

# PRECONFERENCE DISCUSSION BULLETIN

The founding conference of the  
Socialist Alliance in Australia

*Number 4*

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**IMPORTANT NOTE: ALL RESOLUTIONS MUST BE WITH THE  
NATIONAL CONVENORS BY MIDNIGHT, JULY 31 AT THE LATEST.**

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**Socialist  
Alliance**

## NLC SUGGESTED APPROACH TO DEVELOPING DRAFT PLATFORM

At its July 20 telephone hook-up the National Liaison Committee voted by 8-1 to recommend to the Founding Conference the following approach to developing the Alliance's draft platform:

- A. That conference draw up a list of priority pledges for the coming federal election to be the basis of the Socialist Alliance election manifesto;
- B. That it launch a process of policy development to be carried out through policy working groups which will report back to the incoming National Executive with developed draft policy proposals. That detailed elaboration of the draft Socialist Alliance platform received during the preconference

discussion and adopted by conference be the starting point for developing such draft policy proposals;

- C. That the Socialist Alliance hold a round of policy seminars with each area specialising in a theme that best exploits the political openings and expertise of local Alliance members and supporters. That the incoming National Executive coordinate the implementation of the proposal.

*(For: Graham Matthews, Alison Thorne, David Glanz, Ian Rintoul, Janet Burstall, Jenny Campbell, Phil Sandford, Dick Nichols. Against: Carlene Wilson)*

## PRIORITY PLEDGES FOR SOCIALIST ALLIANCE : A SUGGESTED LIST

By Ian Rintoul,, National Convenor

- Scrap the GST, tax the rich to fund welfare and services
- Action against poverty: increase all pensions and benefits to at least 25 per cent of average male wage; restore child-care subsidies
- Restore funding to public education; scrap the HECS debt; no subsidies for rich private schools
- No privatisation ; keep Telstra in public hands
- A fully funded and independent ABC
- Treaty Now—for justice and reconciliation; increase funding for Aboriginal communities for jobs and services
- Ratify Kyoto protocols on global warming, no nuclear reactor, stop uranium mining, stop logging old growth forests
- No to Star Wars missile program; cut military spending
- Increase funding for Medicare, no subsidies for private health companies
- Repeal all anti-union laws
- End discrimination. No to racism, sexism and homophobia
- Cancel Third World debts to Australia; withdraw from the WTO
- Close the detention centres; defend asylum seekers
- Stop casualisation and outsourcing; 35 hour week to create real jobs; end work for the dole

# AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAFT PLATFORM

## 1. GENERAL

### A. Australia: A socialist platform

Workers Power submission to Socialist Alliance national conference, August 2001

#### *Stop the Market Madness*

Last year 30,000 working families went regularly without meals and could not afford to heat their homes in winter, while one in eight children lived in a family with an inadequate income.

At the same time executives in the exclusive million dollar bracket received average pay increases of more than 60%. While company profits continued to rise, by nearly 7%.

It's not just the Coalition that's delivered to the bosses. In the first 8 years of Labor rule, over \$400 Million was shifted from wages to company profits.

Both the Coalition and the ALP stand for the market. The market means low pay, job insecurity, a deregulated economy and unemployment.

The Socialist Alliance challenges the priorities of the market by fighting for the guaranteed right of everyone to work at union rates. We will scrap the job seekers' network and all other welfare to work programmes in favour of work or full pay for all.

We can stop closures and sackings by taking industry away from the bosses who have mismanaged them, without compensation. Under social ownership and the control of the workers, jobs can be saved and production geared towards.

A 35 hour week with no loss of pay will create thousands of jobs. Decent pay can be assured by fixing \$400 per week as a guaranteed minimum.

To win these demands workers will have to fight the bosses - with strikes, occupations, pickets. The minute we try to do this we are hit by the Liberals' anti-union laws. We are for the immediate repeal of all the anti-union laws and the right to take any action against the bosses free from the threat of court interference.

#### *Health and Welfare*

Decent public services, benefits and pensions that lift the unemployed, the single parent and the elderly out of the poverty trap and a health service that provides treatment at the point of need: these are the hallmarks of a civilised society. Yet our government cuts benefits, privatises services.

No public money for private healthcare or insurance. Medicare must be fully funded from highly progressive taxation to provide totally free quality care.

It is the people who work in the health system, and those who use the system, who know best how it runs and how to make it run better.

Healthcare cannot be run for profit. It must be run by the people who work in the system and who need the care.

#### *Education*

All education must be free and easily accessible. No public funding to the wealthy and elite private schools - all public money must be fed back into public education and extra resources garnered. All students from Yr seven up must be paid a liveable student allowance to allow young people to have independence from their parents. Education at all levels must be run by the people who best understand it - those who work and learn in the system.

#### *The Environment*

Capitalism is the root cause of the increase in global warming and the threat to the planet itself. Polluted rivers and lakes, encroaching deserts and of course those injured, made ill or made to live in fear by the nuclear industry, are all ugly mementos of a system that puts profit before the planned use of global resources.

A Socialist Alliance government would make an immediate start to repair the damage done by beginning the planned closure of the nuclear industry and uranium mining (with all workers guaranteed transfer to other jobs at equivalent pay), by planning for the end of fossil fuel use and its replacement by sustainable energy sources, by imposing workers' control over all aspects of health, safety and food production.

The Socialist Alliance believes that a fully integrated public transport system is a basic right. We believe that a rational use of rail as a means of freight transportation can ease congestion. And we believe that real local democracy should decide where and when roads are built.

### ***Tax the rich***

Where will the money come from? This is the question that Labor always asks when workers demand even the slightest reform to the economy or the welfare state. The answer can be seen in central business districts of Sydney and Melbourne every day, in the ledger books and on the computers of the big banks and companies, in the obscene wealth flaunted by a tiny handful of rich people in public life.

The money to give everyone a job, a decent standard of living and public services exists in abundance. It is our politicians' decision to help the rich get richer that is the problem. That is why they've cut corporate tax but introduced a flat, General Services Tax.

Our answer is simple - all of Australia's wealth is the result of things workers produce and services they provide. It's time we took control of that wealth and used it for the benefit of the many - tax the rich, tax the corporations, abolish GST, and replace it with a national steeply progressive income tax.

### ***Racism***

Racism divides workers against each other, with the bosses happily playing on our divisions. To combat this not only does the Socialist Alliance fight for working class unity - black, asian and white - around working class demands. We also fight to destroy institutionalised racism. We will sack all racist police officers. We will disarm the police as a step to disbanding them altogether.

We will abolish all immigration controls and close the refugee detention centres. We will ensure all immigrants' full access to health, education, welfare, jobs and access to the democratic rights of any citizen.

### ***Aboriginal Land Rights Now***

An apology is not enough. The ALP, along with the Liberals, are preparing to harness popular support for Reconciliation to a project designed to legitimise the theft of an entire continent. Australian Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders

need real material compensation for the theft of their land and the decimation of their culture.

Abolish mandatory sentencing. For an end to deaths in custody and full compensation for all those who have suffered at the hands of the Australian state.

The Socialist Alliance fights for the rights of indigenous people to the use of their traditional lands for whatever purpose they deem appropriate. The return of stolen land is basic to indigenous people retaining control of their lives. Land in the use of corporations must be returned without compensation.

Women, lesbians and gay men, youth  
There must be real equality of wages - equal pay for equal work regardless of age, gender or sexuality.

So that women can take a full part in social and economic life, the state must provide free, quality 24 hour childcare in local areas and workplaces and domestic labour must be socialised and collectivised - including a fully funded network of state-run restaurants at subsidised prices, together with state run laundries and cleaning services.

We need the right to free abortion and contraception on demand so that women have full control over their own bodies and full reproductive freedom including access to IVF treatment for all who want it. We need full funding for refuges for victims of domestic violence.

Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people must have the same democratic rights as heterosexuals. For the right to the same legal and financial protections offered by marriage for all. For the right to adopt children and retain custody in same-sex relationships.

The imposition of curfews and Howard's new "war on drugs" criminalise young people and force them to stay under parental control. We oppose all curfews and are for massive expenditure on youth controlled sports and entertainment centres, free from the rule of the family.

For the legalisation of all drugs including heroin, the provision of safe injecting rooms and factual, non-judgemental sex and drugs education in schools. For the right to free access to clean

needles, counselling and support services, quality assurance and the free availability of testing kits and confidential medical treatment.

The age of consent must be abolished and young people engaging in consensual sex not criminalised.

### ***Democracy***

If Australia were democratic, the Liberals would not be able to block legislative changes in the upper houses of state parliaments. The police would not be able to smash demonstrators or escape justice when indigenous people die in custody.

The Socialist Alliance would abolish the Upper House and break all ties with the monarchy, disband the police force and replace it with a democratic worker's militia, institute the election of all judges and magistrates, abolish ASIO and the Special Branch and give soldiers the right to elect their officers. We would immediately grant the indigenous people of Australia the right to self-determination, up to and including the right to form a separate state if they wish.

### ***Australia and the globe***

The Socialist Alliance is internationalist. We are for globalisation of the world's working class movement and struggles. But for us that means fighting the international institutions of global capitalism and the weapons that the bosses use to impose their will on the countries they plunder.

We are for the cancellation of all of the debts owed by third world. We are in favour of abolishing the IMF, World Bank, WEF and would withdraw Australia's participation in them. We would fight for a socialist federation of the Asia-Pacific region to replace their economic forums.

The Australian armed forces don't exist to defend us. They exist to defend Australian capitalism's global interests. We will not spend a cent for the defence of Australian capitalism.

We are for a militia based on the armed workers, not an army standing against the people. We will immediately withdraw Australian troops from all foreign countries. We will withdraw troops from East Timor and the immediately hand over arms to the East Timorese. They cannot have

independence as long as Australia controls their country economically and militarily.

