

Public meeting: For an active boycott of Australian Labor's Voice referendum!

Socialist Equality Party (Australia)
14 September 2023

The Socialist Equality Party (Australia) urges workers and young people to attend a public meeting to discuss our campaign for an active boycott of the October 14 Voice referendum.

The meeting will be held at 2 p.m. (AEDT) on Sunday, October 1, in Community Room 2, Bryan Brown Theatre, 80 Rickard St, Bankstown, Sydney. The meeting will also be livestreamed. Register now to attend in person or online!

The Australian Labor Party, headed by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, has launched the referendum to entrench an indigenous advisory body, labelled the Voice, into the country's anti-democratic 1901 Constitution.

The SEP urges workers to reject both the Yes and No cases presented by the political establishment and calls for an active boycott campaign opposing the whole referendum. The Voice referendum has nothing to do with the interests of workers and youth. It is a fraud, providing no real choice. Instead, the official campaign is a conflict between different sections of the ruling class.

There are merely tactical differences between the Yes and No advocates of the Voice. Both are concerned with strengthening the state apparatus, which will be used against the working class—Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. This is the same state apparatus that perpetrated the crimes against the Aboriginal people.

The Voice would do nothing to alleviate the social crisis confronting indigenous workers and young people, and despite the claims of the Yes camp, is not designed to do so. It will join with the rest of parliament and the political establishment in imposing the austerity program of the ruling class against all sections of the working class, regardless of race.

The basic division in society is class, not race, and the

only means of fighting against the dire poverty and oppression of the Aboriginal working class is through the mobilisation of all workers, irrespective of race.

Labor is promoting the Voice referendum when it is aligning Australia ever more closely with US plans for war against China. To pay for such a war, the government is carrying out a deepening onslaught on the living standards of the working class during one of the most severe cost-of-living crises in decades.

The Voice policy is a central plank of this reactionary agenda. The government cannot cajole and compel the Asian and Pacific Island nations to support such a war without camouflaging the filthy history of genocide the British and Australian capitalist class imposed on Aborigines.

Another purpose of the Voice is to divide workers along racial lines while elevating a privileged Aboriginal elite into the corridors of capitalist power. It is intended to portray a fake supra-class “national unity” to revamp and bolster the capitalist state apparatus as it seeks to subordinate the working class to its war agenda.

At the same time, the SEP rejects entirely the official “no” campaign, headed by Liberal-National leader Peter Dutton. It is based on thinly veiled racist dog-whistling and corresponds with the activities of far-right forces that are openly vilifying Aboriginal people.

Likewise, the so-called progressive No campaign headed by Senator Lidia Thorpe and others provides no answer.

The SEP puts forward an independent perspective for workers.

The dire plight of most indigenous people is a product of capitalism, and the primary division in society is class, not race. The SEP insists that the struggle to end the oppression of Aboriginal people,

and the struggle for the social rights of the working class, are one and the same.

We call on workers and youth to register their opposition by casting informal ballots. Under conditions of compulsory voting, it is a crime to urge a boycott of the vote itself.

But the critical issue is the development of an independent political movement of the working class, directed against the entire political establishment, its program of war and austerity, and the capitalist system itself.

This means the fight for socialism, placing society's resources under public ownership and democratic workers' control, thereby guaranteeing the right of all to free education, health care and all the fundamental necessities of modern life.

At the meeting, leading members of the SEP will outline the active boycott campaign, placing it within the global context and presenting our socialist and internationalist program. Ample time will be provided for questions and discussion. Register now to attend in person or online!

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Note: Under conditions of compulsory voting, which makes it a crime to urge a boycott of the vote itself, the SEP calls on workers and youth to register their opposition by casting informal ballots and join our active boycott campaign in the lead-up to October 14, that goes well beyond the individual act of voting.

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To contact the WWS and the
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