

Public meeting in Australia: Labor's takeover of the CFMEU: An attack on the working class

Socialist Equality Party (Australia)
12 October 2024

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) in Australia will hold a meeting on October 27 entitled “Labor’s takeover of the CFMEU: An attack on the working class.” The meeting, live in Sydney, Melbourne and online, will discuss the political issues behind Labor’s attack on the Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union (CFMEU), and the way forward for workers.

Sydney

WHEN: 2 p.m. (AEDT) Sunday, October 27

WHERE: Belmore Senior Citizens Centre, 38 Redman Parade, Belmore, NSW

Reserve your seat in Sydney here.

Melbourne

WHEN: 2 p.m. (AEDT) Sunday, October 27

WHERE: Activity Room 2, Kathleen Syme Library, 251 Faraday St, Carlton, VIC

Reserve your seat in Melbourne here.

If you can’t attend in person, both meetings will be livestreamed simultaneously. Register for the Zoom livestream using this link.

The Labor government’s appointment of an administrator to run the construction division of the CFMEU is a blatant attack on the rights of building workers and the entire working class. The organisation and its 80,000 members have been placed under the quasi-dictatorial control of a government-appointed lawyer, accountable only to big business and the capitalist state.

The entire pretext of Labor’s attack is a fraud. It has nothing to do with combatting unproven allegations of corruption and links to organised crime in the union. Instead, the CFMEU has been targeted because of concerns in ruling circles that recent pay rises of around

5-6 percent per annum indicate that the union bureaucracy is not doing enough to suppress the wage struggles of a historically militant section of workers.

This struggle goes beyond the construction industry. Labor’s attack on construction workers and the CFMEU has been carried out with the full support of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and virtually every union in the country. This should be a stark warning for workers of what will come in every sector.

The authoritarian measures carried out against building workers demonstrate that the fight for wage rises to make up for the pay cuts imposed over a decade is a fight against the government itself. Every section of workers has suffered under this regime of wage freeze. To fight it, workers must mobilise across all industries. Building workers can’t be left to fight this attack alone.

Tens of thousands of construction workers have turned out to rallies across the country in opposition to this attack on the CFMEU, revealing their determination to fight this anti-democratic travesty. But anger and determination alone are not enough.

The SEP fully supports workers striking against Labor’s attack on the construction union. But we warn that this government offensive will not be stopped through sporadic and isolated “community protests” organised by the ousted CFMEU leaders or others in the union apparatus. Their sole concern is to channel workers into futile appeals to the very government that enacted the legislation against them. The bureaucracy’s aim is to ensure the fight for an independent political program is blocked. Meanwhile, the union leaders pursue their real goal which is to have their privileged

and highly paid positions reinstated.

The struggle against the administration must be based on a fight for genuine improvements in building workers' wages, conditions, job security and safety, not on reinstating the same bureaucrats who have allowed these standards to decline over the past 30 years.

To accomplish this, construction workers must take control of their own future. A network of rank-and-file committees must be established across major worksites and throughout the industry, providing workers with a democratic platform to organise and advocate for their needs and rights. These committees must be independent of the union bureaucracy, whose aim would be to neuter them or shut them down.

The Labor government's attack on workers' rights is inseparable from its broader pro-business and pro-war agenda. Billions are being funnelled into military spending in preparation for a US-led war with China, while essential public services like healthcare and education are gutted. This militarisation is accompanied by increasing repression, as seen in recent police crackdowns on anti-war protests. The administration of the CFMEU is itself an attempt to subordinate workers even more directly to the state, as part of this development of a wartime atmosphere of authoritarianism.

This means that broader political issues are at stake in the fight against administration. Workers must unite to oppose not only Labor's economic policies but its drive towards war, which threatens to devastate lives at home and abroad.

This poses the need for a political fight against the Labor government, the union bureaucracy as a whole and the capitalist system itself. The crisis of world capitalism means a future of poverty, unemployment and catastrophic war threatening humanity. The alternative is the fight to establish workers' power and the socialist reorganisation of society, including placing the banks, the construction companies and the corporations under public ownership and democratic workers' control. At the meeting, leading members of the SEP will elaborate its revolutionary perspective, leaving ample time for questions and discussion.

Register today!

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To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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