

“An attack on the SEP and on democracy itself”—SEP electoral members in Australia denounce party registration ban

Our reporters
10 March 2025

The following statements are from electoral members of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) condemning the Australian Electoral Commission’s (AEC) decision to deny the party official registration.

The SEP submitted a list of more than 1,500 members to the AEC, as required by Australia’s draconian electoral laws. The AEC rejected this list, claiming four denied they were members of the SEP. Citing dubious “privacy” concerns, the AEC refuses to disclose their names, preventing the SEP from verifying the claims or amending its membership list.

The decision means SEP candidates standing in the upcoming federal election will be forced to run without the party’s name appearing on the ballot. This is a blatant attack on the democratic rights of the SEP and its members, as well as those of workers and young people to cast an informed vote for a socialist candidate.

The AEC ruling is part of a broader trend of stepped-up suppression of opposition to the political establishment, including the shutting down of strikes, arrests of protesters and a government-media witch hunt against critics of Israel’s genocide of the Palestinians. The determination to stamp out any challenge to the parliamentary parties comes not from a position of strength, but one of profound weakness.

Support for Labor and the Liberal-National Coalition has imploded. Decades of austerity and job cuts enforced by Labor governments have collapsed its base of support in the working class. However, this has not resulted in a rise in support for the Coalition, which continues to poll at all-time lows.

Under these conditions, the AEC has made its anti-democratic ruling against the SEP to prevent the

growing opposition to the major parties from finding a socialist expression.

On March 19, the SEP will hold a public meeting, in Sydney and online, to discuss these issues and how workers and young people can and must fight for a political alternative to the capitalist program of austerity and war.

Election ban on the SEP: An attack on democratic rights

WHEN: 7 p.m. (AEDT) Wednesday, March 19

WHERE: Lansdowne Rooms, Bankstown Library, Bankstown, NSW

Reserve your seat now!

For those unable to attend in person, the event will also be live-streamed via Zoom.

Read our statement against the decision here.

Emma, an artist from Victoria, wrote:

I am astonished and outraged by the AEC’s ruling against the SEP’s party registration submission.

I thought we were living in a democracy!

The entire process the AEC followed to reach this ruling was secretive and opaque, making the decision completely unjust. This ruling is a disgrace to the AEC. Clive Palmer’s far-right party had their registration accepted in a quarter of the time it took to have ours denied.

This is a deliberate attempt to shut down a real socialist revolutionary voice in Parliament and on the streets of Australia. It is completely unjust and is an attack on the SEP and on

democracy itself. It should never have happened in a democratic country, especially during an election.

Tabitha, an office worker in Sydney, wrote:

I joined the Socialist Equality Party as an electoral member as it offers a genuine socialist alternative to the two-party system which has fostered deep distrust and repeated unreliability in addressing the real needs of the working class, prioritising political power and the wealthy over the welfare of the public.

As someone trying to enter the housing market and establish my own home, I am deeply frustrated by the soaring cost of living, inflation, and skyrocketing housing prices that make it nearly impossible for hardworking individuals to live comfortably. Given that the current system has failed generation after generation, I'm naturally seeking alternative solutions.

The SEP advocates for social and economic equality, an alternative to war and [for] the interests of the working class. As global conflicts intensify, creating increasing tension and insecurity, it is crucial for the working class to have a voice in its future.

The Australian Electoral Commission's decision to block the SEP's party registration based on feedback from just four alleged members, without knowing if proper verification has taken place, is deeply undemocratic and unfair.

This decision highlights the dishonesty between the major political parties, who are threatened by the SEP's challenge to their deep-rooted power. The SEP has fulfilled all required criteria for registration and has become an essential voice for those advocating for a just and equitable society. Its exclusion from the election process is therefore an unfair denial of political diversity and representation.

Mark, a nurse from Queensland, wrote:

I support the registration of the Socialist Equality Party and reject the decision by the AEC. The party obtained the necessary 1,500 membership but are being told that some anonymous members have denied being members. Citizens of a democracy should have the right to vote for their choice of representatives—not a choice decided for them by the AEC.

Mehmet, a retired mechanic from Sydney, wrote:

I've been a member of the Socialist Equality Party for several years. I have supported the party because the SEP puts forward socialist policies and an international perspective of unifying workers around the world to build a global socialist movement.

Having lived under a repressive government in Turkey that suppressed democratic and human rights throughout the country, I see similarities in how the AEC is acting. By blocking the SEP's registration, the AEC is trying to prevent the party from advancing its socialist program.

This is not acceptable.



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