

Youth and students in Australia support IYSSE's call for global anti-war movement

Our reporters

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The IYSSE's ongoing campaign to build its upcoming global online webinar has been met warmly by students and youth in Australia. The webinar, "For a mass movement of youth and students to stop the war in Ukraine!", will take place at 5 a.m. (AEDT) on Sunday, December 11. IYSSE members from around the world will speak at the online event to present a revolutionary, socialist perspective to end imperialist war.

Campaigners have handed out hundreds of copies of the IYSSE statement, "A call to youth throughout the world: Build a mass movement to stop the Ukraine war!" and raised with students the threat of nuclear catastrophe driven by the breakdown of capitalism and led by US imperialism.

The IYSSE campaigned in Brisbane, capital of the northeastern state of Queensland. The IYSSE members and supporters spoke with young people at the busy West End markets, just southwest of the city's centre.

Leo, a musician and landscape worker, spoke about his opposition to the war in Ukraine. "A lot of people are suffering, when they don't need to be."

Initially, Leo thought war emerged out of "a sickness of the mind." But through discussion with IYSSE campaigners, he agreed that the causes lay in the capitalist economic system itself.

"The ruling elites are the sickest of them all," he said. "They throw people into these sorts of scenarios with little to no remorse. It's ordinary people and their families that pay the price."

The young worker said it was "not far-fetched to say the least" to think that US imperialism had goaded the Russian government into invading Ukraine. "It is the US that has been involved in and instigated all the wars over the past three decades. You would be a fool to ignore that historical context."

Leo said the IYSSE's perspective of uniting the working class internationally to stop war by overturning capitalism was "great," adding, "I'm glad to know the potential and opportunity is there for that and that you folks are giving it to people."

In the Victorian state capital, Melbourne, the IYSSE spoke with administration worker Maddy in the inner-north suburb of Brunswick.

"I'm anti-war," Maddy said. "I think wars stem from the government. The war in Ukraine could escalate, and I feel like it should be stopped before anything worse happens. We don't want World War III to take place."

In Sydney, Australia's largest city, the IYSSE campaigned in the working-class outer-western suburbs of Mount Druitt and Blacktown.

Grace, an executive member of the IYSSE club at Western Sydney University, said of the campaign: "We got a positive response. A lot of young people feel positive about socialism and fighting for their future. We need more people to join our fight and attend our meeting."

Lachlan, a retail worker, counterposed the IYSSE's perspective of "rallying people together to think of different ideas of how we can progress as a society," with the violence of war. "It's up to young people having a voice, speaking up and not being afraid to have a say on what's going on in their country."

Nuclear war is "being discussed a lot in the news," Lachlan said. "It is a scary time, unsettling. Hopefully we can come to some kind of conclusion. I've seen that things aren't progressing too well recently."

The young worker connected militarism and war to the social crisis confronting ordinary people. "It's really important for everyone to fight for their future, especially young people. ... It's beneficial for everybody, not just young people, if we make this

change and all stand together against the elite of the world. If we can rally for better benefits, a better society all round where everyone can live more comfortably, not just the one percent, that'd be a good place to be.

“Inflation’s skyrocketing recently. I’ve noticed my rent go up. Everything’s being pushed up, the cost of living, food prices, due to COVID and various reasons.” He agreed that the working class is being made to pay for the expansion in military spending. “We pay for pretty much everything.”

TAFE student Gabe spoke on the impact of war: “Young people need more opportunity to survive in life, instead of going off to fight in other countries. If you send young people to war, when they come back, it’s going to give them complexes, trauma, PTSD that can lead to suicide or drug and alcohol use or addiction.”

Gabe opposed the nationalism of the ruling elite used to justify war and supported the IYSSE’s internationalist perspective.

“It doesn’t matter if we’re black or white, we’re still the same people,” Gabe said. “Even though we’ve got different identities, different cultures, different tribes and religions, I think everyone should stop fighting against each other. If we get enough people, not just in Australia, but worldwide, and try to collect everyone from each country, we can try to fight this.”

Mohamad, is an unemployed worker who came to Australia as a child refugee from Somalia. “I have been living with these issues all my life. I grew up in war,” he noted.

“I am always against the governments because they never listen to society,” Mohamad continued. “If they want to get votes, they will come down and tell us their schemes and as soon as they get elected, they will do their own thing. ... The ones who are suffering are the masses worldwide so, of course, I am for the masses.”

Mohamad agreed with the IYSSE’s fight to build a world party of the working class. “That would dismantle the so-called world powers. Because when all the workers unite, they have no funds. We are the ones that fund them and will stop giving them the funds. We will do it ourselves and there would be a worldwide government. This would be very beneficial to the world.

“I came here as a refugee and I am still having hard

times. Governments don’t care. Nobody listens to the workers who do things unless we join up and listen to each other,” he said.

In the south-west Sydney suburb of Bankstown, high school student Ahmed spoke to the IYSSE about the ruthlessness of US imperialism in the Middle East: “The war in Iraq was all for oil, not liberation as was claimed by the US. Over a million people died just because of oil.”

The IYSSE also campaigned in the regional New South Wales city of Newcastle.

Ebony, a stay-at-home mother, told IYSSE campaigners, “I definitely support an anti-war movement. I think we need to do our part for society and to stop war. The way the world is, things aren’t going to get any better unless people like us do something.”

In a video statement, Robert, president of the IYSSE’s University of Newcastle club, elaborated on the crisis confronting youth: “This young generation has been through struggle and politicisation and radicalisation over the last two decades. It’s come of age during a period of unprecedented social inequality, ongoing environmental degradation, attacks on democratic rights and expanding imperialist wars.

“The Ukraine war has dire implications for humanity because it threatens to trigger a third world war. But this cannot be allowed to happen. The IYSSE is seeking to lead and develop a growing radicalization of workers and youth to a politically conscious international socialist movement. This means studying politics, studying history, and turning to the working class as the only social force capable of putting an end to war.”

Register here to attend the IYSSE webinar, “For a mass movement of youth and students to stop the war in Ukraine!”, on Sunday 11 December, 5:00 a.m. (AEDT).



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