### ***The Workers' Government***

If the Socialist Alliance became the biggest party in parliament and tried to form a government we would be met by savage opposition. We would be attacked and sabotaged by the police, the army, the judges, the top civil servants, the secret service chiefs, the bosses in the boardrooms and editorial offices, the heads of the television stations and multi-media operations. These unelected decision makers would try to crush us.

Banks, multinationals and utility giants are controlled by a handful of people who make and break millions of lives and are accountable to no one. A workers' government will take their industries, wealth and power from them - so it can begin to plan the economy on the basis of need, not profit.

If we relied on committees and bills in parliament we would be out of office within less than a month. But we wouldn't be like a "normal" government that works with the bosses and their unelected state machine.

We would be a workers' government which would turn for our support not to Parliament House, but the workplaces and working class communities - we would base our government on the democratic organisations of the workers themselves, on elected councils in every workplace and every community. These would form the basis of a new way of doing government - a government of the workers and by the workers.

It would be a government that could defeat the bosses and their state with workers' power and open the door to a new society: socialism.

It would fight alongside workers in every country to build a new world in which at last the needs of millions would come before the greed of a handful, a world in which the economy was democratically planned by all of us, for all of us and the state instead of being a faceless monster would become the direct property of millions.

Voting for us is a way of helping us take the fight for a socialist society forward. Join us in that fight today.

## B. Towards a united Socialist Alliance 'platform'

Moved: Joshua Heuchan

Seconded: Paul Petersen

### *1. A discussion contribution.*

The Socialist Alliance (SA) is born of weakness, not strength. The founding organisations and individuals have come together because alone we are incapable of moving beyond our own narrow, circular trajectories.

Yet it is in this *moment of unstated recognition* that we see the strength of the Alliance.

The SA alone provides the vehicle for left reapproachment. The commitment of the revolutionary left to this project is a victory for working class unity against the backdrop of liquidationism and sect building.

Working class combativity, economically, remains low. Whilst the Australian working class has not suffered the same strategic defeats as say British workers with the miners strike of 84/85, the years of the Accord, attacks by subsequent Labor and Liberal Governments and the general triumphalism of capital has left our class weakened and subservient. Politically, our class remains sociological despite the occasional spontaneous outbursts inherent in class society. The left in Australia remains almost completely isolated from the remaining industrially militant sections of our class. A strength of the Alliance lies in the possibility that together we are capable of going beyond ourselves and developing our class into class for itself.

The possibility for the SA in Australia also comes on the back of the RELATIVE success of the SA in Britain. In some ways the SA in Australia is already politically more advanced than the British SA. Our draft platform, whilst dominated by economic demands, retains a political dimension disappointingly absent from the Alliance platform in Britain. British comrades would do well to heed our call for a democratic republic and opening of the borders. The Alliance in Australia has also already produced a 'paper', of sorts. Whilst the publication at present reflects the kind of cringe-producing evangelicalism prevalent in the current crop of papers the revolutionary left distributes and contains little in the way of politics, sober analysis or open debate, the need for a 'paper' has been recognised.

Importantly, some organisations have openly stated their desire for the Alliance to develop into a party, notably the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP). This is to be commended. But for the development of the kind of party our class needs, we require a complete *cultural revolution* within the left on the question of Partyism.

This founding conference will set the basis for the kind of party culture that develops within the SA. We do not need an Alliance in which the participant organisations attempt to replicate their own current organisational practices and cultures within the Alliance. This is a chance for a new kind of culture within the left. It will take a cultural revolution to achieve it.

To transform itself into a party, it is essential that we do not replicate the problems and culture that have plagued the left throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is clear that the Alliance cannot be built on the basis of a sect, where agreeing with the defining 'line' is a membership requirement and the expression of public disagreement is banned. A genuine party must be an organic part of the working class and will contain within it all sorts of different ideas, which must be allowed fresh air and light. There must be open debate.

The obvious starting point for developing this culture is our approach to the Alliance's 'platform'. Or rather, our *programme*.

### *2. What kind of programme?*

The need for a Socialist Alliance programme is pressing and arises from the objective needs of our movement. The programme must be an attempt to shift our class politically to where we should be, not a snapshot of where we think our class is currently at. To do anything else is to tail laborism and be prone to short term temptation.

Without a democratically debated and constantly tested programme (and therefore adjustable compass) we operate blind or according to the whim of this or that passing majority or set of office-holders. The programme must be based on

a concrete analysis of the concrete situation. It must seek to provide a long-term guide to action for the working class itself. A programme based on transitory demands which supposedly appeal to workers “out there” will inevitably lead to confusion and incoherence.

Some comrades have called for a programme of action. Yet this is not what we currently have. What we have is a workerist shopping list containing demands which seek to re-establish the failed project of Labor-left social democracy. The question must surely be posed – why, as revolutionary socialists, are we only capable of uniting around a programme that is mired in economism?

For revolutionary socialists and communists a programme is not some list of admirable but abstract objectives – eg, for ecological sustainable development, free the refugees and social justice. Nor is the programme a binding doctrinal credo, agreement with it being a requirement of sect membership. Nor is it a futile appeal to improve the lot of Australia’s ‘socially excluded’ and overcome ‘third world’ poverty by canceling debt. Nor is it a general election manifesto with up to the moment attacks on the Liberals - eg Axe the GST, people before profits - along with the comments about the latest news – eg Bob Carr’s workers compensation proposals, repealing sections of the Workplace Relations Act etc.

The programme must be a long term guide for action for the working class itself and should be informed by sustained theoretical analysis. Hence our Socialist Alliance programme represents the crystallisation of world historical experience and logically unfolds key defining principles and an overall strategic approach, taking us from the present day to the winning of state power and then universal liberation.

The Socialist Alliance programme is the foundation upon which everything else is built, including in time our exact organisational forms and constantly shifting tactics. The programme links our continuous and what should be all-embracing agitational work with our ultimate aim of a communitarian, or communist, society. Our programme thus establishes the basis for agreed action and is the lodestar, the point of reference, around which the voluntary unity of the Alliance is built and concretised. The programme represents the DIALECTICAL UNITY between theory and practice.

To this extent, we require a minimum programme that can develop into a maximum one.

Comrades should ACCEPT the programme but this does not mean they have to agree with it. Individuals and groups can criticise the programme publically whilst having unity around the work of the Alliance. This is not a contradiction but a principle of democratic centralism. This position should be reflected in the constitution with respect to member participation in the Alliance.

### ***3. Preamble***

The Socialist Alliance is not yet fully a political ‘party’ as such but in many respects already closely resembles one. We have branches, will shortly have an elected leadership and we have begun to participate in elections.

Besides members of the founding organisations, there are a wide range of individual socialists within our ranks.

The Socialist Alliance is committed to coordinating and, in the spirit of working class solidarity, unifying our campaigning, electoral and other relevant work. Together we are confronted by a common enemy - the Australian state and the Australian capitalist class. The Socialist Alliance is internationalist and seeks to promote the unity of workers throughout the world.

We are for the globalisation of the world’s working class movement and its struggles.

### ***4. Immediate Demands***

On the most basic level, the development of capitalism in Australia creates the necessity for workers to struggle against the effects of the capitalist system that confronts them. Even without the leadership of revolutionary socialists and communists, resistance will occur, albeit spontaneously. This is the expression of the fact that workers have nothing to lose except their illusions and everything to gain through the overthrow of capitalism.

To succeed, however, this social movement must consciously oppose every violation of democracy and example of discrimination. Workers must elevate themselves to a ruling class by winning the battle for democracy.

The demands we put forward are based on what our class needs in order to live a decent life in Australia. Our intention is to provide a battle plan and at the same time make workers aware of their power to refashion society so that it serves human interests. The formulation of our demands thereby connects today's conditions and consciousness to the aim of revolution and the establishment of socialism.

#### **4.1. Working conditions and wage workers**

In circumstances where the capitalist state is politicising the economic struggle of the working class, we demand:

- A five-day working week and a maximum seven-hour day for all wage workers; reduction of that to a four-day working week and a maximum six-hour day for occupations which are dangerous or particularly demanding. The working day must include rest periods of not less than two hours.
- An uninterrupted weekly break of not less than 60 hours for all wage workers.
- Equal pay for work of equal value.
- The abolition of overtime in its present form. In the case of emergencies and other such eventualities, overtime must be voluntary, for only short periods and with at least double pay.
- A minimum net wage set to reflect the value of unskilled labour power. This to be decided on the basis of what is needed to physically and culturally reproduce a worker and one child. The minimum wage to be used in the calculation of all other wage rates and benefits.
- A minimum of six weeks' fully paid holiday leave during the year.
- Insurance and other such payments to be made entirely by the capitalists and the state.
- Occupational training for all workers to be a legal obligation for employers.
- Child labour to be illegal before the age of 14. No more than a five-day week, no more than a two-hour day. Child labour to be banned in any industry harmful to

children. Coordination of work and education under trade union supervision.

- All industrial courts, arbitration panels, etc to be made up of at least 50% elected workers' representatives.
- All workers must have the right to strike and the right to join a trade union.

#### **4.2 A Treaty with Indigenous people**

As socialists we seek the highest possible unity between people. The Socialist Alliance sees the only possible road to such unity with Indigenous people as being through the negotiation of a Treaty.

The Socialist Alliance supports the right of Indigenous people to self-determination and the right to fully develop one's own culture. We demand:

- Negotiation of a Treaty which recognises prior ownership and indigenous land rights.
- Fully-funded indigenous community services under Aboriginal control
- Full compensation for the Stolen Generation and other acts of genocide by the Australian state

#### **4.3. Migrant workers**

There are large numbers of workers who have migrated to Australia in order to improve their lives. Immigration is a progressive phenomenon which breaks down national differences and national prejudices. It unites workers in the Australia with the world working class.

The bourgeoisie of Australia uses migrant workers as worst paid labour and keeps them in that position by criminalising them through immigration laws, police raids and deportation orders.

