

Australian SEP electoral members discuss Omicron surge and Global Workers' Inquest into the COVID-19 Pandemic

Our reporters
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World Socialist Web Site reporters spoke with Socialist Equality Party (SEP) electoral members this week about the Global Workers Inquest into COVID-19.

Initiated by the WSWs on November 21, the inquest will investigate the origins, causes and consequences of the pandemic and expose the political and economic forces responsible for allowing its uncontrolled transmission.

Discovery of Omicron, just one day later, demonstrated the necessity for the inquest. “Let it rip” policies embraced by governments everywhere has seen the highly infectious variant rapidly spread throughout the world. In Australia there has been a massive surge in case numbers, with more cases in the first two weeks of 2022 than the total for the previous two years.

Electoral members speak about Omicron’s surge across the country and the importance of the Workers Inquest. They have joined the SEP to support the campaign to defeat anti-democratic electoral laws designed to silence mounting popular opposition to the major political parties.

Support the SEP’s campaign against the laws and sign up as an electoral member today.

Gina, 27, is a customer service representative and a part-time TAFE student in Sydney. “I thought the Dr Jimenez’s testimonial was an indictment of organisations like the CDC and the WHO. We put so much faith in these organisations to provide guidance and protecting us against disease, but it seems that they have no interest in eradicating COVID-19.”

“If the virus is airborne, then going into an office, or a factory, or crossing a border as a truck driver is

incredibly dangerous. We’re told that it’s too expensive to find alternatives, it’s too expensive to provide workers with adequate masks. These public health organisations are incredibly corrupt,” she said.

“There is a huge risk for governments if the truth comes out about how COVID is spread. They don’t want it to become common knowledge that the virus is airborne and is very transmissible because it would highlight the fact that a lot infrastructure would have to be updated in order for the working class to work safely. It isn’t something that these governments want to spend money on.

“The measures put in place to manage COVID are not sufficient. The WHO refused to take down their Tweet about the virus being spread via droplets. It was a good point made by Dr Jimenez about WHO singing from the rooftops that it was spread by droplets, and then whispering about it being airborne,” she stated.

“The Workers Inquest is critical because it’s clear that the governments and health organisations don’t want to provide the evidence about how it spreads, and what we need to do to keep safe. Only the WSWs is providing this information to the working class.

“We need to hold governments accountable for their murderous policy. What the government is practising feels like eugenics—the old, disabled—they don’t get to live anymore. All governments think about is how do we make this a financial gain rather than how do we protect a society from the deadly virus.

“In one Inquest testimonial, the point was made that Astra Zeneca is not an effective vaccine against the new Omicron variant, but this was all young people were offered in Australia for a long time. We were not told that it was not safe. I feel like the confusion was

purposeful. How could it not be? It makes no sense to be this confused about something and to not have a proper plan in place.”

“The WSWs has not just done one video on the virus, it has posted a multitude of interviews, with professors, epidemiologists, doctors, you name it, worldwide, to provide us with a 360-degree view. I learnt from one of the videos that we could eradicate the virus if we had a two-month lockdown. We don’t have to ‘live with the virus’ but can actually eradicate it. We have a choice,” she said.

“The number one next step to ending this pandemic is creating rank-and-file committees in workplaces. We must have safe workplaces, or we won’t return to work.

“The ruling class has made billions from the misery of workers over the past two years. We need the unification of the working class against the capitalist class that’s actively tried to kill us. Once we are unified, we can step up, take action and hold these people accountable for the people they’ve killed,” Gina said.

Anna is an aged care nurse and originally from the Philippines. She works in a privately owned nursing home where she contracted COVID-19 last year. The facility has just recorded another outbreak.

“It’s just getting worse now and we’ve had some positive cases. Three residents are positive, but I don’t know how many staff because management is not disclosing it,” she said.

“PCR test results take so long, up to five days which means some of the staff could be positive and still working. One staff member told me their test came back invalid because it was at the pathology lab for so long.

“I’m wondering why there are no restrictions. The government has removed the restrictions even though case numbers have gone so high. I don’t know what is going on. Does that mean everybody has to get it? How about the old people who are sick? Nothing has been imposed [to protect them], which is a bad thing.”

“In December, before school finished, I had two PCR tests because my daughter’s classmate’s family, the whole of them, got infected with virus. The principal asked us to have tests and said that if you’re negative, pass on the word,” she said.

Anna has had to independently source a booster shot

because it was not provided at work. As with the first and second vaccinations, the home’s staff were told if there were any boosters left over from vaccinating the residents, they would be given to staff. None eventuated.

“It is not good that the union says nothing. They are supposed to be here to help. I don’t know what they are doing.”

Mark, who is currently on the disability pension, said: “The immediate situation is that the health system has broken down. I’ve been trying to book an appointment for a booster but the whole system is chaotic.”

“The implications are that the pandemic is now an ongoing thing, which really raises the question of a solution to the problem and that what must be done to end the pandemic. I haven’t seen a crisis of these proportions before in Australia, but the government’s policy is to allow the virus to spread and for everybody to get it,” he said.

“What happens to people who get Long COVID? What will be done to care for them, which raises questions about the gradual reduction of spending on health care in general.

“The government is intent on neglecting the problems that it has created. What actual money will be going to health care? The government is not prepared to spend the many millions of dollars needed to care for those who have been infected,” he said.

“It’s not in the interest of governments and the capitalists to defend health when it impinges on their profits, which means the working class has to really think about what they’re going to do, and then act on those decisions.”

“The unions are not doing anything about this crisis. A few weeks ago, my sister-in-law took her child to hospital in Adelaide and the nurse virtually begged her to contact the government because the hospital system was collapsing. I agree with the Socialist Equality Party that the unions have been turned into a tool of the state,” Mark added.



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