

**AIIA Silk Road Study Tour**  
October 2022 (TBC)



*Bukhara Mosque (Uzbekistan) (Source Indy Guide)*

**Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan**



**Azerbaijan**



**Dear Fellow Members,**

AIIA Victoria is conducting a three-week Study Tour to Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan. The Tour will be led by Patrick Moore, President of AIIA Victoria. We are very fortunate for the assistance of the Australian Embassy in Moscow in providing contacts in Central Asia. We have appointed Interns Dana Rice and Maya Sekine who will accompany us on the Study Tour. Both have travelled through Central Asia previously. Dana has travelled to Kazakhstan for research on Sino-Russian tensions in Central Asia and the Eurasian Economic Union. She also speaks some Russian.

*"I did not write half of what I saw, for I knew I would not be believed."*

- Marco Polo

Centuries ago, Central Asia was the vital trade link between China and Europe. Today, Central Asia's importance in global affairs is again on the rise. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has revived its focus on the ancient Silk Road as



China extends her influence further westwards. She has already invested billions of dollars in Central Asia. Much of her investment has been concentrated in the energy sector.

In February 2020, US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, met with Central Asian leaders

and visited both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. He expressed concern about China's and Russia's growing influence in the region. Likewise, Australia's DFAT is showing increased interest in Central Asia. One important area of cooperation for Australian-Central Asian diplomacy is water management. Water continues to create significant tension between upstream Central Asian countries like Tajikistan (who wish to use the water to produce hydroelectricity) and downstream ones like Uzbekistan (who need the water for crop irrigation). We will be meeting with various officials in water management.



*Nazarbayev University, Astana,  
Kazakhstan*

Our Study Tour will commence in Kazakhstan's capital, Astana (Nur- Sultan). There we will visit Nazarbayev University where Xi Jinping first announced BRI in 2013. We will meet with a number of organisations whilst in Astana as well as visiting the Korgalzhyn Nature Reserve (a UNESCO World Heritage Site).

We will then travel overnight by luxury train to Almaty. We will have meetings with the Public Policy Research Centre, Narxoz University and Kazakh- German University, all of which Dana has visited previously. We also plan to speak with various officials. These include representatives from the OECD, UNHRC, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development as well as local and foreign journalists and diplomats including our Honorary Consul in Almaty.

After three nights in Almaty we will fly to Ashgabat (the City of Marble) in the intriguing country of Turkmenistan. Various sources have ascribed Turkmenistan to banning libraries, ballet and gold teeth!

*Wedding Palace, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan  
Source: Inspirock*



We will see various sites in Turkmenistan including the Darvaza Gas Crater (aka the Gates of Hell). A fire was started there by Soviet geologists in the 1970s. No one has been able to put it out! We then cross the border into Uzbekistan where we will visit Khiva, Bukhara and

then Samarkand; all of which are UNESCO World Heritage sites.

We will then spend two nights in Tashkent prior to flying across the Caspian Sea to Baku in Azerbaijan where the Study Tour will end. In Baku, we will visit more think tanks, universities and UNESCO World Heritage sites. The walled city of Baku is itself a World Heritage site.

**Cost and Other Matters**

The Study Tour will meet in Astana on the morning of September 15th. Some members may wish to arrive early to acclimatise themselves. The Tour will end in Baku at the Farewell Dinner on Saturday October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The current estimated cost is around \$8,000 to \$8,500 per person sharing (excluding flights to and from Australia). The first three students or graduates under the age of 30 to register for the Tour will receive a \$350 discount. While the itinerary is not yet finalised, we hope to visit many of the important World Heritage and other sites outlined above.



*Itchan Kala, Khiva (Uzbekistan)*

In virtually all cases, we will stay in three and a half star hotels or better. Please register your expression of interest by sending the following details by email to Patrick Moore, [patrick@lisan.com.au](mailto:patrick@lisan.com.au).

<b>Expression of Interest — Personal Details</b>	
<b>Name(s)</b>	
<b>Email Address</b>	
<b>Phone Number</b>	

Patrick and Dana will provide several briefings about the destination countries and other matters prior to our departure.

Please note that the Study Tour will not go ahead if there is any risk of coronavirus in the countries concerned. There is no obligation on your behalf whatsoever until a deposit is paid. So please register your interest now because bookings will be taken in the order of registration.

If we are prevented from carrying out this Study Tour because of coronavirus, we will endeavor to hold one in September 2021.