

VISION

Socialist Alliance

Socialist Alliance stands for Socialism – democratic ownership and management of society's wealth. We could readily meet everyone's need for food, housing, health, education, culture, recreation if the modern technologies, scientific knowledge, organisational know-how and sheer wealth that the giant corporations monopolise were brought under the control of all people. The main roadblock to this potential future is the profit system itself. So long as giant corporations compete with one another to produce ever more output at decreasing costs, our lives will be hostage to their needs.

The Socialist Alliance approach is based on the principle that the needs of people and our planet must come before corporate profit making. But we are also different because we don't think voting is enough. Real improvements in our lives don't originate in Parliament House, but from "ordinary" people acting to defend their interests, from the social movements that we build. We also think that to go on the offensive means we need a real political alternative, a party for the social movements, the oppressed and working people. Such a party gives us every chance to organise collectively to fight for our rights, and to bring into being a government that does put people and the planet first. So if you agree with the Socialist Alliance policies and approach vote for us, but most of all – get active! Join us in the struggle to create the new political voice that worker people in Australia need

Socialist Equality

The SEP advances a program for the reorganization of the Australian and world economy to meet the needs of the vast majority of the global population.

Instead of the present setup, where the major industries, banks and financial institutions are privately owned and controlled, we advocate the creation of a socialist system of public ownership and the fullest democratic control over the economic policies and priorities of society.

Only when social need, not private profit, becomes the organizing principle of production and all aspects of social life, will the extraordinary human and technical resources that are now available be utilized to provide a better living standard and safe environment for all.

Greens

Australia as a nation is experiencing unprecedented prosperity and we should be sharing our resources, addressing disadvantage and investing in the future by building up our communities and giving everyone a 'fair go'.

The Australian Greens have been outspoken about the growing disadvantage within our community and the failure of short-sightedness in social and economic terms. The way we treat those most disadvantaged in our society goes directly to the values that we hold. It can say a lot about how we define ourselves as human beings and what we are doing to realise the kind of society we wish to live in. We believe as a nation we are in many ways missing the opportunity to make the most of these good times because we are not investing in improving the health, education and living standards of all our

citizens. We need to look at how we build, facilitate and support communities and 'social cohesion' as a way of helping to address disadvantage.

We firmly believe that solutions must address the multiple underlying causes of disadvantage, that addressing just one won't help in the long term. That short term fixes don't work, that long term commitment and funding beyond election cycles is needed.

The Australian Greens recognise Australia is facing a housing affordability crisis. The lack of affordable housing including rentals, particularly for people on low incomes, represents a serious market failure as well as policy failure by federal and state governments. There are no simple answers to addressing Australia's housing crisis. Federal, State and local governments all have a role in the housing market, and better coordination together with a comprehensive policy approach is vital to effectively address these issues. The Greens support policies to ensure subsidies and concessions for the provision of private rental accommodation are targeted at affordable housing for low-income households and that there is significantly increased investment in public and community housing and emergency accommodation.

The Australian Greens have long been calling for a national strategy to address poverty in Australia. We support a national poverty strategy that includes better research into poverty, increased income support and a simpler and fairer social security system. There also needs to be more emphasis on providing opportunities for job seekers through education, training and real job creation.

Australian Democrats

We believe that the level of poverty in Australia is unacceptable. Our experiences of advocating for disadvantaged people across Australia have shown us that poverty is all too real and despite what successive federal and state governments claim, it is all too measurable, and the wealth gap between the rich and poor in Australia has grown over the past decade.

We are urging the major parties to commit to the recommendations of the Senate Community Affairs Committee inquiry, *A hand up not a hand out: Renewing the fight against poverty, Report on poverty and financial hardship* (March 2004) particularly Recommendation 94 for a comprehensive anti-poverty strategy to be developed at the national level, and Recommendation 95 that a statutory authority or unit reporting directly to the Prime Minister be established with responsibility for developing, implementing and monitoring a national anti-poverty strategy.

See http://www.democrats.org.au/docs/poverty_in_australia for more details on our policy and actions.

Christian Democrats

Maximising employment priorities in all industries is paramount to achieving a significant reduction in poverty. Ease of access to educational and training opportunities is also essential.

Above all, it is important that the disadvantage be given the necessary incentives to look for work and not to become complacent and fall prey to a 'welfare' mentality. This means that social security payments and taxation arrangements must be structured in such a way as to encourage the unemployed to take up work when being offered a position whilst at the same time maintaining support through a reasonable and non punitive level of welfare payments until self-sufficiency is attained.

Labor

The Labor Party did not provide a response for this forum. Policy information has been collated from the ALP website www.alp.org.au

Labor believes that inclusion and full economic and social participation is critical for every Australian to reach their potential. Social inclusion can help to reduce poverty, improve health outcomes, reduce crime and strengthen communities. Labor believes that we can build long-term prosperity without throwing fairness out the back door. In government, Labor will implement long-term strategies to build social inclusion and spread opportunity so that all Australians have the opportunity to be a valued part of their local community and society.

Labor is committed to preventing and eliminating poverty in Australia, to improving the living standards of all Australians and to reducing inequality between Australians, by providing people with a secure income and access to the services and opportunities they need so that all Australians can live with decency and dignity.

Coalition

The Coalition sees greater prosperity and economic growth as fundamentally linked to improved social outcomes for the poor. For instance, the capacity of individual Australians to find meaningful employment creates opportunities for self reliance, self esteem and family cohesion. Disciplined economic management by government permits investments in education, health and social services that would otherwise be impossible. In government, the Coalition will continue to astutely manage the economy and invest the resultant financial returns in areas of community need.