The Australian capitalist state has an official ideology of anti-racism. That in no way contradicts the national chauvinist consensus which champions Australian imperialism's interests against foreign rivals and sets worker against worker.

The reformist plea for non-racist immigration control plays directly into the hands of our exploiters. It concedes the right of the state to bar

workers from entering Australia. Capital moves around the world without restriction. We socialists are for the free movement of people and against all measures preventing workers and refugees entering or leaving countries.

It is in the interests of all workers that migrant workers and refugees have full, democratic participation in Australian society. Participation is progressive as long as it is not based upon force. In order to encourage involvement and strengthen the unity of the working class the following demands are put forward:

- The right to speak and be educated in one's own language. The right to conduct correspondence with the state in one's own language.
- No religious or separate schools.
- The right to learn English for all migrant workers and their families. Employers must provide language courses.
- The right to become citizens with full social and political rights of the country they have emigrated to for all workers.
- Borders should be open and without immigration controls and refugees given full access to the social and political rights of the country they have fled to.

#### ***4.4. The unemployed***

Unemployment is an inevitable by-product of capitalism. Full employment can only be a temporary phenomenon in a system which reduces people to mere possessors of the commodity, labour power - ie, objects of exploitation.

Especially in periods of crisis, millions cannot profitably be employed and are therefore discarded. Maintained at below subsistence levels, the unemployed are used as a reserve army of labour to drive down general wage levels. Unemployment is not due to the policies or flavour of this or that government. The only way to eradicate unemployment is to end the system that causes it.

As part of the working class, the unemployed must be fully integrated into the workers' movement. They must be made into a reserve army for socialism.

The immediate Socialist Alliance demands for the unemployed are:

- The right to work at trade union rates of pay, or unemployment benefit at the level of the minimum wage.
- No state harassment of the unemployed. Claiming benefit is a right, not a privilege.
- Cheap labour schemes must be replaced by real training and education under trade union supervision.
- The unemployed must have the right to remain in or join trade unions as full members with equal rights.
- To the extent that they operate, unemployed workers' organisations must be represented in the trade union movement - from trades and labour councils to the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

#### ***4.5. Nationalisation***

From the point of view of globalisation and the world struggle for socialism, programmes for wholesale nationalisation are today objectively reactionary. The historic task of the working class is to fully socialise the giant transnational corporations, not break them up into inefficient national units. Our starting point is the most advanced achievements of capitalism. Globalised production needs global social control.

We oppose the illusion that nationalisation equates in some way with socialism. There is nothing inherently progressive or socialistic about nationalised industries.

Under definite circumstances, however, nationalisation serves the interests of the workers. Faced with plans for closure or mass sackings, the Socialist Alliance demands that the state - the executive committee of the bourgeoisie - not the workers, bears the consequences of failure.

Against closures and mass sackings, we demand:

- No redundancies. Nationalise threatened workplaces or industries under workers' control.
- Compensation to former owners should be paid only in cases of proven need.

- There must be no business secrets hidden from the workers. The books and databanks of every company must be open to the inspection of specialists appointed by and responsible to workers.

#### **4.6. Trade unions**

Trade unions limit competition between workers, thus securing a better price for labour power. They represent a tremendous gain for the working class, drawing millions of workers into collective activity against employers.

Of course, left to itself, trade union consciousness is characterised by sectionalism and the hopeless attempt to constantly improve the lot of workers within capitalism. The Socialist Alliance openly seeks to make trade unions into schools for socialism. It does this by always putting forward the general interest, by fighting for workers' unity and by fully involving the masses in decision-making.

Bargaining is a specialist activity. Consequently the trade unions need a layer of functionaries. However, due to the passivity of most rank and file members and lack of democratic accountability, these functionaries have consolidated themselves into a conservative caste.

The trade union bureaucracy is more concerned with amicable deals and preserving union funds than with the class struggle. Operating as an intermediary between labour and capital, unions have a real material interest in the continued existence of the wage system. Within the trade unions we fight against bureaucracy by demanding:

- Trade unions must be free of any interference or control by the state.
- No trade union official to be paid above the average wage of a worker in that particular union.
- All officials must be elected, accountable and instantly recallable.
- Workers should support trade union leaders only to the extent that they fight for the long-term interests of the working class as a whole.
- One industry, one union. Industrial unions are rational and enhance the ability of workers to struggle.

- All-embracing workplace committees. Organise all workers, whatever their trade, whether or not they are in trade unions. Workplace committees should fight to exercise control over hiring and firing, production and investment.

#### **4.7. Councils of action**

In any decisive clash of class against class, new forms of organisation which are higher, more general and more flexible than trade unions emerge. In Russia they have been called soviets, in Germany Räte, in Iran shoras.

Democratically embracing and coordinating all who are in struggle, such organisations of struggle have the potential to become the workers' alternative to the capitalist state. The Socialist Alliance will encourage any such development.

#### **4.8. Workers' militia**

The Socialist Alliance is against the standing army and for the armed people. This principle will never be realised voluntarily by the capitalist state. It has to be won by the working class developing its own militia.

Such a body grows out of the class struggle itself: defending the picket line, mass demonstrations, workplace occupations, fending off fascists, defending refugees etc.

As class struggle intensifies, the conditions are created for the workers to arm themselves and win over sections of the military forces of the capitalist state. Every opportunity must be used to take even tentative steps towards this goal. As the circumstances allow, the working class must defend itself with whatever means become available.

To facilitate this we demand:

- Rank and file personnel in the state's armed bodies must be protected from bullying, humiliating treatment and being used against the working class.
- There must be full trade union and democratic rights, including the right to form bodies such as soldiers' councils.
- The privileges of the officer caste must be abolished. Officers must be elected. Workers in uniform must become the allies of the masses in struggle.

- The people have the right to bear arms and defend themselves.

#### **4.9. Peace**

Australian imperialism has continued to play a significant role in the Asia-Pacific region. The Socialist Alliance opposes all imperialist military alliances and ventures.

Australian capitalism continues to provide weapons and training to oppressive regimes from PNG to Indonesia. It has a vested interest in promoting militarism. The Socialist Alliance stresses however that the struggle against the military-industrial complex cannot be separated from the struggle against the profit system as a whole.

The Socialist Alliance does not call for this or that percentage cut in military spending. We are against giving even one cent or one person to the capitalist state's armed forces.

Peace cannot come courtesy of bodies such as the United Nations - an assembly of exploiters and murderers. Nor can it come about by trying to eliminate this or that category of weapons. It is the duty of revolutionary socialists and communists to connect the popular desire for peace with the aim of revolution. Only by disarming the bourgeoisie and through international socialism can the danger of war be eliminated.

The Socialist Alliance is not pacifist. Everywhere we support just wars, above all revolutionary civil wars for socialism. We will therefore strive to expose the war preparations of the capitalist state, the lies of social chauvinists and the illusions fostered by social pacifism. These alien, bourgeois influences objectively disarm and paralyse the working class in the face of a state armed to the teeth.

#### **4.10. Women**

Women are oppressed because of the system of exploitation and the division of labour. Women's oppression has existed since the before the dawn of class society but under capitalism such oppression has taken on new forms as others have been superseded. The abolition of exploitation will mark the beginning of the emancipation of women. Therefore the struggle for both is interconnected.

Women's emancipation is not a question for women alone. Just as the abolition of class

exploitation is of concern to female workers, so the emancipation of women is of concern to male workers. The struggle for socialism and the emancipation of women cannot be separated.

Under capitalism women carry out domestic labour, such as housework, child rearing, etc, which is performed gratis. Given the technical possibilities to industrialise it, such work is enormously time-wasting. It is also dull, demoralising and does not allow for any kind of cultural development.

Advanced capitalism has created the material prerequisites for the liberation of women. However, women cannot fully emancipate themselves until the disappearance of the division of labour without going beyond bourgeois right - that is, right based on work done.

In Australia women have won or been granted formal equality with men. The very existence of the capitalist system makes a mockery of that formal equality. At work, at home, in education, before the law, women are at all times faced with inequality, discrimination and oppression.

There has been a rapid increase in women's participation in the economy. Capitalism has an inherent tendency to increase not only the number of unemployed but also the absolute size of the working population. Nowadays, therefore, women are exploited by capital as cheap wage workers and domestic slaves. Hence, as a norm, they suffer a double burden of oppression.

Women are faced with specific problems and concordant demands. These demands, however, do not conflict with the demands of the general working class, but rather they reinforce them.

The Socialist Alliance demands:

- The turning of formal equality into genuine equality. Socially, economically, politically and culturally there must be equality of opportunity. Open 24-hour crèches and kindergartens to facilitate full participation in social life outside the home: ie, trade unions, political organisations, workers' militia, cultural activities, etc.
- High quality canteens with cheap prices. The establishment of laundry and house-cleaning services to be undertaken by the state. This to be the first step in the socialisation of housework.

- Fully paid maternity leave three months before and six months after giving birth (the partner to be provided with six months' paternity leave).
- Free abortion and contraception on demand.
- Provision for either parent to be allowed paid leave to look after sick children.
- Maximum six-hour working day for all nursing mothers.
- Decriminalisation of prostitution so as to remove it from criminal control. Sex workers to be provided with special healthcare and other services to reduce the dangers they confront. Measures to give sex workers wider social opportunities.

#### **4.11. Youth**

Youth are at the sharp end of Australian capitalism's perverted values. Young workers are in general not protected by trade union membership. Homelessness and unemployment are greatly disproportionate amongst the young. Training on official schemes is notoriously mediocre, designed more to massage government statistics than equip youth with the skills of the future. In the drive to cut costs, basic education is under constant attack, with the standard of university education woefully diluted.

Youth are contradictorily fawned upon by advertisers, exploited as cheap labour and blamed for social decay. The system is in fact only interested in youth in terms of the cash register. Every ideal, every artistic talent is judged purely in terms of its ability to generate artificial needs in others. There are many who reject the twisted ethos of the system. But in despair they often turn to nihilism - itself turned into a commodity by capitalism.

