Greens make fraudulent appeal to disaffected voters in Australia's NSW state election

Mike Head, SEP candidate for NSW Legislative Council
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With support for Australia's two main ruling parties—Labor and the Liberal-National Coalition—falling to record lows, the Greens are trying to make a supposedly progressive pitch to alienated voters in the New South Wales (NSW) March 25 state election.

The NSW Greens' election platform features appeals to "make housing affordable," "tackling and surviving the climate crisis", "rescue our public health system" and "lower the cost of living."

On closer examination, these appeals are a sham. That includes the Greens' environmental posturing. The platform states: "This election you have the opportunity to put the Greens in the balance of power so we can:

- Phase out coal and gas by 2030
- Transition NSW to 100% renewable energy
- Make fossil fuel companies pay their fair share of tax
- Prepare communities to better withstand the climate crisis
- Provide a just transition for workers

That is, the Greens are bidding for the "balance of power" in state parliament, like they already have in the federal Senate, so they can work with either a Labor or Liberal-National government, operating within the same profit-driven capitalist market that created global warming.

Even if the Greens' policies were adopted in full, they would not meet what many scientists state is required to address the existential threat of climate change. Emission reduction targets set by governments and UN gatherings fall far short of what is needed to stop temperatures rising to a critical point.

The Greens' "fair share of tax" is revealing. It amounts to an unspecified levy on coal exports that would supposedly raise $7 billion a year for a "Climate Recovery and Transformation Fund." Yet even this would be a small impost—about 6 percent—on the coal giants. The platform itself says Australian coal exports are forecast to reach $120 billion in earnings in 2022–2023.

Moreover, the Greens' at the national level are already bartering away their policy of opposing new coal and gas projects. Last Sunday, federal Greens' leader Adam Bandt told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's "Insiders" program that his party was ready to "compromise" in order to support the Albanese government's carbon-trading "safeguard mechanism," which purports to reduce emissions by only 43 percent by 2030.

As a token of his desire for "good faith" discussions with Labor, Bandt said the Greens had already "compromised" on the inadequate 43 percent target and the carbon credit "Ponzi schemes" that allow large corporate polluters to keep churning out emissions by buying phoney offsets.

Such is the "balance of power" sought by the NSW Greens—the ability to wheel and deal with policies designed to fool people into believing that something is being done to halt the plunge towards a climate catastrophe. Any genuine solution necessitates a unified international strategy to address global warming and an end to the domination of private profit above all else—in other words, the fight for socialism.

Likewise, on the growing housing and homelessness crisis, intensified by soaring interest rates and the cost of living, the NSW Greens say they "will work towards more public and social housing, and the implementation of affordable and accessible housing targets for state and local government." This is when the Albanese Labor government has promised to build only 30,000 such homes over five years—a drop in the bucket compared to the needs of millions of working-class households now threatened by mortgage and rent stress.

Amid the public hospital crisis of acute staff shortages, impossible workloads, ambulance ramping and dangerous treatment delays, the Greens' main proposal is to legislate nurse-to-patient ratios similar to those in Victoria and Queensland. These ratios have done nothing to avert the meltdowns caused by decades of under-funding, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, if anything, the situation in the health system in Victoria is more dire than in NSW.

Like the rest of the political establishment, the Greens

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have backed the let-it-rip policy of dropping all public health restrictions on the spread of COVID-19 with the result that an estimated 25,000 people have lost their lives. The Greens, like Labor and the Coalition, bear political responsibility for this ongoing health disaster.

The Greens are an integral part of the parliamentary order that is dominated by the dictates and requirements of the super-wealthy corporate and financial elite. They are utterly opposed to the fundamental restructuring of society needed to address global warming, the housing crisis or any of the other issues confronting working people.

As we say in the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) election statement: “Nothing can be solved as long as society’s resources, created by the working class, are controlled by a corporate oligarchy.”

That is why the SEP is standing candidates in order to advance a socialist program to totally reorganise society to meet the pressing social needs of the vast majority, not the private profits of the super-rich. We say: Place the banks and the corporations under public ownership and democratic workers’ control.

This is the only way to fund the hundreds of billions of dollars required for public education, healthcare and other essential services, affordable housing for all, and decent pay and conditions for workers. That also requires ending the massive military buildup and diverting the spending into dealing with the social crisis.

The Greens’ election platform is conspicuously silent on the threat of a US-instigated nuclear world war. To mention the Australian political establishment’s support for the reckless and criminal US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine would mean raising their own filthy role in supporting it.

The Greens are urging on the Albanese government’s participation in the war, while marching in lockstep with its anti-China war propaganda and provocations. Most recently, the Greens spearheaded a witch-hunting campaign of demanding the removal of all Chinese-made security cameras from government buildings on the spurious basis that information was being sent to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

The Greens have occasionally criticised the AUKUS pact with the US and UK to acquire nuclear-powered submarines, hypersonic missiles and other offensive long-range weaponry, clearly intended for use against China. But they have done so from the right, objecting that the arrangements could undermine the capacity of Australian capitalism to determine its own war priorities.

The Greens once postured as an anti-war party, in order to appeal to young people in particular, during the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. They have become an openly pro-imperialist party of war. In 2010, they formed a de facto coalition with the minority Gillard Labor government, propping it up as it totally committed itself to join the Obama administration’s launch of the US military and strategic “pivot to Asia” to reassert American hegemony over the Indo-Pacific against China.

This record is in line with that of the Greens internationally, including in Germany where they are once again in office, in alliance with the Socialist Democratic Party and the “free market” Liberal Democrats. Green Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and other Green MPs are the most fanatical warmongers of German imperialism and the war against Russia.

Workers and young people who want to fight war, social inequality and the deteriorating living, working and social conditions should reject with contempt the Greens’ bid to channel the mounting political disaffection back into the hands of the parliamentary establishment and the capitalist order.

Instead, they should support and participate in the election intervention by the Socialist Equality Party, and join and help build the SEP into the mass socialist party of the working class. That is needed to overturn capitalism as part of the fight of the International Committee of the Fourth International to unite the working class globally on a common socialist and revolutionary program.

Contact the SEP:
Phone: (02) 8218 3222
Email: sep@sep.org.au
Facebook: SocialistEqualityPartyAustralia
Twitter: @SEP_Australia
Instagram: socialistequalityparty_au
TikTok: @sep_australia

Authorised by Cheryl Crisp for the Socialist Equality Party, Suite 906, 185 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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