

Support the SEP in the Australian federal election! Build a socialist movement of the working class against war, austerity and dictatorship!

Socialist Equality Party (Australia)
30 March 2025

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) is standing candidates in the Australian federal election, to build an independent movement of the working class against Labor, the Liberal-National Coalition, the Greens and capitalism itself.

Our campaign is part of a global fight by our world party, the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI). In recent elections in the US, Britain, Germany and Sri Lanka, the sections of the ICFI have put forward a common program of socialist internationalism, as the only means to end mass poverty and halt the descent into fascism, dictatorship and world war. Our election campaign, like those of our co-thinkers around the world, is aimed at uniting workers globally, in opposition to all the governments, with the perspective of abolishing the profit system.

This election coincides with the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe. All of the claims that those horrors, of massive war, genocide and displacement, are a thing of the past are being refuted.

The same contradictions of capitalism, which claimed some 80 million lives in that war, are leading to a catastrophe on a far greater scale. Eighty years ago, German imperialism in crisis sought to redivide Europe. Now, American imperialism in crisis is seeking to redivide the world. All of the other imperialist powers, however, including Australia, are turning back to the program of militarism and a scramble for resources, markets and profits, as the only solution to their intractable crisis.

A new world war has not yet been declared. But the world is at war. Already, a global conflict is developing, including the US-NATO proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, the Israeli genocide in Gaza, associated threats of war throughout the Middle East and the advanced US plans for conflict with China.

War means fascism and dictatorship. That is the significance of the coming to power of US President Donald Trump. For the first time in history, his administration is seeking to erect a fascist dictatorship in America. Already, Trump has carried out unprecedented acts. Political opponents are being snatched from the streets by federal agents; immigrants are facing mass roundups; court orders against the administration are being ignored and Trump is ruling by decree.

Trump is not simply an American phenomenon. What his regime is trying to implement is the program of the capitalist ruling elite everywhere.

Australia is no exception. The SEP states bluntly that this election will resolve absolutely nothing for working people. The official campaign is a fraud, with Labor Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Liberal-National leader Peter Dutton engaged in an absurd pantomime debate over minuscule tax cuts versus an inconsequential reduction to the fuel excise.

Nobody believes that either policy will resolve the massive cost-of-living crisis.

The real agenda of whichever party forms government is being sketched out in the financial press. There, it is openly discussed that whether led by Labor or the Coalition, the next government will have to carry out massive cuts to social spending, to make the working class pay for the economic crisis. And it will preside over an unprecedented expansion of the military in preparation for war.

That is the reality behind all the lies of a “better future.” Australia’s economy, already in a deep slump, will be battered by the developing trade war. Politically and militarily, Australia is already involved in all of the wars being waged around the world. And the same financial and corporate interests overseeing the gutting of federal spending in the US are demanding similar austerity measures here.

Albanese and Dutton have responded to the onslaught on American democracy with a competition over who can work best with Trump. That is not only because of the US-Australian alliance. It is because their own agenda parallels what he is imposing, from attacks on immigrants, to attempts to shut down protests and the waging of war.

The SEP is the only party raising these fundamental issues. For that, we have been effectively banned from having our party name on the ballot. The Australian Electoral Commission, enforcing anti-democratic measures imposed by Labor and the Coalition, rejected our application for formal party registration, despite the SEP having met the onerous requirement of submitting a membership list of more than 1,500. The rejection was aimed not just at keeping the name of the SEP off the ballot, but keeping the truth out of the election.

We are proceeding with our campaign, however, standing candidates even though their party affiliation will not appear on the ballot. We appeal to you to vote for them. And above all, to join the SEP and take up the fight for socialism, as the only means of addressing the existential issues posed by the crisis of capitalism—from war to the climate catastrophe and fascism.

Our candidates will centrally raise the following policies:

Fight against war!

Like its counterparts around the world, the Australian ruling class has demonstrated there are no “red lines” it will not cross in the drive to war. The Labor government, with the backing of the Coalition, has fully

supported Israel's slaughter of the Palestinians, politically, diplomatically and materially, including through ongoing weapons export permits. This is an election in which the candidates for the major parties have blood on their hands.

Labor's support for the genocide in Gaza cannot be understood outside of its backing for US-led imperialist wars globally. Labor, following on from the previous Coalition government, has taken Australia's contribution to the Ukraine war to more than \$1.5 billion, aiding Kiev's fascist regime, which acts as a proxy for the CIA and NATO.