The following demands are of crucial importance for youth:

- The provision of housing and hostels for youth to enter of their own choice for longer or shorter periods when they lose their parents or choose to leave them.
- Education compulsory up to the age of 16 and from then on within a fully democratic system. Education should be free and of a polytechnical nature: ie,

rounded to include technical as well as academic skills.

- No religious schools, no private schools.
- Students over the age of 16 should receive grants set in line with the level of the minimum wage.
- The right of every young person on leaving education to a job, proper training or full benefits.
- The removal of all obstacles to the participation of youth in social life. Votes and the right to be elected from the age of 16.
- The provision of a broad range of sports and cultural centres under the control of elected representatives of youth.
- The abolition of age-of-consent laws. We recognise the right of individuals to enter into the sexual relations they choose provided this does not conflict with the rights of others. Alternative legislation to protect children from sexual abuse.
- The extensive provision of education and counselling facilities on all sexual matters, free from moralistic judgement, is an essential prerequisite to enable youth to develop themselves in all areas of sexuality and re-production.

#### **4.12. Pensioners and the elderly**

People deserve a secure, dignified and comfortable old age. The needs of the elderly should be met fully by the state, and should be available by right. Our older people should not suffer the humiliation and anxiety of relying on means tests or charity nor be subjected to nursing homes which function as little more than prisons for old people.

The aim of these demands is to mobilise the working class as a whole to fight for pensioners' rights:

- No compulsory retirement. The right to retirement from age 60 for all workers - at 55 in unpleasant and dangerous jobs.
- The state pension should be at the level of the minimum wage, and should be paid to everyone who has retired.

- Old people should have the right to decide how they live. There should be no compulsory institutionalisation. The state must provide what is needed to allow elderly people to live independently if they so wish, for as long as they are physically or mentally capable of doing so.
- Social clubs for the elderly should be democratic and subsidised by the state, not charities.
- The comfort and dignity of the dying must be ensured at all times. Euthanasia and disposal of the body after death should be carried out according to the wishes of the individual.

#### **4.13. Sexuality**

People identifying sexually as something other than heterosexual are regularly scapegoated, persecuted and subjected to violence. Homosexuality is generally portrayed as a deviant act which threatens the family - the basic economic unit of capitalist society.

Homophobic attitudes divide the working class and aid those advocating the authoritarian state. The working class needs to be mobilised in order to defend and advance homosexual and queer rights.

The Socialist Alliance demands:

- Abolition of all forms of state discrimination directed against homosexuality.
- Lesbians, gays and queers should be accorded the same rights in society as heterosexuals: ie, state marriages, artificial insemination for lesbians, adoption and fostering. No discrimination in custody cases on the grounds of sexual orientation.
- No discrimination in any area of employment.

#### **4.14. Freedom of information**

Knowledge is power. The Australian bourgeois state has always shrouded its affairs in secrecy. The real class interests and imperialist ambitions

of the capitalists are thus kept from the eyes of the working class.

Freedom of information legislation is a sham. The working class must fight for openness in all state matters, not least as a preparation for running its own state.

The Socialist Alliance demands:

- Conduct the affairs of the bourgeois state in complete openness in all matters.
- Abolish all rules relating to the period of time which documents may be kept secret and all other forms of secrecy. Public access to all state files, cabinet papers, diplomatic agreements, etc.
- End all forms of censorship, both legislative and institutional.

#### **4.15. Crime and prison**

Crime can only be understood in relationship to society. In a class society crime is a product of alienation, want or resistance. Under capitalism the criminal system is an anti-working class, anti-popular system.

Against this system the Socialist Alliance demands:

- All judges and magistrates must be subject to election and recall.
- Fines must be proportionate to income.
- There must be workers' supervision of prisons.
- Prisoners must be allowed the maximum opportunity to develop themselves as human beings. People should only be imprisoned within a short distance of their own locality - if not, families must be given full cost of travel for visits.
- Prison life must be made as near normal as possible. The aim of prison should be rehabilitation, not punishment. Within prisons there should be a wide range of cultural facilities. Medical treatment must be via the general health service. There must be provision for daily visiting hours and weekly 24-hour conjugal visits.
- Worthwhile prison work must be made available. It must be paid at full trade

union rates and limited to seven hours a day.

- Cells must be self-contained and for one person alone.
- Prisoners must be allowed access to books, newspapers and periodicals of their choice. Incoming and outgoing letters can only be checked for contraband - they must not be read or censored.
- Prisoners should have the right to vote in parliamentary and other such elections and to stand for election. Votes from prisoners to count within the constituency they actually live, not where they happen to originate.

#### **4.16. Religion**

Religion can play no progressive role for the working class - unlike previous oppressed classes in history - in its struggle against today's ruling class.

Nevertheless, though revolutionary socialists and communists want to overcome all religious prejudices, we are the most consistent defenders of the individual's freedom of conscience and freedom of worship.

The Socialist Alliance therefore demands:

- Separation of religious matters from the state. End all state subsidies for religious institutions.
- Freedom for all religious cults. Freedom for atheistic propaganda. Religious organisations and individuals have the right to propagate their ideas and seek to win converts. Opponents of religion have the same right.
- The ending of all state-sponsored religious propaganda and acts of worship. Religion is a private, not a state matter. Religion can be taught as a subject of academic study, not as a means to indoctrinate children.
- Religious organisations, no matter how 'progressive', have no role to play in the provision of services to people.

#### **4.17. Small businesses and farms**

Small business people, including small farmers,

form a strong petty bourgeois stratum in Australia. Carrying on an unstable, precarious existence, these people operate in the nooks and crannies of the monopoly-dominated capitalist economy.

Their limited profits often oblige them to work alone or alongside their employees. A combination of the threat of bankruptcy and the aspiration to become big capitalists drives them to work longer hours in worse conditions than many members of the working class.

Every downward oscillation of the capitalist economy faces the petty bourgeoisie with financial ruin. While the destruction of this stratum is economically progressive, the working class has a political interest to defend the petty bourgeoisie from the short-term ravages of the capitalist economy, at the same time helping to raise the working conditions, security of employment and living standards of wage workers in farming and in small businesses.

The Socialist Alliance demands:

- Secure rights of tenure for owner-occupiers, small farmers and small businesses, with low rents.
- Cancellation of debts to banks arising from disproportionately high interest rates. Provision of low interest rates for small businesses.
- Guaranteed prompt payment of bills by big business to small businesses.
- Encouragement of the formation of producers' cooperatives through the provision of scientific and technical advice, research facilities, administrative machinery, grants for capital improvements, etc.

#### **4.16. A Federal Republic**

The bourgeoisie has ceased to be a revolutionary class in Australia. The democracy we have achieved has resulted from class struggle. Our class must not leave questions of democracy and high politics – how we are ruled and controlled – to the ruling class.

We struggle for maximum democracy under capitalism (and then under socialism). The

working class must take up the mantle of democracy as our own.

The Socialist Alliance sees the nature of the state, its form and the way our class is ruled in Australia as primary issues in the struggle for socialism. We advocate militant republicanism and revolutionary democracy – power and control from below.

## C. International Socialist Organisation amendments to Socialist Alliance Platform

### By David Glanz, Wills Socialist Alliance, for the International Socialist Organisation

1. Add “declining services” before “transport chaos” in the first paragraph of the preamble of the platform
2. Replace “Axe the GST” with “Scrap the GST”. Add “cancel the HECS debt” to the “Free tertiary education” point. Add “Increase pensions to 25 per cent of average male weekly wage” after “no mutual obligation” of the last dot point of this section.;
3. Under “Public Need not Corporate Greed” add a dot point: No to privatization, Keep Telstra under public ownership
4. Add a point to Full Union Rights: Stop the attacks on workers compensation, increase entitlements for injured workers
5. Under Fight Corporate Globalisation, include “withdraw Australia from of the WTO”

## D. Various amendments

### By Matt Emery. Fremantle Socialist Alliance

I would like to propose the following policies.

- Lowering the voting age to at least 14.
- Bank charges to be abolished.
- Abolish age discrimination on wages.
- Free quit smoking products;(paid for by tobacco companies).
- Alternative medicine and treatments to be claimable through Medicare.

#### ***Rationale***

1. Young people are citizens of the world, with many concerns. Governments treat young people as “lesser citizens” for their own economic

The Socialist Alliance demands:

- A centralist democratic republic
- The replacement of the anti-democratic and royalist federal constitution with a revolutionary democratic one based on the programme of the Alliance.

6. Under Freedom and Democracy, delete “disarm the police to stop police killings”
7. Under For Ecological Development, add “not freeways” to the end of “Money for public transport”
8. Make “Stolen Generation”, plural. Add “restore the right to veto mining on Aboriginal land
9. Under Free the Refugees: delete “Open the borders”, so the point will read, Funding for settlement, language classes and job training. Add “end mandatory detention” to “close the detention centers”
10. Under Jobs Not Profits make changes to the three last dot points (NB “no work for the dole is under Scrap the GST”).
  - (i) Stop casualisation; for full employment with real jobs;
  - (ii) Stop national competition policy massacring jobs and services;
  - (iii) For industry-wide agreements. No trading-off of jobs or conditions.

and political ends. They want young people to be the passive victims of policy which discriminates against them. Young people work for less pay than adults yet; rent property, buy food and consumer goods, get sick and pay for pharmaceuticals, pay for public transport, pay taxes, and have no political say in the way they live their lives. This argument only scratches the surface of the overall problems faced by the youth of today. It is up to young people to decide what is best for themselves.

2. Without going in to detail on the actual figures, banks are making around \$6B/per annum off bank charges. The people who pay the most are always the poor. And the government wonders

why national savings are so poorly. This argument speaks for itself. Get rid of them.

