



for the millions, not the millionaires

# Socialist Campaigner

National Newsletter of the Socialist Alliance, Number 8, June 2004.

## Think outside the square

### By David Glanz (National Co-convenor & candidate for Wills)

Forget the speculation about when the federal election will be held - August, October or whenever. For Socialist Alliance branches, the election campaign must begin now.

Unlike the major parties, we don't have the money for TV advertisements or paid distribution of leaflets. So we have to make the best of the only real resource we have going - our members and supporters.

The good news is that we now have an excellent weapon with which to wage our campaign. The Socialist Alliance election manifesto is a bright, professional and accessible publication that we want to get into as many hands as possible.

The first print run was 10,000 and we'll be happy to print it again if demand is there from the branches. You can even make a little for the election campaign fund by asking for a \$1 donation - more than the price paid by branches.

The first feedback from the manifesto has been very positive. Members feel confident to use it on stalls, in workplaces and everywhere else the Alliance is active.

As Paul Roberts, Melbourne South-East branch convenor, said: "We were out last week campaigning in Clayton, with our candidate, Josephine Cox. It was great having the manifesto on the stall. It's well written and looks fantastic. It makes the Socialist Alliance look much more credible and professional. You can offer it to people knowing that they'll be impressed." The branch sold three manifestos that day.

Wills branch members have sold 15 manifestos so far while doorknocking in Brunswick and Coburg. Members told the last branch meeting that there was a lot of interest, with many people pleasantly surprised that a new party would have such an impressive publication.

Why not try to sell the manifestos at work, too? I've sold three so far in my workplace - all at \$2. One went to someone who helped the Alliance at the 2001 federal election, another to a colleague who came to the branch fundraising dinner recently, and the third to a colleague who is thinking of joining the Greens. The manifestos help generate discussion.

Branches and districts should also organise to get the manifestos round demonstrations. June 20 is World Refugee Day, a perfect opportunity to impact on a crowd that will undoubtedly include many people willing to vote left of Labor.

We also should try to get the manifestos into union branch meetings, on university stalls, and in anti-war campaign meetings - the potential audience is in all these places.

Meanwhile, branches need to start brainstorming ideas to get the Alliance noticed. As the election nears, we'll find our profile more and more squeezed by the major players, so we have to be inventive.

Of course, letterboxing, doorknocking and stalls are the basics. But we need to think outside the square.

For instance, Centrelink offices are often chronically understaffed, leading to stress for workers and delays for claimants. The Alliance has CPSU members in most cities - so why not try to get the local facts, and then have the candidate distribute a leaflet outside the office and invite the local papers along?

If you're taking up the refugee issue, or the plight of Hicks and Habib, lock the candidate in a cage in the local shopping centre and organise a speakout.

Tasmanian comrades found a motorcade worked well in the recent state upper house election. Get a half dozen cars, cover them in corflute placards and drive from shopping centre to shopping centre. At each one, the candidate can make a quick speech while others hand out leaflets.

Ask AEU sub-branches at local schools if you can come along to speak.

Hand out leaflets outside mosques on Fridays after prayers. Put out posters in the main community languages in your area.

Organise "meet the candidate" meetings and letterbox 1000 or 2000 homes within easy walking distance of the venue.

I'm sure there are many more good ideas out there among our members. Send them in to the election coordinating committee at [federalelection@socialist-alliance.org](mailto:federalelection@socialist-alliance.org).

## Seeing Red: a success we must build on

### By Dick Nichols (Seeing Red managing editor)

It's just over two months since the first issue of *Seeing Red* appeared on Socialist Alliance's stalls and at its meetings. Just how well is our magazine doing? What can we do to make sure it survives and flourishes? How can we best use it to help Socialist Alliance grow?

There's no doubt that the magazine has struck a positive chord with readers. The most negative comment to reach the ears of the Editorial Board—from a certain Sydney millionaire book-selling identity—was that it was "a bit dry". But our formula for *Seeing Red*, combining serious essays, humour and vivid graphics while tackling a wider range of topics than most left publications, has gone down very well with the various audiences at which it is aimed.

The response from left and socialist-minded intellectuals, many of whom are battling to survive in an increasingly reactionary academic scene, has been especially gratifying. Many are subscribing, while some are already signing up as contributing editors. Their contribution will be invaluable in

planning the content and approach of future issues.