It is in this region that Australia plays the most crucial role. Over the past three years, Labor has completed Australia's transformation into a key state for war against China. The AUKUS pact, under which Australia is acquiring nuclear-powered submarines at a cost of \$368 billion, is the centrepiece of a much broader military build. All branches of the military are being equipped with missiles to assert "impactful projection" against Beijing. US basing arrangements have been massively expanded, including through the stationing of American imperialism's nuclear strike capabilities in the north and west of the continent.

This program has been carried out without a shred of a popular mandate. Behind its back, the population has been placed on the front line of a potential war. And far more is to come. Washington and the military intelligence apparatus demand a massive increase in military spending, to the tune of tens or even hundreds of billions a year. Calls are being made for a "whole of nation" mobilisation including national service and conscription in preparation for war against China.

This will not be halted through protests and appeals to the powers that be. That has been demonstrated by the mass movement that developed in opposition to the Gaza genocide. Despite some of the largest and most sustained anti-war protests in this country and globally, the slaughter in Palestine continues. Responsibility lies with the Greens and fake-left parties such as Socialist Alternative and Socialist Alliance, which have subordinated all opposition to moral pleas to the very Labor government that is participating in the war crimes.

The SEP stands completely opposed to this fraud. We say:

- End the genocide in Gaza, and the wars in the Middle East and Ukraine!
- No more spending on militarism! The billions squandered on war must immediately be redirected to the public hospitals, schools and other social services.
- Close the military bases that are transforming Australia into a launching pad for war!
- Build a socialist anti-war movement that unites workers worldwide against the source of conflict, the capitalist system!

Defend democratic rights!

War is incompatible with democracy. While supporting the Gaza genocide, Australia's political establishment has joined a global campaign to demonise and even outlaw mass opposition. The Albanese government has led this, working in league with the mostly Labor state administrations.

Using the big lie that opposition to the Israeli regime's war crimes is antisemitic, academics, artists, students, health workers and many others have been vilified and threatened. Police, acting on behalf of the governments, have initiated prosecutions against prominent opponents of the genocide. Hate speech and anti-protest laws, potentially criminalising condemnations of Israel and Zionism, have been rushed through the parliaments.

The SEP particularly calls attention to the brutal attacks on respected

academic Dr. Randa Abdel-Fattah, who faces the prospect of sacking at Sydney's Macquarie University for opposing the genocide. We defend the two Bankstown nurses, who were cajoled by an Israeli social media influencer into making politically backward comments online. They have been the subject of a public lynching and now face years in prison on bogus charges. The involvement of the New South Wales Nurses and Midwives Association in attacking these nurses is a warning to workers everywhere that the union bureaucracies are their enemy.

The repression goes far beyond the immediate question of Gaza. It attempts to create a wartime atmosphere and strengthen the state apparatus in preparation for conflict with China. All elements of civil society, from the schools and universities to the economy, are to be subordinated to the military build-up. Preparations are doubtless being made for measures similar to those imposed in Australia during the two imperialist world wars of last century, when "enemy aliens" were subjected to mass internment and socialist and anti-war activists were jailed.

The central target is the working class. This was underscored by Labor's unprecedented placement of the Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union under administration last August. Based on entirely unsubstantiated media allegations, 80,000 construction workers have been stripped of their industrial rights and placed under the control of an administrator, acting as a quasi-dictator in league with the corporations and the state.

As in the US and internationally, immigrants, one of the most oppressed sections of the working class, are under assault. Australian governments, Labor and Coalition, have led the way over decades, imposing reactionary measures, such as offshore detention, that are copied by Trump and other fascist forces globally. Last year, Labor and the Coalition teamed up to pass their own mass deportation bill, modelled on Trump's policies, which could see 80,000 immigrant workers kicked out of the country.

While there is not a sizeable fascist movement in Australia, such policies go in that direction. And Australian oligarchs, such as Clive Palmer and Gina Rinehart, are openly agitating for a Trump-style regime in this country.

Democracy will not be defended through parliament, where the parties of capitalist rule have imposed one series of anti-democratic laws after another. Instead, the fight to defend basic democratic rights must be linked to the struggle against war and the independent mobilisation of the working class.

- Hands off immigrants and refugees! End the scapegoating of these oppressed workers for the social crisis caused by capitalism! Full citizenship rights for all working people now!
- Repeal all the anti-democratic national-security laws, which are directed against democratic rights and the working class!
- End political censorship, including the reactionary measures used to keep "minor" parties off the ballot!
- Free political prisoners worldwide, including the anti-war students being persecuted by the Trump administration and the courageous Ukrainian socialist Bogdan Syrotiuk, imprisoned by the Kiev dictatorship for fighting to unite Ukrainian and Russian workers to end the war!

Fight for the social rights of the working class!

