



Australian Institute
of International Affairs
Victoria

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS STUDY TOUR – CANBERRA REPORT

11–16 NOVEMBER 2023



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The AIIA Victoria inaugural Young Professionals Study Tour to Canberra 2023 marked a one of a kind journey for 15 successful tertiary students and early career professionals in international affairs based in Victoria. The immersive 6-day study tour provided unique insights into the political, international, cultural, and historical landscape of Australia's capital. It presented young professionals with exclusive opportunities for insightful discussions on a range of topics with some of the country's top foreign policy experts and practitioners, and offered an unparalleled opportunity for knowledge enrichment and networking. Such exposure allowed young professionals to build meaningful connections within the foreign policy landscape, fostering relationships that can shape their careers and open doors to new opportunities.

The Young Professionals Study Tour to Canberra included full access to the AIIA National Conference, Australia's leading annual event on Australian foreign policy. The AIIA 'Navigating the Perfect Storm: Australian Foreign Policy and the Polycrisis' National Conference hosted many distinguished guests who shape the nation's policies including ministers, academics, top government officials and industry leaders. The day brought together some of Australia's most prominent international affairs experts examining new developments in international affairs and the place of Australian foreign policy within them. The 15 Study Tour participants participated in careers-focused masterclasses on Multilateral Diplomacy, International Business, Universities and Think Tanks, and International Disaster Resilience at the Australian National University Coral Bell School the day before the AIIA National Conference. Following the masterclasses, the study tour cohort was invited to attend an evening reception at the Embassy of Japan.

After the AIIA National Conference, the study tour participants had exclusive bespoke access to the AIIA National President's Breakfast with the President of Latvia (2019–2023) Dr. Egils Levits, roundtable discussions at Parliament House, ANU National Security College, the Embassy of Spain, leading consultancy firms, the Office of the Special Investigator (OSI), and a private Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery tour.

The Young Professionals Study Tour to Canberra 2023 surpassed expectations, leaving a lasting impact on the young participants. By combining educational insights with experiential learning, the tour successfully achieved its objectives, creating a foundation for continued professional growth, collaboration, and engagement amongst the next generation of leaders in international affairs.

This report encapsulates the key experiences and the impact of the tour on the participants.



STUDY TOUR PROGRAM

DAY 1: SAT 11 NOVEMBER

MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY (MoAD)

Private Tour with a focus on International Affairs



The first day commenced with a private tour at the Museum of Australian Democracy (MoAD), located at Old Parliament House. The private tour offered the young professionals a chance to explore the history and evolution of democracy in Australia. It provided insights into the development of political systems, the evolution of democratic processes, and key moments in the nation's political history.

WELCOME RECEPTION AT WALT & BURLEY

The Study Tour welcome reception was hosted at Walt & Burley's Lounge. With magnificent views of Lake Burley Griffin, the venue provided a friendly setting, adorned with delightful cheese platters, delicious snack towers, and an array of refreshing beverages. The first day activities not only served as a convivial icebreaker, but also set the tone for experiences that awaited the study tour participants in the days to come.

DAY 2: SUN 12 NOVEMBER

AIIA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

MASTERCLASSES

ANU Coral Bell School

This experience allowed the participants to attend two 90-minute careers-focused masterclasses and make meaningful connections with experts in Multilateral Diplomacy, International Business, Universities and Think Tanks, and International Disaster Resilience.



STUDY TOUR PROGRAM

EMBASSY RECEPTION

Embassy of Japan

A memorable highlight was the captivating evening reception held at the Embassy of Japan. The reception celebrated cultural exchange and featured an exquisite selection of sushi prepared by the Embassy chef.

DAY 3: MON 13 NOVEMBER

AIIA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Hotel Realm

During the study tour, the participants attended the AIIA 'Navigating the Perfect Storm: Australian Foreign Policy and the Polycrisis' National Conference.



STUDY TOUR PROGRAM

AIIA NATIONAL CONFERENCE GALA DINNER

National Arboretum

With over 44,000 rare and endangered trees across a 250-hectare site, the National Arboretum offered a great space for the AIIA National Conference Gala Dinner. The Gala Dinner speaker was Former Japanese Prime Minister ASO Taro.



DAY 4: TUE 14 NOVEMBER

AIIA NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S BREAKFAST

National Press Club



Following the AIIA National Conference, the 15 study tour participants had breakfast with the former President of Latvia (2019-2023) Dr. Egils Levits at the National Press Club. Dr. Levits discussed the pressing topic of Russian aggression from the perspective of the Baltics.

STUDY TOUR PROGRAM

CYBERCX

Roundtable Discussion and Exclusive Tour of the CyberCX Security Operations Centre

CyberCX is the leading provider of professional cyber security and cloud services across Australia and New Zealand. With a workforce of 1,300 professionals, CyberCX helps customers confidently manage cyber risk, respond to incidents and build resilience in a complex and challenging environment. The study tour participants attended an interactive roundtable discussion with the CyberCX Lead Cyber Intelligence Analyst, a Senior Manager, a Senior Consultant, and the Protected Security Operations Centre (SOC) Analyst. Relevant international affairs events were discussed through the lens of cyber security. The discussion was followed by an exclusive private tour of the CyberCX Security Operations Centre (SOC).

