

# More Australian educators demand reinstatement of victimised London bus driver David O'Sullivan

The Committee for Public Education  
3 June 2021

*The World Socialist Web Site has received numerous statements of support from Australian educators and members of the Committee for Public Education (CFPE) demanding David O'Sullivan's reinstatement at the Cricklewood bus garage in London.*

*Meetings of the CFPE, a rank-and-file group of teachers, education staff and academics, have unanimously adopted resolutions opposing the victimisation of O'Sullivan, who was sacked for seeking to protect the health of drivers and the public from the coronavirus pandemic.*

*Visit [here](#) to find out more and join the campaign for David O'Sullivan's reinstatement. You can donate to O'Sullivan's legal defence [here](#).*

**Patrick O'Connor, literacy specialist teacher and CFPE member, Melbourne**

I strongly support the international campaign demanding the reinstatement of David O'Sullivan and call on educators in Australia and internationally to join the fight to defeat the victimisation of this worker for his principled defence of his colleagues' safety amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Many working people in Australia have personal ties to London through family, friends, and personal travel, and have watched in horror firstly as the city emerged as one of the initial COVID-19 epicentres, and secondly as details have emerged of the government's murderous "herd immunity" policy. While Prime Minister Boris Johnson—backed by the Labour Party and the trade unions—was preparing to "let the bodies pile high in their thousands" on behalf of big business and finance capital, courageous workers including David O'Sullivan were organising rank-and-file committees to fight for safe working conditions,

including the right to stop work where these could not be ensured.

His sacking must not be allowed to stand—every worker should donate to O'Sullivan's legal fund, send a message of support, pass a workplace resolution and follow the campaign on the *World Socialist Web Site*.

**Carolyn Kennett, tertiary educator and CFPE member, Sydney**

Obsessed solely with the impact of the pandemic on the stock market, governments internationally have done nothing to contain the spread of COVID 19. The deadly back to work campaign is the stated policy of the ruling classes, who are only interested in serving the needs of the corporate and financial elite regardless of the cost to the health and lives of the working class.

Throughout the pandemic, it is the essential workers who have kept society running, feeding the population, treating the sick and providing all the logistical support necessary to meet basic human needs. These workers deserve to be protected and provided with the most advanced safety measures to prevent the spread of infection.

Instead, they have been forced back into unsafe working conditions, lied to about the risks involved and treated as expendable pawns in the grotesque drive for profit. The unions, who unfalteringly declare their supposed interest in health and safety, have worked hand in glove with governments to suppress any struggle for the right to a safe workplace.

All those who speak out against unsafe working conditions—whether in schools, factories, warehouses, hospitals or offices—must be defended against any victimisation by employers, union bureaucrats and government officials. The sacking of David O'Sullivan

must be opposed by the broadest sections of workers. This is a blatant attempt by the union, the company and the government to silence those who speak out in order to defend the safety of themselves, their co-workers and the working class in general.

**Campbell, teacher and CFPE member, Victoria**

I write to openly defend London bus driver David O'Sullivan. His sacking from his job is a conscious and further development in the suppression of any and all worker-led exposure of the dangerous conditions which they now face in their workplaces due to the COVID pandemic.

The current political environment is now highlighting the extent that the financial elite are prepared to go in defence of capitalism. The suppression of both the truth regarding COVID and the developing class struggles across the globe, has become sharper and more brutal. Workers' actions across the globe have been met with open resistance by the union bureaucracies. These betrayals by the unions are not isolated events but are developing as a conscious resistance to the growing anger by workers.

Workers across the world need to learn important, objective lessons from the current developments. Events such as David O'Sullivan's sacking by Metrolink and the open denial of support by the Unite union sharply brings into focus that the only way forward now is the development of independent rank-and-file organisations in workplaces.

**Frank, retired teacher and CFPE member, Victoria**

I am a retired teacher of 37 years' experience. I want to express my support for David's reinstatement. He has been victimised because he organised bus drivers independently of the union to oppose the murderous policy of management. They are implementing Johnson's deadly herd immunity policy with disastrous consequences for bus drivers.

The role of the union in fully supporting management highlights that the only way to ensure workers' safety is for workers to take matters into their own hands by organising rank-and-file committees.

**Will Marshall, secondary teacher and CFPE member, Melbourne**

I applaud the stand taken by bus driver David O'Sullivan and want to add my voice to those who are calling for his reinstatement. O'Sullivan has put his

colleagues and others first in fighting for their safety at the Cricklewood Garage in London. The fact that there were over 40 people who caught the virus there is testament to the validity of his concerns and shows that his actions were absolutely justified.

Essential workers have been hailed as being "heroes" at various times, but the moment a worker conscientiously insists on the implementation of safety measures, he is victimised and the real relations are revealed. And the unions have again proven themselves as worse than useless. Workers from all countries should join this fight and see it as their own.

**Chris Gordon, tertiary educator and CFPE member, Sydney**

The sacking of David O'Sullivan for defending the health of his fellow workers is a manifestation of the attitude of the ruling elite, facilitated by the unions, towards workers in the pandemic: let them die. And moreover, if workers dare to speak up and defend themselves, then use whatever means possible to victimize them and to intimidate others.

The working class in the UK has suffered terribly from the pandemic, with many thousands dead, unnecessarily. Bus drivers have been victims, dying at a rate several times higher than the general population. In fighting for proper safety precautions, O'Sullivan was insisting on his fundamental right to health. Even under bourgeois law, his demand was entirely legal, and his sacking illegal. The union's claim to have "no position" on the pandemic or on the return to work, in conditions that are manifestly unsafe, is a straight out support of the broader agenda of opening the economy and ensuring that corporations continue to rake in massive profits.

The defence of David O'Sullivan is a principled measure, and I encourage workers everywhere to wholeheartedly support his reinstatement.

*To get involved with the work of the CFPE, contact them at [cfpe.aus@gmail.com](mailto:cfpe.aus@gmail.com) or visit their Facebook page or Twitter.*



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**