Australian teachers, Committee for Public Education support October 1 school strike

Our reporters
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The Committee for Public Education (CFPE) in Australia sends international greetings and support to the October 1 school strike and protests called by parents in the UK, initiated by Lisa Diaz.

Diaz has called on parents to keep their children home to oppose Prime Minister Boris Johnson's "herd immunity" policy of deliberately infecting children. The homicidal policy of opening schools is now the program of governments internationally, policed and imposed by the teacher unions in every country. In Australia, infections in schools have continued to grow in New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria, the most populous states, despite vastly reduced student numbers, with only children of essential workers and others designated as vulnerable attending on-site.

In NSW, more than 200 schools have closed due to infections, and in Victoria more than 90 have shut, not including hundreds of childcare centres. This week, data from the NSW Health Department showed that in just seven days more than 1,200 children under 9 years old were infected along with nearly 1,000 more under 19 years. A similar process is underway in Victoria, where infections have surged to record numbers in the last week with a 50 percent increase in the past 24 hours.

Despite infections, hospitalisations and deaths, both the Berejiklian Liberal-National Coalition government and the Andrews Labor government are proceeding with a staggered reopening of schools, beginning in Victoria on October 5 and NSW on October 18. The reckless re-openings have been endorsed by the New South Wales Teachers Federation and the Victorian branch of the Australian Education Union.

The CFPE has received statements of support from educators and parents across Australia for the October 1 strike.

Renae, a secondary teacher from Adelaide: Evan Blake's interview with UK parent, Lisa Diaz, was brilliant. As teachers and school staff, we will always do everything we can to keep your children and young people safe, but governments prove time and time again that they are not listening to us. They didn't listen when we told them we didn't have enough hand sanitiser or soap when all this started, they didn't listen when we said it's impossible to socially distance in classrooms, they are not listening now to educators telling them our windows are nailed shut and our air-conditioning systems don't work. And they are not even pretending to listen when they decide to reopen schools early without consulting with school leaders and staff.

This idea that students can catch COVID on a bus but not in a classroom is crazy. The proof that students are the next victims, carriers and transmitters of COVID can be seen in the US and the UK. Educators are doing everything we can to keep our communities safe. We need a Lisa Diaz here in Australia.

Erika, a retired teacher from Sydney: I salute Lisa Diaz for her courageous stand in defence of life. The pandemic is a tragedy of Shakespearean proportions. It's obvious that this doesn't matter to the ruling elite and their mouthpieces, including the teachers' unions. The economy must open up and the most fundamental health protection measures must be compromised.

In Australia, we watch in horror the outcome of school reopenings in the northern hemisphere, knowing that this is what we're facing here over the next months. Lisa's description "dystopian" is correct. Her voice has cut through the lies and is being supported by tens of thousands of parents, teachers and students.

The October 1 strike must be the start of a fightback against the squandering of life in pursuit of corporate profits.

Susan, a primary schoolteacher from Melbourne: The conditions in UK schools are absolutely appalling. As a parent and teacher watching the situation unfold in the UK and across the world, I am deeply disgusted that governments are forcing students and teachers into unsafe schools. Lisa has stood strong against this, and I applaud her strength and fully support the school strike on October 1.

Governments in Australia are following suit, opening schools under the same conditions. This will cause hospitalisations and death. Lisa has provided an extremely important lead that needs to be seen as the beginning of a world-wide opposition to the murderous policies of governments everywhere.

Colleen, a retired worker from regional Victoria: I give my 100 percent support to Lisa Diaz and her call for a strike by parents until all students and staff are made safe with all the stated health measures. This return to school policy is murderous, purely to support the corporate world.

A two to three months world-wide eradication lockdown, with support for workers, would have been far better than 18 months of the hell we have lived through—and will live or die through because of the current "herd-immunity" policies. As a grandparent with four grandchildren who are being forced back to school in Victoria, I do not want my family members to become part of the "necessary" statistics. They are not expendable!

Ardan, a primary school teacher in Melbourne: Lisa, you are

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absolutely right and you have support from teachers in Australia. How can we be sending children back to school and into harm's way when they are currently the most vulnerable members of society? The so-called leaders need to be given a message that the health and wellbeing of students is of utmost importance!

