

Exclusive National Victoria Investigation

Inside the Melbourne boxing gym with a neo-Nazi underbelly

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Extremism experts have raised concerns about the presence of a child at a neo-Nazi event in Melbourne's north-west, saying it indicates far-right groups are indoctrinating children with hateful ideology during vulnerable periods in their intellectual development.

An investigation by *The Age* has uncovered links between Legacy Boxing Gym, in Sunshine West, some of Victoria's most dangerous neo-Nazi activists and a growing community of young men learning to box at the gym.



Assembled right-wing activists pose with a child (centre) at Legacy Boxing Gym, in Sunshine West.

Images posted in encrypted far-right chat groups captured a secret December 3 event held at the gym, which was adorned with swastika and SS flags and other far-right symbolism. A photo from the event shows prominent neo-Nazi Thomas Sewell posing with a child and dozens of other far-right supporters.

The photo also features far-right activist and Nazi sympathiser Jimeone Roberts, who was convicted of plastering Caulfield with more than 50 swastikas. The display of swastikas became illegal in Victoria in June. According to business records, the directors of Legacy Boxing Gym include Werribee man Timothy Holger Lutze, 32.

Investigations by *The Age* have uncovered several pictures in which Lutze and young members of the gym are making Nazi salutes. On Friday morning, the gym, which was founded in 2019, removed some of the images from Facebook.

Messages to the gym's social media accounts on Friday went unanswered.

When contacted by *The Age*, a spokesperson for the gym said they were too busy to answer questions about the far-right gathering held there.

Peta Lowe, a juvenile extremism expert, said children's exposure to violent extremist views, materials and ideology should be considered a "risk of harm" under child protection legislation akin to neglect, psychological and physical abuse.

"We have a responsibility to protect children from violent extremism in all forms. It is a risk of harm to the safety and wellbeing of children, and of our society. Children are victims in these situations, even when they may actually perpetrate violent extremist acts," she said.

"This is an internationally accepted principle in working with children recruited to [extremist] organisations."



Thomas Sewell (far left) arriving at court with his supporters this week. JUSTIN MCMANUS

Propaganda produced by a far-right group founded by Sewell shows combatants in an exhibition boxing match at the gym, flanked by swastika and SS flags.

Sewell, 29, a prominent Melbourne white supremacist, was this week found guilty by magistrate Stephen Ballek after [he repeatedly punched a security guard in the head](#) outside Channel Nine's Docklands headquarters after being refused a meeting with *A Current Affair* producers in March 2021.

Supporters including Roberts attended court and made racist gestures supporting him.

Victoria University extremism expert Mario Peucker said events like the one held this month where children and the partners of members were welcome were rare.

He also expressed concerns, echoed by Lowe, that the child in the photograph was in a developmentally formative period when children didn't have a well-developed capacity to critically reflect and challenge hateful white supremacy ideologies.

In the 2022 Annual Threat Assessment, director-general of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, Mike Burgess, found the number of children being radicalised was growing and their ages were getting lower.

Lowe said Australia was providing inadequate support for vulnerable children and young people.

"Australia is really lagging behind other countries who have civil society services specifically designed to provide disengagement support services outside of law enforcement and intelligence gathering," she said.

Timothy Lutze, right, with gym members.

Boxing Victoria secretary David Pike said they would be investigating the allegations and that they found “any attempt to bring extremist views into boxing or any other sport abhorrent”.

The photos are a few of many being shared on encrypted communication platform Telegram. Legacy Boxing Gym is also active on many other public media channels.

Photos posted on social media show the gym celebrating boxing wins by young competitors and commemorating birthdays of members, presenting a public image of a wholesome and supportive community.

In one post on a Facebook account, the gym’s co-owner Lutze is in the background giving the Nazi salute.

Assembled right-wing activists pose at Legacy Boxing Gym, in Sunshine West.

In another, a man gives the Nazi salute at a public playground. Next to him is a child also giving the salute. Sewell's group has recently intensified efforts to recruit members by staging anti-LGBTQ stunts.

In 2021, according to ASIO, minors made up 15 per cent of new investigations into threats from extremist groups — up from 2-3 per cent in recent years.

Timothy Lutze, centre, with members of the gym. [FACEBOOK](#)

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