

What would happen if Donald Trump became Australian Prime Minister

By Robert Gottlieb, The Australian, 20 January 2017

What would happen to Australia if we elected a party headed by Donald Trump to government and Donald Trump became our prime minister?

I am going to transposing some of the US policies being advocated by Donald Trump to the Australian scene to illustrate what a profound change that would make to our nation.

The purpose of such an exercise is not to advocate such courses of action (I agree with some of the Trumpism style policies but strongly disagree with others) but rather to underline just what a fundamental change he plans for America.

Our first real indication of how far he will try to go, and at what pace, will be his inauguration speech. If he gives one of those speeches that make everyone feel good but says nothing then I think we can assume the pace of change will be much slower than markets have been anticipating.

On the other hand if he comes out fighting for his agenda then the Trump express will have left the platform full steam ahead. But that still does not mean he will be able to achieve rapid change.

Whichever approach he takes at inauguration, it will be a world-changing event. That's why I will set my alarm for around 3.30am (AEDT) tomorrow so I don't miss a moment of this historic event. You can join me or do the more sensible thing and record it.

I don't want to give myself a time deadline but I will give you my interpretation of events as soon as I can.

Certainly by 7am I will be well finished writing and will be joining my grandchildren for breakfast. What Trump is doing in the US (good or bad) is likely to be very important for them and their parents.

I invite you to make suggestions today about what you are looking for at the Trump inauguration and I will check your remarks before turning in tonight. They will be helpful in framing my comments tomorrow morning.

And then of course tomorrow I will invite you to contribute your interpretation of the inauguration speech. Without restricting you I would like to stay away from the obvious character flaws in the new president, not because they are unimportant, but I want to concentrate on policies.

And what do I think he will do? When in doubt I always look at what the markets are telling us and last night, after falling for some days, the US 10-year bond yield rose sharply as prices crashed. That signals the markets are expecting Trump will go full steam ahead with Janet Yellen at the Federal Reserve raising interest rates at a faster pace than most expected.

So here are 10 actions Donald Trump would take in Australia if he were prime minister.

* Curb migration and expel or send to Nauru Muslim migrants threatening terror attacks or acts of violence. (I mention that first because that's his most controversial action and Americans took it on board).

* Stop artificially starving Australia of gas and coal energy so that power prices are reduced for consumers and industry. Pipelines to the Northern Territory and Bowen Basin would be urgent projects. To kick-start exploration, he would begin by rewarding farmers where gas was discovered on their land, which is really easy to do despite the constitution. State governments which want higher power prices and set about inflicting the burden on their people will not find life pleasant.

* End the chronic duplication between the states and Commonwealth in health and education, which is bloating costs by untold billions.

* The huge waste savings would allow big tax cuts to stimulate the economy and match the US. He would not tell local investors that they would also bear much of the costs via lower franking rebates.

* Make independent contracting easier to arrange and allow them to access the lower corporate tax rate.

* Pick out 10 depressed areas of Australia and earmark them for industrial expansion. Kickstart this drive by taking up the German submarine offer to use the project to kick start digital manufacturing. And we get the submarines quicker and save up to \$30 billion.

* Put a 35 per cent tariff on all cars and require Ford, General Motors and Toyota to revise their plans and/or give their plants to other world motor makers who will use them. Digital manufacturing makes Australian competitive again.

* Stop Commonwealth public servants holding back state infrastructure--- infrastructure, health and education would be Commonwealth swamps that would be drained. Free medicine would disappear and users would pay more of the cost.

* Adopt a fast train project between Melbourne and Brisbane via Sydney so that people could live out of the cities and commute quickly. The big rise in regional property would help fund the project as would abandoning a second Sydney airport which would be made redundant by the train.

* Convince the US to make sensible decisions on the Joint Strike Fighter and the F22. My readers know what I mean. That's the one policy I unreservedly agree with.

I could keep going but I think you have got the message of how revolutionary Trump policies are. See you tomorrow morning and suggest you also have breakfast with your children or grandchildren.