

“If I hadn’t been following [Dr Berger], I would probably have let my guard down at school and caught COVID like nearly every other teacher”

Students and teacher support zero-COVID advocate Dr David Berger

Our reporters
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The WSWS continues to receive statements supporting Dr David Berger, an Australian physician and dedicated zero-COVID advocate who is being threatened with deregistration by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) over his social media condemnations of the government’s “let it rip” coronavirus policies.

Since the publication of our first article on July 8, which calls on scientists, health workers and other sections of workers to come to Dr Berger’s defence, the WSWS has published twenty articles, including compilations of statements of support from workers, students and professionals.

We urge workers, young people and professionals to speak out in defence of Dr Berger. Statements of support can be emailed here. Please indicate in the email how you would like to be identified in our next article, and if you want to include a photo, please attach one to the email.

Lucinda, a secondary teacher from Western Australia:

I’m a WA resident and teacher who has been very grateful for my state’s leadership throughout the pandemic until the past few months when they have stopped all preventative measures and proceeded with the “let it rip” strategy. This strategy might seem fine if you’re healthy, or if you’re working from home or self-employed and deal with a limited number of people, but as a teacher with serious health issues it affects me

greatly.

Teachers are in close contact with hundreds of students and staff each day. The week after the mask mandates were dropped in WA, seven of the teachers I work with caught COVID. I picked up extra work in my department, and as a result of the overwork I became unwell.

Teachers are the profession with the (equal) highest risk of Long Covid, and because I have auto-immune conditions and ME/CFS [myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome], I am at a higher risk than others.

Throughout the past few months, after reading his article in the SMH [Sydney Morning Herald] about people with underlying health conditions, I have followed Dr Berger on Twitter. He posts the latest studies and articles on COVID and helpful information on respirators and ventilation.

If I hadn’t been following him, I would probably have let my guard down at school and caught COVID like nearly every other teacher I know. Some of those teachers and many of my friends have not fully recovered. Many are still fatigued and with ongoing health problems weeks and months later.

I am disappointed that the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency would attempt to silence Dr Berger for his medically credible viewpoint which is no doubt preventing disability and death. I congratulate him for speaking out and trying to educate the general public on how they can protect themselves from COVID.

Sam Martin, a chemical engineering student at the University of Newcastle in New South Wales:

If Dr Berger's input on the pandemic had been taken on board, you would have a much better situation in Australia than what we have currently. His warnings have been entirely legitimate, including about vaccine-resistant strains developing. The censorship of dissenting voices shouldn't be done. Experts in a particular field like Dr Berger should never be silenced because otherwise you end up on a rocky path that leads to a dictatorial situation.

The government should have the responsibility of protecting and saving lives. It should exist for the sake of the people but currently it's definitely not for the people. The vast majority of the population are not having their interests expressed or valued by the government.

I was quite lucky when the pandemic first started to be in a school that had adequate facilities to address problems and we were able to operate remotely. However, there is a real divide in funding between public schools and private schools. My mother teaches in a public school and they tend to have a much larger number of students per teacher. When you end up with 30-odd students in a class it's impossible to social-distance in such an environment.

There is a massive divide in wealth currently and I've always felt it is a clear thing. There's very clearly a tale of two cities, one section of people gets treated like first-class citizens and another are treated as second-class citizens.

When you get down to it, it is morally bankrupt. Companies, in order to continue making money, are telling—or indirectly telling—people that they need to go and die, because people are catching this virus and dying. There are many people who would not have gotten this virus if they weren't forced to go back to work.

Alex, a criminology student from Queensland and supermarket worker:

I am in support of Dr David Berger. He has collaborated and published with numbers of other doctors and at no point has there been any doubts raised over his medical abilities or judgments. Censorship of his advised COVID response is unjust and only assists the expansion of misinformation.

This censorship allows for a continuation of the “let it

rip” campaign that capitalist governments all over the world are pushing to protect business interests. Without people like Dr Berger, I cannot find any reliable information that I need to protect myself or my family from infection.

Abby, a mental health nursing student at the University of Newcastle:

There should be freedom of speech. You should be able to criticise what the government does or says and Dr Berger shouldn't be cancelled out.

Trying to shut him down is awful and shouldn't be happening. Instead, what he says should be considered. For example, the identification of COVID-19 being airborne was something that took a while to happen. If he was explaining that early on, then he was doing his job.

The government hasn't been telling people that they need to wear masks. Masks should be seen as something that protect both yourself and the community. It was stupid that some people were against this, and I think the vaccine-only approach was also silly. Even when the vaccines were being rolled out, it was a too slow. Now we have new variants. People need to be warned about this.

When I was on placement in hospital, I was in the acute mental health unit. It was terrible to watch how patients were impacted and restricted in an environment due to COVID. They couldn't really do what they want to do and that impacts their quality of life and well being.

The mental health crisis has been surging and that's been terrible. I think there is something of a stigma around mental health in Australia and there isn't a lot of education around what mental health really is. There needs to be education on all these matters.



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