

Trump's education order sparks concern in Australia



Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has faced calls to respond after the Trump administration cut funding to seven Australian universities.

The administration's move came after US agencies asked Australian researchers to justify why they should continue receiving American research grants.

The surveys they received asked several questions including whether the researchers had received funding from China, and if their university had recognised only two sexes - male and female.

The institutions which have had their funding cut are the Australian National University, Monash University, University of Technology Sydney, University of NSW, Charles Darwin University, Macquarie University and UNSW.

The funding cuts are part of Trump's 'America First' agenda.

Australian Academy of Science chief executive Anna-Maria Arabia told the Australian Financial Review the federal government had to be quicker to respond to the cuts rather than choosing to "wait and see".

"It is incumbent on the prime minister to call an emergency meeting of the National Science and Technology Council, which he chairs, compelling all ministers to the table to share intel and comprehensively assess the extent of Australia's exposure to a reduction in US R&D investment across portfolios," Ms Arabia said.

"The consequences of inaction are profound with consequences for every Australian's way of life," she said. "We don't know the full extent of the pain US measures will inflict on Australia, but we do know it's coming, and we have a chance to put in place strategies that will allow Australia to capture opportunities whilst mitigating the worst of the damage."

The cut of funding could leave a \$600 million hole in the efforts of Australian researchers, with the US the largest research partner of Australia. Last week after it was revealed the universities had been asked to justify their funding, the National Tertiary Education Union called on the government to "guarantee Australian researchers would be protected".

"The federal government must push back on the Trump administration's blatant foreign interference in our independent research in the strongest possible terms," NTEU president Alison Barnes said.

The funding cut is another step in President Trump's 'America First' agenda, with "DEI, woke gender ideology and the green new deal" listed as reasons why the US had announced a "temporary pause" in grants.

A memo sent by the US office of management and budget to an Australian university project on January 27 and retrieved by The Guardian, declared financial assistance for the researchers was a waste of taxpayer money and explained federal spending priority would go towards "the will of the American people".

"Financial assistance should be dedicated to advancing Administration priorities, focusing taxpayer dollars to advance a stronger and safer America, eliminating the financial burden of inflation for citizens, unleashing American energy and manufacturing, ending 'wokeness' and the weaponization of government, promoting efficiency in government, and Making America Healthy Again," the memo said.

"The use of Federal resources to advance Marxist equity, transgenderism, and green new deal social engineering policies is a waste of taxpayer dollars that does not improve the day-to-day lives of those we serve."

A spokesperson for Education Minister Jason Clare told SkyNews.com.au the government would continue to advocate for the US and Australia to continue to collaborate on important research.

"Australia and United States research institutions have a long history of cooperation that has helped develop new technologies and solutions to global challenges," the spokesperson said.

"Ultimately, the US will fund whatever research it wants to fund, but we will continue to make the case to the US that collaborative research benefits both US and Australia's interests."

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Sources:

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