Will, a secondary school teacher in Melbourne: Lisa's call should be the start of a coordinated international movement opposed to governments and unions to ensure the safety of the global population. To fight the virus means to fight the propaganda that is being pushed onto the population every day by the media, politicians, and unions.

For the sake of profit, children are being offered up as guinea pigs, unprotected in super-spreading conditions. In the US three children and three educators die each day due to COVID. What will be the impact of long COVID on literally millions of children? No-one can say. I fully support the parent school strike.

Campbell, a secondary teacher in regional Victoria: I congratulate and support Lisa Diaz's call for a school strike by parents on October 1, as it is a much needed, forward thinking step in the eradication of the COVID-19 pandemic.

There is no political desire or will by politicians, unions or the media to address this immense crime where a brutal experiment is being carried out on British children, and where the lives of working people are viewed as expendable. The response by parents and teachers internationally shows the urgency and growing support to address this crime.

Kaye, a secondary teacher from Sydney: I fully support the call by #SafeEDForAll parent Lisa Diaz for a school strike. It's a courageous step. The UK government's policy of forcing the reopening of schools has created a disaster and this is being mirrored all over the world.

I'm a teacher in Sydney, Australia and the government in the state of NSW just announced in the media last night that they were bringing forward the reopening of schools to October 18. This is under conditions where there were 2,000 cases of COVID reported last week in the 0-19 age group, and we are currently on school term break. What happens when students start coming back through the school gate? It's just NOT safe.

Carolyn, a university lecturer, and grandparent from Sydney: I strongly support Lisa's call for a parent and student strike and an end to the homicidal experiment of herd immunity and call on others to do the same. Our children are precious—we should be fighting to protect them. The risks to our children are enormous, and even if not fatal, the detrimental long-term impact on the health of so many children is appalling.

Instead of "learning to live with the virus" we should be uniting to demand proper public health measures (masks, lockdowns, social distancing) and global vaccination programs and be fighting for the eradication of COVID-19 worldwide.

Frank, a retired secondary teacher from Melbourne: Lisa Diaz's call for a parent strike is resonating with teachers, parents and students all over the world as governments push to reopen the economy in order to force parents back to work. Children are known spreaders of the coronavirus and as is being shown internationally die and develop severe symptoms such as impaired cognitive ability.

Lisa has shown the way forward as she has bypassed the unions who have endorsed every government lie to justify their murderous experiment with children's lives. Teachers, parents and students must unite and take matters into their own hands, form rank-and-file committees to take forward this life and death struggle.

Nicole, a retired teacher from regional New South Wales: It's time to be heard and the strike called by Lisa Diaz and parents in the UK is an effective way to be seen and heard. Kids have died, staff have died, their families have suffered loss and grief. When the information is controlled by governments and their media cronies, they can attempt to sell the lie that schools are safe.

Wendy, a casual English teacher in Sydney: I support Lisa Diaz's call for a strike. Here in Australia many parents and teachers in Sydney have great concerns about the lack of protocols to prevent the spread of COVID and more particularly the potential mutations which could more easily develop in crowded classrooms. It only takes one case to start a spread. The opening of schools seems premature and will not achieve the desired effect of eradication of the virus.

Patrick, a primary school literacy teacher in Melbourne: I strongly support the preparations for an October 1 global school strike. There is no scientific basis whatsoever for returning to face-to-face teaching in conditions where the virus is widely circulating, insufficient time and resources have been allocated to the universal delivery of vaccines, and the necessary safety investments for classrooms have not been made. The dragooning of children, teachers, and school staff back into the schools is a class-based policy, aimed at ensuring workers go back to their workplaces and allow the corporations to go back to business as usual.

The global strike initiative must be actively supported here, and developed as the opening shot of a sustained campaign against the rushed and unsafe reopening drive. As in Britain and internationally, the teachers unions in Australia are actively collaborating with the government to ensure that the schools reopen, and are suppressing opposition from school workers and families. The fight against a dangerous and premature return to face-to-face teaching means a fight to build rank-and-file safety committees in every school.

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