

SEP campaign wins warm response among workers and youth in Oxley

Mike Head, SEP candidate for the seat of Oxley
29 April 2025

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) is intervening in the May 3 Australian federal election to take our socialist program to the broadest layers of the working class, as the only alternative to the immense crisis of global capitalism that is plunging the world into trade war, war and dictatorship.

That is why, as part of the SEP team of candidates, I am standing in Oxley, one of Brisbane's working-class heartlands, where we have been receiving an appreciative response from workers and young people.

We have found a warm response and genuine interest in our fight to develop a socialist movement of the working class in Australia and internationally, against all the parties of big business, not just the Liberal National Party, but also Labor and the Greens.

Many workers have expressed their concerns that the Trump administration's economic war against China threatens humanity with the prospect of a nuclear World War III, and that his regime's war on the American working class—deporting immigrants, firing thousands of federal workers, axing public health and social programs and dismantling public education—is setting a global agenda.

Oxley covers major working-class suburbs such as Inala, Richlands, Durack, Darra, Forest Lake, Doolandella, Goodna, Wacol, Carole Park, Ellen Grove, Redbank, Redbank Plains, Bellbird Park, Collingwood Park, Camira and Springfield.

It is the location of sizeable industrial sites, including Volvo Trucks, a Rheinmetall arms factory and Primo Meats, as well as large logistics warehouse hubs for Australia Post and the Coles and Woolworths supermarket chains. Nearby is a large JBS meat processing complex employing many immigrant workers.

In Oxley, we see the social gulf between the colossal fortunes of oligarchs like mining magnates Gina Rinehart and Clive Palmer and the worsening financial hardships

facing workers and their families.

The unemployment rate in Inala, a former public housing suburb, is nearly 12 percent, or almost three times the national average. It is not much lower in suburbs like Goodna, Ellen Grove and Redbank Plains.

Here the cost-of-living and housing crisis, which is throwing millions of working-class households into financial stress, is particularly acute.

Tara, a truck driver and mother of six, spoke to me at the Inala retail centre about soaring costs of living, saying it was becoming impossible to survive and raise a family. She also denounced Donald Trump's drive to "Make America Great Again" at the expense of "everyone who are not billionaires."

Residents of town house complexes in Richlands and Redbank Plains told me about rents as high as \$725 a week or mortgage payments of up to \$1,000 a week.

At the Richlands Woolworths shopping centre, Hayden discussed with me the difficulties he faced as a young father paying more than half his wage on rent. He began by expressing disgust at being urged to vote for other parties as a "lesser evil," saying they were all evil, representing the rich and powerful.

The level of outright home ownership within Inala-Richlands is just 17 percent. That is far below the Greater Brisbane average of 27 percent, or even further below the figure of more than 60 percent in Brisbane's most affluent suburbs.

The concerns and hostility of many young people in the electorate toward the corporate ruling class and its political establishment were given voice by Sienna, an 18-year-old who left school last year and is working with her mother as a cleaner.

In a discussion with me, Sienna spoke out against war, genocide and capitalism, and Trump's "crazy" economic warfare on behalf of the wealthy. She said she wanted equality and free speech.

Oxley has one of the most international populations in Australia, with almost half the people in Oxley born overseas and nearly 60 percent speaking a language other than English at home.

On our doorknocks and at the workplaces where we have campaigned, like the JBS Dinmore meatworks, the Volvo truck plant at Wacol and the Woolworths warehouse at Larapinta, we have met workers from all over the world.

That shows the increasingly global character of the working class. But Labor and the Liberal-National Coalition are competing to see who can cut immigration the most and slash the greatest number of international students.

They are trying to make so-called foreigners the scapegoats for the social crisis, which is caused by the control of the billionaires and corporate giants over the economy, including the supermarkets, the banks and the property market.

This whipping up of nationalism and chauvinism seeks to split and divide the working class, spearheaded internationally by the mass deportations being carried out by Trump. We have met workers and students from many different parts of the planet who are facing problems with their visas, and the costs of applying for them. Some are having to plan to leave the country as a result.

Anti-immigrant poison, together with militarism, was on display when I challenged the candidates of Labor, the Coalition, the Greens and billionaire Clive Palmer's pro-Trump "Trumpet of Patriots" at the only election debate in the electorate, hosted by a local women's group.

All four backed sharply increased military spending. Labor's Milton Dick, who holds the seat and was Speaker in the House of Representatives, and the Coalition's Kevin Burns defended the AUKUS pact, which involves spending at least \$368 billion to acquire nuclear-powered attack submarines for use against China.

The Greens' Brandan Holt said nothing about AUKUS and the vast military outlays. But, he aligned himself with them, declaring: "We have to defend our nation." The Greens' policy is to spend billions of dollars on missiles and other weaponry, and form a coalition with the Labor government, which is completely committed to the US military buildup against China.

I opposed this line-up, warning that the greatest threat to the security of working people is that of a US-led nuclear war against China. I explained that the SEP and our sister parties in the International Committee of the Fourth International are fighting to unite workers globally,

including in China, Australia and the US, against the capitalist profit system, which is the root cause of war.

On behalf of the SEP, I was the only candidate to oppose the anti-immigrant demagoguery of Mark McGuire, the Trumpet of Patriots candidate, who flatly declared, without any explanation, that two million "foreigners" in Australia were to blame for the housing and cost-of-living crisis.

This demonising of immigrant workers is a threat to all the Oxley residents born overseas or who had a parent born overseas. I again emphasised that the SEP stands for the international unity of the working class, across all national and ethnic lines, in the struggle to overturn capitalist rule.

As our election statement declares:

- 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!

Our campaign is important in charting a course for the working class. I urge workers and young people in Oxley and throughout Australia to vote for me and the other SEP candidates. Above all, however, while we appreciate the support we have received, we need you to become actively involved in our campaign, and to join our party to build it as the new mass party of the working class.

Authorised by Cheryl Crisp for the Socialist Equality Party, Level 1/457-459 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills, NSW, 2010, Australia.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact