

Australian health workers denounce Labor's backing for US-Israeli war against Iran

Our reporter
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The US-Israeli onslaught against Iran, backed by Anthony Albanese's Labor government, has provoked deep anger among workers across Australia, including in the health sector. Health workers who spoke with the World Socialist Web Site this week expressed outrage over the criminal assault and the complicity of the government and trade union apparatus.

The Labor government was among the first internationally to endorse the attack and has integrated Australia directly into it through the deployment of weaponry, personnel and intelligence assets. None of the major unions, including those covering health workers, have condemned the war or called for industrial action to stop the flow of military materiel.

The WSWS urges nurses, doctors and other health workers send statements of opposition to sephw.aus@gmail.com for publication.

Gerry, a mental health worker, said he was “completely shocked” by Trump’s decision to wage war on Iran.

“Israel has completely devastated Gaza and killed tens of thousands of people—they’ve committed crimes on an industrial scale. Within hours of the attack, the Albanese Labor government declared its support. We’re not independent, we’re part of that American war machine,” he said.

Gerry denounced the war as “criminal” and said: “You can’t just attack a boat, kill people and leave others to drown. That’s a war crime. They had Australian personnel on the submarine. Targeting elected leaders is also a criminal act. The Albanese government doesn’t represent my views or the views of most working people. Nobody supports Donald Trump and nobody supports war, especially an illegal one.”

He drew a connection between the war and the social crisis confronting workers. “The people running society

are completely disconnected from working people. This war serves their interests, not ours. Like the Iraq War, it’s about oil and resources. Workers are barely surviving as it is.

“The government is starving social services—cutting the NDIS, underfunding aged care and forcing user-pays systems. In my workplace we’re using outdated, sometimes broken equipment. Meanwhile billions go to the military. I’ve heard nothing from the unions—no statements, no leaflets, nothing opposing the war.”

On what should be done, Gerry said: “Don’t send your children to war. Don’t participate in it. War requires mass participation—they need us to send our children, to build weapons, to supply the army. If the working class refuses, it stops.”

Paula, a nurse from Melbourne, first learned of the attack on Iran through social media.

“My first reaction was, ‘What is the world doing?’ Then I saw Albanese had declared support. It was incredibly disappointing. Labor says one thing and does another,” she said.

“We’re repeating history. The US removes one leader, installs another, then later decides that leader must also go. It’s a vicious cycle driven by powerful men playing dangerous games that devastate ordinary people.”

Paula rejected the claim that Iran’s nuclear program justified the attack. “That’s just the pretext. Israel has nuclear weapons, as do the US and others. This goes back to the 1950s when Iran tried to nationalise its oil. The West made sure it retained control and profits, keeping Iran subordinate. The US has opposed Iran’s independence ever since the 1979 revolution and has repeatedly sought regime change, always claiming it’s about getting rid of a ‘bad leader.’ But what about Netanyahu?”

She warned that the war would have severe domestic consequences. “It will mean even deeper cuts to healthcare and social services. We already can’t staff wards properly; things will only deteriorate.”

Asked whether she supported an international socialist program to end imperialist war, Paula said: “Yes—absolutely. I used to think Labor was a socialist party, but it’s capitalist. I hadn’t heard much about the Socialist Equality Party before, but I’ve been impressed by the meetings I’ve listened to. I agree with its outlook—it’s common sense about how to build a fairer and humane society.”

A **research scientist** at a major Melbourne hospital also condemned the attack. “The assault on Iran is a criminal act with nothing to do with supporting ordinary Iranians,” she said. “The line that this is about freedom or liberation is false. It’s about control of the region and its oil. The US and Israel want to dominate and monopolise those resources.”

The scientist added: “Everyone now understands why Israeli President Herzog visited Australia earlier this year—it was to secure Albanese’s backing before the attack. As soon as the bombs began falling, Labor declared its support. These are blatant war crimes under the Geneva Conventions, but they are carried out with total impunity.

“Healthcare workers are horrified. Our duty is to save lives, but doctors and nurses in Gaza have been detained, tortured and even killed. It’s intolerable.”

She emphasised that the fight against war must be taken up by workers themselves. “That’s how we fight this—through collective resistance. Those in power rely on our labour to sustain their system. The power lies with the working class, and it’s time to use it.”

These interviews underscore the necessity for health workers to take matters into their own hands by forming independent rank-and-file committees in hospitals, aged-care centres and other healthcare facilities.

These committees must unite with other sections of workers to mobilise against the war and Labor government’s attempts to slash health, education and social services to fund it. The fight against war requires, above all, the building of a unified international movement of the working class based on a socialist program.



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