

Carlah Walton

Australian Regional Director – Tourism Fiji



HSC Year: 1987

Training (eg TAFE, University etc)

NSW Police Academy
Rogen International – Public Speaking / Negotiation Skills

Jobs

Tourism Fiji
Australian Regional Director

Austrian Airlines
Deputy General Manager

Flight Centre Limited
Various management roles

NSW Police Force
Constable of Police

What are you doing now?

Currently I am responsible for all sales and marketing activities in the Australian market for Tourism Fiji. It's my job to convince as many Australians as possible that Fiji is the most amazing holiday option for families, couples, honeymooners, adventure seekers, seniors and groups of friends (like for schoolies!!)

I give media interviews in relation to all things in relation to Fiji and organise the training of the travel industry in all aspects of what's available there (hotels, tours, culture etc).

Relevant Experiences since leaving school (eg special achievements)

- I was the personal travel agent for the Australian leg for Prince Edward for the Melbourne Commonwealth Games trip.
- As a result I was invited to dinner with Prince Edward (and 19 of his closest friends!!) and a gala ball at Kensington Palace – I took my Mum who used to work at Chatham High.
- I wrote the emergency management plan for the Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport in 1995 (which has since been updated !!)

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Interesting Experiences (eg something that may be relevant to students??)

- I've had many interesting experiences from meeting a lot of celebrities due to my work with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and people I've met in the travel industry.
- My Police stories are the most interesting (apparently). I was once locked in a room with a murderer who had the victim's big toes in a plastic bag in his pocket!
- TRAVEL – It's the most rewarding experience of all. Being exposed to different cultures makes you realise how truly lucky we are to be born in this country. You find the best and the worst in people and discover that no matter where you are in the world, people are intrinsically the same.

Other comments /Memories from Chatham High Days

A lot of people these days seem to rubbish Chatham High School, but I found it a place of inspiration. If you wanted to achieve anything in sport then every teacher in the school was available to offer their help in any way they could, whether it was help in catching up after being away on a sports trip, or coaching advice. Academically if you wanted to learn the teachers matched your motivation. It was a place where kids from all over the valley congregated and were equal, and that has never left me.

I am still in contact with a lot of my teachers. They graduated from being in control, to mentors, to friends and I am immensely proud to call them such. I still have friends I made in Year 7 – it was a place which nurtured life-long friendships and encouraged you to look out for your mates.

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Tips for our students

- Whilst completing HSC: Get plenty of sleep, be nice to your Mum and Dad and stay away from the nightlife until it's over because you only get one shot at it. Start studying hard in Year 11 and by the time you get to your trials it's all just revision. Take responsibility for your learning. Your Mum and Dad, your teachers have all been to high school – this is YOUR future – grab it with both hands.
- Going to University (eg living away from home tips, university life): Keep in contact with your school friends after you leave. They keep you grounded and they understand you better than anyone. New friends are great, but old friends keep the homesick monster at bay. Learn to cook simple meals, and wash and iron – really important. Enjoy yourself and take every opportunity offered to you – it's a fantastic, big world out there.
- Getting a job (during and after university): Be confident. There are a lot of people who will give you a go if you don't have experience, but have an inquiring mind, a sense of humour and actually TALK to people (not text!!) Learn to be a good speller – there is nothing worse than a poor speller and it doesn't matter how intelligent you are, if you can't spell it doesn't look good! Turn up to an interview looking like the boss. Make sure you're well groomed, your shoes are clean and your clothes are ironed. It's not old fashioned, it's business.
- Other Tips: Take every opportunity thrown your way, both at school and in life. A lot of people attribute the great things I've seen and experienced to luck, but the old saying goes, "the harder I work, the luckier I get" and it's true. Always be nice to the people you work with, even the difficult ones because one day they could be your boss. Never leave a job and burn your bridges. Most industries are quite small and incestuous, so if you've been a bad employee word will get around. DO SOMETHING THAT EXCITES YOU – you spend a long time at work and if you hate your job it'll show in everything you do. You're the master of your destiny, so if you choose the wrong course at Uni, picked the wrong apprenticeship, took a job you hate, then CHANGE IT because you're the only one who can change your life.