

Learning & Leading Gap Year Scholars

● Nathan Carlton

Dates	September 2010 to February 2011
Locations	Australia, New Zealand
Activities	Independent travel and volunteering



What did you do on your gap experience?

A flight from London's Heathrow airport. Although I knew leaving friends and family behind would be tough I was very excited about the experiences I was about to encounter especially never having flown before this would definitely be memorable.

My gap experience began in Sydney, Australia an extremely vibrant and young city. I then travelled to New Zealand and stayed in Taupo. Here I visited the Huka Falls, the largest falls on the Waikato River. Lake Taupo was sits in a Caldera created by a super volcanic eruption roughly 26,500 years ago.

The next part of the trip took me to Rotorua where I saw the Lady Knox Geyser producing a jet of water reaching up to 20m.

The next part of the trip was to Auckland. The sky tower was an excellent vantage point to see the whole region it is 328 metres tall, probably one of the most iconic views is of Rangitoto Island A volcano which erupted roughly 600 years ago. Auckland itself is surrounded by a volcanic field the most recent eruption being Rangitoto. I spent a day climbing Rangitoto to reach its peak with the Auckland skyline in the distance. I took a ferry out to the Island which was very hot and had some tough ground where you walk over lava fields. I also saw lava tubes and caves formed by the eruption and lava flow, and I was able to walk through some of them. Also while in Auckland a visit to an aquarium brought me across a mock camp of Scott and his team who happened to be sent on an Antarctic expedition by The Royal Geographical Society. It was fascinating to read about the expedition and to discover that I had reached that point due to the same organisation. From Auckland I headed North to a town called KeriKeri. This part of the trip included a trek to the Rainbow falls and fairy pools along the KeriKeri river. One whole day was spent driving north to Cape Rienga the northern most point of New Zealand where huge natural sand dunes could be seen on the way. The rest of the trip included 6 Days touring in a campervan and then to Tauranga, Napier, The coromandel, Hastings, Masterton where I undertook voluntary work as well as to Wellington which became my final destination.