsay, Louvre, Eiffel Tower,
- **Nimes:** Nimes Theatre, Pont du Gard, Orange Theatre
- **Nice:** overnight stay

April 21 – May 1, Italy

- **Venice:** Peggy Guggenheim Collection, St Mark's Cathedral, Doges Palace
- **Florence:** Arena Chapel Frescoes, Galleria Accademia, Uffizi Gallery, Duomo Cathedral, Duomo Museum
- **Pompeii/Naples/Sorrento**
- **Rome:** Hadrians Villa, Colosseum, Roman Forum, Palatine, Ara Pacis, Vatican, Spanish steps, Pantheon

May 2 – May 6, Greece

- **Athens:** National Archaeological Museum, Acropolis Museum, Acropolis (temple of Zeus), Mycenae, Napflion, Aegina, Temple of Aphaia

My academic priorities for 2016/2017

- 2016 – successfully complete NCEA Level 3 to a high level
- 2017 – to be accepted to study a conjoint degree of Law and Psychology at Auckland University

Photos of Casey Rei – Epsom Girls Grammar School Europe tour

Eiffel Tower – Paris, France



View from the top of the Eiffel Tower



Notre Dame – Paris, France



Ara Pacis – Rome, Italy



Siena Duomo – Italy



Colosseum – Rome, Italy



Trevi Fountain – Rome, Italy



Inside the Vatican – Italy





Parthenon – Athens, Greece



Lunch in Athens, Greece



Waiting for the Aegina ferry back to Athens

