

SEP and Victorian Teachers and ES Staff Forum

The political issues in the fight against the AEU-Labor government EBA

20 May 2017

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) has launched a campaign among teachers at primary and secondary public schools throughout Victoria, via the distribution of leaflets and emails, and through social media, for the rejection of the new four-year Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) that has been formulated and agreed between the Australian Education Union (AEU) and the state Labor government. Teacher members of the SEP are spearheading this campaign and have called a public forum for Sunday, May 28, to take it forward.

The AEU is attempting to convince teachers and Education Support (ES) staff to endorse the deal, when, in fact, it is diametrically opposed to their interests, as well as to the interests of the 2.5 million students who attend public schools in the state.

The new Victorian EBA perpetuates existing crippling workloads, which have resulted in an average of 15 hours per week per teacher in unpaid overtime, and the steady growth of contract employment. It agrees to teachers receiving no wage rise at all for the 2016 year, and only 3.25 percent in 2017 and beyond, leaving Victorian public school staff among the lowest paid in the country.

Behind the backs of teachers and ES staff, the agreement signed by the AEU with the government commits it to implementing the Bracks report. This means it has committed itself to overseeing a performance-based system, which judges teachers, parents and students on the basis of student results obtained in standardised testing regimes, such as NAPLAN. Teachers need to be clear: the agenda motivating such regimes is to hand over public schools to for-profit operators. This has been amply demonstrated in the US, Britain and New Zealand, where privatised schools have become a particularly

attractive source of profit-making for private investors.

The forum on May 28 will present a detailed critique of the AEU-Labor government agreement. It will present the “No” case to teachers and ES staff and encourage as many as possible to campaign energetically among their colleagues at schools across the state to vote “No” in the secret ballot of all teachers and ES—both union and non-union—which will ratify or reject the EBA.

The forum will review the broader international context of the serious issues facing Victorian teachers, and the driving forces behind the endless undermining of public education. It will explain the revolutionary socialist and internationalist perspective necessary to create a high quality, free public education for all students—from kindergarten to university—permanent, well-paid jobs for all school staff, and an education system that values the intellectual, physical, creative and psychological development of all.

Ample time will be available for questions and discussion. We urge teachers and ES staff, as well as concerned parents and students, to attend this vital forum and report back to your school community.

Meeting details:

Sunday, May 28, 2 p.m.

Arts House Meat Market

5 Blackwood Street, North Melbourne

Hall hiring levy: \$5/\$3 concession

Parking is available in the surrounding streets



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact