

“An outrageous attack”—SEP electoral members in Australia speak out against party registration ban

Our reporters
13 March 2025

Published below are statements from electoral members of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), opposing the rejection of the party’s registration application by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). The decision means SEP candidates standing in the upcoming federal election will do so without their party name appearing on the ballot paper.

The anti-democratic ruling comes amid a deepening crackdown on opposition to Israel’s genocidal onslaught against the Palestinians, which is fully supported by the Labor government and the Liberal-National opposition.

This week, it has been exposed that the major parties conspired to rush through draconian “hate speech” laws, in New South Wales (NSW) and federally, under the pretext of combatting a “wave of antisemitism” and a “terror” plot that they knew to be a hoax.

This underscores the urgent need for workers and young people to fight for an alternative to the status quo, in which the major parties are both telling the same lies to justify shutting down any criticism of their program of war and austerity. This perspective, which only the SEP will advance in the next election, is what the AEC and the entire political establishment is desperate to silence.

We urge you to attend our public meeting on March 19, in Sydney and online, to discuss this blatant act of political censorship and what must be done to defeat it.

Election ban on the SEP: An attack on democratic rights

WHEN: 7 p.m. (AEDT) Wednesday, March 19

WHERE: Lansdowne Rooms, Bankstown Library, Bankstown, NSW

Reserve your seat now!

For those unable to attend in person, the event will also be live-streamed via Zoom.

Read our statement against the decision here.

Dolores, from Victoria, wrote:

I became an electoral member of the Socialist Equality Party because it is the only alternative to the two-party system and the only party based on the working class, fighting to arm it with an international strategy.

The decision to deny the Socialist Equality Party (SEP)

official party registration is an outrageous attack on democratic rights and workers’ ability to seek an alternative outside the existing system. The SEP is being deliberately targeted because it fights to unite workers against the pressing crises we all face—nuclear war, pandemics, climate catastrophe, and austerity.

The main parties, Labor, Liberal and the Greens, all stand with big business, as do the pseudo-lefts like Socialist Alliance and Victorian Socialists.

Governments are nervous that people no longer support the political establishment, particularly the two-party system. This shows the breakdown of parliamentary rule.

As the crisis unfolds, attacks on freedom of expression have intensified, particularly against those who oppose the policies of war and genocide. Any opposition to the slaughter in Gaza is branded as antisemitic.

The suspension of Randa Abdel-Fattah’s ARC grant over her anti-genocide stance is a clear expression of this anti-democratic crackdown. These measures aim to intimidate the population, suppressing opposition to US-led wars and the Australian government’s role in Israel’s genocide of the Palestinian people. They are scared that we will all rise up against them, because they know we are powerful united.

Kim, a retired high-school teacher from Queensland, wrote:

As an electoral member of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), I wish to add my voice to those of fellow party members who vehemently protest the lack of transparency and undemocratic nature of the Australian Electoral Commission’s rejection of our application for re-registration.

Every effort was made in good faith by the SEP to satisfy the terms of the “law.” However, the SEP has been barred from registration on tenuous and highly dubious grounds by the AEC. The “law” which, in part, trebled the required number of party members, was introduced when the SEP was already a registered party in 2021. The restrictions

created by COVID and the imminence of the 2022 election made compliance with the new membership requirements virtually impossible and led to the SEP's de-registration. With the current rejection, received on 17th February 2025, the SEP is again denied a realistic time frame in which to re-submit.

Furthermore, access to Socialist Equality Party candidates, who represent the interests of the majority of voters, is being denied by the absence of their party name from the ballot paper. Our electoral system is shamefully undemocratic if it continues to pursue an agenda restricting voters to a two-party system by obstructing competition from minor parties or independent candidates unless they receive financial backing from vested business interests.

The SEP advocates for government of, for and by the people, united in the true spirit of democracy.

I wish to challenge the AEC to provide convincing evidence that the SEP should be denied party registration, a decision that was based on a small sample of our membership. I also demand a full review of the SEP's application for registration.

Mike, a worker in Western Australia, wrote:

As an avid reader of the *World Socialist Web Site*, I became aware of the major political parties changing the rules so that 1,500 members, instead of 500, were needed to register a party in the federal election of May 2022. I joined as an electoral member shortly after.

After witnessing the AEC's delay tactics, it is evident that they are willing to use any means to block the SEP's involvement in the upcoming election. I am convinced they do not want voters to see or hear the clarity of the message that would come from the party's campaign.

So many people in Australia want to see an end to the ugliest form of humanity displayed by the US/Israel genocide in Gaza. An end to the housing affordability crisis. An end to the ridiculous waste of \$368 billion on the militarist AUKUS pact with the US and the UK and a way forward that doesn't involve the corporatised unions doing their best to hold real progress back.

I fully support the Socialist Equality Party in their campaign to stop the suppression of the only true working-class party available to voters in the upcoming election.

Mary, a health worker in northern NSW, wrote:

I am writing to object to the undemocratic decision of the Australian Electoral Commission to prevent the Socialist Equality Party from registration.

The SEP is the only genuine socialist party standing in the elections. It is the only party that campaigns among the

working class and student youth, seeking support for its policies and program. This decision has trampled on my democratic rights, as well as those of all our members.

The Labor and Liberal-National duopoly have been exposed like never before as parties of big business, war and genocide. Thousands across Australia have lost faith in the two-party system, which fails to address even the most basic issues affecting millions. Housing, education, the cost of living, obscene defence spending, support for US imperialist war and genocide, and environmental devastation dominate our lives. This AEC decision protects the entire political framework of capitalist corporate profits and greed.

The AEC has used flawed and duplicitous methods to block the SEP's registration—from delaying the process to its fake concern for members' "privacy" and unscientific statistical methods. Hands off the SEP.

The most egregious example of the undemocratic nature of this whole affair is the registration of the Trumpet of Patriots by Clive Palmer. Backed by millions of dollars, he rebranded another party to promote a Trump-style fascist organisation—exposing the real priorities of the system.

I will raise this with fellow workers and support the SEP's campaign for immediate registration.

The Socialist Equality Party's name reflects our purpose. We fight for social equality, for the working class. As I write, a report from the Australia Institute reveals that the richest 10 percent of Australians have claimed 93 percent of all new wealth—the largest increase in the nation's history.

Never before has there been such a need for a party fighting for socialism and equality. Give us that right. We demand it.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact