

Socialist Equality Party in Australia announces federal election candidates

The Socialist Equality Party (Australia)
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The Socialist Equality Party is proud to announce its candidates for the 2007 federal election, due to be held before the end of this year. In the course of its campaign the SEP will advance the socialist alternative to militarism and war, social inequality and the escalating attack on democratic rights.

The SEP will contest a total of nine House of Representative seats in New South Wales, Western Australia and Victoria. It will also field above-the-line party tickets for the Senate in Victoria and New South Wales, enabling all voters in Australia's two most populous states to cast a vote for the SEP.

The party's national secretary **Nick Beams** will head the SEP's Senate ticket in NSW, along with SEP member **Carol Divjak**, and will be the party's national spokesman.

In Sydney, the SEP will stand candidates in four lower house seats: Grayndler, Kingsford-Smith, Parramatta and Chifley.

In the inner-west seat of **Grayndler**, with its large concentrations of students, urban professionals and immigrants, 27 year-old **Patrick O'Connor** will represent the SEP. O'Connor, who joined the party in 2004, is a staff writer for the *World Socialist Web Site*. He will oppose Labor's Anthony Albanese, the shadow minister for infrastructure and water, who is a long-time Labor apparatchik.

O'Connor has written extensively for the WSWs, exposing the military operations of Australian imperialism in the South Pacific. In March 2007, he contested the NSW state election in the state seat of Marrickville, opposing Labor, the Greens and the Socialist Alliance, and is already known to many local residents.

Alex Safari, a 57-year-old agricultural scientist, will challenge Labor's high-profile environment spokesman and ex-rock star Peter Garrett in **Kingsford-Smith**. Safari, who has a PhD in quantitative genetics and currently works for the NSW Department of Primary Industries, is ideally placed to clarify critical questions of political perspective in relation to issues of climate change and the environment.

Safari emigrated to Australia from Iran in 1982, and he will be warning youth, students and working people about escalating US plans for a military attack on Iran. The largely working class electorate of Kingsford-Smith encompasses the dockyards at Botany Bay, Sydney airport and large areas of light industry in Alexandria. The seat's boundaries also take in the University of New South Wales and the southern beachside suburbs of Maroubra and Coogee.

In Sydney's western suburbs, the SEP will stand two candidates.

Chris Gordon, 40, will contest the seat of **Parramatta**. The marginal seat, currently held by Labor, takes in a swathe of suburbs from Blacktown and Kings Langley in the west, through to Dundas and Carlingford. It includes much of Sydney's mortgage-belt, where young families are struggling with home repayments and record levels of personal debt.

The city of Parramatta is a commercial hub for the western suburbs, and the seat is home to a large number of factories and worksites, including the McArthur Express transport company, where riot police last week attacked workers protesting their sacking and loss of entitlements after the company went into liquidation. Westmead Hospital, which is also the site of Sydney's leading children's hospital, is located in the electorate, as is the Parramatta campus of the University of Western Sydney.

James Cogan, 37, a staff writer for the *World Socialist Web Site*, is the SEP's candidate in the seat of **Chifley**. Named after post-war Labor Party leader Ben Chifley, the seat encapsulates the total collapse of the post-war period of national reformist concessions to the working class. Chifley borders Parramatta and includes the working class suburbs of Mount Druitt, Bidwill, Wilmot and Shalvey, with large concentrations of public housing where thousands of families live below the poverty line. The seat is home to a significant Aboriginal population and young families in newer housing developments. The Werrington and Kingswood campuses of the University of Western Sydney are also located there.

In the seat of **Charlton**, 150 kilometres north of the Hunter Valley, 65-year-old SEP Central Committee member **Terry Cook** will challenge former ACTU leader Greg Combet, who is beating a well-worn path to Labor's parliamentary frontbench. While the ALP's star-recruit is being promoted as an opponent of the Howard government's hated WorkChoices legislation, Rudd Labor has guaranteed to retain its key features. A Labor government will deepen the savage attacks to workers' conditions enforced by the Hawke-Keating Labor governments between 1983 and 1996.