What's more, the first issue sold very easily to the broader left. In particular, wherever Socialist Alliance comrades took it upon themselves to push the magazine actively they showed that sales came "as easily as shelling peas". This active selling of the magazine led to a number of Socialist Alliance branches (Canberra, Northern Rivers, Sydney Northside, Illawarra, Canterbury-Bankstown) selling out their original bundle and taking new orders.

Another sign of the impact of our first issue is that copy and correspondence is flowing in for issue number two, and the Editorial Board will soon have to play the bastards' role and decide whose work to accept and whose to

reject!

### Final distribution push

As this issue of *Socialist Campaigner* goes to press, branches have sold between 1000 and 1300 of the 1600 copies taken in bundles, while 1200 have gone out for commercial distribution via our state and territory distribution coordinators, as well as around 100 in subscriptions and 200 in complementary copies. That leaves us with 900 of the first issue to move (our total run was 4000).

Our effort from the national distribution desk will be to use part of this remaining stock to hunt up subscriptions from academics, unions and NGOs. In addition, we will investigate the feasibility of having the magazine placed in select newsagencies via a commercial distributor.

As the last month of distribution of our first issue approaches, Socialist Alliance branches and commercial distribution coordinators need to make a special effort to distribute the remainder of our stock. This is also an opportunity to get the Socialist Alliance known and appreciated in a wider milieu. The best way to achieve this goal is simply for every branch to try to follow the example of those branches that have led the way in *Seeing Red* sales.

Some examples. Why not...

- Make sure that at every future demonstration (especially at the June 20 World Refugee Day and the June 30 demonstration against the Iraq occupation) there are comrades dedicated to selling subscriptions and single issues to the crowd? It's partly because of that approach that Canterbury-Bankstown sold out of its first bundle.
- Follow Illawarra's example of doorknocking those university faculties where there are sympathetic academics? That's how we've netted more subscriptions from the University of Wollongong than any other institution.
- Have a comrade visit the local Trades and Labor Council and other union offices? You can tell them that even the NSW Labor Council has its subscription to *Seeing Red*!
- Make a point at every meeting, including branch meetings, of asking every one to take out a subscription? When the Venezuelan ambassador addressed a recent Sydney meeting and the chair made a point of drawing the audience's attention to *Seeing Red* the harvest was 13

copies and a couple of subscriptions.

- Make a point of showing *Seeing Red* around at work? Often people only have to see that magnificent cover to be induced to part with the \$5.

If all branches put in this sort of effort over June, the first issue of *Seeing Red* will come close to selling out and we will be on a solid financial footing as we produce our second issue.

### Making *Seeing Red* work for Socialist Alliance

However, *Seeing Red* isn't just an interesting magazine made possible by the emergence of Socialist Alliance. We can also use it to consolidate the Socialist Alliance and its influence.

That's not only because future issues of the magazine will carry more information on the work of the Alliance: it's also because in producing *Seeing Red* Socialist Alliance is showing that it's dedicated to making a serious and sustained contribution to the development of the anti-capitalist alternative.

In particular, it fits in with the Alliance's own policy development effort, which took a step forward at the Third National Conference and with the appearance of our *Manifesto 2004*.

However, to advance the work begun it's very important that branches and members make more conscious use of the magazine and more of a contribution to it. Why not, for example:

- Have a discussion at a future branch meeting about a *Seeing Red* article? For instance, does the Alliance's newly adopted health policy adequately embody the principle's of "wellness" outlined in Humphrey McQueen's article in issue 1?
- Have a branch discussion about the sort of issues the magazine should take up? What sort of articles and approach would better help the work of the Alliance in your area? Who could write them?
- Think about getting that particularly telling anecdote or piece of information into the Behind the Headlines section? Nearly every SA branch is a fount of information about scandalous goings-on in the ALP and the Coalition, as well as inspiring stories about the dignified struggles of "ordinary" men and women. Let *Seeing Red* know about them.
- Host a *Seeing Red* discussion on a contentious topic? With the appearance of our second issue *Seeing Red* will be housing

## SA's \$100 club (or "How to divert state subsidies to the millions, not the millionaires")

**As a registered political party, membership dues and donations to Socialist Alliance, up to \$100 per financial year, are tax deductible.**

**That means that someone on an average wage who adds a \$40 donation when paying their \$60 annual membership fee will get back around \$30 on their tax.**

