

Australia: Crowds show solidarity with Tibetan people

Sunday 27 April 2008, by [McILROY Jim](#) (Date first published: 5 April 2008).

As part of a global day of action in solidarity with Tibetan protesters, 65 actions took place across Australia on March 31.

In Brisbane, Australian Democrats senator Andrew Bartlett addressed a rally of around 200 people. "Australia, a country that calls itself democratic, has a duty to speak out against the repression of the people of Tibet by the Chinese government."

Ross Daniels, university lecturer and former Queensland spokesperson for Amnesty International, told the crowd "the Tibetan people's right to self-determination has been brutally taken away from them. This is genocide of a people and their culture".

Sasha Jespersen, from Amnesty, told the crowd that "the human rights situation in China has got worse, not better, in the lead up to the Beijing Olympic Games".

The rally also heard from Ashley Brown, Australia Tibet Council board member. "Tibetans are still protesting: 140 people have died, 1000 have been arrested, and torture is widespread. Monasteries have been sealed off. We are very concerned for the safety of the Tibetan people", he said.

Katie Cherrington reports from Melbourne that despite rain, over 200 people gathered on the lawns of the State Library. Speakers included Michael Butler from Amnesty International and Alison Tate, International Officer for the Australian Council of Trade Unions. Greetings were heard on behalf of Senator Lyn Allison from the Australian Democrats and Sharan Burrow, ACTU president. The rally called on PM Kevin Rudd to demand that China: keep the Olympic torch out of Tibet, allow access to Tibet by international media and independent monitors, and negotiate with the Dalai Lama for a lasting solution to the Tibet issue.

P.S.

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