

“This party fights for a real democracy through the political organisation of the working class”

SEP (Australia) electoral members denounce anti-democratic electoral laws

Our reporters
9 November 2021

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) is campaigning to defeat anti-democratic electoral laws rushed through the Australian parliament on August 26. The legislation requires the submission of a 1,500-membership list, treble the previous number, by December 2 to avoid deregistration. These laws affect the SEP and 35 other political parties that do not have members of parliament.

In this latest set of interviews, SEP electoral members told the WSWs that the legislation is designed to silence dissenting voices. They placed the laws within the context of the homicidal reopening policies in Australia, which are allowing COVID-19 infections to spread.

As part of this campaign, the SEP held a public meeting on October 31 entitled “A socialist program to eliminate COVID-19. Become an electoral member of the SEP today.” The video of this meeting can be found [here](#).

To join the SEP’s campaign against the legislation, sign up as an electoral member today.

Mark, 73, is a retired university lecturer from the New South Wales (NSW) Central Coast who joined as an electoral member early this year. He said: “I’ve had a look through the legislation, and the best way to understand it is by following a pattern going on from the end of the 1970s to the present day.

“There have been increasing moves by governments, with the support of capital, to regain control over the

behaviour of citizens after the unsuccessful struggles of the 60s and 70s to wrest control back to the people. This legislation is part of that pattern.

“Particularly over the last 30 years at state and federal level, governments have utilised various areas of concern to pass legislation limiting the freedoms and rights of the electorate and population, so that major parties and capital can have increased control.

“I started teaching in the early 70s in NSW, focussing on multicultural studies. I have an interest in government curriculum and how it turned away from developmental learning to vocational, arithmetic, writing and technology. Students’ capacity for critical thinking has become increasingly limited.

“In conjunction, there is propaganda associated with the war on terror, accompanying a whole range of anti-terror legislation which limits the way people can express themselves. For instance, legislation is now in place so that those suspected of terrorist activities or talking to someone suspected of it can be incarcerated without representation for seven days. The concentration of media ownership has continued as well.

“Putting the electoral laws in that context, you see they’re part of a process that’s been developing for some time.

“People should support the SEP and the International Committee of the Fourth International—the larger international organisation of which it is a part—because it has sensible and workable answers to the crisis facing

humanity. COVID is eradicable. There is scientific evidence to be able to do so. No other political organisation adopts that position.

“Secondly, this movement has a valid alternative to the standard Western political system, which separates government from the will of the people. This party fights for a real democracy through the political organisation of the working class.”

Jennifer, 60, who lives on the NSW North Coast and joined as an electoral member this year, explained: “The legislation affects people’s ability to have a voice. The governments are afraid of smaller parties and are trying to quash them.

“There has been a lot of government mismanagement with respect to COVID. I disagree with the reopening policies. It’s too fast. Schools near my area are also being closed due to infections.

“I was annoyed that they were restricting vaccines to those older than me, even though I have Multiple Sclerosis (MS) which affects the immune system. I’ve been very concerned throughout the pandemic. I only just got my second jab on November 1!

“The establishment parties have always been unpopular as long as I can remember. This is the reason why the [Australian] Democrats and the Greens first came into existence, but they’ve discredited themselves now.

“I remember when I was working in environmental management when Rudd became prime minister. Peter Garrett became a minister to make the government seem environmentally friendly... The funding for my job was disappearing, so you had to fight for it. It became really competitive. It was totally dishonest of the Labor Party.”

Annica, 32, who became an electoral member this year, commented: “I signed up because my brother-in-law is a long-time member. He asked us to join because of the new electoral laws.

“I was disappointed that it was such a large increase of members needed in such little time. Tripling members in three months was setting smaller parties up to fail. The government pretty much just takes parties off the ballot paper by making it such a short time to get such a large increase in members. It’s also not a reflection of how people vote.

“In my circles it’s not a common thing to be a member of a political party. I was a bit hesitant to sign

up due to the privacy aspect of it. I don’t like it that my name has to be submitted to the government in order to be a member. I don’t trust them. Why does the government need to know who I’m supporting or who I’m potentially going to vote for? But I decided to do it anyway, because removing these smaller parties from the ballot will make people think that there are no other options.”



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact