

Two academics oppose censorship of IYSSE at Sydney's Macquarie University

Our reporters
2 August 2023

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) continues its campaign against the refusal of Macquarie University in Sydney to affiliate its student club.

Given that the IYSSE fulfilled all the obligations and has refuted management's lying pretext fully, this now stands exposed as blatant political censorship of a socialist and anti-war movement of students.

Sign the petition to demand that the IYSSE be affiliated, and send statements to management, copied to the IYSSE.

Below are two statements from academics, one from Mike Head, a professor at Western Sydney University and correspondent for the WSWs, and another from a researcher who has worked previously at major universities in Sydney and elsewhere.

To the Macquarie University management,

As a university educator and socialist, I condemn the Macquarie University management for continuing its blatant political censorship of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE).

You are refusing to re-affiliate the IYSSE club at the university despite proof that your decision to block the IYSSE's affiliation was based on a completely false assertion.

I add my voice to the demands being raised by students, faculty, IYSSE members and workers across Australia and internationally for you to immediately rescind this totally anti-democratic decision.

Not only does your decision ban the IYSSE; it attacks the basic democratic right of Macquarie students to access and consider the socialist and anti-war policies of the IYSSE.

Your Student Engagement, Inclusion & Belonging division's Paul McKay has again refused to affiliate the IYSSE, despite it holding a successful annual general meeting and satisfying all the other stipulated affiliation requirements.

This is still based on the fraudulent claim that the IYSSE shares "the same aim and purpose" as the Macquarie Socialists club, which is linked to the Socialist Alternative organisation.

That flies in the face of the IYSSE's detailed June 6 statement, published for an international audience on the *World Socialist Web Site*, documenting how the Macquarie Socialists and Socialist Alternative totally oppose the IYSSE's socialist and anti-war perspective.

Moreover, the Macquarie Socialists themselves have publicly rejected "the claim that we share the same aim and purpose as IYSSE."

On June 11, the IYSSE lodged a formal complaint with your complaint department against the refusal to affiliate the club, but no finding has been issued more than five weeks later.

Your ongoing refusal to affiliate the IYSSE demonstrates that this anti-democratic decision is of a political nature. It seeks to silence the only genuinely socialist and anti-war club on campus, with a long record of activity and meetings at the university.

Notably, the ban came less than two months after the IYSSE club held a strong meeting of students and staff at Macquarie, reported on the *World Socialist Web Site*, opposing the US-NATO proxy war against Russia in Ukraine.

This meeting was part of an international series conducted by the IYSSE, warning that the escalating military actions of the US and its allies threaten nothing less than a global nuclear war. At the same time, the meetings opposed entirely the nationalist policies of the Putin regime, which represents an oligarchy that came to power through the Stalinist dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The IYSSE is the only youth organisation in the world fighting for the unity of the international working class, including Russian and Ukrainian, on a socialist perspective directed against war.

The Macquarie Socialists and other pseudo-left groups have taken a diametrically opposed position. They have backed the US-NATO offensive, falsely presenting it as a war for "democracy" and "sovereignty."

The IYSSE's anti-war perspective has come under attack internationally, including by university managements,

governments and fascistic Ukrainian nationalist groups that have tried, unsuccessfully, to block, obstruct or shut down the series of IYSSE meetings.

If your decision to bar the IYSSE is not reversed, Macquarie University will be openly and publicly identified with this anti-democratic campaign, at the expense of its own students and staff.

Sincerely,
Professor Michael Head

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I write in support of the affiliation application of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) at Macquarie University. It is crystal clear that the University Administration has declined a valid application for affiliation on political grounds since the IYSSE has followed the guidelines to the letter. The action of Macquarie University management thereby constitutes an unacceptable act of political censorship that must be opposed by all people concerned with the continued erosion of democratic rights, freedom of association and freedom of speech, and freedom of the press (including the case of Julian Assange), all of which are under threat in Australia and around the world.

I say this as someone with first-hand knowledge of the military-academic-industrial nexus in Australia where I worked for more than 10 years, first as a University researcher and then in the defence sector. During my time in academia my research was entirely funded by the Cooperative Research Centres scheme, with funding provided 50-50 by Industry (notably defence) and the Australian government. I know for a fact that Australia has become a frontline partner in the US plans for war against China, i.e., World War 3, which have been in the offing since President Obama announced the Pivot to Asia in 2011 and US marines were stationed in Darwin.

University research in Australia has become increasingly hollowed out by deliberate government intervention that channels grants into so-called 'priority' areas: the most "successful" Uni labs are those that offer their services, including those of their undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as their academics, to the defence sector, which, in Australia, is predominantly represented by a small number of (mostly) US defence companies. This trend is clearly apparent in the course offerings available to students, where, for decades, commercially oriented courses have been given precedence.

Is it acceptable to censor the political voices that call for a halt in the unprecedented military build up in Australia? Is it acceptable to silently acquiesce while the capitalist class in Australia and elsewhere conspire to start a third, possibly nuclear, world war? Is the wealth of a small number of ultra-

rich capitalists and their majority owned corporations more important than the future of millions of youth in Australia and billions of youth around the world? These are some of the questions that the IYSSE is encouraging debate on, unlike so-called 'socialist' clubs whose clear pro-capitalist and pro-war orientation you dishonestly equate with that of the IYSSE.

Other important questions that are raised and dealt with by the IYSSE include the resurgence of fascism in capitalist countries throughout Europe and in the US; the Australian government's response to the covid-19 pandemic, the capitalist response to global warming; the role of unions, including student unions, in preventing and limiting strikes; and a host of other social, political, economic and scientific issues that are largely absent from public discussion but that are enormously important to young people and the working class at large.

The Macquarie University IYSSE has a right to exist. Its affiliation must be immediately granted and any students who wish to join this club must be allowed to do so unhindered and unmolested by right-wing groups that oppose them. It is the responsibility of Macquarie University to ensure that the rights of the student body as a whole are respected and not just those of students whose politics it agrees with.

We call on all readers to support the fight to defend the IYSSE at Macquarie University by sending letters of protest over the rejection of the IYSSE's affiliation to the Student Engagement, Inclusion and Belonging division of university management at studentgroups@mq.edu.au, and iysse.macquarie@gmail.com.

Get in touch with the IYSSE to find out how you can be involved:

Email: iysseaus@gmail.com

Facebook: facebook.com/IYSSEaustralia

Twitter: @IysseA

Instagram: @iysse.aus



To contact the WWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wws.org/contact