

SEP announces candidates for 2013 Australian election

11 May 2013

The Socialist Equality Party is proud to announce our candidates for the scheduled September 14, 2013 election. A total of 10 SEP candidates will stand for the Senate in five states—New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia. Fielding two candidates in each state allows the party to be placed on the ballot paper as an “above-the-line” group. This will enable voters in each of these states to cast a vote directly for the SEP.

The SEP candidates will spearhead the struggle for the building of a broad, international anti-war movement among workers and young people on the basis of a socialist and internationalist program. We urge SEP supporters and WSWS readers in Australia and throughout the Asia-Pacific region to assist in publicising the campaign as widely as possible, distributing our statements and organising meetings and other speaking engagements for our candidates.

New South Wales

Nick Beams, 65, is the national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP). He was a founding member of its predecessor, the Socialist Labour League (SLL), in 1972. Widely known as a leading authority on Marxist political economy, Nick is a member of the International Editorial Board of the *World Socialist Web Site* and his articles on economics, politics and history are read by a broad international audience. He has authored major analyses of the significance of globalised production for the international working class and has lectured in the United States, Europe, the former Soviet Union, Asia and throughout Australia. Born in Britain and raised in Tasmania, he lives in Sydney and is the father of two adult children.

Zac Hambides, 25, is a leading member of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), the student movement of the SEP. Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, his family immigrated to

Australia in 2000. Zac met the SEP in 2007 at the University of NSW, and was attracted by its analysis of the underlying causes of the US-led invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, and by the party’s Marxist heritage and struggle for principle. He joined the SEP in 2008 and is continuing his studies at the University of New South Wales.

Victoria

Patrick O’Connor, 33, is a member of the national committee of the Socialist Equality Party and a regular contributor to the *World Socialist Web Site* on international and Australian political issues. Born in Dublin, Ireland, Patrick emigrated to Australia with his family in 1989. He attended school in Perth and graduated from the University of Western Australia in 2002 with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) degree in history. Patrick joined the SEP in 2003. He represented the party in the 2007 and 2010 federal elections and the 2012 by-election for the state seat of Melbourne. He plays a leading role in the work of the party in Victoria. He has written and spoken extensively against US and Australian militarism in Iraq, Afghanistan and in the Asia-Pacific, against the persecution of Aboriginal youth and refugees, and on the industrial and social struggles of the working class. He has one child.

Tania Baptist, 41, was born and raised in Melbourne and works as a law clerk. Politicised by the Iraq War, Tania began reading the *World Socialist Web Site* after the 2004 federal election and applied to join the Socialist Equality Party in 2006. In the 2007 federal elections, Tania stood as one of the SEP’s Senate candidates for Victoria. In 2010, she represented the party in the Melbourne western suburbs’ seat of Gellibrand.

Queensland

Mike Head, 60, is an SEP national committee member, WSWS correspondent and University of Western Sydney law lecturer. He is married with three children. Mike writes regularly for the WSWS on the assault on democratic rights that is being carried out on the false pretext of the “war on terror”, as well as on a range of other political, economic and social issues. He has stood as a candidate of the SLL/SEP in numerous elections, most recently representing the party in the NSW seat of Fowler in 2010. Over the past several years, he has worked regularly in the Brisbane area, building the influence of the SEP among workers and young people there.

Gabriela Zabala, 49, has been a member of the SEP since 1997. Immigrating to Australia from Uruguay in 1970, she studied at Macquarie University in Sydney, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in English. She has three children and tutors undergraduate students in English literature. She stood as an SEP candidate for the Senate in NSW in the 2010 election.

South Australia

James Cogan, 43, is the SEP’s assistant national secretary. He grew up in regional Victoria and joined the SLL in 1991, motivated by opposition to the first US-led war on Iraq and to the Hawke-Keating Labor government. Since 2003, he has written for the WSWS and spoken regularly on the US-led invasions and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, the persecution of WikiLeaks and the implications of the Gillard government’s alignment with the US “pivot” against China in Asia. He has represented the SEP in several election campaigns, most recently standing for the federal seat of Grayndler in Sydney in 2010, and the seat of Marrickville in the 2011 NSW election.

Peter Byrne, 54, an architect and son of a car worker, joined the SLL in 1983. For three decades he has fought for a socialist perspective in the Melbourne area, including in campaigns to defend the jobs and basic rights of car workers, building workers, pilots and teachers. In the 2010 federal election, Peter stood for the SEP in the seat of Calwell, where the Ford Broadmeadows car plant is located. He also stood in the state seat of Broadmeadows in the Victorian election in November 2010 and a subsequent by-election in February 2011.

Western Australia

Peter Symonds, 63, is a member of the SEP’s national committee, the national editor of the *World Socialist Web Site* and a member of the international editorial board of the WSWS. Born in Britain, Peter was raised in Sydney and joined the SLL in 1984 while working as a high school teacher in Melbourne. In 1987, he began working as a journalist for the party’s former newspaper, *Workers News*. Since the launch of the WSWS in 1998, he has played a leading role in the site’s ongoing analysis of political and social developments in Asia, Australia and the South Pacific. He has authored detailed assessments of the US militarist “pivot” to Asia and its impact in the region, exposing the dangers it poses to the international working class.

Joe Lopez, 48, was born in Perth and raised in the working-class suburb of Balga/Westminster. He joined the SLL in 1984, opposing the far-reaching attack on workers’ living standards being carried out by the Hawke-Keating Labor government. He works as a nursing assistant at the Royal Perth Rehabilitation Hospital in Shenton Park and is centrally involved in the work of the SEP in Western Australia. He has written for the WSWS on the growth of social inequality and attacks on working-class living standards that have accompanied the so-called “mining boom” in WA. Joe represented the SEP in the Perth seat of Swan in the 2007 and 2010 elections.

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