

# South Australian workers and youth speak ahead of state election

Our reporters  
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The Socialist Equality Party is campaigning in Adelaide, South Australia, ahead of the state election on March 21, which is proceeding under the shadow of the escalating US-led war against Iran. There is widespread opposition across Australia to the federal Labor government's support and active participation in the war.

South Australia's Labor government, led by Premier Peter Malinauskas, is transforming the state into a central hub for the AUKUS military alliance with the United States, as part of US-led preparations for war against China. While billions are being allocated to submarines, bases and missiles, public housing, hospitals, schools and social services remain chronically underfunded—as the ruling class seeks to make workers pay for the militarisation of society.

While Labor is expected to be re-elected, this is not because of any popular enthusiasm for Malinauskas' right-wing and militarist program. Rather, it reflects the crisis of the opposition Liberal Party, which has fallen behind the far-right, anti-immigrant One Nation in recent polls. None of the bourgeois parties is offering anything to address the social crisis facing working people, including collapsing public services and unaffordable housing.

SEP members spoke about the war and the social crisis with young people and workers at Adelaide University and in the working class suburbs of Elizabeth and Salisbury in Adelaide's north.

The northern suburbs were decimated by the closure of the car industry in 2017, presided over by the state Labor government and the trade union bureaucracy, which enforced mass redundancies in the interests of the corporations. In Elizabeth, the former Holden stronghold, the unemployment rate was 17.8 percent in September 2025, according to an analysis of official

data by AreaSearch. The 2021 Census found that nearly half of households in the suburb were living on less than \$800 a week, with median incomes in the bottom 10 percent nationally.

The cost of living has surged dramatically in recent years. Rents in Adelaide have climbed sharply, with median weekly rents reaching over \$600, while median dwelling prices are approaching \$1 million. Secure housing is increasingly out of reach for large sections of the working class, particularly young people.

**Jamie** had moved to the state from Victoria. Formerly a professional boxer, he sustained permanent injuries and his wife Kirsty now cares for him. He told the WSW: "I feel for Iran and Palestine at the moment. I've seen on the news the fellow [US veteran Brian McGinnis] that was standing up for Iran and they broke his arm on live TV.

"It's getting out of control. There's no justice anymore. It's about power now and it shouldn't be like that. In my eyes Donald Trump is running everything."

Jamie also spoke about the degradation of the healthcare system, saying, "If you don't have the money [to pay for treatment], it's a three-year waiting list. My wife has endometriosis and they said she had to go on a three-year waiting list because we can't afford the four thousand dollars needed."

**Moe** is an apprentice electrician from Syria who experienced the war in that country. He said, "There are no winners in wars, a lot of innocent people die. I had a lot of family members in Syria who died and they did nothing bad. They were completely innocent."

Moe denounced the genocide in Gaza, saying, "They flattened Gaza and killed 60,000-70,000 people and Gaza will never be rebuilt. No one will fund it—Trump said he will fund it but all he's interested in is casinos and hotels."

Regarding the SA election campaign, he said, “The Labor Party has done a terrible job. Everything has become so much more expensive, especially housing. I will never be able to afford a house in this economy, so I’ll probably live with my parents. People are struggling. There are more than one million Australians who have to work two jobs just so they can afford to live.

“I’m not voting Labor, but I am not voting for One Nation; Pauline Hanson is racist and her comments on there being ‘no good Muslims,’ were very racist.”

**Ryan**, a tiler, said, “We’ve just invaded a sovereign country for oil. And I think long term, China [will be targeted]. It’s a continuous pattern that’s occurring. Syria beforehand. Personally I’m just against the war. People suffer. They say we’ve gone from a unilateral world order to a multipolar system, I guess between China, Russia and America.”

**Tiana**, who is from Lebanon, said, “Israel has been bombing Lebanon, fighting against Hezbollah. Israel is not stopping. They want to take over the land and do what they did to the Palestinians.”

On the war in Iran, Tiana added that “it’s essentially over oil reserves that America is trying to get. I think it’s also partly because of the Epstein situation and they’re trying to cover that. But they’re putting a lot of innocent people’s lives at stake. What’s happened in Gaza has been happening for years, because of greed and power of the higher ups and I don’t know how the people are going to get out of this situation.”

**Aleem** pointed to “the stark reality that might unfold in the next few weeks. Fuel is the basic building block of the economy. If fuel prices go up, it has a ripple effect on everything—on all commodities, not just food. Every aspect of the economy gets affected. I’m anticipating that fuel prices could rise to four or even five dollars a litre.

“The Strait of Hormuz is the main artery for global oil supply, and it’s under threat with Iranian and Israeli warships targeting each other’s positions. If oil supplies are blocked, it will impact the whole world. It’s already affecting my home country, Pakistan—fuel prices have increased significantly.

“In some parts of Australia—NSW or Sydney—it has already reached around three dollars a litre.

“The situation is also impacting China’s economy. Seventy percent of China’s oil comes through the

Straits of Hormuz. To gain economic supremacy over China, the US might be using indirect or underhanded methods, such as contributing to instability that disrupts fuel supplies. But China is a military and economic behemoth; it can absorb fuel price spikes better than developing countries. For third-world countries, the impact is much harsher.

Aleem, who voted for Labor in the last state election, said official politics in Australia was increasingly following the right-wing trajectory of the United States. Pointing to the rise of One Nation in the polls, he said, “every immigrant is concerned about their future in Australia.” He compared the anti-immigrant party to Donald Trump’s “America First” demagoguery, which sought to pit Americans against foreigners in order to divert anger over unemployment and low wages.

Members of the Socialist Equality Party stressed that this election, regardless of who wins, will not resolve the problems facing working people. They argued that the only way forward is for workers to break with every big-business party and join the SEP, the only socialist and internationalist party capable of leading the working class in the fight against austerity, war and the capitalist profit system.

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