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Group of agitated protesters had Onkaparinga Council staff fearing for their safety

A group of protesters had staff at a southern suburbs council meeting fearing for their safety after storming the building, before police shut it down. Watch the video.



Emily Jarvis

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The Messenger



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Frightened staff and councillors at a southern suburbs council had to flee Tuesday night's meeting under police escort after angry protesters "stormed" the chambers.

Just 15 minutes into their first general council meeting since the elections, Onkaparinga Council's staff and elected members had no choice but to abandon and adjourn the meeting.

"Unfortunately there was an interruption to the meeting due to audio visual technical issues, meaning the large crowd gathered outside of the council chamber were unable to adequately hear the meeting, resulting in disruptive and aggressive behaviour from members of the public," Mayor Moira Were said.

"It's very disappointing that we were not able to conduct business safely in an open and transparent way."



Protesters outside council chambers on Tuesday night. Picture: Facebook

The chambers had just begun to discuss declaring a climate emergency motion, the main debate for the night, when a number of members in the gallery became agitated by the topic.

Members of the gallery explained there were audio issues when the motion was called on, prompting spectators to move from one viewing area to another.

Speaking to ABC Radio Adelaide this morning, Mayor Were said she did not feel it was a safe workplace and police noticed the behaviour was escalating.

"Some people after the meeting were pushed and shoved physically, and they

Some people after the meeting were pushed and shoved physically, and they were also verbally abused,” she said.

“I don’t think that is a safe place for anyone to be working.”

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Kate Simpson was one of the bystanders in the gallery, saying there was no need to turn the place “upside down”.

“The things that scared me most about the ways the protesters managed themselves was that they were recording the voices and faces of others in the space,” she said.

“Also, some of the big blokes protesting were yelling at police and saying ‘see what we can do when we all turn up!’ ie shut down a council meeting.”

Others expressed frustrations by posting online, comparing it to the [Capitol riots at the White House](#) two years ago.

“The storming of the council? Are these people also Trump supporters by any chance? The parallels...,” one user wrote.

“Jan 6 Washington and Jan 17 in Onkaparinga!” another commented.

Mayor Were said the council would provide details about the next meeting in due course on the City of Onkaparinga website.

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