

SEP (Australia) public meeting: Defeat anti-democratic electoral laws. Become an electoral member of the SEP!

Socialist Equality Party (Australia)
8 September 2021

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) has called a public meeting on Sunday September 19 at 12 p.m. (AEST) to discuss the campaign launched by the party to defeat the blatantly anti-democratic electoral bills that were rushed through the Australian parliament on August 26. [Click here to register.](#)

Behind the backs of the population and with almost universal media silence, the Labor Party opposition marched lockstep with the Liberal-National Coalition to pass these bills through both houses of parliament in a little over 24 hours.

The laws demand that political parties, without parliamentary seats, must treble their membership lists from 500 to 1,500 to remain officially registered so that their party name will appear on ballot papers. This will affect 36 registered parties, including the SEP, which must submit such lists within the next three months under conditions of COVID-19 and widespread lockdowns.

The laws also ban parties from using certain names, notably “socialist” or “communist,” if another registered party already claims it.

These laws are an attack on the rights of all parties. More broadly, they are an assault on the rights of the working class as a whole. The aim is to silence the growing opposition to the two-party political establishment. At the 2019 federal elections, 25 percent of voters cast ballots for parties other than Labor and the Coalition.

There is an intimate link between the passage of these bills and the unfolding COVID-19 catastrophe, which has killed millions worldwide and is surging in the two most populous states, New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria.

Governments, state and federal, Coalition and Labor, know there is deep-rooted hostility to the demand to lift safety restrictions and reopen the economy in the name of “living with the virus,” regardless of the infections, illness and death that will result. The spearhead of this campaign is to force children back into classrooms so their parents are compelled to return to work, under unsafe conditions, for the sake of corporate profit.

The requirement for party registration and the submission of 500 members’ details was first enacted by the Hawke Labor government in 1984. Violating the principle of a secret ballot, it compelled parties to hand over lists of members, opening them up to surveillance and harassment.

The SEP has always opposed these party registration laws. However, it has submitted, under protest, the required 500 electoral members each time registration has been due, in order to exercise the elementary right to stand candidates under the SEP’s name.

This online public meeting will outline the SEP’s campaign to defeat these anti-democratic laws and demand the repeal of all restrictions on the democratic rights of parties and individuals to run in elections.

At the same time, the SEP is appealing to all supporters and readers to become an SEP electoral member today, join the campaign and help the party retain its registration to defeat this attack.



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