

# Australia: Support for campaign against Zionist witch hunt of Randa Abdel-Fattah

**Macquarie University Rank-and-File Committee**  
**4 March 2025**

The Macquarie University Rank-and-File Committee is calling for an urgent staff meeting and action, including an on-campus rally, to fight moves to sack academic Dr Randa Abdel-Fattah from the university, because of her high-profile opposition to the ongoing US-backed Israeli genocide and ethnic cleansing in Palestine.

A joint meeting of the Macquarie and Western Sydney University rank-and-file committees on Monday night passed this resolution:

That this meeting supports the demand for an urgent staff meeting and rally at Macquarie University to take up the resolution adopted at the February 20 Macquarie University Rank-and-File Committee public meeting to oppose “the victimisation and witch hunt of anti-genocide activist Randa Abdel-Fattah,” and call for “a campaign throughout the universities and the working class against it.”

As we have warned, Abdel-Fattah’s employment is directly threatened by last week’s decision of the Australian Research Council (ARC), acting at the behest of the federal Labor government, to freeze her ARC Future Fellowship grant for a study of “the hidden history of Arab/Muslim social movements” in Australia.

The ARC move is a step toward terminating Abdel-Fattah’s employment because her job, as a fixed-term appointment, depends on the continuation of the research grant. This is a reactionary political agenda, trampling over both employment and democratic rights, including academic freedom and free speech.

The ARC decision follows a blatant demand by Labor MP Josh Burns, the chair of the Labor government’s witch-hunting parliamentary committee, to know why Macquarie University had not already sacked her.

The ARC suspended Abdel-Fattah’s fellowship just a month after federal Education Minister Jason Clare ordered the ARC to investigate her grant “as a matter of priority.” The supposed reason is that she allegedly bent ARC rules by holding an online workshop as part of the grant, instead of a formal academic conference.

Such perfectly appropriate modifications of research grant agreements are common, as previous ARC grant recipients can testify.

Clearly, Abdel-Fattah has been targeted because she, like other academics and journalists, has been falsely branded as antisemitic for denouncing the criminal atrocities being committed by Israel in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank.

These mass killings and aid cutoffs are intensifying behind the façade of a supposed ceasefire. They are openly backed by the Trump

administration with fresh multi-billion dollar arms supplies as part of a plan to wipe out or forcibly remove the Palestinian population.

The need for a full-scale campaign by staff and students at Macquarie University and across the entire tertiary education sector in defence of Abdel-Fattah and other Zionist witch hunt victims was underscored last week when Universities Australia, the universities’ peak employer body, agreed to enforce a new reactionary definition of antisemitism.

This definition conflates antisemitism with anti-Zionism and essentially bans criticism of Israel, which was created in 1948 by the removal of thousands of Palestinians, accompanied by military violence and terrorism that has continued ever since.

The Macquarie University Rank-and-File Committee is continuing to receive resolutions and statements of support for our call for a campaign throughout the universities and the working class as a whole for the defence of Abdel-Fattah and all the other victims of what has become an escalating Zionist witch hunt.

This campaign is a test case for the defence of all the academics, journalists, students and workers being slandered and vilified as antisemitic for opposing Israel’s crimes and the underlying nationalist ideology of Zionism, which many Jews also oppose.

Numerous messages of support have been sent to the campaign, which the Macquarie University Rank-and-File Committee launched with a statement on January 21. The recent messages include this resolution passed last week by a meeting of the Health Workers Rank-and-File Committee, which is supported by the Socialist Equality Party.

This meeting of the Health Workers Rank-and-File Committee, which has defended many doctors and nurses victimised by Zionists, who doxxed and reported them to AHPRA [the federal government’s Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency] for supporting Palestine, also opposes the victimisation and witchhunt against anti-genocide activist Randa Abdel Fattah.

An academic in sociology at Macquarie University, she holds a four-year research grant from the Australian Research Council.

The latest attacks on her are trying to have her research grant rescinded, and to have her sacked from Macquarie University. They are led by the Murdoch press, Zionist lobby groups and are fully endorsed by the Albanese Labor government.

This is to silence not only Abdel Fattah, but all opposition to the US-Israel mass killing that the Trump administration

intends to intensify.

We call on all health workers at hospitals and other workplaces to pass resolutions of support defending Abdel Fattah, the right to free speech and all democratic rights under attack.

