

SEP candidates in the Victoria election in Northern Metropolitan

Socialist Equality Party (Australia)
25 October 2026

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) is standing in the upper house Northern Metropolitan region in the November 28 Victorian state election. The SEP's candidates are Morgan Peach and Peter Byrne.

This election is taking place amid an international assault on jobs, living standards and democratic rights, and under the shadow of the opening shots of a third world war. The cost-of-living disaster, the destruction of public housing, the gutting of public services and the scapegoating of immigrants are the policies of a capitalist system in crisis, implemented by parties that represent the banks and the corporations.

In opposition to all the other parties standing in this election, from Labor, the Liberals, Victorian Socialists and the far right One Nation, the SEP is standing to advance a socialist and internationalist perspective, fighting for the independent political mobilisation of the working class against capitalism—the source of these escalating crises.

Morgan Peach, 31, is a member of the SEP's National Committee and president of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) club at the University of Melbourne, where he is studying to become a secondary teacher in English and History.

He was politicised by the questions that dominate politics today: the drive to war and the assault on democratic rights, including the persecution of Julian Assange for exposing war crimes. Peach joined the SEP in 2019, concluding that neither the established parties nor student protest politics could provide a way forward. He plays a central role in the party's work and political struggles in Melbourne. This includes the political fight against the pseudo-lefts of Victorian Socialists and Socialist Alliance, at the University of Melbourne, which seeks to channel student opposition back behind Labor, the Greens and the union bureaucracy.

He writes for the *World Socialist Web Site* and has stood for the SEP in 2025 in the federal seat of Calwell, which lies within Northern Metropolitan.

Peter Byrne, 67, is an architect and the son of a car worker. He joined the Socialist Labour League (SLL), the

forerunner of the SEP, in 1983, after being involved in protest politics at the University of Melbourne, including anti-nuclear and uranium mining activism. The SLL's serious approach to history, program and perspective—and its explanation of the opportunist politics of the other tendencies involved in protests—attracted Byrne to the party.

For more than four decades, he has played a leading role in the party's Melbourne work, including campaigns to defend car, building and aviation workers and teachers. He has represented the SEP in elections, including the federal seat of Calwell in 2019 and the Victorian Senate in 2022.

The SEP is standing in Northern Metropolitan because it is a key working-class region where the party has a long record of struggle. The issues confronting workers here are the same issues confronting workers across Victoria, Australia and the world.

The consequences of Labor and Coalition rule, enforced with the trade-union bureaucracy's collaboration, are sharply visible in the Northern Metropolitan region.

It stretches from inner-northern suburbs and university districts through deindustrialised centres such as Broadmeadows and Thomastown to growing outer suburbs around Wollert, Kalkallo and parts of Wallan. Its 11 electoral districts include substantial numbers of immigrant workers, including people whose families fled US-led wars and interventions from the former Yugoslavia and the Middle East. They face One Nation's reactionary racist scapegoating, which is echoed in the anti-refugee policies of Labor and the Coalition. The SEP fights to unite workers, regardless of birthplace, against war, austerity and exploitation and demands that all refugees and immigrants have full citizenship rights.

Broadmeadows and its surrounding suburbs stand as a demonstration of what Labor and the trade union bureaucracy have inflicted on the working class over decades.

The destruction of manufacturing is the clearest expression of this. Car company Ford's 2013 announcement that it would end Australian production was part of the destruction

of the entire Australian auto industry—a process the SEP opposed and fought against, in defence of the jobs and rights of car workers and the mobilisation of workers nationally. The closure affected about 700 jobs in Broadmeadows, following earlier losses including Kraft’s shutdown of its Broadmeadows biscuit factory in 2006, which eliminated 151 jobs as production shifted to China. Labor governments in cahoots with the union apparatus oversaw and enforced this process, subordinating thousands of workers’ livelihoods to corporate profitability.

The impact has been disastrous. In the period since Labor assumed power in Victoria in 2014 the situation for working people has deteriorated profoundly.

According to the 2021 Census, Broadmeadows recorded an unemployment rate of approximately 13 percent, compared with 5 percent across Victoria. Median weekly household income was just \$1,151, against \$1,759 statewide. Youth unemployment in the wider North Western Melbourne employment region averaged 14.1 percent over the year to August 2026, up from 12.8 percent a year earlier and above the Victorian rate of 12.2 percent.

In Melbourne’s inner north, the Labor government’s plan to demolish 44 public housing towers is a vicious assault on some of the most vulnerable sections of the working class, carried out directly in the interests of the property developers. The towers house 10,000 people in 6,600 apartments. Under the banner of “redevelopment,” public land in highly valuable inner-city locations is being handed over to private developers, who will reap windfall profits while residents are displaced.

Labor’s wrecking operation is proceeding against a backdrop of homelessness—the 2021 Census estimated 571 people experiencing homelessness in the City of Yarra alone—and amid a housing market in which median house prices are around \$1.2 million in Brunswick and above \$1.6 million in several inner-northern suburbs.

The SEP has a record in the fight to defend public housing. We helped establish the Neighbourhood Action Committee, which is mobilising residents against the demolition. We demand that the towers be renovated and expanded under residents’ control, and we will use the election to mobilise workers against this assault and to prevent the destruction of the towers.

In the outer north, rapid residential growth has outpaced the provision of essential services and transport connections. Workers commuting into Melbourne face long journeys, congestion and dependence on cars where public transport does not meet their needs. Modelling published by SGS Economics and Planning in 2023 put annual household transport costs at \$23,655 for Melbourne’s outer-growth-area scenarios, compared with \$8,310 for inner- and middle-

ring scenarios. Workers should not be forced to choose between affordable housing far from employment and unaffordable homes closer to work. Moreover, cheap public transport must be available to all.

A change of government will not resolve these issues. The Victorian Socialists promote the fraud that Labor is a “lesser evil” that can be pressured and appealed to, along with the Greens which do deals with Labor. This is aimed at directing the justifiable opposition of working people back into the arms of Labor and the confines of parliamentary politics. Labor’s own attacks on refugees, social conditions and democratic rights have created the conditions for the far right One Nation to make gains and inroads.

None offers a way out.

We fight for secure jobs and rising wages, universal high-quality public services, expanded public housing, and public ownership of major corporations and utilities under democratic workers’ control. We oppose imperialist war and fight to unite workers internationally against militarism and austerity.

Our campaign will fight for the reorganisation of society around human need, not corporate profit: secure jobs and rising wages, free and high-quality public services, a massive expansion of public housing, and the transfer of essential utilities and major corporations into public ownership under democratic workers’ control. We fight to unite workers internationally against militarism and austerity.

This struggle cannot end on election day. The SEP’s campaign in Northern Metropolitan is part of the fight to build a socialist movement of the working class—the only genuine socialist campaign in this election. We urge workers and young people throughout Northern Metropolitan, and throughout Melbourne and Victoria, to support the SEP campaign, participate in its activities and join the party to build an independent socialist movement capable of challenging the capitalist system itself.

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