

Australia: Workers and youth support SEP election campaign

Our reporters
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The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) federal election campaign continues to gain support from workers and young people who voice their concerns about the escalating war dangers and the social conditions they face.

The SEP is campaigning for seats in the Senate across three east coast Australian states—Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales (NSW). This Sunday, May 15 at 3 p.m. (AEST) the SEP will hold its final nationwide online meeting prior to the May 21 election. Register now to attend.

SEP NSW candidate Max Boddy spoke to **Yaser**, a Palestinian student studying law and communication at the University of Western Sydney. “I’m currently working and studying while living at home. The rising cost of living has been very hard. I need to work so I can pay for things I need to live. This pressure of work and uni makes study more difficult,” he said.

One of the highest expenses is “petrol, even though it is supposedly cheaper with the government subsidising 22 cents per litre, it’s still costing \$2 [a litre]. Driving from where I live to uni is a lot of money and a lot of petrol per week.

“Everything is expensive, buying groceries. I realised something I bought two years ago has now increased markedly. I bought the same piece of timber in 2020 and it has increased by \$11 since then. We are experiencing hardship now,” he added.

“The cost of living is going up because the government is trying to get more revenue, to get back the money they lost during COVID. There is a big divide. The majority of Australians are in the working class and do struggle. There’s only the minority higher class levels that are making money and not struggling.”

Referring to the escalating US-led war against Russia

in Ukraine, he said: “I think all wars should stop, for the benefit of everyone.”

Boddy explained the SEP’s call for the socialist unity of the Russian and Ukrainian working class against US imperialist provocations. Yaser responded, “I definitely agree with that. I agree that America has gone in, caused this war and stepped out as if nothing happened.

“It especially affects the working class in Ukraine and Russia. I think they’re struggling the most. Their governments are all into this war. The working class in both countries need help. Not just in Ukraine, I’m sure in Russia, the working class is struggling.

“The Palestine-Israel conflict is one of the major conflicts around the world. The people of Palestine are struggling at tremendous levels. There is famine and they don’t have proper health safety. The governments are causing the conflict, which ripples down onto the people of the two countries.”

Naba, a young retail worker in Sydney’s working-class southwestern suburbs, spoke about Australia’s involvement in the war in Ukraine. “The government is making decisions on our behalf when a lot of people don’t want to get involved, they just want to live their lives in peace. No one wants war, but war is just never ending,” she said.

“We don’t want World War III to start, we want everyone to be united. The result is innocent people dying, not the governments going out and dying. You only get to live once, imagine losing that life due to a war that had nothing to do with you?” she said.

Naba referred to the COVID-19 pandemic. “You can see what governments are thinking, they don’t care if people are dying. In Italy when it got really bad, doctors in hospitals were making decisions about who’s going to live and die. Imagine having someone’s life in that position? Everyone should be

entitled to health care.

“The bushfires got to a stage where there were states in this country that had the worst air pollution in the world. All the firefighters were out there, but the government did not care. It is the same situation with war. People are going to lose their lives and the government isn’t going to care,” she said.

Elizabeth, an SEP electoral member from the Central Coast in NSW said, “I’m on Centrelink [unemployment payment] and my son, who’s nineteen, lost his job in hospitality during COVID. He’s been looking for work. He’s tried for jobs and cold canvassing, but there’s nothing.

“He applied for Centrelink, well over a month ago, but he still hasn’t had any funds come through. He’s been told that he applied at a busy time, so Centrelink is trying to blame us. He can’t use a job provider because he is not with Centrelink.

“I’m on JobSeeker after working in an office most of my life. You have to meet certain requirements in order to get paid. I was depressed, and they still told me if I don’t keep up with job-hunting and show proof, then they will cut my funding.

“With rent assistance, I get \$800 per fortnight, and my rent is \$750, so I only have \$50 left for everything else. Between myself and my son, we’ve been scrounging to get by. I’ve been selling cans and he’s done odd jobs for a friend. I managed to get a food voucher for \$30 and I was told that I could use that over a period of time—that’s one shop and it’s gone! How do they expect people to live?” she asked.

“Liberal or Labor, none of them want to change this situation, they’re okay with people being poor. They’re spending money on the military, on wars, on nuclear submarines. War is about the economy. The only ones who gain anything are the bigwigs who make lots of money, and it’s the rich that govern how this country is run. It’s the little people who go out and die in war, for the economy. It’s been the same with the pandemic.

“I support what the SEP says. Workers need to organise to fight for what we need, and to unite internationally. I’m all for it, I think it would be great. We don’t really hear about what’s going on for workers in other countries, outside of SEP meetings. I think that workers need to be together, to unite and help each other,” Elizabeth said.

Register to join SEP Australia online meeting: “Vote 1 Socialist Equality Party.”

Contact the SEP:

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