3. The first argument touches on the fact that young people are paid considerably less for equal work, yet have no concession in the cost of everyday living.

4. Tobacco is the only legal product available to humans that is addictive. This must be the “sacred cow” of capitalism to tobacco companies, but it is the misery and death of millions of people worldwide. Tobacco companies must be brought to bear the burden of their nefarious marketing tactics. People addicted to illicit substances have access to treatment that

is cost effective for them. Why is not the same treatment extended to addicts of nicotine? Tobacco companies have the resources to pay for such a program; make the rich killers pay.

5. People of Australia have the right to a basic level of medical coverage, as vouchsafed by Medicare. However, this treatment is only limited to Western medicine. Alternative treatments should be available to all people regardless of income. The treatment or consultative portion should be covered or partly covered by Medicare. The alternative medicines should also be available at the same rate as prescription drugs, to people on healthcare cards.

## 2. AMENDMENTS TO THE PREAMBLE

### A. Amendments proposed by the Illawarra Branch

*Adopted over the two branch meetings on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> July.*

*Amend the sentence:*

While tremendous wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few, millions of us face **sexism**, transport chaos, low pay, job insecurity, homelessness, racism, and environmental destruction

*Delete the following sentence:*

We recognise that on issues such as the GST, health, education, Labor is offering far less than what traditional labor voters want

### B. Amendments from Workers' Liberty

*Here are a few more changes following our amendment in the Preconference Discussion Bulletin No. 2. Some are in response to comments, but most are designed to remove duplication that went noticed earlier. The reasons for these amendments were given in DB2. Here the preamble is presented twice, once as a set of amendments, deletions and insertions. The sections against the left margin are in the draft platform. The indentations show changes.*

The second Preamble presents the text as it reads with the amendments incorporated.

Insert at beginning

#### **“Theme**

For a workers' plan to rebuild Australia — tax the rich, seize control from the profiteers, rebuild jobs, expand public services, create a democratic republic.”

#### **Introduction**

The Socialist Alliance stands on a platform of total opposition to the profit-driven economic rationalist agenda of social austerity, privatisation and deregulation. While tremendous wealth is concentrated in the hands of a

delete “few”  
replace with “tiny minority”),

millions of us face transport chaos, low pay, job insecurity, homelessness, racism, and environmental destruction.

*[This sentence was considered as just letting Labor of the hook for the attacks they inflicted on the working class and student during their thirteen years of implementing capitalist restructuring and neo-liberalism. A suggestion was floated for a sentence along these lines to replace it.]*

*Amend the sentence:*

A movement for change must be built by developing policies, campaigns, industrial struggles and co-operation with all workers, environmental, **anti-sexist**, anti-racist, and other social movements and to put forward an alternative to corporate control of society.

Moved up from paragraph below –

“Only by ending the concentration of power in the hands of that minority can the wealth that exists be used for the benefit of working people”.

Delete

“By empowering communities and redistributing the wealth of society, we can create jobs, expand public services, and improve welfare and services.”

Replace with

“Working-class communities who campaign for their needs and rights can develop their own sense of power as a collective alternative to private ownership, and could then redistribute the wealth of society, create jobs, expand public services, and improve welfare and services.”

Delete (repetition)

“The tremendous wealth of Australia is concentrated in the hands of a tiny minority.”

Insert

“By socialism, we mean nothing like the old Stalinist Soviet Union with its bureaucracy and repression, but instead solidarity raised from a principle of resistance to the guiding principle of society. We mean the working class organising to liberate itself from the rule of profit and create its own democracy, abolishing the privileges of managers and officials.”

Every major industry should be reorganised on the lines of social provision for need, publicly owned, and democratically controlled by workers and the community. No rich and no poor, no profits and no wage-slavery, no mansions and no homeless, no jobless and no overworked!

The Socialist Alliance will stand candidates in the next federal election to give a voice to working-class struggle, to the need for working-class political representation. We will stand to offer an alternative that Labor is not. We recognise that on issues such as the GST, health and education, Labor is offering far less than what traditional Labor voters want. The Socialist Alliance stands in complete opposition to the racist and right-wing Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party.

If elected, a Socialist Alliance candidate would reject the perks and personal pay-outs of parliamentary office and take only an average worker's wage. In parliament, Socialist Alliance candidates would use their position to give a voice to workers' struggles and social movements, fight reactionary policies and promote the mass campaigns that can defeat the attacks on jobs and living standards.

A movement for change

Delete

“must be built”

and replace with

“requires above all that the working-class movement renovate itself”

by developing policies, campaigns, industrial struggles,

Insert

“internal democracy”

and co-operation with all workers, environmentalists, anti-racists, and other social movements, to put forward an alternative to corporate control of society. A sustained mass campaign of total opposition to the ruling-class offensive can bring together the forces to replace capitalism with a socialist society, based on co-operation, democracy, liberty and ecological sustainability.

Insert

“For a workers' government — one that acts in the interests of workers, not bosses, and one that supports, encourages

and is rooted in the organisations and struggles of working-class people.”

## **PLATFORM PREAMBLE — incorporating the above amendments**

### **Theme**

For a workers' plan to rebuild Australia - tax the rich, seize control from the profiteers, rebuild jobs, expand public services, create a democratic republic.

### **Introduction**

The Socialist Alliance stands on a platform of total opposition to the profit-driven economic rationalist agenda of social austerity, privatisation and deregulation. While tremendous wealth is concentrated in the hands of a tiny minority, millions of us face transport chaos, low pay, job insecurity, homelessness, racism, and environmental destruction. Only by ending the concentration of power in the hands of that minority can the wealth that exists be used for the benefit of working people. Working-class communities who campaign for their needs and rights can develop their own sense of power as a collective alternative to private ownership, and could then redistribute the wealth of society, create jobs, expand public services, and improve welfare and services.

By socialism, we mean nothing like the old Stalinist Soviet Union with its bureaucracy and repression, but instead solidarity raised from a principle of resistance to the guiding principle of society. We mean the working class organising to liberate itself from the rule of profit and create its own democracy, abolishing the privileges of managers and officials. Every major industry should be reorganised on the lines of social provision for need, publicly-owned, and democratically controlled by workers and the community. No rich and no poor, no profits and no wage-slavery, no mansions and no homeless, no jobless and no overworked!

The Socialist Alliance will stand candidates in the next federal election to give a voice to working-class struggle, to the need for working-class political representation. We will stand to offer an alternative that Labor is not. We recognise that on issues such as the GST, health and education, Labor is offering far less than what traditional Labor voters want. The Socialist Alliance stands

in complete opposition to the racist and right-wing Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party.

If elected, a Socialist Alliance candidate would reject the perks and personal pay-outs of parliamentary office and take only an average worker's wage. In parliament, Socialist Alliance candidates would use their position to give a voice to workers' struggles and social movements, fight reactionary policies and promote the mass campaigns that can defeat the attacks on jobs and living standards.

A movement for change requires above all that the working-class movement renovate itself by developing policies, campaigns, industrial

struggles, internal democracy and co-operation with all workers, environmentalists, anti-racists, and other social movements, to put forward an alternative to corporate control of society. A sustained mass campaign of total opposition to the ruling class offensive can bring together the forces to replace capitalism with a socialist society, based on co-operation, democracy, liberty and ecological sustainability.

For a workers' government — one that acts in the interests of workers, not bosses, and one that supports, encourages and is rooted in the organisations and struggles of working-class people.

### 3. AMENDMENTS TO SPECIFIC SECTIONS OF THE DRAFT PLATFORM

#### i. "Axe the GST, tax the rich"

From North Sydney Socialist Alliance

Add:

- Restore the Prices Justification Tribunal;
- Impose a Tobin tax on international financial transactions in the finance and equity markets, the proceeds to be directed to retirement of poor countries' debt

From Alan Woodcraft, Fremantle Socialist Alliance and International Socialist Organisation

Add after:

"Increase social security payments" "including, non means-tested parenting allowance".

#### ii. "Public need, not corporate greed"

From Workers' Liberty

##### **Privatisation and public ownership**

*The issue of privatisation has not been addressed in the platform. Workers' Liberty proposes that it should be, as follows, in the section of the platform entitled "public need not corporate greed". This also seems the best place to assert that public services should be provided on a secular, and not religious, basis. Dot points 3-6 are as in the draft platform. Everything before them is new, and the final point is also new.*

##### **PUBLIC NEED NOT CORPORATE GREED**

The Socialist Alliance believes that public services should be publicly owned, publicly funded and democratically controlled by those who work in and use them.

- For public ownership of key sections of the economy – major transport, communications, utilities, construction and manufacturing industries, as well as banking and financial institutions;
- Reverse the privatisation of Telstra, Qantas, the Commonwealth Bank, airports, electricity and Centrelink;
- End government funding of private schools, hospitals and health insurance;
- No subsidies to wealthy schools;

- Fund Medicare, not private health funds;
- Expand public services;
- End government funding to welfare and education services run by Church and other religious organisations.

#### iii. "Full union rights"

From Socialist Alliance, North Sydney

Add the demand:

- Protection for children from child labour

From Phil Sandford, Workers League and Parramatta Socialist Alliance

Add Point 4:

- Defend 60/40 representation in the ALP

*In support see separate article by Phil Sandford, Preconference Discussion Bulletin No. 6.*

From Stuart Martin, Illawarra Socialist Alliance

*I propose that the first point be broken up as it's too long and therefore loses its impact. I also propose a new point on Greenfield sites, given the near disaster for the One-Tel workers who did not have access to redundancy payments. The "Comprehensive Agreements" refers to the trend of Enterprise and Certified Agreements that make the Awards null and void for workers, in some cases these agreements are little better than collective AWAs. Therefore the section would have the following dot points (new wording in bold):*

- Every worker has the right to join a union **of their choice and not be discriminated against for doing so.**
- **Employers are obliged** to recognise and negotiate with the union (or unions) of their employees.
- Unions **and their members** have the right to gain access to workplaces, to inspect company plans and books, to strike, to picket effectively and to act in solidarity with other unions or social causes.
- Repeal anti-union laws - the Workplace Relations Act and sections 45 D and E of the Trade Practices Act.