**For Socialist Alliance, that extra \$40 is a significant help (multiply \$40 by the roughly 400 full-wage members at present and you'll get the idea). For the member, after claiming their tax deduction, it has cost only an extra \$10.**

**So, when next you pay your membership dues, join the \$100 club – and encourage everyone else who joins to do the same.**

**It is not often under capitalism that state subsidies go to the millions, rather than the millionaires. Let's do as much of this redistribution as we possibly can.**

**... and don't forget that you can now pay your membership fee and donate to SA securely on-line at [www.socialist-alliance.org](http://www.socialist-alliance.org)**

controversy (the first on the issue of "middle-class welfare"). Such debates should be the bread and butter of SA's political life. Why not use them to draw more people around the Alliance?

Send in your articles and letters. Alliance branch meetings are full of interesting information and discussion. Let's reflect the best of that in *Seeing Red*.

In a nutshell, the more Socialist Alliance members contribute to *Seeing Red*, the more lively and relevant it will become and the broader the audience that will be drawn to it. In working together to

make it a better magazine, we will also be spreading the influence of Socialist Alliance.

## Meet your new National Executive

The Socialist Alliance National Conference last month elected a new, 33-strong National Executive.

The NE is made up of representatives from each of the affiliated organisations (proportional to their memberships), plus a majority of

non-aligned members who were elected by their state/territory delegates at the conference, on a proportional membership basis, to represent the members of their state or territory.

Introducing your National Executive:

### STATE/TERRITORY REPS

#### **NEW SOUTH WALES**

Raul Bassi: Raul is in Canterbury-Bankstown branch and is a National Convener, SA's candidate for Blaxland, and on the National Anti-war & International Solidarity Coordinating Committee.

Michael Morphett: Michael is in Sydney North branch.

Austin Whitten: Austin is in Sydney Central branch and is the convener of the SA-Green Left Weekly Editorial Board.

Andrew Watson: Andrew is in Northern Rivers branch and on the SA-Green Left Weekly Editorial Board and the National Trade Union Coordinating Committee.

Julie Sloggett: Julie is in Canterbury-Bankstown branch.

#### **VICTORIA**

Louise Walker: Louise is in Melbourne Central branch, and is a National Convener and on the National Trade Union Coordinating Committee.

Lalitha Chelliah: Lalitha is in Melbourne North East branch and is SA's lead Victorian Senate candidate. She is a National Convener and on the National Elections and Policy Development Coordinating Committee.

Tony Dewberry: Tony is a member of Wills branch.

#### **SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

David Scrimgeour: David is a member of Adelaide branch.

The 2nd South Australian

representative will be elected by the branch next month.

#### **WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Chris Cain: Chris is in Perth branch and WA Secretary of the MUA.

Joseph Karunarathe: Joseph is a member of Perth branch.

#### **NORTHERN TERRITORY**

Ray Hayes: Ray is in Darwin branch and on the National Anti-war & International Solidarity Coordinating Committee.

#### **QUEENSLAND**

Dave Riley: Dave is in Brisbane Central branch and on the SA-Green Left Weekly Editorial Board and the National Elections and Policy Development Coordinating Committee.

Sam Watson: Sam is in Brisbane South West branch. He is SA's lead Queensland Senate candidate and SA's spokesperson on Indigenous issues.

#### **ACT**

John van der Velden: John is a member of Canberra branch.

#### **TASMANIA**

Linda Seaborn: Linda is in Hobart branch and on the National Membership, Finances and Branch Building Coordinating Committee.

### AFFILIATE REPRESENTATIVES

#### **DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST PERSPECTIVE:**

Lisa Macdonald: Lisa is in Sydney West branch and is SA's candidate for Reid. She is a National Convener and convener of the National Membership, Finances and Branch Building Coordinating Committee.

Peter Boyle: Peter is in Marrickville branch and on the SA-Green Left Weekly Editorial Board.

Pip Hinman: Pip is in Marrickville branch and is co-convener of the National Anti-war & International Solidarity Coordinating Committee.

John Percy: John is in Sydney Central branch and on the National Anti-war and International Solidarity Coordinating Committee.

Sue Bolton: Sue is in Wills branch and is convener of the National Trade Union Coordinating Committee.

