

## **Socialist Equality Party Press Release**

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### **University of Sydney escalates censorship of SEP anti-war meeting**

The University of Sydney has now joined the Labor-controlled Burwood City Council in an escalating attack on the democratic rights of the Socialist Equality Party to hold an anti-war meeting on Sunday April 26 entitled “Anzac Day, the glorification of militarism and the drive to World War III.”

On April 10, in a flagrant act of political censorship, Burwood Council cancelled the SEP’s hall booking, citing “complaints” from “residents” as justification. The real source of the “complaints,” along with open threats to disrupt the meeting, were supporters of “The Great Aussie Patriot” Facebook page, which has connections to the extreme-right wing “Reclaim Australia” group.

One week later, on April 17, after initially starting to process the SEP’s booking three days earlier, the University of Sydney suddenly announced its refusal to hire the venue, on the basis that there was “potential for disruption to activities as a result of the event.” The university’s representatives refused to provide any details, finally admitting only that the decision had been taken at “all levels.” The SEP is demanding to know what meetings were held and who was involved in making this decision, which makes a mockery of the university’s claim to stand for intellectual freedom.

These actions constitute a serious threat to the democratic right of freedom of speech and establish a dangerous precedent. They occur under conditions of more than a year of mind-numbing propaganda “celebrating” the centenary of World War I, culminating in next weekend’s Anzac Day events. This campaign is about rewriting the past in order to glorify war and legitimise the militarisation of Australian society as the Abbott government, with full support from the entire political and media establishment, integrates the country ever more closely into the US “pivot” to Asia and preparations for war with China.

As such, its goal is to intimidate and suppress the widespread and deep-going anti-war sentiments held by the vast majority of the Australian population.

For additional information and interview requests, as well as details of the international political campaign launched by the SEP against this political censorship, contact SEP National Secretary James Cogan: E:

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