

SEP Australia to stand in New South Wales state election

Against war and austerity! For social equality and democratic rights!

The Socialist Equality Party
19 February 2015

The Socialist Equality Party will be standing four candidates in the March 28 state election in New South Wales, Australia's most populous state. Our campaign will be dedicated to building the SEP as the new revolutionary leadership of the working class and advancing a socialist and internationalist program against war, austerity budget cuts, the corporate attacks on workers' jobs and conditions and the assault on democratic rights, which is taking place under the pretext of the fraudulent "war on terror."

The SEP campaign will be conducted against the sitting Liberal/National Party coalition government of Premier Mike Baird, the Labor Party and Greens, and the assortment of single issue candidates that are all seeking to confine the working class to futile protest votes aimed pressuring the various parliamentary parties. Our campaign will strive to develop the understanding among workers that the source of the escalating social and economic crisis they confront is the failure of the capitalist profit system itself.

The SEP's candidates are: James Cogan in Summer Hill, Carolyn Kennett in Penrith, Oscar Grenfell in Bankstown and Noel Holt in Wyong. Due to anti-democratic NSW electoral laws, while the SEP is a registered political party at the federal level, at the state level it is not. Our candidates will therefore not be identified on the ballot paper next to the party's name.

The SEP's assistant national secretary, 45-year-old **James Cogan**, will stand for the newly-created electorate of **Summer Hill** in Sydney's inner western suburbs. Cogan writes regularly for the *World Socialist Web Site* exposing the US and Australian war preparations against China and on the political and social issues that face the working class. Summer Hill

includes many of the areas that were formerly part of the seat of Marrickville, where Cogan stood in the 2011 state election.

Summer Hill epitomises the social changes that have taken place across Sydney due to deindustrialisation and the relentless speculation in real estate. In suburbs such as Marrickville, Dulwich Hill and Ashfield, the median price for a three-bedroom house has nearly doubled over the past decade, passing \$1 million. Even the median cost of a two-bedroom apartment is over \$600,000. Rents have soared in tandem with property prices. Due to its relative proximity to Sydney's centre and major universities, many city workers and students live in the area, paying exorbitant mortgages or rents.

Carolyn Kennett, 53, a mathematics lecturer at Macquarie University, will stand for the SEP in the working class electorate of **Penrith**, in Sydney's west. Kennett is married with five children and seven grandchildren and has represented the SEP in several federal and state elections.

Located over 50 kilometres from Sydney's centre, median house prices in Penrith and similar areas are one third those in suburbs closer to the city. Tens of thousands of workers who live in the sprawling outer suburbs endure traffic gridlock on city motorways or overcrowded trains to get to work, as well as overstretched services and infrastructure. Youth unemployment is as high as 30 percent.

The electorate takes in Penrith, Kingswood, Cranebrook, Emu Plains and the township of Glenbrook at the foothills of the Blue Mountains. The Liberal Party won the seat in 2011 with a 25.7 percent swing against Labor—the largest in the state. The electorate is the target of a racist campaign in the

upcoming election by the right-wing Australia First Party over the application by local Muslims to build a mosque for their community.

Oscar Grenfell, 23-years-old, will represent the SEP in the electorate of **Bankstown**, in Sydney's south west. Grenfell is a Bachelor of Arts graduate from the University of Sydney who, like many thousands of recent graduates, is currently unemployed.

The Bankstown electorate takes in long-established working class suburbs such as Bankstown, Bass Hill, Sefton, Chester Hill and Villawood—the site of an immigrant detention centre where people seeking refugee status in Australia are imprisoned. The area has been hard-hit by decades of job destruction in manufacturing, with the official unemployment as high as 12 percent, close to double the national rate. As in the western suburbs, youth unemployment is close to 30 percent.

In 2012, the SEP conducted an investigation into causes of a fire in EuroTerraces, one of the numerous high density apartment towers that have been built in Bankstown, which led to the death of a Chinese student and the severe injury of another.

Sydney's south-west has a large Muslim community. In recent months, police have carried out a series of raids on homes as part of purported anti-terrorism operations. In virtually every case, no charges have been laid, underscoring that the motivation for the hysteria over “home grown terrorism” is to justify the deployment of the Australian military to the Middle East, greater powers for the intelligence agencies and police and a raft of anti-democratic laws that attack fundamental civil liberties.

Noel Holt, a 66-year-old retired telecommunications worker, will represent the SEP in the seat of **Wyang**, in the Central Coast region of NSW between Sydney and the city of Newcastle. Holt, married with four adult children and 13 grandchildren, has stood as the SEP's candidate in Newcastle in both federal and state elections.

The electorate includes Wyong and townships such as Tuggerah, Toukley, Gorokan, Lake Haven and Blue Haven. More than one in four workers in the region spends hours every day travelling to and from Sydney or Newcastle to get to work. The Central Coast has one of the highest rates of youth unemployment in NSW, with at least 28 percent of 15–19 year-olds without a

job.

The SEP will soon publish a statement outlining its program for the NSW election. We urge workers, students, youth, socialist-minded intellectuals and professional people to give our campaign your maximum support, including financial contributions. The SEP neither seeks nor receives financial backing from the government or any corporate donors. We rely completely on the donations of WSWs readers and SEP supporters. Please donate to the campaign online. Most importantly, click here to contact us about getting involved in the election campaign and joining the SEP.

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