Jorge Jorquera: Jorge is in Marrickville branch. He manages the SA web site and is co-convener of the National Elections & Policy Development Coordinating Committee.

#### **INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST ORGANISATION:**

David Glanz: David is in Wills branch and their election candidate. He is a

## **www.socialist-alliance.org - information and fun**

**By Jorge Jorquera (Web site manager)**

Over the last few weeks the Socialist Alliance web site has been radically changed to make it more informative and user friendly – especially for SA branches and members.

Take a look at:

- the new home page, which presents SA's activities up front and links you direct to all our policies, media releases, documents, the newsletter, and campaign resources
- the new Federal Election 2004 page, which not only provides details of all our candidates, but also links to all branches' election leaflets (there's bound to be some good ideas among them for your branch to use)
- the new Policy page, which contains all the policies adopted by SA, including those adopted at the recent national conference.

Then take a break and have some fun playing our new game "Privatise!" on the site (go to the bottom of the right column on the home page).

Branch activities details, photos and graphics, feedback - and more games - are always welcome. Email: [web\\_team@socialist-alliance.org](mailto:web_team@socialist-alliance.org) or phone Jorge at the SA national office on (02) 9690 2508.

National Convener, and on the Seeing Red Editorial Board and National Elections & Policy Development Coordinating Committee.

Brian Webb: Brian is a member of Sydney East branch.

Juliet Edeson: Juliet is a member of Brisbane South West branch.

**WORKERS LIBERTY:** Riki Lane is a member of Wills branch and the National Trade Union Coordinating Committee.

**FREEDOM SOCIALIST PARTY:** Alison Thorne is a member of Wills branch.

**WORKERS LEAGUE:** Greg Adler is a member of Marrickville branch.

**WORKERS POWER:** Carlene Wilson is a member of Wills branch.

**SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY:** Ken Davis is a member of Sydney East branch and on the National Anti-war & International Solidarity Coordinating Committee.

**RESISTANCE:** Aaron Benedek is a member of Canterbury-Bankstown branch.

**WORKER COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRAQ:** Representative to be notified.

## "Ding dong" this is Socialist Alliance calling!

**By Alison Thorne (Wills branch executive)**

On Sunday May 29 the Salvation Army was out in force encouraging people to "help the poor and disadvantaged" through donating to its Red Shield Appeal. While the Salvos offer the crumbs of charity, members and supporters of Socialist Alliance affiliate the Freedom Socialist Party were doorknocking to promote socialism - a lasting solution to the problems endemic to late capitalism.

I'd never been doorknocking before but enthusiastically embraced preparing comrades for the task and coordinating our efforts on the day. Four comrades spent two hours pounding the pavements of Brunswick to campaign for Socialist Alliance candidate for Wills, David Glanz. Our experience was a resounding success which I'd like to share with others in Socialist Alliance.

First, the Freedom Socialist Party sees our united electoral effort as a key priority for Socialist Alliance. As David Glanz has said many times, "the vote does matter!" And we are determined to

put in the effort to help achieve the best possible result in Wills. If we can achieve that, not only will we get much needed electoral funding not to mention the return of our deposit, but we will also encourage many more people to seriously consider voting for, supporting or joining Socialist Alliance.

We saw doorknocking as an opportunity to let people know that we are running a very serious socialist campaign and to find out what issues they see as central to the upcoming federal election.

Step one was to work out how we would approach the task. We settled on the following opening remarks. "Hello, I'm Alison and this is Craig. We are campaigning this afternoon for David Glanz, the Socialist Alliance candidate for Wills in the upcoming federal election. We're keen to find out what issues are important to you. Have you got a moment to talk?"

This approach worked like a charm! While some residents told us they were too busy to talk, almost everyone was open to taking a leaflet. Both teams encountered only one refusal each. Craig and I met a Liberal voter - a rare species in Brunswick - who was polite but declined our leaflet. Debbie and Peter were turned down by a macho jock in a rugby jumper. Everyone else was sufficiently open to take a leaflet.

More than half of the people who we found at home were willing to talk and tell us what was on their minds. This was invaluable. Peter and Debbie report that the issues most on people's mind in their area were the war, refugee rights and services.

