

## Wagga continues fight for peace by taking to the streets



By [Taylor Dodge](#)

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Wagga deputy mayor Jenny McKinnon (left) joins Jayne Christian and Zahraa Najem at a peace rally for Palestine near Riverina MP Michael McCormack's office on Sunday. Picture by Les Smith

The voices of thousands of slain and displaced Israel-Hamas war victims will not go unheard if a group of passionate Wagga residents have any say in the matter.

On Sunday, 25 people took part in a rally calling for peace in Gaza and for Nationals Member for Riverina Michael McCormack to call for a ceasefire.

The rally took part outside of Mr McCormack's office on Fitzmaurice Street.

Rally participant and Wagga woman Jayne Christian said her reason for rallying was multi-faceted.



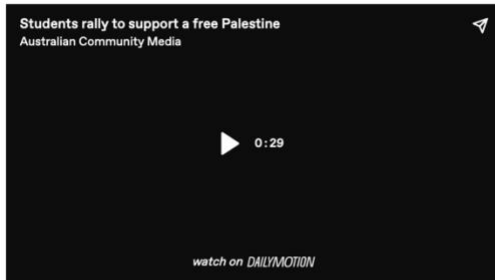
"For me personally, I have an Aboriginal background and we understand genocide when we see it because it has happened here in Australia and it's been happening to other people," she said.

"It's about that solidarity that you always stand with people who are going through it, especially when governments tell you that it's not happening or it's not how you see it to be - that's why I come to these rallies.

"Just the scale of what we are seeing directly from the ground in Palestine, it doesn't matter where you are I think it's important to stand with through that and to clearly state that you know it's not

right."

Ms Christian said Mr McCormack calling for a ceasefire was not an unreasonable request.



Thousands of school students block city streets and staged a sit-in at a major shopping centre in pro-Palestine protest. Video via AAP.

"When people have approached Michael he has made strong statements about standing with Israel, and I think if you can make that statement and say Israel has the right to self-defence than I think you can also make a statement saying Palestinians have a right to life and call for ceasefire," she said.

"I think they're reasonable measures, so why people shy away from saying it is beyond me."

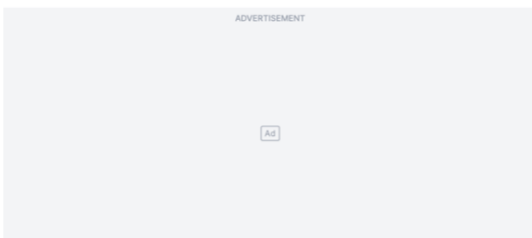
In response to Ms Christian's claim, Mr McCormack said he was

Ms Christian said seeing how much care there was for those impacted by the war in a far-away city like Wagga was promising.

"It means a lot because it's very traumatic in terms of what we are seeing vicariously and for Aboriginal people it's triggering a trauma that is already there as well," she said.

"So to have an outlet where you can come together is really important in processing what is happening, and those who are showing up share values and world view so it's a safe place to do so."

At the end of the day, Ms Christian said the most important part of it all was reflecting on the voice of those directly affected.



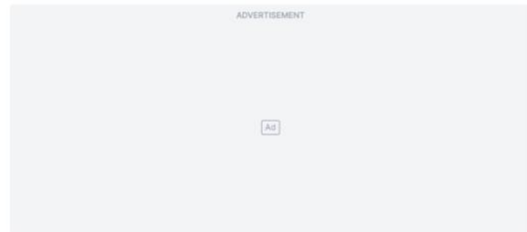
"It's important to keep amplifying the voices of Palestinian people both on the ground and in the Palestinian diaspora - they speak best to what is happening and from what I am seeing governments aren't doing enough to stop the violence and we are only now seeing

deeply concerned by the situation in Gaza.

"An indelible black mark has been left in the hearts and minds of innocent people from both Israel and Palestine," he said.

"I am deeply saddened by the loss of innocent lives, regardless of whether they are Israeli or Palestinian.

"I acknowledge geopolitical tensions in the region have been ongoing long before the October 7 Hamas attack on innocent civilians, which caused an escalation in the conflict.



"Regrettably, Hamas is an insidious terrorist organisation that has proven to have no regard for the lives of innocent people, including Palestinians.

"Israel must be allowed to defend itself but must do so within the rules of engagement."

commercial and financial consequences for Israelis in terms of what is happening," she said.

"Anyone who is joining together in solidarity there is that processing it for us but also putting that spotlight back on other people."

The Israeli-Hamas war was sparked after Hamas terrorists went on a rampage in southern Israeli communities on October 7, killing 1400 people and taking upwards of 212 hostages back into Gaza.

In response, Israel declared war on Hamas and began bombing the densely-populated enclave

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