Another significant message of support was sent by “Leo” (a pseudonym), who participated in the recent protest involving more than 100 students, teachers, parents and others at Sydney’s Granville Boys High School against the removal of Sheikh Wesam Charkawi, a longtime student support officer at the school.

Charkawi had been barred from working on the premises for allegedly breaching the New South Wales (NSW) Department of Education’s social media policy by posting on Instagram a video denouncing the witch hunt against two Bankstown Hospital workers who were goaded by an Israeli provocateur into making reactionary comments to him online, and now face serious criminal charges.

Charkawi was finally reinstated after the protest, but the wider threat to fundamental democratic rights continues.

“Leo” sent the following statement:

Everywhere we turn, a Muslim or Arab is being shut down and punished and silenced for criticising or protesting against Israel’s genocide. To point out the double standards only makes you a bigger target. We are seeing a complete erosion of the right to speak against genocide and injustice whilst those who support genocide and racism are protected.

Jonathon, a Macquarie University student, described the treatment of Abdel-Fattah as “absolutely disgusting and totally contrary to everything that I’ve been taught Australian democracy is all about.” He commented:

The idea that they can come for academics for making their very reasonable statements or criticisms of a genocide government causing so much death and destruction of the Palestinian people.

I don’t even know how to describe it, it makes me so angry. I think we really do need to get organised and we need to do something about it before we get to a point where people can’t do anything.

At the root of everything that’s happening is capitalism. The Labor government or the Liberals or any political party that exists wouldn’t be doing what they’re doing unless it aligned the interest of capital, because at the end of the day, that’s the fundamental force that’s driving the world that we live in.

Of course, that’s exactly what Marx was talking about in his writings, the fact that at the end of the day, capital is the fundamental driving force of this society.

I find it disgusting that people would conflate anti-Zionism and antisemitism, because it really waters down what the term antisemitism means. If you look at the actions of Israel, it’s even bad for the people living in that nation.

It’s not good for the people who are being sent to die. I don’t have particular sympathies for IDF soldiers who are

committing war crimes against the people of Palestine, but even for those people living in Israel it’s not exactly a good situation to be living in a country which is committing a genocide.

There are many Jewish people, students, academics, etc. who have been very outspoken in their opposition to the genocide. So it’s completely erroneous to say that criticism of Israel is in anyway antisemitic.

We appeal to educators, students and workers to make statements or pass resolutions in defence of Abdel-Fattah and all the other targets of the Zionist-led witch hunt.

We also urge you to join or form rank-and-file committees to take forward the campaign to defeat this assault on the right to free speech and fundamental democratic rights, and oppose the suppression of dissent against the underlying program of genocide, war and austerity.

In its opening year statement on the universities on February 13, the Committee for Public Education (CFPE), the rank-and-file educators’ network, said: “Tertiary education staff and students in Australia, together with their counterparts internationally, confront a serious attack on jobs and free speech as the 2025 academic year begins.”

The statement warned that “despite outrage and opposition, university managements were pushing ahead with over 2,000 job cuts, especially in the humanities and arts, as a direct result of the Albanese government’s reactionary cuts to international student enrolments on top of Labor’s deepening of the decades-long chronic under-funding of tertiary education.

Under these conditions, the CFPE warned, a historic assault was also underway on free speech, particularly against the continuing US-backed Israeli atrocities in the Middle East, but also against the program of war and austerity being implemented by the Albanese Labor government.

The statement said: “Opposition exists throughout the universities to the job destruction, course closures, pro-corporate restructuring and suppression of dissent. But the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) and the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) leaders have for years opposed any unified fight by university staff and students.

“Just quitting the unions in disgust, as many have done, is not an answer. Staff and students must take matters into their own hands. For that, new democratic forms of organisation, independent rank-and-file committees (RFCs), must be built.”

As part of the fight to defend Randa Abdel-Fattah, we are encouraging the widest possible discussion on this perspective. It means a struggle against capitalism itself and its program of ever-greater corporate wealth, and turn to war and Trump-style dictatorial rule.

To join the campaign or send statements of support for the defence of Randa Abdel-Fattah, email us at [macquarierfc@gmail.com](mailto:macquarierfc@gmail.com), or the CFPE at [cfpe.aus@gmail.com](mailto:cfpe.aus@gmail.com).



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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