Craig and I found several people who were very concerned about education - particularly the increase in HECS. We spoke to high school students who informed us that the local secondary college is running before and after school classes as not everything is able to fit into the timetable. We spoke to a couple of working mothers concerned about childcare. We spoke to one gay man interested in resisting homophobia sure to be whipped up by the debate around same-sex marriage. We were pleased to find out that voters were unimpressed with Costello's big spending budget and saw it as a bribe. We also found that many residents were keen to raise local council issues, particularly issues of inappropriate development.

Craig and I encountered two households with signs advising people not to knock on their door if wanting to discuss religion! Our opening remark, "Hello, we're Marxists, not Mormons", was an instant hit. Another rapport building tip is to make friends with all cute dogs! This is a sure way to strike up a conversation with their humans.

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Residents were interested in hearing more from us about Socialist Alliance's policy on health care and the environment. A Muslim woman appreciated hearing about our motion on the hijab. Several locals also asked us about our preference policy. The answer met with a positive response.

We found a high level of awareness of Solidarity Salon, the organising centre shared by Radical Women and the Freedom Socialist Party, which is also where the Wills branch of Socialist Alliance holds its meeting.

There was also enthusiasm to find out more about our ideas. We sold 13 copies of the Socialist Alliance Manifesto and five copies of the Freedom Socialist Bulletin which features amongst other things interviews with Socialist Alliance candidates.

Comrades were extremely enthusiastic about our experience. Residents in our neighbourhood treated us seriously and were interested in sharing their ideas with us and hearing about what Socialist Alliance stands for. We were delighted by the name recognition. In the area where Craig and I were campaigning, this election is the third time Socialist Alliance has stood. In the area where Debbie and Peter campaigned - in the old local council ward of Hoffman - the upcoming election will be the fifth time voters have had the opportunity to consider what Socialist Alliance stands for.

Our last Wills branch meeting was energised by the response we'd got and proposed sharing what we learnt through Socialist Campaigner. Many other comrades in Wills are eager to give doorknocking a try.

I strongly recommend doorknocking to comrades in all branches which have the resources to do some intensive and very outward looking political work. I'd be more than happy to answer questions and share more information about our experience with any comrades who would like to know more. Contact me at [a.thorne@bigpond.com](mailto:a.thorne@bigpond.com) or (03) 9388 0062.

## Green Left partnership

**By Dave Riley (SA Editorial Board)**

The Alliance is currently exploring an ongoing partnership with Green Left Weekly. While this trial arrangement is only a few months old, the re-affirmation by our recent national conference to proceed has offered us the opportunity to more rigorously experiment with ways we can utilise this publishing resource.

Green Left Weekly has been published for 13 years and the task of the expanded editorial board is to explore ways we can integrate the viewpoint of the Socialist Alliance and its membership to change the paper so that it is more a vehicle of the SA. The cutting edge of this integration is the weekly column, Our Common Cause, which is being pitched as the Alliance's editorial perspective. Outside of this the paper is open to as much across-the-board Alliance input which we can muster.

Each edition of Green Left is broadly divided into the following sections: news, comment and analysis, international coverage and cultural dissent (magazine and review pages). For its part the SA Editorial Board is seeking members' input in all of these areas. We want to open the paper up to the whole Alliance membership so that it becomes a responsive tool, reflecting what we do and what we think as a collective political organisation.

We are also actively seeking suggestions as to how best we can proceed with this task and better realise an Alliance presence in the paper. So while in the first instance this is about copy - standard newspaper articles and the like - and getting it written, we are also open to layout ideas and feedback on how well we are going and how we could do better.

This is a partnership where we settle into a working arrangement with an already existing publishing enterprise. The more we approach that partnership with a vigorous and productive outlook, the more successful this project is going to be in bending the opportunity offered by GLW to our needs.

At the moment we are encouraging Alliance members to come forward and start relating to this process. If you are keen to write or help organise others to write for Green Left Weekly you can hook up with this process by joining our facilitation group. Just send an empty email message to [SAGLW\\_copy\\_subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:SAGLW_copy_subscribe@yahoo.com) and you will straightaway team up with others who are similarly motivated.

There are people on hand to help you with the protocols for submitting or writing copy, and with enough suggestions for articles to get you busy if you can't come up with ideas yourself. Hopefully we'll be able to work towards generating some focused region by region networking into this task of generating copy. But for the moment, we are trying to tap into and begin the business of harnessing our primary resource located within our membership. In essence, that's you!

