SEP (Australia) campaigners for NSW election speak to workers about cost of living crisis and war

Our reporters
7 March 2023

The Socialist Equality Party held a speak-out in Parramatta, Western Sydney, on Saturday as part of its campaign for the New South Wales (NSW) election.

Oscar Grenfell, the SEP's lead candidate for the upper house, and Bankstown candidate Max Boddy, along with other party members, spoke to workers and young people about the deepening cost-of-living crisis, and the need for a socialist alternative to the program of war and austerity put forward by all other parties in the election.

Grenfell said bipartisan claims that the developing social catastrophe is "an automatic process" were "a complete fraud." Instead, he explained, "what's being imposed is a class agenda, in the interests of the banks and big business, directed against the working class."

He continued: "What the Socialist Equality Party is putting forward is the need for workers to form their own organisations of struggle, independent rank-and-file committees, to organise a political and industrial counteroffensive."

Grenfell drew out the connection between the social crisis and the war in Ukraine: "Why do we have massive inflation? Well, in part, because the US and NATO have launched a proxy war against Russia in Ukraine. Workers are being made to pay for this in the form of soaring prices, as well as the billions of dollars that are being handed to the war machine."

Boddy explained: "Genuine opposition to war must come from a socialist perspective—the uniting of the Ukrainian and Russian working class with the international working class, against their own governments at home."

"The Socialist Equality Party," Boddy said, "is the only party in this election that is fighting for the freedom of Julian Assange." He continued, "Every worker should come to the defence of Assange, because he personifies the basic democratic right of freedom of speech and revealed the horrors of US imperialism."

Workers and young people told *World Socialist Web Site* reporters their concerns over the rapidly rising cost of living and the escalating threat of war.

****

Doreen said: "Rent, mortgage, groceries, everything's gone up and it's affecting everyone. It's something that definitely needs to be addressed, to alleviate that pressure."

On the question of war, Doreen said: "What's going on in Ukraine is absolutely sad. With all the politics and power play that's going on, it's the millions of innocent people that are affected—homeless, refugees being displaced out of their own homes. That's what war has actually done."

Doreen expressed her support for persecuted journalist Julian Assange. She said: "I think he did the world a favour. Wikileaks exposed what our governments are up to. What he told the public, the public needed to know. Innocent people were killed, particularly in places like the Middle East. I stand for Julian Assange, I'm all for it and I think he did the public justice."

Speaking about the trumped-up rape allegations against Julian Assange, Doreen said, "I don't believe them to be honest. I've seen people say a lot of negative stuff about Julian Assange, trying to hide the good work that he's done and the truth of what's actually going on."

Doreen was also concerned about climate change. Originally from Tonga, she said: "All of my family are

© World Socialist Web Site

from the Pacific Islands. A lot of their villages are sinking underwater. They have had nothing to do with it, the major impact is coming from the larger countries. It's all about money, greed, power."

Peter, a 16-year-old high school student, said, "I see the future, in terms of the cost of living, of only a low percentage of people being able to care for themselves." He continued, "The people of Australia, the middle and lower class, are losing money which they deserve, so people and banks can enjoy their lives. It's not fair."

His friend **Ethan**, 15, agreed: "The working class are paying and giving money to the government and the government is giving it to the richer people so the richer people are going to get richer, and the people who are working have to work harder, longer, just to support that."

They were also concerned about the increasing danger of war. Peter said, "it will be detrimental for the future of the world if one country exercises their power over the other countries." He pointed to the role of the United States, because "they have the strongest military and the most influence all over the world," and believed Australia was "just a puppet for America."

Ethan raised that young people face particular risk, and feared that Peter and himself "might be going to war, if it happens."

Shweta said, "Any war is not acceptable. If you talk about the war in Ukraine, directly or indirectly, every human being is suffering." She pointed to the impact of the war on the cost of living in Australia, as well as global supply chains, saying, "We are from overseas and a lot of our staple foods are not being exported because of these wars."

A worker in the hospital system, Shweta said, "We are short of nurses." She blamed this on the low wages offered to health workers and said the government "should give some budget for health care, because health care is basically the backbone of any country."

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:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site