

Australian workers protest against Israel's genocide in Gaza

Our reporters
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With Israel's imperialist-backed ethnic cleansing operation against Palestinians well into its seventh month, weekly protests involving thousands continue in Australia's major cities.

Workers and young people at the demonstrations are voicing their opposition not only to the Netanyahu regime's genocide and growing military assault on the broader Middle East, but to the ongoing support afforded to these war crimes by the federal Labor government.

Reporters from the *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to several of those who attended the Melbourne rally last weekend.

Michelle, an education support worker, said "I'm just disappointed that our government is supporting this. I can't make sense out of it. Every time something escalates, [the government] just follows America." She thought the US support for Israel's genocide was about "control, money and power."

Michelle pointed to the complicity of the corporate media: "We've been told a lot of lies. We're not told the full story on the news. They just keep pointing to October 7, and that it all started from there, and I don't believe it. I've seen a lot of information and watched a lot of videos—I'm more educated about it now."

She was concerned about escalating conflict in the Middle East, and the threat of a broader war: "I've got one little grandchild and I just think it is going to get messy and awful. We can look over there and see that we're not untouchable either. One day it could be knocking on our door."

Jasmin, a 25-year-old dentist, said the "doxxing of health workers criticising the attack on Gaza is inhumane and cruel. Healthcare workers should be able to give voice to the victims affected by the war."

She said the conditions in Gaza were terrible and that

"health workers in Gaza can see first-hand the effect on children, the elderly and pregnant women. This is collective punishment.

"The attack on health workers is to weaken Palestinians as a whole so they can't resist and fight back. They are targeting vulnerable communities and health care workers intentionally."

Steve, a 69-year-old retired IT worker, had been to about seven of the Sunday rallies. He said the suppression of protests in the US and Berlin "shows the degree to which support for Palestinians is growing. If you look at what Biden is doing, he is having to actually notice what is happening in terms of support for Palestinians. The fact that they are shutting down protests is illustrative of them trying to protect their position."

Speaking about Labor's backing of the genocide, Steve said, "The issue is the support for the US. It goes back to AUKUS, and what that process is doing... reinforcing that connection between the USA and Australia. When you look at Gaza and all the other things going on, a lot of it is driven by the relationship with the US.

"I don't think the rationale [of US imperialism] is 'we want a war,' what I do believe is that their rationale is 'we have to maintain US supremacy throughout the world,' and they will put whatever effort they can into maintaining that position."

Eva, an architect, came to the protest to oppose "the injustice that is currently happening in Palestine." She was also concerned about the threat of broader conflict, saying Israel's bombing of Iran was "highly inflammatory."

Eva said the Labor government had been "really disappointing. I have written to my [Labor] MP and received no response. I don't think Muslims like

myself will be voting for Labor again. We're just looking for what our other options are."

Speaking on the significance of US student protests against the genocide, and their repression by police, she said: "It is really concerning, the irony of it being that there is the First Amendment right to free speech. I think [US authorities] are scared and they are trying to quell it as much as possible. I think as a people it is our responsibility to work even harder to make our voices even louder."



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