

SEP electoral members denounce removal of COVID-19 safety measures as “profit-driven”

Our reporters

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Socialist Equality Party (SEP) electoral members have voiced their opposition to the dangerous rush by the Liberal-National government in New South Wales and the Labor government in Victoria to remove COVID-19 safety restrictions, pointing out that it is driven by the profit demands of big business.

Electoral members have linked the rising popular opposition to government refusals to protect the population from COVID-19 to the anti-democratic electoral laws pushed through parliament with bipartisan support on August 26.

The laws target the SEP, and 35 other parties without seats in parliament, forcing them to submit an additional 1,000 members by December 2 or face deregistration, which means their party name will not be on the ballot paper during elections.

Many people recognise that the end of lockdowns, contact tracing and other basic measures will lead to mass death and hospitalisation, with the working class bearing the brunt.

On Sunday October 31, the SEP will hold an online public meeting to explain its COVID-19 eradication policies and their crucial connection to the campaign to defeat the electoral laws. [Click here to register](#). To join the SEP campaign against the legislation, sign-up as an electoral member today.

Dmitri, a 23-year-old writer from Adelaide in South Australia, became an electoral member in 2020.

“Along with the drive to war with China and the associated sabre-rattling is the ongoing assault on workers and demands that they go back to work. The ruling class have attempted to drive a wedge into the developing working-class consciousness, which is being crystallised by the Socialist Equality Party despite it being attacked by a screen of trumped-up

electoral laws,” Dmitri said.

“I support the calls by the SEP and WSWS to form rank-and-file committees of workers, teachers, students, parents, and school workers in opposition to reactionary and dangerous demands to go back to school” he continued. “These calls line up with the drive for production to appease goals for consumer goods and war machinery. The outcome of face-to-face learning would be more cases, sickness, and even deaths as well as super-spreading events.”

The government and media, he continued, are spreading the blatant lie that children are not at risk from COVID-19.

“This is a distortion controverted by the fact that 59,000 children were infected in Britain during the first two weeks of reopening of schools and 200,000 children in the first five weeks in the United States. Three children now die every day in the US, mirrored by three educators’ deaths per day. Among the long symptoms of COVID-19 are chronic fatigue and pain, respiratory issues and brain fog, which will immensely harm students and their performance,” Dmitri stated.

“The drive to reopen is nothing other than a profit-driven program,” he continued. “The ruling class’s mantra that we ‘live with the virus’ is only expedient because proper action against COVID-19 would require an overhaul of how the profit-driven economy is run. It has everything to do with forcing the working class into business as usual, that is, where profit is king, where production must subordinate its workers. Deaths from a pandemic are merely incidental.”

Government refusals to follow scientific advice for the eradication of COVID-19, claiming it would be “too costly,” he said was in line with the vile maxim of the bourgeoisie, “all for us, and nothing for other people.... ‘Herd immunity’ for the mass of the workers,

privileges and safety for the bosses and upper class.”

Daniel, a university worker and electoral member since 2007, said: “What could be more anti-democratic than limiting candidates on an electoral ballot? These law changes are a blatant reaction against the loss of support for the major parties of establishment politics—both domestic and international.

“In the social media age, people have free access to a wider range of information and analysis, so governing parties need new ways to limit access to dissenting voices. These laws will be justified by the same rhetoric that supposedly opposes ‘fake news’ and seeks to channel readers and voters to mainstream media outlets, where news and opinions are vetted and regulated.

“The WSWS has already exposed and analysed the internet censorship methods of Google and Facebook, which don’t go far enough for ruling parties. These electoral laws are another way to slow the movement of the majority away from capitalist politics.”

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Aden, a 28-year-old Victoria University student from Melbourne, became an electoral member early this year. He works for an Australian supermarket retailer.

“I think it [COVID-19] has been handled poorly,” he said, referring to the Victorian Labor government’s response, “especially when we had the eight to nine months of no cases where we could’ve had a big push with the vaccine or at least set up quarantines outside of the [Melbourne] CBD and suburbs. But none of that happened and the Delta variant keeps spreading.

“Even though we’ve been in lockdown, the number of infections has gone up every single day. We don’t have to live with the virus because we did beat it and now a lot more people are going to get sick and potentially die when we do reopen,” he said.

“I’ve never agreed with any of the major political parties. We’ve now had four or five different prime ministers in four or five years, when we’re supposed to have one every four years. It’s just a revolving door at the moment. Obviously, there is something wrong because we can’t even have a stable prime minister,” Aden added.

Commenting on the SEP’s call for workers to build rank-and-file safety committees, independent of the trade unions and bourgeois parties, Aden said “I think it

sounds like a good idea. Unite the workers to fight for their own rights. I think it’s good for workers from Coles, Woolworths, and other retailers to have their own rights and to communicate together, as opposed to relying on a third party that doesn’t care.”



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