The onslaught on democracy is the inevitable consequence of deepening social inequality and the rising power of a super-rich oligarchy. The 200 wealthiest Australians now control a total of \$625 billion. In 1983, the total was \$4.6 billion, or less than \$20 billion in today's dollars. Nearly half of all wealth is now held by the top 10 percent of households.

The fortunes of the billionaires are the product of a class war that has

been spearheaded by the capitalist governments over decades, above all by Labor. The Albanese administration has inflicted the biggest reversal in working-class living standards in the post World War II period. Workers' average purchasing power has declined by 9 percent since 2019, 13 interest rate hikes have driven up mortgages, housing stress is at unprecedented levels. For all its cost-of-living promises, the Labor government has imposed the burden of the global inflationary crisis fully onto the working class.

This has gone hand-in-hand with a stepped-up offensive against public education, healthcare and other essential social services, including the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The public schools and hospitals are in their deepest crises in decades after successive real funding cuts. But far more is being demanded. The discussion in ruling circles, hidden from working people, is over the need for an even greater offensive, to pay both for a massive expansion of the military and to fuel corporate profits. As in the US and internationally, the last vestiges of the welfare state are to be abolished.

The onslaught on social conditions has produced massive anger. But in one industrial dispute after another, workers have been sold out by the corporatised trade unions, which function as the industrial police force of governments and big business.

The SEP campaigns for the establishment of rank-and-file committees, completely independent of the union bureaucracy and controlled by workers themselves. Through such committees, workers can share information, link up their struggles across workplaces and industries and prepare an industrial and political fight against the offensive on jobs, wages, working conditions and the attacks on vital social programs.

These committees should join with the International Workers' Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees, a concrete mechanism to unite the struggles of workers worldwide in opposition to the poisonous nationalism promoted by the union apparatuses. The SEP opposes all forms of nationalism and racism, which only serve to divide the working class.

- Workers must receive immediate pay increases of at least 30 percent, to make up for the real wage cuts of recent years!
- Affordable housing for all! For a massive expansion of public housing and rent caps to ensure everyone has a decent place to live.
- Trillions for public education, healthcare and welfare! End the crisis in the public schools and hospitals! High-quality education and healthcare are a social right!
- Place the banks and the corporations under public ownership and democratic workers' control! Expropriate the fortunes of the billionaires! The working class must control the social wealth it produces!

Workers need a new party!

The capitalist crisis, globally and in Australia, means that major social struggles are in the offing. Above all, they require revolutionary leadership. The working class needs its own mass socialist party, independent from and opposed to all of the capitalist parties. That is what the SEP is fighting to build.

In this election, as in every other, the Greens and the pseudo-left will peddle the lie that it is necessary to vote for Labor to keep the Coalition out. That has always been a fraud. In today's context, it is a politically criminal attempt to chain workers and young people to a political establishment that is hurtling towards war, a massive offensive against the working class and dictatorship.

The Greens have no fundamental differences with this agenda. They are a capitalist party that defends the dominance of the banks and major corporations over society, as well as militarism and war. As climate

change spins out of control, the Greens promote the hoax that environmental disasters can be averted in a world where corporate profit and national interest are the overriding priorities. In this election, their entire pitch is to form a coalition government with Labor, which would continue Australia's support for the Gaza genocide and accelerate the war drive against China. To make that clear, the Greens began their campaign with the announcement of a military program for the acquisition of missiles and drones, which they said was "just the beginning" of their war plans.

The pseudo-left groups such as Socialist Alternative, their electoral front, Victorian Socialists and Socialist Alliance are also no alternatives. These groups have nothing to do with socialism or the working class. They speak for an affluent layer of the upper middle class that advances its own selfish interests within the framework of capitalism, including through the use of identity politics based on race, gender and sexuality, as opposed to class. The pseudo-left seeks to tie workers and young people to Labor, the Greens and the union bureaucracy. They have derailed mass opposition to the genocide by subordinating it to appeals to Labor. In other instances, such as Ukraine and Syria, they openly support US-led imperialist war.

The SEP is the Australian section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, the only genuine world socialist movement. Together with our sister parties internationally, we fight to unify the working class globally on the basis of its common class interests. That perspective is the only viable one. Every issue confronting humanity, from war to climate catastrophes, pandemics and dictatorship, is global in scope and requires a unified response from the international working class.

We appeal to all workers and young people to vote for our candidates to signal your support for a socialist perspective. But more than that, become involved in our campaign, helping to break the corporate media's silence on these crucial issues, and to develop a discussion in the working class on the way forward. Above all, we call on workers and youth who want to fight for a socialist future to join the SEP and build it as the new mass party of the working class.

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