Charlton is a large electorate extending from Lake Macquarie in the south, up to Wallsend, Minmi and Fletcher in the north. For many decades the area has been a centre of the power and coal mining industries, where Cook has a long record of struggle against the program of restructuring and job-destruction imposed by successive Labor and Liberal governments in collaboration with the unions.

Noel Holt, 59, is the SEP's candidate in the seat of **Newcastle**, also in the Hunter Valley. A retired Telstra worker with 41 years' service, Holt is a longtime fighter for the rights of working people. Newcastle used to be one of the state's industrial centres, with mining, steelworks, docks and railways. Over the past 25 years, thousands of permanent jobs have been eliminated by factory closures, including the shutdown of BHP and the elimination of ship repairs. Today, young school leavers are forced to compete for casual and part-time jobs in call centres and the retail and service sectors. Large parts of the electorate suffer from high youth unemployment and associated social problems. It includes the working class suburbs of Mayfield, Waratah, Broadmeadow and Adamstown, and in Jesmond and Cooks Hill has a large population of students, who attend the nearby University of Newcastle.

In Western Australia, the SEP's **Joe Lopez**, 42, will contest the seat of **Swan**. The area is home to sections of light industry, the railway marshalling yards, and Perth's international and domestic airport terminals. It includes the working class suburbs of Queens Park, Belmont, Kewdale, Beckenham, Cannington and Rivervale. Curtin University, one of the state's three main universities, has a large population of students residing in the seat.

Behind the image of Western Australia as a "boom state" is the social reality of escalating living costs, crumbling infrastructure—including hospitals and schools—and record waiting lists for public housing.

In Victoria, the SEP's Senate team is **Peter Byrne** and **Tania Baptist**. Byrne, 48, an architect, is the son and brother of car workers. He has been a member of the SEP for more than two decades and has played a leading role in the work of the party's Melbourne area. Baptist, 36, joined the

SEP in 2006, motivated, in particular, by her agreement with the SEP's analysis of the war in Iraq and the party's struggle for a genuine international socialist alternative to militarism and war.

Will Marshall, 44, a teacher at Footscray City Secondary College, will represent the SEP in the seat of **Melbourne**, opposing the ALP's Lindsay Tanner and the Greens. The electorate has a large student population, with two major universities, University of Melbourne and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, located there. Melbourne includes the city's central business district and the inner-city suburbs of Carlton, Fitzroy, North Melbourne, West Melbourne, East Melbourne and parts of Ascot Vale, Flemington, Kensington, Richmond and Collingwood. It also includes many of the city's high-rise housing commission towers, which are home to a large number of newly-arrived immigrants. Sections of the textile industry, transport and the dockyards are also situated there.

Frank Gaglioti, 50, is the SEP's candidate in **Calwell**. A teacher in the public school system for 25 years, Gaglioti has been a party member since 1991. Calwell takes in the major working class suburbs of Melbourne's north, including Broadmeadows, where the party has a long history. It is home to the Ford motor company and associated car parts suppliers where workers face the continual threat of closure and the winding back of conditions. The electorate extends out to Craigieburn and Sunbury, encompassing newer housing developments in northern mortgage-belt suburbs like Roxburgh Park. Sections of light industry, including food processing, general farming, horse studs, textiles, clothing, transport, and telecommunications, wine production and service industries are located in Calwell, along with Melbourne's international and domestic airport terminals. Many Iraqi and Turkish workers live there.

The SEP urges all supporters and readers of the *World Socialist Web Site* to give their full support to the SEP's federal election campaign by distributing our election statements, donating to our \$50,000 election fund, attending our election committee meetings, voting for our candidates and above all by joining and building the SEP as the new socialist and internationalist party for the working class. The party's election statement will be published soon.



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