

# Australian Greens campaigning for pro-business, pro-war coalition with Labor

Robert Creech, SEP candidate for the seat of Newcastle

17 April 2025

The Australian election is characterised by widespread hostility towards Labor and the Liberal-National Coalition, with broad layers of workers and young people viewing them correctly as parties of big business, the banks and war, with virtually indistinguishable programs.

Growing numbers are seeking out a political alternative. Some young people are no doubt looking to the Greens, which have won a degree of support based on their condemnations of Israel's genocide in Gaza and their posturing over housing and other aspects of the social crisis.

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) bluntly warns that the Greens offer no way forward whatsoever. We have always opposed this party, explaining that whatever its rhetoric, the Greens is a pro-capitalist outfit that defends the dictatorship of the banks and the billionaires, and the parliamentary order that advances their interests.

The election is being held under conditions of a massive global crisis, expressed in the development of all-out economic war, military conflict and a turn by the ruling elites to fascism and dictatorship, expressed most sharply in the ascension of Donald Trump to the US presidency.

Under these conditions, all parties are being compelled to show their true colours. That is certainly the case with the Greens, which are running the most openly right-wing and pro-war campaign in their history.

The central thrust of the Greens' campaign is their aspiration to form a coalition government with Labor after May 3.

This is under conditions where Labor, over the past three years, has completed Australia's transformation into a frontline state for war with China; has presided over the biggest reversal to working-class living conditions in decades, and has gone on the offensive against democratic rights, spearheading a crackdown on mass opposition to the Gaza genocide.

The response of the Greens to this reactionary record, is

that they want a seat at the table.

To try to politically justify their overtures to Labor, the Greens are once again peddling lesser-evilism. The Greens are claiming that Coalition leader Peter Dutton represents a unique danger. A number of their statements warn: "America got Trump. We can't let Australia get Dutton."

What a sham! In the first instance, Trump is not some aberration but the most naked expression of the political program of the ruling elite in every country, amid the deepest breakdown of world capitalism since the 1930s.

The outgoing Labor government, though not fascist, has implemented policies that are similar to those of Trump. That included the bipartisan passage late last year of a mass deportation bill, which could result in more than 80,000 people on temporary and bridging visas being kicked out of the country, as part of a broader offensive against immigrants and refugees.

While fulminating against Trump, the Greens are trying to form a government with a Labor Party that has fawned over the fascist gangster in the White House. Labor leaders, including Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Foreign Minister Penny Wong, have congratulated Trump, over and over again, while pledging to collaborate with him as closely as possible.

Labor has declared that it would be better placed to work with Trump than Dutton and the Coalition, based on the government's record of militarising Australia in preparation for war with China.

For all their rhetoric, the Greens are desperately seeking to collaborate with Labor, which is desperately seeking to collaborate with Trump.

The fact is that the threat of the far-right cannot be fought through seedy deals within the rotten parliamentary set-up. Trump's election was directly facilitated by the right-wing, corporate and pro-war character of the Democrats, which, like Labor, have also

pledged to work with his fascist administration.

The only way to fight the threat of fascism and authoritarianism is through the independent mobilisation of the working class against capitalism and all its representatives, which is anathema to the Greens.

The Greens are not only presenting Labor as a “lesser-evil.” In the words of party leader Adam Bandt, this election presents a “once in a generation opportunity” to establish a minority government dependent on the Greens that would usher in a “golden era of progressive reform.”

This is an even more blatant lie than the phony campaign promises of Labor and the Coalition. The Greens well know that Labor, having overseen a massive reduction in living standards, will be compelled to go even further once the election is over. The entire discussion in ruling circles is over the necessity for unprecedented budget cuts, to pay for a decade of forecast deficits and for the economic crisis that will be exacerbated by global trade war.

Bandt has repeatedly stated that there are no conditions on the Greens backing of a Labor government. The various policies he has stated, such as an expansion of dental care and of public housing, have the character of a wish list that the Greens know will not be implemented.

What is the record of the 2010–13 Greens-backed minority Labor government of Prime Minister Julia Gillard, which the Greens present as a model to be emulated? Bandt has vaguely referenced purported “reforms” by that government, without being able to concretely outline any.

In reality, that Labor-Greens government participated in the US-led troop surge in the neo-colonial occupation of Afghanistan, during which most of the confirmed Australian war crimes, including the murder of civilians, took place. It aligned Australia with the US pivot to Asia, a massive military build-up directed against China, setting the stage for the war that is now being prepared by Trump.

On the social front, the Labor-Greens coalition kicked 100,000 single parents off their benefits. It slashed the budgets of healthcare and education, and initiated the pro-market restructuring of these essential services, as well as disability services.

The Greens have already signalled that they will back a similar austerity offensive, that will be even more drastic given the depth of the capitalist crisis. Late last year, they shelved all of their demands on housing and voted for Labor legislation that handed vast sums to the property developers.

The Greens have also signalled their willingness to join the military build-up and war. On the eve of the election, they unveiled their first costed defence policy, a \$4 billion program to construct drones as well as intermediate range missiles, which would serve Australia’s involvement in a war with China.

For well over a year, the Greens had denounced Labor over its complicity in the Gaza genocide, involving some of the worst war crimes since the 1930s. In practice, the Greens played a central role in derailing mass opposition to the genocide by peddling the lie that Labor could be pressured to end its involvement. Now, with Labor maintaining its full support for the criminal Israeli regime, the Greens are proposing a coalition with it.

National Greens leaders now have almost nothing to say about Gaza. Bandt did not even mention it during his extended address to the National Press Club. The Greens are making plain that they will not let a genocide get in the way of their aspirations to advance through the corridors of power. In the most cynical fashion, however, they are raising Gaza in certain local electorates, particularly those with a large Middle Eastern and Islamic population.

The sharp shift to the right by the Greens must be the occasion for drawing political lessons. It demonstrates that opposition to militarism, war, austerity and authoritarianism, cannot go forward through any of the capitalist parties or the official parliamentary set-up.

Rather, what is required is an independent movement of the working class, directed against the entire political establishment, and the decaying profit system that it represents, which is once again hurtling towards barbarism and disaster. That means the fight for the socialist reorganisation of society, in Australia and globally, the revolutionary perspective fought for by the Socialist Equality Party alone.

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