In the meantime, don't be hesitant about sending in reports on what the Alliance

is doing. Begin asking your branch or committee: What could we put into Green Left Weekly this week? Utilising Green Left this way will extend your branch's outreach and promote your activities.

If you want to catch up with the story so far, each Our Column Cause column is archived on the Socialist Alliance web site ([www.socialist-alliance.org](http://www.socialist-alliance.org)) and Green Left Weekly houses the most visited political web site in Australia at [www.greenleft.org.au](http://www.greenleft.org.au).

Articles should be sent to [glw@greenleft.org.au](mailto:glw@greenleft.org.au) and if you have any further questions about the project, you can contact the Socialist Alliance GLW Editorial Board at [ne@socialist-alliance.org](mailto:ne@socialist-alliance.org) or through the national office.

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## Gearing up for the June 30 rallies

**By Pip Hinman (Anti-war & International Solidarity Coordinating Committee)**

On the eve of what Washington tells us will be a hand-over of Iraq to the Iraqis on June 30, Socialist Alliance is preparing to protest.

The "hand-over" to a foreign-appointed interim Iraqi government is a fraud that will change nothing.

The White House insists that the US keep control of military and security matters. More than 130,000 US troops, and thousands more from allies such as Australia, will remain in Iraq.

Not only that, the interim Iraqi government will not have the power to draft or enforce any significant new legislation. For instance, it will not be

able to change the US-sponsored privatisation laws, under which 100% of any industry - except oil - can be sold off to foreign companies.

A permanent constitution is not expected to be in force until 2007, during which time the US hawks hope to have cemented a new status quo in Iraq with Guantanamo-style US military bases, domination of the local economy by global corporations and a government locked into pro-US foreign policies.

As more news of the torture, the mass jailings and other horrific acts leaks out, the "Coalition of the Willing" is looking increasingly shaky, and public opinion in Australia in relation to the occupation is starting to shift.

This bodes well for making the June 30 protests big and broad. SA activists are central to all the peace coalitions that are organising these events, and that means that we have a double load - working as part of the anti-war coalitions and also profiling ourselves in the run-up to the federal election.

Already we've had some early successes. SA organised a protest in Parramatta in late May when John Howard came to speak and received good news coverage in the local paper. SA activists have also been central to reviving the Parramatta and Marrickville Peace Groups, the latter organising a small but spirited local rally on June 5 (with the Greens deputy mayor, SA and Stop the War Coalition) to build support for the J30 protest.

The influx of new Greens local government councillors in NSW allows the peace groups, and Socialist Alliance, to push for and win council support for some progressive causes. Marrickville council unanimously agreed to support J30, and the councils in Bankstown, Canterbury and Randwick are also being approached by SA to do

### Trade union motion for June 30 rallies

#### For a free and independent Iraq! Bring the troops home!

June 30 is the date for the so-called hand-over of power of Iraq to a foreign-appointed interim Iraqi government. But the US and its allies, including Australia, plan to keep control of military and security matters with more than 130,000 troops stationed there for the foreseeable future.

One way we can help Iraq win its freedom and independence as a sovereign nation is to end the occupation.

Rallies are being organised around the world in June to call for foreign troops to be withdrawn from Iraq.

This [name of union] supports the rally being called by [name of peace coalition] on June 30 for real freedom and independence in Iraq and the troops to come home.

This union commits to notify its members of the upcoming rallies on June 30, and assist financially if possible.

Moved \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded \_\_\_\_\_

the same.

SA members in the Stop the War Coalition have been working closely with independent and Green activists. The Sydney Peace and Justice Coalition was approached to jointly organise this event, but it refused. However the breadth of the speakers (including former Liberal president John Valder; Ali Kazak, head of the Palestinian delegation in Australia; Sister Susan Connelly; Greens Senator Kerry Nettle; and Andrew Ferguson, NSW secretary of the construction division of the CFMEU) assists in reaching a broad crowd. Socialist Alliance in Sydney district is planning a three-week campaign to make sure that the Stop the War Coalition's and SA's own publicity for June 30 gets out beyond the usual circles.

Interest in the war and the fate of Mamdouh Habib and David Hicks is growing, as several recent local peace group meetings have shown. SA members in NSW are now involved in at least seven peace groups - from the Blue Mountains to Randwick in the east. SA members in Resistance are also organising a rally in Sydney city on June 11 to build for J30.