- **No ‘Greenfield’ sites or Comprehensive Agreements – all workers to have access to an Award.**
- No individual contracts

#### iv. “Fight corporate globalisation”

##### From Workers' Liberty

*Workers' Liberty suggests a new first dot point that makes clear that we are for international working-class solidarity. It replaces the words after "Cancel Third World debt" in the current platform, words we propose to delete.*

- Fight globalised capital with global working-class solidarity, to gain union rights, basic public services, and a living wage for workers worldwide, and for a global plan of economic reconstruction at the expense of the rich as our alternative to the poverty-and-privatisation drives of the WTO, IMF, World Bank, and international banks.
- Cancel Third World debt.

*The point that says*

- “Stop Howard’s military expansion; no military ties with repressive regimes”  
*(which is proposed by Dick Nichols to go in a new section on foreign policy) we propose to re-word as:*
- Stop Australia's export of military hardware and personnel.

##### **Rationale**

*We can't think of any non-repressive regimes that the government has ties with that we would want to keep!*

*It is a bit of a stretch to suggest that Australia is expanding its own territory by military conquest. What Australia does is to train and arm neighbouring regimes. So Workers' Liberty proposes this phrase as a more relevant policy for the SA.*

##### From Workers Power

Replace current section “FIGHT CORPORATE GLOBALISATION” with:

##### **GLOBALISE THIS!**

The Socialist Alliance is internationalist. We are for globalisation of the world's working class movement and struggles. But for us that means fighting the international institutions of global

capitalism and the weapons that the bosses use to impose their will on the countries they plunder.

We are for the cancellation of all of the debts owed by third world. We are in favour of abolishing the IMF, World Bank, WEF and would withdraw Australia's participation in them. We would fight for a socialist federation of the Asia-Pacific region to replace their economic forums.

The Australian armed forces don't exist to defend us. They exist to defend Australian capitalism's global interests. We will not spend a cent for the defence of Australian capitalism.

We are for a militia based on the armed workers, not an army standing against the people. We will immediately withdraw Australian troops from all foreign countries. We will withdraw troops from East Timor and the immediately hand over arms to the East Timorese. They cannot have independence as long as Australia controls their country economically and militarily.

##### From Illawarra Socialist Alliance

*Delete:*

- “Promote peace and international co-operation”

*[The question was raised in our group “on what basis?” NATO could claim this for its work on Serbia, Howard could also claim this for East Timor. More concrete discussion in the branch focused on abolishing the UN security council and opposing the arms trade.]*

#### v. “Freedom and democracy”

##### From Alan Woodcraft, Fremantle Socialist Alliance and International Socialist Organisation

- Increased democracy- all elected appointments recallable.

*This already happens in the Philippines.*

- Residency category which gives full electoral franchise after four years of residency.

*Currently many migrants are totally disenfranchised as they don't have citizenship*

*due to not wanting to give up their nationality of birth. Countries such as Japan and the Philippines do not allow dual nationality and thus taking up Australian nationality implies renouncing their nationality of birth. This is not the case for UK migrants. By not having a residency category which automatically allows full voting and participation rights, such migrants are discriminated against. Such a residency category exists in the UK. It is the case that Asian migrant after tens of years of living in this country do not have the vote.*

From Ray Jackson, Sydney Central Branch for the Freedom Socialist Party

Peter Murray, Wills Branch for the Freedom Socialist Party

Debbie Brennan, Wills Branch for Radical Women

*The existing "Freedom and Democracy" section in our platform makes a start towards defining the key issues which need to be addressed.*

*We propose replacing and renaming the section to read as follows.*

### **DEFEND AND EXTEND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES**

*\* Sever all ties with the British monarchy: for a democratic republic of Australia based on a new constitution. The constitution must include a Bill of Rights guaranteeing individual freedoms and outlawing all forms of discrimination, must recognise Indigenous sovereignty and must provide that all political offices are filled by direct election and that any qualified resident is eligible to stand;*

*\* End police brutality and racist harassment: disarm the police. Establish elected, community-controlled, police review boards with the power to discipline and fire cops who brutalise, harass and murder Indigenous people, immigrants, women, queers, youth and workers. The police are the armed agents of the ruling class and are incapable of policing themselves;*

*\* Democratic rights for prisoners: expanded funding for legal aid to provide free, quality legal representation to all who need it. Stop racism and sexism in sentencing. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against prisoners and ex-prisoners. The right of prisoners to organise on their own*

*behalf without retaliation. Quality health care and decent living conditions in prison. Full access to job training and education while in prison. An end to the use of prisoners as super-exploited labour. Pay prisoners full award wages for their work. The right of prisoners to retain custody of their children. Adequate facilities for children to stay with parents. The right of prisoners to unmonitored and unlimited visits from friends, relatives and partners, regardless of sexual orientation or marital status. The right of prisoners to be housed close to their communities. Transgendered inmates to be housed in prisons appropriate to their chosen gender. An end to sexual harassment of all prisoners. Stop strip searches and prison rapes. Immediate implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.*

*\* Preservation and extension of civil liberties to protect our right to dissent, including freedom of speech, association and assembly, and the right to privacy in all spheres < particularly at work where civil rights are routinely suppressed;*

*\* Democratic reform of the electoral system: repeal electoral laws designed to make it harder for minor parties to gain registration, introduce proportional representation at all levels of government, guarantee equal media time to all political parties;*

*\* Immediate and unconditional legalisation of prostitution: sex workers must not be subject to any form of legal harassment, fines or prosecution. Integration of prostitutes into the working class, with basic labour safeguards and the right to unionise. End the causes of prostitution: poverty, racism and sexism. Provide education and training programs for those who choose to leave the sex-industry.*

*\* Legalise all drugs under community control, to take away drug dealers' profits, lower the cost and, therefore, reduce crimes committed to finance drug habits. Regulate drug quality. Provide needle exchange programs, safe injecting facilities and free, quality, voluntary treatment programs for addicts and alcoholics. Establish universal, culturally sensitive education programs to help prevent drug addiction. No forced drug testing.*

## From Workers Power

*Delete 3<sup>rd</sup> demand in section titled “Freedom and Democracy” and add to the start of section...*

If Australia were democratic, the Liberals would not be able to block legislative changes in the upper houses of state parliaments. The police would not be able to smash demonstrators or escape justice when indigenous people die in custody.

We are for the immediate repeal of all the anti-union laws and the right to take any action against the bosses free from the threat of court interference. We are for the dropping of all charges and fines gained in struggle by all trade unionists and anti-Nike and S11 protestors.

The Socialist Alliance would abolish the Upper House and break all ties with the monarchy, disband the police force and replace it with a democratic worker's militia, institute the election of all judges and magistrates, abolish ASIO and the Special Branch and give soldiers the right to elect their officers.

We would immediately grant the indigenous people of Australia the right to self-determination, up to and including the right to form a separate state if they wish.

## vi. “End discrimination”

### From North Sydney Socialist Alliance

*Add to first point, the words,*

“Fertility and sexuality are entirely private matters”

- Right to freedom of religious expression;  
*Add “religion” to the list to end all discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability and political ideology*
- Introduce a Bill of Rights for the child.

### From Alan Woodcraft, Fremantle Socialist Alliance and International Socialist Organisation

*Add after “...political ideology” “or employment status”.*

*Note need too for further recognition of “housework” and that many parents wish to be able to rear their children themselves.*

## vii. “For ecologically sustainable development”

### From Kamala Emanuel, Denison Socialist Alliance, Hobart

*This proposal for two minor amendments seeks firstly to change the name of the section “For Ecologically sustainable development” to “For Ecological Sustainability,” as there are issues of environmental repair that don’t have much to do with “development”, but which logically belong together.*

*Secondly, it seeks to add a point on genetically modified organisms, which the movement is trying to prevent being allowed to contaminate the environment. In Tasmania, there has been a moratorium on outdoor food crop trials, allowing for non-food GMO crops such as poppies to continue to be grown, and for field testing of food crops in tents to be conducted. The point could be added to the one on anti-nuclear and forest issues.*

*This amended point would read:*

- No uranium mining, no reactor; no logging old growth forests; no genetically modified organism (GMO) crops or field trials.

### From Workers Liberty

- “Extend and socialise public transport” to replace “money for public transport”, and
- “Worker-community-green alliances to take control of production for human need and sustainability, not profit” to replace “worker-community-green alliances to counter profiteering developers”.

### From Workers’ Power

*Replace current section “FOR ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT” with:*

#### **THE ENVIRONMENT – OUR WORLD IS NOT FOR SALE**

Capitalism is the root cause of the increase in global warming and the threat to the planet itself. Polluted rivers and lakes, encroaching deserts and of course those injured, made ill or made to live in fear by the nuclear industry, are all ugly mementos of a system that puts profit before the planned use of global resources.

A Socialist Alliance government would make an immediate start to repair the damage done by beginning the planned closure of the nuclear industry and uranium mining (with all workers guaranteed transfer to other jobs at equivalent pay), by planning for the end of fossil fuel use and its replacement by sustainable energy sources, by imposing workers' control over all aspects of health, safety and food production.

The Socialist Alliance believes that a fully integrated public transport system is a basic right. We believe that a rational use of rail as a means of freight transportation can ease congestion. And we believe that real local democracy should decide where and when roads are built.

