

## White House promises Trump ban won't affect Australians

Written by Michelle Grattan, Professorial Fellow, University of Canberra

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The White House has given Australia's ambassador to Washington, Joe Hockey, assurances that Australian dual citizens will not be caught by Donald Trump's suspension of entry of people from seven designated majority-Muslim countries.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull announced this shortly after receiving a call from Hockey early Tuesday morning. "He has had assurances, confirmation from the White House, that Australian passport holders – regardless of their place of birth or whether they are dual nationals, or whether they hold another passport – will remain welcome to come and go to the United States in the usual way," Turnbull told Sky.

These are similar assurances as those given to the UK and Canada. Turnbull said the confirmation had come from US National Security Adviser Michael Flynn.

Asked why he was not speaking out more forcefully about the Trump ban, which has been widely criticised internationally, Turnbull defended his cautious line by saying his job was to advance Australia's national interest and protect the interests of its citizens.

"So when I need to give frank advice, fearless advice, to the United States government, I do so privately. But I don't comment on American domestic policy publicly. My job is to get results from Australians and that's what I have done today."

Turnbull also referenced the commitment he received from Trump at the weekend to honour the resettlement deal the Australian government forged with former president Barack Obama last year.

But Turnbull did reiterate Australia's own commitment to a non-discriminatory immigration policy.

Former US ambassador to Australia Jeffrey Bleich has lashed out at the Trump 120-day ban on all refugees from entering the US as "illegal and cruel". He said it violated the most basic tenets

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of the American nation.

“Barring access to all asylum seekers not only breaks the law, it breaks faith with who we are as a people,” Bleich [said in a Facebook post](#). Bleich is now chair of the J William Fulbright Board. He was ambassador to Australia during the early part of the Obama presidency.

*Michelle Grattan does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond the academic appointment above.*

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