In Perth, Tariq Ali will be the keynote speaker at a lunchtime rally on June 30 organised by the NoWar Alliance. He will also address a public meeting organised by the WA Peace Network, UWA and Unions WA. SA activists through WA NoWar were keen to bring WA Peace Network on board the rally, but to no avail. There, as in Sydney, unions are being approached to endorse the rally, and a model motion is being circulated.

In Melbourne, local peace groups and Socialist Alliance branches are letter-boxing and mass leafleting public gatherings with J30 material. After a long (but constructive) debate, SA activists in the Hobart Peace Coalition, managed to win support for the demand "Iraqis demand real independence: Troops out now", and this seems to have become the main focus for the rallies across the country. In Hobart too, there are plans to organise a "puppet show", an apt comment on the incoming interim Iraqi government.

To date, many suburban newspapers have been happy to cover peace group events and protests, and we should be seizing the opportunity to publicise J30 through carefully timed media releases - both in SA's name as well as the anti-war coalitions'. The same applies to some of the ethnic press - particularly the Turkish, Arabic and Spanish press.

A three-week push to make these protests big and broad will set us up for organising even bigger pre-election anti-occupation rallies. Reaching unions

should be made a priority as the torture revelations and lies and cover-ups have moved public sentiment again, and we need to test this out.

Socialist Alliance is chairing and co-chairing the J30 rallies in Hobart and Sydney, and while this is still being decided elsewhere, it's clear that SA has built up considerable authority in the movement, something that stands us in good stead for building the Alliance and posing a left alternative in

the elections.

If you're not yet involved with this project and would like to be, please get in touch with the SA branch nearest you. There are still many useful things to do to build these rallies.

## ***Are you active in your union?***

***The Socialist Alliance's National Trade Union Coordinating Committee has been working since 2002. It meets by telephone hook-up and has representation from most cities and many unions on it. When there is a particular industrial campaign which crosses state boundaries, we invite extra SA members involved in that union to the meetings.***

***The NTUCC is a working body (not just a talk-shop) and its members report back to SA members in their city and union about the discussions and decisions relevant for their work. The committee proved very useful during the three-state teachers' strike, the national NTEU strike and the NSW-wide PSA campaign last year.***

***If you're interested in participating in the NTUCC, phone Sue Bolton on (03)9639 8622 or 0413-377-978, or email [sue\\_bolton@hotmail.com](mailto:sue_bolton@hotmail.com).***

## ***Gellibrand election campaign launched***

**By Karl Miller (Melbourne West)**

The theme of the dinner to launch SA's election campaign in Gellibrand in Melbourne's west was "End Howard's war mongering madness! Put a socialist into parliament!"

Along with good food and plenty of drinks there were two speakers. Michael Bull from the Craig Johnson Defense Campaign talked about the importance of the victory for Craig and militant unionism. Alliance candidate for Gellibrand Linda Waldron gave a rousing speech about the political situation and why membership of the Alliance is so important.

Contacting all branch members and supporters early and often was central to the event's success. The branch phoned all members and supporters, did a mail-out, and used email to encourage people to support the event. We got 47 pre-bookings, of which 35 made it, but another 20 people rocked up as well. The positive response underlined that Socialist Alliance has a lot of potential to mobilise its supporters for this election campaign.

Unfortunately, there were lots of "clashing" functions on the night - especially weddings! A Workers First organiser in our branch was getting married, so that took out a table or two. However, Workers First members sent "apologies" by way of a donation of \$300 and Craig Johnson raised \$325 for Linda's campaign in a whip-around at his Coode Island workplace. Our friends in the Somali community were also having a wedding, and instead sent a well-received message of solidarity.

Despite the unavoidable absences, the night had a good cross-section of support: Turkish and Kurdish comrades, university lecturers, construction workers, and plenty of welfare recipients. A guy living across the road came over to see what was happening, stayed for the speeches and was visibly impressed. The mood was vibrant and talkative.

We got a good showing from other SA branches: a table each of members from Geelong and Wills, and members from all the other branches in Melbourne. Five SA election candidates and two Greens candidates came along. All up we raised over \$1350 for our election campaign.