### viii. "Social justice for indigenous Australians"

#### From Illawarra Socialist Alliance

*Replace references to "Aboriginal" with "Indigenous" for consistency of language and to be inclusive of Torres Strait Islanders.*

#### From Kamala Emanuel, Denison Socialist Alliance, Hobart

*Proposal: to add "apology to and" so that the last point now reads,*

"Apology to and full compensation for the Stolen Generation(s)"

#### **Rationale**

*An apology is window-dressing without real justice, but is a necessary component of the ideological struggle to make clear that unjust government policy needs changing and amends must be made for past violations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's rights.*

### ix. "Free the refugees"

#### From Tony Dewberry, Wills Socialist Alliance and Socialist Democracy

I notice that I did not make a formal amendment to the draft program in my section on open borders. My proposal is that: "The call for open borders be deleted from the draft program."

#### From Sue Bolton, Burwood Socialist Alliance and Democratic Socialist Party

*I propose that the current section of the platform which is titled "Free the refugees" be renamed to read "Free the refugees and migrant rights"*

*Under this heading, I propose that the following points be included in the platform:*

- Remove all restrictive and discriminatory immigration regulations
- End mandatory detention of refugees
- Close the detention centres
- End all deportations
- Full rights for asylum seekers and migrants
- Funding and specialist services for resettlement
- Unlimited and free English classes
- Grant permanent residency status for refugees and abolish the temporary visa category
- Repeal the Border Protection Act

*Without these changes, this section of the draft platform is inadequate as a basis for mobilising opposition against the Howard government's racist campaign against refugees and migrants. By adopting these changes, we can begin to spell out what it means to open the borders, and we can also address the issue of migrant as well as refugee rights.*

*It is not enough to talk only about refugee rights in this section. The UN definition of "refugee" is very narrow, thus allowing rich imperialist governments to exclude millions of refugees who do not fit into the precise UN definition. If the Socialist Alliance's platform is limited to discussing the rights of refugees and not those of all migrants, it will not equip the Alliance to respond to the many other injustices of the Australian government's migration policy which puts up great barriers against family reunion migration and people who have been forced out of their countries for economic or other reasons.*

*For these reasons, it is important to include a point on "removing all restrictive and discriminatory immigration regulations".*

#### Alison Thorne, Wills Socialist Alliance, for Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women

### **REMOVE THE BARRIERS TO IMMIGRATION**

Comrade Tony Dewberry raises some concerns about the demand for open borders [See

*Preconference Discussion Bulletin No.3—ed.].*

Given that one political current which Socialist Alliance is politically competing against is the rightwing populist anti-globalisation rhetoric of One Nation et al, we believe it is very important that that the open borders demand is retained, explained and popularised.

We do, however, agree with Tony that the most appropriate section for this demand is the section on globalization. It is our experience that people encountering the open borders demand for the first time quickly grasp its importance when the barriers to free movement of labour are contrasted with the ability of capital to move freely.

The question of immigration needs to be addressed in at least four places in our platform.

1. The demand for open borders as part of the section on globalization.
2. In the section on ecologically sustainable development, where we need to distinguish ourselves from environmentalists who advocate immigration and population control.
3. In a distinct section which expands on our existing concrete demands in relation to refugee rights.
4. In a new section calling for a removal of the barriers to immigration.

We propose the following as a starting point to address point 4.

Remove the barriers to immigration

- Overturn all immigration laws which favour wealthy business migrants and limit the admission of working class and poor people and migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds;
- Abolish the pro-business “points” system and the requirement for sponsors to pay up-front bonds;
- Abolish the two-year waiting period which prevents newly arrived migrants from accessing social security and leaves people totally dependent on charity.

x. “Jobs not profits”

From Alan Woodcraft, Fremantle Socialist Alliance and International Socialist Organisation

"No enterprise bargaining" *be replaced by*

- No individual contracts, collective bargaining, National Awards.

*Also add:*

- Free workskills training on demand.

*I'm not sure that this a correct formulation, but the point is that the AMWU want to be able to continue pattern bargaining.*

From Workers' Liberty

*Workers' Liberty proposes a whole replacement section for the platform here.*

Everyone should be guaranteed the right to a secure job at a living wage.

We support workers organising to stop sackings, and to claim and guarantee their entitlements when companies go bust. Our answer to the problem is:

- Legislation to cut work hours to a maximum of 35 per week, without loss of pay, and to require employers to recruit new permanent staff in proportion to the cut in hours;
- End casualisation — flexible working conditions should come with no loss in entitlements or job security;
- New jobs in hospitals, schools and public services, created by expanding those services and financed by taxing the rich and big business;
- Corporate collapse should not be allowed to threaten the livelihood or entitlements of workers. Companies threatening layoffs, whether profitable or insolvent, should be taken under public control and managed by committees elected by the workers. Minimum compensation should be made only to small share-holders;
- Build union and community support for workers who occupy their places of employment when they are threatened with closure;
- A minimum wage for all workers. Restore the ability of unions to negotiate award rates and conditions comparable to the best levels achieved in each industry;
- No individual contracts – for maximum solidarity in bargaining on wages and

conditions. Raise wages and conditions to the level of the best enterprise conditions through workers solidarity across all enterprises, as our answer to competition policy and enterprise bargaining;

- Training or retraining for all who require it, publicly provided, on a living wage, and leading to recognised qualifications.

Replace the rule of the free market by workers' control and democratic planning for social need and ecological sustainability.

### **Rationale**

*We are expanding this section to allow for some more complex answers to issues which are so simplistically presented in the draft that they could in some cases be counter-productive.*

*We agree with Chris Spindler's point in Discussion Bulletin 3 about enterprise bargaining — sometimes enterprise bargaining is actually an advance over having no union agreement at all. Hence the point beginning, "No individual contracts". To this we add a political demand against enterprise bargaining, casualisation, and so on as the parameters for re-creation of the legal conditions for trade unions to "level up" wages and conditions through industry-wide bargaining. Deregulation, tariff reduction, free trade, competition policy, contracting out, casualisation, enterprise bargaining and individual contracts are all elements of economic policy followed by Australian governments for the last 2-3 decades.*

*We are for setting regulations on companies in order to protect health, safety, security and working conditions. General calls for re-regulation, protection and other reversals of the overall policy approach are not automatically in our best interests. We should judge specific measures on their merits, and do not find any general demands about re-regulation to be helpful.*

*On the shorter working week, the part about hiring new staff is based on the French experience (where there is a shorter work week by law, but bosses often manage to get round it by "annualising" hours, demanding "flexibility" etc., and actually not hiring anyone new at all).*

*The call for expropriation of job-cutters should not be limited to companies which are actually*

*going bust (Lutte Ouvriere in France actually prioritises a call for expropriation of profitable firms which cut jobs). The call for protection of workers' entitlements surely only arises when the company goes down, so is subsumed in the call for expropriation. Therefore, we mention support for such struggles in our introduction, but our actual policy is more comprehensive.*

*The ACTU's "living wage" case is inadequate — we need a more ambitious target for a minimum wage that could make the basic case for the abolition of the "working poor". We should say that we are for higher wages — especially with Australia's long tradition of public intervention in wage-setting in response to union claims via industrial courts.*

### **From Phil Sandford, Parramatta Socialist Alliance and Workers' League**

*Amend to read:*

1. Shorter working week with no loss in pay
2. Nationalise under workers' and community control and without compensation companies that threaten mass sackings
3. Renationalise under workers' and community control and without compensation Qantas, the Commonwealth Bank and Telstra
4. No to all forms of privatisation
5. Stop casualisation
6. Stop competition policy massacring jobs
7. No enterprise bargaining

*(The last three points remain unchanged)*

*In support: See separate article by Phil Sandford (Preconference Discussion Bulletin No. 6)*

### **From Illawarra Socialist Alliance**

*Add point:*

- End wage discrimination — abolish youth wage-rates.
- Scrap Work-for-the-Dole and similar exploitative schemes.

## 4. PROPOSED ADDITIONAL SECTIONS TO THE DRAFT PLATFORM

### i. "Women's liberation"

From Kamala Emanuel, Denison Socialist Alliance, Hobart

*I would like to make a proposal for a separate point in the platform for issues of women's liberation. Currently these are found under the heading "End Discrimination". But the second-class status of women under capitalism is more than a collection of discriminations, but rather, reflects systematic oppression in the service of perpetuating class society. A socialism that leaves intact the oppression of over half the population isn't socialism, and more emphasis should be placed in the platform on the Alliance's commitment to rebuilding a fighting women's liberation movement.*

*The proposal is brief, not a maximum program for women's liberation, in keeping with the rest of the dot-points of the draft platform, and would merit further elaboration, as comrades have already suggested we do over the coming period.*

*The proposed amendment would read:*

#### **FOR WOMEN'S LIBERATION**

- Full reproductive freedom. Repeal abortion laws. Guarantee access to abortion services. Lift the ban on RU486 (mifepristone, "the abortion pill"). End legalised discrimination against lesbians and single women seeking access to medically-assisted conception.
- Expand availability of affordable quality child-care.
- Fully funded refuges for women and children escaping domestic violence.
- No cuts to women's services.
- Equal pay for comparative work. Affirmative action to ensure access to non-traditional jobs.

The remainder of the points would remain in the original, now reading:

#### End Discrimination

- End all discrimination based on race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age,

disability, political ideology, and sexuality.

- Repeal all laws that discriminate against lesbians and gays. Full equality for same sex couples.
- Equal pay for equal or comparative work for women, young people, Aboriginal workers and people with disabilities [not, as is currently written, "the disabled"].

#### From Illawarra Socialist Alliance

*Start by restructuring the "End Discrimination" group of demands as follows:*

*1. Shift the specific demand "repeal all laws that discriminate against lesbians and gay – full equality for same sex couples" to the group "Freedom and Democracy."*

*2. Shift the specific demand "End all discrimination based on race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, disability and political ideology" to the group "Freedom and Democracy."*

*3. Delete "Equal pay for equal or comparative work for all, including women, young people, Aboriginal workers and the disabled."*

*4. Add:*

- Restructure wages in "traditional" jobs undertaken by women raising them to the same as jobs traditionally undertaken by men with similar qualification requirements.
- Guarantee paid Maternity Leave for all women, and abolish the "loop-holes" allowing discrimination of mothers by employers when they return to work.

