

Socialist Equality Party announces candidates for Australian election

Socialist Equality Party (Australia)
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After a powerful campaign to win ballot access, the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) is standing six candidates in the May 21 Australian federal election in order to provide a genuine socialist alternative to the increasingly detested capitalist political establishment.

Our candidates are the only ones offering a socialist program of action for the working class under conditions of soaring living costs, escalating social inequality, mass unchecked COVID infections, intensifying world war dangers and disastrous climate change, as set out in the SEP's election statement.

We have gained ballot places despite the SEP being deregistered as a party for election purposes by the anti-democratic electoral laws jointly pushed through parliament last year by the Liberal-National Coalition government and the Labor Party, just as the COVID pandemic worsened.

To overcome the impact of these laws, our members and supporters successfully gathered more than 750 signatures in one week to nominate our candidates for the Senate in three states: New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

As a result of this support we won in the working class, our candidates will appear on the top line of the Senate voting papers in these states as distinct groups of two candidates each, even though we are prevented from having our party's name on the ballot to identify them as SEP candidates.

Our candidates are SEP assistant national secretary Max Boddy and WSWs writer Oscar Grenfell in NSW, longtime party member Peter Byrne and an International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) leader, Jason Wardle, in Victoria, and longstanding WSWs correspondent Mike Head and another IYSSE leader, John Davis, in Queensland. Their biographical details and how to vote for them as

the SEP candidates can be found [here](#).

The SEP's fight for ballot access, and the enthusiastic and determined response we won from working-class and young people, further exposes the anti-democratic efforts of the entire corporate-backed parliamentary elite to stifle dissent and block any expression of it in elections, above all, the socialist program advocated by the SEP.

Every aspect of the measures now in place to keep opponents off the ballot demonstrates how much the ruling parties—Labor, the Coalition and the Greens—fear the deepening popular disaffection with their decades-long records of imposing the dictates of big business.

This hostility has been intensified by all their federal, state and territory governments, operating through the unconstitutional “National Cabinet,” disastrously letting loose the COVID pandemic for the sake of corporate profit, resulting in a rising tide of infections, hospitalisations and deaths.

Along with 12 other parties that currently have no members in parliament, the SEP was deregistered by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) this year as a result of the bipartisan Coalition-Labor electoral laws. Suddenly—without any public debate—these laws tripled from 500 to 1,500 the numbers of members required to be a registered party. A three-month deadline was imposed, just as the pandemic made face-to-face political activities highly dangerous, and often illegal due to lockdowns.

Once the SEP was de-registered, getting onto the ballot involved gaining the signatures of more than 100 voters registered on the electoral roll for each of our six candidates in their respective states.

This meant visiting supporters so they could sign the official nomination forms from the AEC and conducting street campaigns, despite the pandemic, to

ensure we met the short nine-day deadline set by the AEC. Each sign-up had to exactly match the person's entry on the AEC's electoral roll or risk being disqualified.

Each individual nomination cost \$2,000, a further barrier to parties and candidates without corporate-financed resources and party apparatuses.

In addition, every candidate had to submit a 16-page declaration of their entitlement to stand, swearing that they were not disqualified by the reactionary nationalist constitutional provisions and 2017 High Court rulings barring anyone who is a dual citizen, or possibly entitled to citizenship of another country, or otherwise lack "sole loyalty" to Australia.

This declaration even questions the citizenship status of grandparents and all former personal partners. That underscores the reality that about half the population—those from immigrant backgrounds—cannot stand for parliament unless they take extraordinary steps to renounce any previous foreign citizenship rights.

The SEP's campaign is critical. The first two weeks of the official campaign have proven that Labor, the Coalition and all the parliamentary parties agree on every substantive issue: growing militarism and US-led war preparations, social spending cuts, handouts and tax cuts for the rich and big business, and attacks on basic democratic rights.

In fact, Labor is pitching itself to the ruling class as the party best able, in close partnership with the trade unions, to further restructure the economy for the benefit of employers, and to fully back Washington's escalating confrontations with Russia and China.

The SEP is the only party opposing the explosion of militarism and war, including Australia's frontline participation in the US-led war drive, which threatens a global conflagration.

The SEP is also alone in warning that the election will resolve nothing for working people. As soon as the voting is out of the way, whichever party forms the next government, it will unleash austerity measures and "budget repair" to pay down the \$1.2 trillion debt incurred by pouring hundreds of billions of dollars into corporate support packages throughout the pandemic, and into military expansion.

The Greens and various independents offer no alternative. They are capitalist outfits, all seeking to do

a deal to prop up either a Labor or Coalition government.

Against all these parties, the SEP is advancing a fighting socialist program of action for the growing sections of the working class—including teachers, nurses, health and aged care workers—entering into struggle against inflation, wage suppression and a deepening social crisis.

The SEP campaign is directed toward the development of an international political movement of the working class. We urge the formation of rank-and-file committees independent from the political elite and the unions. We call for the overturn of capitalism, the source of war and all the existential threats facing humanity, and the establishment of socialism, a society based on social equality and genuine democracy, not the accumulation of private wealth by a tiny elite.

The SEP is launching its election campaign with a public meeting this Monday April 25 at 3 p.m. (AEST). We urge workers, students, young people and all those interested in the socialist alternative to Labor, the Coalition and the Greens to attend. Register today!

As part of our campaign, we also urge our readers to join the International May Day Online Rally on Sunday May 1 (May 2 Australian time) hosted by the International Committee of the Fourth International and *World Socialist Web Site* to provide the program for the unification of the working class in the global struggle against the capitalist system.

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