

The Socialist Equality Party candidates in the 2019 Australian election

The SEP (Australia)
16 April 2019

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) is standing Senate groups in New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria and running candidates in the House of Representatives' electorates of Parramatta in Sydney, Calwell in Melbourne and Oxley in Brisbane.

We are calling on all those who want to put an end to the unprecedented levels of social inequality, attacks on democratic rights, the re-emergence of fascism and the danger of war, to support the SEP's campaign and to participate in the fight for its socialist and internationalist program.

As the SEP's election statement explains, the descent into ever greater social and economic crises, dictatorship and a third world war can only be prevented through the independent mobilisation of the working class, around the world, to abolish the capitalist profit system and establish workers' governments that will implement a socialist program.

Senate in NSW

Richard Phillips, 70, will head the party's Senate group in NSW. Phillips is a long-standing SEP national committee member. Having previously worked for ABC television and as a professional photographer in Melbourne and Sydney, he joined the Socialist Labour League, the forerunner of the SEP, in 1975.

During his more than four decades in the Trotskyist movement, Phillips stood as the party's candidate for the federal seats of Gellibrand in 1990, Wills 1992 and Blaxland in 2010, and for the New South Wales Legislative Assembly seat of Bankstown in 1999 and 2011. He is a regular contributor to the *World Socialist Web Site* writing extensively on the arts and national affairs.

John Davis, 25, applied to join the Socialist Equality Party in 2013, based on his support of the struggle for socialism and internationalism against the drive to militarism and war. He is president of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) club at the University of Newcastle, where he is currently completing a Masters degree.

Davis has played a leading role in the fight to build the IYSSE in Newcastle and on the NSW Central Coast amongst working-class youth and students, who face ongoing cuts to tertiary education and are forced to make the choice between working in low-wage, casual jobs or suffering permanent unemployment.

Senate in Victoria

In Victoria, the SEP's Senate team is Tessa Pietsch and Jason Wardell.

Wardell and Pietsch are students who have played important roles on their campuses this year, building the SEP's defence campaigns for WikiLeaks' journalist Julian Assange and whistleblower Chelsea Manning.

Tessa Pietsch, 22, is secretary of the IYSSE at the University of Melbourne and joined the SEP in 2018. She became interested in socialism when studying history in high school and went on to do a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Melbourne, majoring in history and literature. Pietsch is currently undertaking a postgraduate degree focussing on the 1917 Russian Revolution.

Jason Wardle, 27, is president of the IYSSE at Victoria University, where he studies Liberal Arts. Jason, whose father and uncles were merchant seaman, grew up in Perth, and worked there as a casual construction labourer.

Wardle became politically active as a result of his opposition to militarism and war, including the US-led interventions in Libya and Syria, and Australia's integration into Washington's confrontation with China in the Asia-Pacific. He turned to the SEP after growing disillusioned with the militarist and pro-business program of the Labor Party. Wardle moved to Melbourne and joined the SEP in 2017.

House of Representatives

Oscar Grenfell for Parramatta

Oscar Grenfell, 27, is the national convenor of the IYSSE, a member of the SEP's national committee and a regular correspondent for the *World Socialist Web Site*. He has written extensively on key political and industrial issues, including in defence of Assange and Manning, the political and social crisis confronting young people and exposures of the pro-capitalist policies of the Greens and of the pseudo-left's divisive "identity" politics.

Grenfell was born and raised in Sydney's inner-west and joined the SEP whilst at high school. He completed a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Sydney, majoring in English literature. In 2015, he stood as the SEP candidate for Bankstown in the NSW state election, and for Grayndler in the federal election in 2016. In Parramatta, Grenfell will be running against the sitting Labor Party member Julie Owens.

The Parramatta electorate is a major western suburbs commercial hub and also home to major factories and worksites, including public sector offices, the large Westmead Hospital-Children's Hospital complex and a Western Sydney University campus. The culturally diverse electorate includes the suburbs of Oatlands, Dundas, Toongabbie, Wentworthville, and parts of Granville, Blacktown, Parramatta, Dundas, North Rocks and Carlingford.

Peter Byrne for Calwell

Peter Byrne is the party's candidate for the northern Melbourne working-class electorate of Calwell. Byrne, 60, is an architect and the son of a car worker. He joined the Socialist Labour League, the forerunner of the SEP, in 1983.

For more than three decades, Byrne has played a leading role in the party's work in the Melbourne area, including in campaigns to defend the jobs and basic rights of car workers, building workers, pilots and teachers. He stood for Calwell in 2010 and has also represented the SEP in the state seat of Broadmeadows, in Victorian elections and by-elections.

Byrne is running against the candidates of the Greens, Labor and the pseudo-left Victorian Socialists, all of whom are seeking to divert the immense hostility among workers and young people to the official establishment back behind the moribund parliamentary system.

Calwell includes the suburbs of Broadmeadows and Coolaroo, which have been hard hit by the liquidation of the car industry and now have official unemployment rates of more than 25 percent. With a large refugee and immigrant population—including from Iraq, Syria, and other Middle Eastern countries—the electorate extends out to Mickleham, encompassing newer housing developments for working families unable to afford the exorbitant housing costs closer to the inner city.

Max Boddy for Hunter

Max Boddy, 30, is a member of the SEP national committee and secretary of the party's Newcastle Branch. He regularly writes for the WSWS on the issues facing asylum seekers and their inhumane treatment at the hands of Australian governments, whether Coalition or Labor. He has completed a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Newcastle, majoring in Aboriginal Studies, and now works in the community sector.

The working-class Hunter electorate covers more than 10,000 square kilometres and includes a large proportion of the NSW mining and agricultural industry. The area has been devastated by the shutdown of manufacturing in Australia and the slowdown of mining production. While the large-scale industries in the electorate rake in billions in profit, workers and their families are left poverty-stricken, with rising living costs, high rates of unemployment, particularly amongst youth, and their communities suffering some of the country's worst levels of pollution.

Boddy will be standing against Labor incumbent Joel Fitzgibbon, whose family has held the Hunter seat since 1984. The SEP campaign will expose the role that Fitzgibbon and the Labor Party have played in the region's devastation, including the loss of thousands of jobs, historically low wages, and ongoing attacks on working conditions. At the same time, they have collaborated with governments and the media in the stoking of nationalism and xenophobia.

Mike Head for Oxley

Mike Head, 66, is an SEP national committee member, WSWS correspondent and Western Sydney University law lecturer. A member of the party for more than 40 years, he is married with three adult children.

Head writes regularly for the WSWS on the bipartisan assault against democratic rights, as well as on other political, economic and social issues. He has represented the party in several elections and stood in 2013 as an SEP candidate for the Senate in Queensland. In recent years, he has conducted political work regularly in the Brisbane area, building the influence of the SEP among workers and young people.

The Oxley electorate, which is currently held by Labor, covers 155 square kilometres and lies south west of Brisbane city, covering Inala and surrounding suburbs. The area has official jobless rates of nearly 20 percent, among the highest in the country, and lacks basic services, such as a major public hospital.

To become involved in the SEP's election campaign, please email us at sep@sep.org.au today.

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