

SEP Australia verifies “registered party” status once again

By our reporters
5 October 2017

The Socialist Equality Party (Australia) has once again successfully verified that it meets the requirements of the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to remain on the list of “registered political parties.” Registered status ensures that the party’s name will appear on the ballot paper in federal elections alongside our candidates, rather than the SEP being described as “independent” or having no political identification at all.

The so-called “major” parties—the Liberal-National Coalition, the Labor Party and the Greens—collaborate to impose anti-democratic and arbitrary membership tests on parties that have no representation in parliament. The implicit aim is to exclude political challenges, under conditions of growing alienation among masses of ordinary people, from the existing political establishment.

Currently, registration requires a party to provide the AEC with the details of between 500 and 550 members and to pass an “eligibility review” after each election.

The review involves the AEC vetting the submitted members to ensure the name and address of each person matches their registration details on the federal electoral roll. Any discrepancy can result in members being excluded from the list, and the party potentially being issued a “notice of deregistration.”

AEC officers then conduct a random survey of a percentage of members, questioning them as to whether they do, indeed, belong to the party. Some parties have been deregistered because a handful of people, for whatever reason, have declined to confirm membership.

The SEP insists that all like-minded people have the democratic right to form a political organisation of their choice and seek to win support for its program and policies. Moreover, they should be able to do so

without intrusive, potentially intimidating and time-consuming examinations of their membership by a government authority.

In 2007, the SEP decided to gain registered status, despite our opposition to the AEC’s anti-democratic requirements. Under conditions in which our election campaigns and other activities are regularly subjected to virtual blanket censorship by the establishment media, having the party name on the ballot paper assists those workers and youth who want to vote for a socialist and internationalist perspective to identify our candidates.

As in all previous reviews over the past 10 years, the SEP provided the AEC with the details of more than 500 dues-paying electoral members. All those who were contacted during the random survey confirmed their membership.

The registration of the SEP is an important expression of the base of political support that has been built for the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) in the working class in Australia since 1972, when a section of the world Trotskyist movement was re-established in the country. The party has had a long, active and principled presence in key working class areas and the *World Socialist Web Site* has a significant audience.

Among the more than 500 electoral members are workers and youth who joined in response to the ICFI’s consistent struggle to alert the working class to the dangers of war. The fight to build an international anti-war movement on the basis of a socialist program was at the centre of the SEP’s campaign for the July 2, 2016 election. Others have joined as a byproduct of the SEP’s fight against the destruction of public education, health care, working conditions and other fundamental social and democratic rights.

Above all, the support for the ICFI is the outcome of the decades-long struggle to delineate a genuine socialist and internationalist perspective from every form of nationalism and opportunism. SEP members are educated in the unbridgeable political differences that exist between the world Trotskyist movement and organisations such as the Labor Party, the trade unions, the Greens and various pseudo-left groupings.

The SEP extends our public thanks to all current electoral members and our broader base of supporters. We encourage all those who want to become active in the day-to-day work and campaigns of the party to apply for membership in one of our branches. Now is the time to take up the fight for genuine socialism—against war, social inequality and oppression.

We also appeal for financial support. A generous donation from every member would enable us to expand the fight for a socialist perspective in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region, and develop our editorial contributions to the WSWS. Donations can be made via PayPal or by contacting us here and asking for bank transfer details.

To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>