

Australian workers and young people speak out against war and austerity in NSW election

Our reporters
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Socialist Equality Party members and supporters campaigned at polling booths in Sydney, Lismore, Newcastle and the Central Coast for Saturday's New South Wales (NSW) state election.

Today, the *World Socialist Web Site* is featuring comments from workers and young people in the working-class southwest Sydney electorate of Bankstown. Coverage from elsewhere in the state will follow in the coming days.

As is always the case in elections, SEP campaigners were alone in seeking to discuss with voters the major political issues they see confronting workers throughout NSW, Australia and around the world.

While completely absent from the “official” campaign—because the parliamentary parties, and the corporate media, are in complete agreement—the growing threat of war was a major concern expressed by workers and young people.

As well as opposing the destruction of innocent lives, voters saw the connection between increasing militarism and the deepening social crisis at home. Many were angered in particular by the recent announcement by the federal Labor government of \$368 billion for nuclear-powered submarines in preparation for a US-led war against China, while the cost of living soars, wages fall and health and education budgets are slashed.

Many workers and young people expressed hostility to Labor, the Liberal-Nationals and the Greens, and recognised that the election will do nothing to resolve any aspect of the domestic crisis or stop the relentless drive to war.

There was substantial interest in the perspective put forward by the SEP that the working class needs to take matters into its own hands and build a revolutionary party to fight for a socialist alternative to the capitalist

agenda of war and austerity.

In addition to the video interviews above, several other workers gave comments to SEP campaigners, which are presented below.

Firdoz, a housekeeper at Bankstown, who voted for the SEP for the first time, said: “I voted for you because we need a change. We are all suffering. Everything is getting expensive. Everyone promises that they’re going to fix it, but nothing happens. It is very hard to live now; fuel costs more, food, our rent goes up.”

Firdoz said Labor and Coalition “are not doing anything. They promise us they’re going to do things for us, but nothing is happening. There are billions of dollars for war, but not for education, healthcare. Not for ordinary people. Nothing. Poor people are suffering here.”

Rima said: “War is disgusting, it’s stupid, it ruins everyone’s lives. They kill a lot of innocent people for no reason. I’ve never agreed with war, it doesn’t get anywhere, it just makes it worse.”

Linda said the main reason she supports the SEP is opposition to war. She said: “I think it’s really scary that the major parties all support war, because they’re the ones who are calling the shots.

“Even if war is happening on the other side of the world, it still has an impact on everyone, wherever they are.

“I really feel that a third world war is looming on the horizon.”

George said: “It’s all about weapons. They’re making these weapons and they want to sell them. They don’t care about human beings anymore.

The entire world should be together. I think all the people in the world think so, it’s only governments that

don't think so.

I'm only an individual, but I'm sure everyone wants peace. They want to live in peace, live in harmony. Everyone is equal, wherever you live, we're the same.



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