EMBASSY OF SPAIN

Roundtable Discussion, Embassy Tour and Lunch

The young professionals were warmly welcomed at the Embassy of Spain, where they were greeted by the Ambassador HE Ms Alicia Moral Revilla and Chargé d'affaires Ms Momán Pampillo. The visit included an engaging roundtable discussion with the Ambassador, a tour of the embassy, and a paella lunch, fostering cultural exchange and diplomatic insights.



STUDY TOUR PROGRAM

ANU NATIONAL SECURITY COLLEGE

Roundtable Discussion, Panel and Networking Reception

The day concluded with a visit to the Australian National University (ANU) National Security College. The participants had the valuable opportunity to discuss national security with Professor Rory Medcalf AM, Head of the National Security College. The discussion was followed by an insightful expert National Security Dissection Panel which enhanced their understanding of national security and fostered professional development. The visit culminated in a networking reception.

DAY 5: WED 15 NOVEMBER

DFAT CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DIPLOMACY BRANCH

Roundtable Discussion

On the fifth day of the study tour, the study tour participants actively participated in a roundtable discussion hosted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Climate and Environmental Diplomacy Branch. The participants gained firsthand knowledge of international efforts and strategies to address climate challenges.

PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Private Tour and House of Representatives Question Time

By attending a private tour, the participants discovered the must-see highlights within Parliament House from the towering flagpole to the Great Hall Tapestry, the architecture, the chambers of the Senate and House of Representatives, history and events. The tour was followed by seating during the House of Representatives Question Time and witnessing the Parliament in action.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION WITH SEN. JAMES PATERSON, SHADOW MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND CYBER SECURITY

The participants then engaged in a conversation on pertinent issues within the realm of national security and cybersecurity with Sen. James Paterson, Shadow Minister for Home Affairs and Cyber Security, at Parliament House.



STUDY TOUR PROGRAM

FEDERAL PARLIAMENTARY PRESS GALLERY

Private Tour with Stephen Dziedzic



The day ended with a Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery private tour led by Stephen Dziedzic, the ABC's Foreign Affairs (Asia Pacific) reporter, based in the Parliament House bureau. The tour offered unique insights into the workings of Australian federal politics and media relations. This immersive experience left a lasting impression on the participants, fostering a deeper appreciation for the critical role of the media.

DAY 6: THU 16 NOVEMBER

THE OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR (OSI)

Roundtable Discussion

One of the final activities of the study tour was a pivotal roundtable discussion hosted by the Office of the Special Investigator (OSI), which enhanced the participants' understanding of international legal, investigative processes, as well as of potential careers in the sector.

DFAT OFFICE OF THE PACIFIC

Roundtable Discussion

Another thought-provoking roundtable discussion that concluded the AIIA Victoria inaugural Young Professionals Study Tour to Canberra 2023 was hosted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Office of the Pacific. The visit not only provided invaluable insights into diplomatic strategies and regional cooperation, but also provided them with the opportunity to speak with DFAT Graduates.

AIIA VICTORIA YOUNG PROFESSIONALS STUDY TOUR TO CANBERRA 2023 PARTICIPANTS

Elise Almaari
Alphonsus Chan
Ben Kovacs
Alexandra Perkins
Ryan Pratt
Conrad Reynolds
Chloe Sammann
Sarah Weise

Laura Brennan
Justin Chua
Madeleine Mulligan
Subi Polat
Catherine Quaden
Sophie Romer
Eleftheria Tachmatzidou

Study Tour Leader Dr. Patricia Salas Sanchez, AIIA VIC General Manager (Operations)

TESTIMONIALS

"The [AIIA Victoria] Canberra Study Tour has been an experience of deep enrichment. Being able to engage with professionals and experts in their fields is invaluable. I have gained a wealth of knowledge about foreign affairs and career development that I will continue to foster." Madeleine Mulligan

"The Study Tour is a great opportunity for young professionals to network with various professionals in international affairs and visit government agencies and private companies. I feel that I know better about Australia's foreign policy and national security and the career opportunities that are out there. Highly recommend!" Alphonsus Chan

"I would like to thank AIIA for this extremely valuable tour. It exceeded expectations and provided a valuable opportunity to learn from industry professionals and make connections." Laura Brennan

"The study tour offered access and insight to senior experienced people as well as places which would otherwise be unavailable to students and young professionals whom are finding their way in the world, I would apply again!" Conrad Reynolds

"It was a great and engaging experience. The opportunities and visits offered were engaging and exceptional. The itinerary produced was of great quality and the professionals we got to engage with were very knowledgeable." Eleftheria Tachmatzidou



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We extend our sincere gratitude to the individuals, organisations and universities mentioned in this report whose collaboration, insights, and dedication have been invaluable in the successful execution of this project.

Many thanks are extended to Dr. Bryce Wakefield, AIIA National Executive Director and the AIIA National Office for going above and beyond, contributing exceptional efforts and opportunities for the participants.

Special thanks

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AIIA Victoria gratefully acknowledges the **Walter Mangold Trust Fund** for its ongoing support of our young members.

FUTURE STUDY TOURS

Please email admin.vic@internationalaffairs.org.au if you would like to go on the AIIA Victoria mailing list for future tours and follow us on social media.



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