

# Socialist Equality Party (Australia) launches Melbourne by-election campaign

**Socialist Equality Party**  
**15 June 2012**

The Socialist Equality Party is proud to announce that it is standing Patrick O'Connor, an SEP National Committee member and writer for the *World Socialist Web Site*, in the Melbourne state by-election being held on July 21.

The SEP is the only party that fights for the independent interests of the working class in opposition to Labor, Liberal and the Greens. We oppose the destruction of jobs, attacks on wages and working conditions and the elimination of welfare programs and social services.

Our campaign provides workers and young people with the only viable alternative to the political program and parties of big business and finance capital. Our perspective is for the mobilisation of the working class to create a socialist society, based on social equality and freedom, and a democratically and rationally planned economy that meets the needs of the majority, not the profit interests of a privileged and tiny elite.

Once again the capitalist system has failed. All over the world, workers and young people are facing the greatest economic, social and political crisis since the dark days of the Great Depression and World War II in the 1930s and 40s. The ruling classes have no solution other than to place the full burden of this crisis onto the backs of the working class. Entire nation states, such as Greece, are being bankrupted at the behest of the banks and financial markets. The social and economic catastrophe confronting Greek workers is only the most acute expression of a wider crisis of the profit system. Mass unemployment, plunging living standards and the scourge of war characterise a new age of austerity and militarism around the world.

Claims made by the Gillard Labor government and the media that Australia is immune from the global crisis are a cruel joke for millions of workers and their families. Mass layoffs are being announced daily, with at least 130,000 jobs destroyed in the manufacturing sector alone since the 2008 financial crash. Workers confront permanent job insecurity and ever-deteriorating conditions, including ongoing demands for higher productivity and lower wages.

The growing army of unemployed struggle to subsist on poverty-level welfare payments. The disabled, single parents and other welfare recipients are being dragooned into the workforce as an additional source of cheap labour for business to exploit. Young people complete their university and TAFE studies with ever higher tuition debts, only to find dwindling job prospects. Many older workers are being forced to postpone their retirement plans as their superannuation funds plunge in value along with stock market indices.

and Liberal alike, have begun imposing their own austerity agendas, including ever greater cuts to social spending. Over the past three decades, education, health and welfare have already been opened up to private profit and subjected to the market principle “user pays”. The ruling elite has launched what can only be described as a social counter-revolution, aiming to eliminate every social reform won by the working class in over a century of struggle. Its goal is to drive workers’ wages and conditions down to the “internationally competitive” levels in Asia’s low wage manufacturing platforms, including China, India and Vietnam.

The Labor Party’s rhetoric about “spreading the benefits” of the mining boom is a fraud. Record mineral exports have only benefited a tiny layer at the top. A handful of billionaires have reaped unprecedented personal fortunes while well over two and a half million people, including at least half a million children, are forced to live below the poverty line.

The world economic crisis is fuelling the drive by US imperialism to shore up its declining global position through military force. The list of Washington’s aggressive interventions over the last decade includes Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, with Syria and Iran the next targets. Successive Australian governments have unconditionally backed every one of these criminal wars. The Gillard government is currently colluding with Washington in its preparations for a war against China, which threatens the working class in Australia, throughout the region and the world with a nuclear catastrophe.

It is a lie that there is no alternative to capitalism. From the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and throughout North Africa and the Middle East last year, to the mass protests and general strikes in Europe, workers around the world, including Australia, are beginning to re-enter the political arena. Their struggles must be armed with a new revolutionary leadership and perspective.

The old parties and organisations that once spoke in the name of the working class have been completely transformed. The Labor Party has become the most ruthless representative of the corporate and financial elite. Federal and state Labor governments, including the Labor-Greens coalition in Tasmania, seek to outdo their Liberal counterparts in implementing the sharpest austerity cuts.

The Greens are a pro-capitalist party, representing the interests of an affluent section of the middle class, pre-occupied with augmenting their own privileged lifestyles and wedded to the profit system. Their aim in this by-election is to win their first state lower house seat in Victoria. Falsely promoting themselves as a “progressive” alternative to Labor, they are being backed by various pseudo-left organisations.