# Victory for Craig = victory for militant unionism

**By Sue Bolton (Trade Union Coordinating Committee Convener)**

May 21 marked a tremendous victory for militant unionism. Although the county court judge sentenced Craig Johnston to a 12-month prison sentence for the industrial protests at Johnson Tiles and Skilled engineering in June 2001, the sentence was wholly suspended for three years. The prosecution had made it quite clear that they wanted Craig jailed immediately.

As well as the suspended sentence, Craig was fined \$10,000 and ordered to pay \$44,560 damages to Skilled Engineering.

In his sentencing remarks, the judge recognised that the protests at Skilled Engineering and Johnston Tiles arose out of a legitimate industrial dispute, and involved workers who had a legitimate grievance.

The political nature of the trial was reflected when the judge said that he felt that Craig's sentence should reflect a degree of deterrence not only for the general public but for Craig in particular. He said that this is because Craig's views mean that he would be likely to repeat the actions unless he was deterred by his sentence.

In the media after the court case, the Australian Industry Group (the manufacturing bosses' organisation), the VECCI (Victorian Employers' organisation) and the AMWU national officials indicated disappointment that Craig hadn't been jailed, because a jail sentence would have ruled him out of standing for any official position in the union movement for five years. The AIG CEO even let the cat out of the bag when she said that her organisation had spoken to the AMWU about getting rid of Craig Johnston.

AMWU national secretary Doug Cameron told the media that the AMWU was consulting its lawyers to see if the union rules could be changed to prevent Craig from standing for office again or to expell Craig from the union.

None of the comments from the bosses' organisations, or from Doug Cameron, mentioned the 29 sacked Johnson Tiles workers, two of whom have never worked again. Other Johnson Tiles workers have only been able to find sporadic employment. Charges have never been brought against Johnson Tiles and Skilled Engineering for robbing these workers of their jobs.

If it wasn't for the fact that the bosses want to crush the militant unionism represented by people like Craig, it is likely that Skilled Engineering would have made an out-of-court settlement and Johnson Tiles wouldn't have pressed charges.

We still have one final hurdle to cross in the campaign. The prosecution has until June 18 to appeal against the sentence and call for an immediate jail term. If the prosecution appeals against Craig's sentence, we will need to crank up the campaign again.

Providing the prosecution doesn't get the sentence overturned, this victory has ramifications for all the construction union officials who have findings against them as a result of the royal commission. It starts to create a precedent that a person shouldn't be jailed for union activity, and it will give confidence to union leaders and rank and file activists that militant unionism is not a crime.

We can't underestimate the impact of the rally of up to 8000 workers outside the county court on May 10, the first day of the case. The rally did exert political pressure and indicated to the Bracks government it could expect further industrial and political action if it continues to persecute Craig Johnston and other militant unionists.

The rally was a second victory because it was organised against the wishes of the bosses, the Howard government, the Bracks government, the ACTU and the AMWU national officials. In the lead up to the rally, the AMWU national council passed a motion that the rally was unauthorised and AMWU members were not to attend. This meant that some bosses threatened workers with the sack or with legal action if they attended. The 2500 to 3000-strong contingent from the AMWU was very strong for standing up to intimidation from the bosses and from the national union leadership.

The other noteworthy thing about the rally is that the unions that mobilised are the unions which are the backbone of any rally called by the Victorian Trades Hall Council, yet Trades Hall turned its back on these same workers in this campaign.

We also need to note that Socialist Alliance played a big role in this campaign. That fact was noticed by many workers who have never considered joining a socialist organisation before but are now considering joining, or at least helping out in SA's federal election.

## Venezuelan trade unionist tour

Organising has begun for the speaking tour of a Venezuelan trade union leader later this year.

Brisbane Central SA member Coral Wynter has been visiting Venezuela for the last month or so and has had some promising discussions with Venezuelan leaders keen to visit Australia. While nothing is confirmed yet, a tour by a leader of the UNT (Venezuela's trade union federation) is on the cards for September or October.

A tour organising working group is now being formed to bring together trade unionists, Latin America solidarity activists and any other SA members from around the country who'd like to get involved. We hope to also involve non-SA members interested in building solidarity with the Venezuelan revolution and workers' struggles.

If you would like to help, contact Roberto Jorquera at [robertojorquera@yahoo.com](mailto:robertojorquera@yahoo.com) or phone him on 0425 316 152.

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Authorised by D. Nichols, 23 Abercrombie St, Chippendale NSW 2008.