



Jayne Christian

## Speaking up for Palestine on Wiradjuri Country

[Jayne Christian](#) - August 5, 2024



### WORLD NEWS

The June 30 Palestine solidarity protest in Wagga Wagga. Image: supplied.

On 30 June 2024 the Community of Wagga Wagga came together, welcomed by Aunty Pamela Honeysett, Wiradjuri Elder, along with invited guest Assala A Sayara, Palestinian-born woman, mental health professional, PhD student and liberation activist, now residing on Dharug Country. Around 150 Community members gathered to hear speeches, march the streets and join together afterward for a Community BBQ.

For the last ten months, myself along with a consistent group of around 30 people continue to meet every Sunday morning outside the office of Federal MP, Michael McCormack, by the Wollundry Lagoon, to show support for Palestinian people and share connection with local Palestinian and Muslim families along with all who attend, as we continue to virtually witness the unfolding of a bloodthirsty genocide levelled at Palestinian people and perpetrated by the settler State of Israel. This is not the first intense escalation of violence known as a Nakba, or catastrophe, within what has now been a 76-year and 10 month ongoing occupation of Palestinian lands, and the oppression and persecution of Palestinian people upon those lands.

Councillor Jenny McKinnon and former Greens for Palestine Convenor, Ray Goodlass, have been regular attendees of the Sunday gatherings, and were present at the June protest rally, with Mr Goodlass speaking to the Community about the historical and present situation, informed by his many travels over the years to Palestine.

Youth members of the Community, Amber and Jana, also addressed the crowd with their understandings and feelings about what has been happening in Palestine, along with local business owner, Michael Agzarian, who has often been a target of MP Michael McCormack's false claims of 'terrorist-sympathising' within the Wagga Wagga Community.

---

I drew attention to the slaughter of what is now understood to be well over 15,000 children in Palestine over the last ten months, drawing parallels between the experiences of Palestinian people and First Nations peoples across these lands now known as Australia, in resisting settler-colonial violence. I also noted criticism of Mr McCormack and local peace organisation, Wagga Wagga Rotary, for their continued dismissiveness about this particular humanitarian crisis, and the settler-colonial context in which it is occurring.

This year marks the 200-year commemoration of the declaration of martial law in NSW and remembering the significant role of Wiradjuri warrior, Windradyne, who we know worked in relationship with the Baramadagal Dharug people, in early resistance efforts to the settler-colony. Other well-known early resistance warriors include Bidjigal man, Pemulwey, who rallied the Tribes of what is now known as the Sydney Basin Area, and led the Battle of Parramatta.

Assala A Sayara told the crowd: "When you live in a world where the man who rapes, and murders, and kills is celebrated and the man who is protecting and resisting on their land is called a terrorist, then you know that there is no Peace in this world, and when one group of people are protected over another group of people, you know there is no Humanity... We will live like flying hawks or die as proud lions, we are all for Palestine and Palestine is for us."

Community questioning the financial relationship between the pro-Israel lobby and prominent Labor and Nationals MPs was echoed by Assala A Sayara. It was noted that the NSW National Party recently unanimously passed a motion in Wagga Wagga supporting the full sovereignty of Israel and calling for the release of all Israeli hostages while remaining silent on issues of Palestinian sovereignty and Palestinian hostages, many of whom are underage, detained by Israeli authorities without charge, and subjected to heinous forms of torture.

Many of those in attendance also noted that Mr McCormack has directly contributed to the spread of misinformation, including through addresses he has made in Parliament, and when corrected by his constituents, fails to set the record straight.

Assala A Sayara concluded that: "History will mark who are the truth tellers, history will mark who are the fanatics and are the devils, history will mark who stood on the right side of history... and I will tell you as a Palestinian who cannot comprehend what we are witnessing, that we Palestinians do not surrender, we Palestinians do not bow down, we Palestinians do not break regardless of how painful the injustice is, because we have what they don't have, we have our honour, we have our dignity and we have the truth in our hands".

At a time of year when NAIDOC week activities were underway, we remembered this is traditionally a time of protest and while it now includes a spirit of celebration, let us remember what is at the core of all protest, past and present, and let us celebrate the right of all Sovereign peoples to rise up and resist, as we stand with our brothers and sisters of Palestine.

**Jayne Christian is a Baramadagal woman of the Dharug speaking peoples. She graduated in 2012 from both the University of New England with a Bachelor of Arts (Sociology) / Bachelor of Laws and holds Graduate Diplomas in both Legal Practice and Family Dispute Resolution. Ms Christian worked in private practice, Federal and State public service legal roles for 18 years, before moving into creative and consultative work.**

SOLIDARITY

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

PALESTINE

WORLD NEWS

NSW

OPINION