On behalf of the financial markets, federal and state governments, Labor

The reality is that after winning the federal seat of Melbourne, the

Greens immediately moved to shore up the reactionary parliamentary setup by signing a deal with Julia Gillard's minority Labor government. They bear direct responsibility for every one of the government's regressive measures over the past two years, including Gillard's military deal with US President Obama to station US marines and materiel in Darwin, the continued deployment of Australian troops in Afghanistan, East Timor and Solomon Islands, the mandatory detention and victimisation of refugees, the attacks on Aboriginal communities through the Northern Territory intervention and Labor's spending cuts and punitive measures against welfare recipients.

Likewise, the trade unions function as the industrial police force for corporate management, playing a central role in enforcing mass layoffs in manufacturing, the public service, and other sectors of the economy, along with the ever-escalating destruction of working conditions.

The Socialist Equality Party calls for the formation of new rank-and-file committees, entirely independent of the trade unions, in every workplace.

We fight for an independent movement of the working class to establish a workers' government committed to socialist policies. The expanding social needs generated by a complex mass society cannot be met within the framework of an economic system based on the private ownership of the means of production and the unrestrained accumulation of personal wealth. Only the socialist reorganisation of society can put an end to war and guarantee secure jobs, decent living standards, education, healthcare and a future for all.

The SEP stands for:

**\* Public ownership of the banks, mining giants and major corporations**

Transform the banks, mining conglomerates and major corporations into publicly owned and democratically controlled utilities. Replace the anarchy of the market with rational planning. Redistribute resources from the wealthy elite to meet the essential social needs of the people, under their democratic control.

**\* An emergency public works program**

Pour billions into the economy to create a massive program of public works that will end unemployment and provide decent paying jobs to all, along with affordable high quality housing and free universal health care, education and social services.

**\* End militarism and war**

Withdraw all Australian military personnel from the neo-colonial military operations in Afghanistan, East Timor, Solomon Islands and elsewhere. Close down all US military and intelligence bases and end all imperialist alliances and intrigues, such as ANZUS. Prosecute the war criminals in Canberra and Washington.

**\* Defend democratic rights**

Anti-terror legislation and other antidemocratic measures imposed under the fraudulent "war on terror" must be rescinded. Withdraw all anti-trade union and anti-strike legislation. Immediately release WikiLeaks' founder Julian Assange.

**\* For the international unity of the working class**

The Socialist Equality Party insists that the key to the future lies in the international unity of the working class, whose interests cannot be defended on the basis of a national program. Workers in every country have common class interests against corporate and financial capital. They must reject all forms of nationalism, racism and xenophobia, aimed at dividing their struggles from those of their class brothers and sisters in Asia and around the world.

The Socialist Equality Party is the Australian section of the International Committee of the Fourth International. It is based on the long heritage of revolutionary Marxism. The Fourth International was founded in 1938 by Leon Trotsky to defend the program of socialist internationalism against the betrayals of Stalinism. Its origins go back to the Left Opposition, which fought from 1923 against the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union under Stalin and his nationalist program. Together with our sister parties in Europe, North America, and Asia, and through the daily collaboration and analysis embodied in the *World Socialist Web Site*, we fight for an internationally unified revolutionary movement of the working class.

All around the country, workers and young people are deeply alienated from the old political parties and trade unions and are beginning to recognise the need for fundamental change. They are looking for a means to fight. The way forward lies in building a new socialist movement of the working class.

We urge you to vote for Patrick O'Connor on July 21. Because of the state of Victoria's anti-democratic electoral laws, the SEP's name will not be on the ballot paper next to our candidate. This is because the state requires political parties to have 500 Victorian members, all of them on the electoral roll, in order to be registered—an entirely arbitrary figure aimed at preventing any challenge to the two-party system and its political apologists.

Our campaign is vital in the fight to build the Socialist Equality Party and provide a socialist and internationalist political program for the immense social struggles, in Australia and internationally, that lie directly ahead. If you agree with our program, we urge you to not only support our campaign, but to get involved. Distribute our election statement and other election material, join our Melbourne election committee, sign up others in your workplace, school or suburb, attend our meetings, and above all, join the SEP.

*Authorised by Nick Beams, 113/55 Flemington Rd, North Melbourne VIC 3051*



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**