*5. Amend:*

- "Full reproductive freedom – repeal abortion laws" by adding "and ensure all women have access to free reproductive health services, including abortion."
- Fully funded refuges for women and children who have been victims of abuse. *[All forms of abuse should be included, including emotional abuse that had been missed in the first draft.]*

*Given that we want to clearly identify the Socialist Alliance as feminist, it makes sense to have a clear statement to that effect.*

## ii. "For full reproductive freedom"

From Debbie Brennan, Wills Socialist Alliance, for Radical Women

Alison Thorne, Wills Socialist Alliance, for the Freedom Socialist Party

*Having a clear, unambiguous position in abortion is an important feature of our current platform and one where the Socialist Alliance can clearly distinguish itself from the mainstream parties which hide behind a conscience vote. However, a socialist position on reproductive freedom must address much more than the question of abortion. For many women in both Australia and other parts of the world, the right to continue with a pregnancy is a question of equal magnitude. Women will not have won the complete right to freely choose to continue with or terminate a pregnancy until we have free, safe abortion on demand and free quality child care, an independent living wage, free quality education, health care etc.*

### **FOR FULL REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM**

\* It is an unconditional right of every human being to control their own body. Get abortion out of the criminal code. Free, safe, accessible abortion on demand. End the rightwing prohibition on the import of Mifipristone (RU486);

\* No state interference with a woman's reproductive decisions during pregnancy;

\* Expand contraceptive choices, free safe birth control for both women and men to be available for all who request it, regardless of age;

\* Equal access to donor sperm, IVF and reproductive technologies for single and lesbian women;

\* No forced sterilization, stop the reproductive genocide against Indigenous people and people with disabilities;

- Stop "population control" programs used by imperialism to perpetrate genocide in Third World countries.

## iii. "Youth rights"

From Workers' Power

### **END YOUTH OPPRESSION!**

The imposition of curfews and Howard's new "war on drugs" criminalise young people and force them to stay under parental control. We oppose all curfews and are for massive expenditure on youth controlled sports and entertainment centres, free from the rule of the family.

The age of consent must be abolished and young people engaging in consensual sex not criminalised.

For the legalisation of all drugs including heroin, the provision of safe injecting rooms and factual, non-judgemental sex and drugs education in schools. For the right to free access to clean needles, counselling and support services, quality assurance and the free availability of testing kits and confidential medical treatment.

## IV. "Full equality for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people"

Alison Thorne, Wills Socialist Alliance, for the Freedom Socialist Party

*The Freedom Socialist Party is proud to have written the queer rights policy for the Progressive Labour Party. This policy was well received in the community and resulted in several invitations to participate in pre-election forums in the queer community and very positive coverage for PLP candidates in the queer press.*

*We propose the following slightly modified and abbreviated version of that policy as a starting point for our Socialist Alliance policy.*

We live in a society which attempts to dictate sexual preference and gender identity through the promoting of marriage and the nuclear family as the legitimate institution. Lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people suffer oppression because their lives are a direct threat to the nuclear family which is an economic cornerstone of capitalism.

The Socialist Alliance is opposed to all attempts to shoehorn people into sexual and gender conformity. We believe it is a basic democratic

right that the self definition of sexual preference and gender identity should be recognised as a matter of individual choice.

Heterosexism exists at almost every level in this society, and that discrimination on the basis sexual orientation and gender identity is entrenched in all of the key institutions of society < education, health, the law, the media, family, church and state.

Socialist Alliance therefore demands:

#### **[1] Legal Reform**

- Enforceable anti-discrimination legislation to protect lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, people living with HIV/AIDS and transgendered people. Removal of existing exemptions for private schools, insurance industry, tax system, superannuation etc;
- Equalisation of age of consent for heterosexual and homosexual acts;
- The removal of all references to homosexuality in the Crimes Act & the repeal of Summary Offences laws which allow police to entrap and harass gays & sex workers;
- Anti-homophobia education programs for the legal profession;
- The right of transgendered people to be issued with passports, drivers licences and other documents specifying the gender of their choice.

#### **[2] Equality for same sex partners**

- Extend to same-sex relationships equal status with heterosexual de factos in superannuation, immigration, taxation, family law, industrial relations and any other laws and regulations;
- The right of gays and lesbians to choose to marry if they so wish;
- Independent incomes [Newstart, Pensions etc] for all regardless of relationship status. No state-enforced economic dependency.

#### **[3] The right of gays & lesbians to parent**

- The right of gay men and lesbians to adopt or foster children;
- No discrimination against gay men or lesbians in child custody cases;

#### **[4] Rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth**

- Quality, factual and non-moralistic sex education in schools;

- Education programs to counter homophobia and anti-gay violence in schools;
- Funding for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth programs including refuges and housing services, health services, coming out, self-esteem and suicide prevention programs;
- Independent incomes for young people free from a parental means test.

#### **[5] Positive representations in the mass media, culture and public life**

- Support for Pride Marches, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, film and video festivals and other queer community events;
- Defend and extend gay, lesbian and transgender programming on the ABC, SBS and community broadcasters;
- An end to the vicious and destructive portrayal of gay men, lesbians and transgender people in some sections of the media.

#### **[6] An end to police harassment**

- An immediate halt to police harassment, brutality and entrapment;
- Anti-homophobia education programs for the police;
- Establish elected community review boards to discipline and sack police who harass members of the queer community.

#### **[7] Rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered workers**

- Promotion of strong policies within unions to defend gay, lesbian and transgendered workers;
- Support for the establishment of gay and lesbian caucuses within trade unions;
- Opposition to the homophobic exemptions which exclude gays and lesbians who work with children from anti-discrimination protections. Support for gay and lesbian teachers, youth workers and child care workers.

#### **[8] Equality in immigration**

- Equal treatment for gay men, lesbians and transgendered people in immigration. Recognise same-sex relationships;
- No discriminatory immigration quotas;
- Remove HIV status from the health tests for visas.

#### **[9] Equality in the defence forces**

- Full equality for gays, lesbians, transgendered people and people with HIV/AIDS in the Australian Defence Forces.

v. "End discrimination against people with disabilities"

From Brenda Hunter, Geelong Socialist Alliance, for Radical Women

Alison Thorne, Wills Socialist Alliance, for the Freedom Socialist Party

*We propose the addition of the following section to our platform to address some of the issues relating to the oppression of people with disabilities. This policy would also need to be read in conjunction with sections proposed by the Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women on education, housing and reproductive rights which also raise specific demands addressing the needs of people with disabilities.*

*As well as the demands we propose in this paper, we also need a section in our platform addressing occupational health and safety, workers compensation and the needs of injured workers.*

### **END DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

- Complete integration of people with disabilities into society, including full legal rights and protection from discrimination.
- Make public transport, buildings and all public facilities accessible to people with disabilities.
- Government funding to provide signing for the hearing impaired, braille and spoken word information for the visually impaired and quality technological aids to assist people with disabilities.
- Affirmative action programs to provide employment for disabled people. No exemptions from award wages, unionise sheltered workshops.
- \*Increase the Disability Support Pension. Fully fund attendant care programs and pay both people with disabilities and their carers a living wage.
- An end to stereotyping which emphasises disabilities and ignores abilities.

vi. For a policy on transgender rights

From Virginia Brown, Perth Socialist Alliance

*My proposal is that the Socialist Alliance platform of demands incorporate the demand for:*

- Transgender rights - legal recognition of the gender by which people live

**[See preconference discussion article which appears in full in Preconference Discussion Bulletin No. 6]**

vii. "Towards effective drug law reform"

From Michael Arnold, Geelong Socialist Alliance

*My proposed alteration to the Socialist Alliance platform would read:*

*"Legalisation of personal drug use; immediate trials of prescription heroin."*

*I feel this is a balanced demand. On the one hand it calls for something –heroin trials - that has already had viability studies and cost estimates completed. The trials could be quickly implemented, thus giving us a demand where the chance for victory is very good. It is probably fair to say that many dependent heroin users are the most oppressed, most downtrodden and most frequently arrested of any drug users. Heroin trials can provide immediate relief from crippling financial pressures, poor health, and the need for petty crime. At the same time by calling for legalisation we recognise the need for more far-reaching reform, for the right of all individuals to control their bodies, regardless of drug of choice, and we seek to remove a tool of social control from the state arsenal.*

**[This is the last paragraph of a preconference discussion article which appears in full in Preconference Discussion Bulletin No. 6]**

viii "Anti-nuclear policy"

From North Sydney Socialist Alliance

- No new nuclear reactor at Lucas Heights and decommission the re-licensed HIFAR reactor currently operating;
- A safe and properly funded disposal program for the existing nuclear waste from Lucas Heights, to be maintained in a way accountable to the public;

- No nuclear waste dump for international commercial use in Australia;
- Close the operating uranium mines and no new mines to be approved
- No Australian support for George W. Bush's National Missile Defence program and renewed, active support for the non-proliferation agreements in place

ix "Preserve the independence of the ABC"

From Anne Picot, North Sydney Socialist Alliance

There should be an additional heading in the Platform "Preserve the independence of the ABC" and the following points below it:

- Restore and maintain funding to the ABC so the in-house television and associated services production capacity is restored and maintained.

- Future appointments to the Board be made on published criteria which must include a commitment to public broadcasting; board membership should reflect the ABC's existing and potential audiences, by region, ethnic background and age group.
- The Board's deliberations should be made publicly available. It should report annually to a standing committee of both houses of Parliament."

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***Explanation:***

The ABC motion is based on the discussion at the (Sydney) Politics at the Pub on Friday 13/7 (panel included Kirsten Garrett, Producer of RN's Background Briefing, and Penelope Tolz, NSW president of the Friends of the ABC) and discussion with Quentin Dempster at the "Now We the People conference" in Sydney on 14-15 July 2001.