

VOTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

TRUMP'S "AMERICA FIRST" ALREADY THREATENING AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH

Despite being just two months old, the second Donald Trump presidency is sending shockwaves through the world. Australian universities are no exception.

At least six Australian universities have already had US government funding terminated or paused. Funding suspensions affect not just USAID programs but also grants from the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health.

We're also seeing an ideological intrusion into research. Some Australian researchers collaborating with US partners have already received a 48-hour deadline to respond to a 36-question survey which amounts to blatant foreign interference. The questionnaire demands confirmation that projects align with Trump administration priorities, including those that are transphobic, climate denialist and more generally hostile to independent research.

The scale of this threat cannot be overstated. In 2024, US government funding to Australian research organisations totaled \$386 million. For context, the Australian Government provides about \$800 million annually in non-medical research funding via the Australian Research Council.

Peter Dutton's Coalition is pursuing a raft of Trump-style policies including appointing a shadow minister for government efficiency – a clear nod to the Elon Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, which has savagely cut critical education funding.

The Coalition's track record is already concerning: vetoing peer-reviewed research grants, doubling fees for humanities degrees, and systematic funding cuts that destabilised our sector. Between 2013 and 2022, Australian universities lost over tens of thousands of jobs during COVID while casualisation rates soared.

The Liberals' education spokeswoman Sarah Henderson has already vowed to seize back ministerial veto powers over research grants, which would undo a hard-won victory that the NTEU and many others across the sector fought for.

As news of the Trump research questionnaire broke, the NTEU immediately called for the Federal Labor Government to leave no stone unturned in pushing back against these ideological attacks on academic freedom.

Australian research is critical. It helps deliver solutions to pandemics,

develop cures for cancer, create innovations in science and engineering and teach the critical thinking skills society needs.

That's why it's crucial for NTEU members to make the case to all political parties that higher education policies must work towards a university sector that values independence, critical inquiry, and public good over ideological agendas.

The future of Australian research and academic freedom is too important to risk.

Has your work been affected? Share your story: [**betterunis.nteu.au/trump**](https://betterunis.nteu.au/trump)

GET INVOLVED

THIS IS A PIVOTAL ELECTION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.

We are in dire need of a government that is serious about governance reform, committed to reversing the disastrous "Job Ready Graduates" cuts, understands the value of independent public research, and manages international education fairly.

The Coalition has already signaled its intent to roll back key gains, such

as the right to disconnect, while also targeting public universities by cutting international student enrolments and politically interfering with research.

Every Coalition government has a track record of reducing investment in higher education, and it is clear they will return to these cuts if given the chance.



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