# Constitution of the Socialist Alliance

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## 1. Name #

The name of the organisation shall be the Socialist Alliance, herein after referred to as “the Alliance”.

## 2. Definitions #

2.1 Member. A member of the Socialist Alliance is someone who has completed a membership application form, lodged it with the Socialist Alliance and had it accepted by a Socialist Alliance branch or the National Executive.

2.2 Oppressed Group. An oppressed group is any broadly defined section of the population that suffers discrimination within capitalism based on race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, age and/or disability.

2.3 Affiliate group. An affiliate is a socialist party, migrant organisation, trade union or similar working class organisation that has joined the Alliance as a discrete entity.

2.4 A Voting Member is a member that has the right to:

1. Vote at branch meetings and be elected to a Branch Committee;
2. Election by their branch as a delegate to the National Conference and National Council;
3. Election to the National Executive or as a National Office Holder;
4. Participate in a candidate preselection process and be nominated as a candidate.

## 3. Aims and objectives #

3.1 The aim of the Socialist Alliance is to replace the capitalist system with one in which the fundamental elements of the economy are socially owned and controlled and democratic systems of popular power established. Only these radical measures will enable us to deal with the economic, ecological and social crises of the 21st century.

3.2 The Alliance seeks fundamental social and political change by developing policies, campaigns, and protests in co-operation with all workers, First Nations, environmental, anti-racist, and other social movements, and to propose an alternative to the corporate control of society. A sustained mass campaign of total opposition to capitalism should aim to create the conditions to bring about a transformation to a socialist society that is based on co-operation, democracy and ecological sustainability.

3.3 The Alliance participates in campaigns that accord with its platform and policies as adopted, involving trade unions and communities, to support the provision of all the resources and services that youth, workers, unemployed, women, pensioners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, refugees, migrants and other oppressed groups have the right to access and receive. The Alliance supports a common action platform for the purpose of endorsing candidates to contest elections for local, state and federal government representatives and for the House of Representatives and the Senate.

3.4 The Socialist Alliance stands candidates to give a voice to working-class struggle, social movements and meet the need for working-class political representation.

3.5 In parliament and on local council, Socialist Alliance representatives use their positions to support workers' struggles and social movements, fight reactionary policies and promote the mass campaigns that can defeat the attacks on jobs and living standards.

## 4. Membership #

4.1 Any individual who broadly agrees with the aims and objectives of the Alliance and agrees to participate in the non-sectarian, co-operative spirit of the Alliance is eligible to join by completing a membership application form and lodging it with the Alliance.

4.2 To be eligible to become a Voting Member and to maintain their status as a Voting Member, the member must pay an annual membership fee.

4.3 A Voting Member is someone who will help build the Alliance and its projects, and promote and participate in its democratic structures to the best of their ability.

4.4 Applications by individuals to become Voting Members of a branch will be processed by the local Branch Committee for a decision on acceptance or rejection, and its recommendation will then be presented to a meeting of branch members for endorsement or otherwise. If the meeting of branch members, as formally assembled, approves an application, then the applicant will be accepted as a Voting Member. Applications by individuals to become Voting Members of a branch shall be considered by a meeting of either the branch or the branch executive within 30 days. If the meeting approves the application then the applicant is considered a Voting Member.

4.5 An individual who lives too far from any branch to participate at branch level is regarded as an “at large” member. An application to become a Voting Membership from such an individual will be considered by the State Executive (where they exist) or by the National Executive, which will consider an application within 60 days of the receipt of an application. If the State Executive or National Executive approves the application, then the “at large” applicant will be accepted as a Voting Member of the Alliance. There is no right of appeal against the rejection of an application to become a Voting Member.

4.6 Any member who through their actions brings the Alliance into disrepute or who engages in behaviour that disrupts the inclusive and non-sectarian democracy of the Socialist Alliance (which may include breaches of the Code of Conduct), or that is considered to be detrimental to the best interests of the Alliance, may be asked by the branch executive or the National Executive to show cause within 30 days why the member’s membership should not be suspended or cancelled. The relevant branch or the National Executive shall after that time make a decision to maintain, suspend or cancel that person’s membership.

4.7 A member who has responded to such a request, and has subsequently had their membership suspended or cancelled by their branch, is entitled to lodge an appeal with the National Executive against the decision to suspend or cancel the membership of that person.

4.8 If the National Executive has satisfied itself that a serious threat to the security, reputation or property of the Socialist Alliance exists, it may take immediate action to temporarily suspend a member’s membership, whilst a process takes place under Section 4.6.

4.9 The National Executive is empowered to consider an appeal against the suspension or cancellation of a member’s membership by a branch, and may take evidence in writing or other form in making its decision. The National Executive will consider an appeal within 60 days of the lodgement of the appeal with the National Convener, and

convey its decision to the appellant within 7 days of making its decision. A decision of the National Executive under this Section is final.

4.10 The National Conference will be the body to review a National Executive initiative to suspend or cancel the membership of a member. The decision of National Conference shall be final.

4.11 The Socialist Alliance encourages full participation of all members as activists and leaders at local, state and national levels of the organisation and as candidates and branch officers. The Alliance actively encourages working class women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, immigrants, LGBTQIA people, people with disabilities and young people to take on leadership roles within the Alliance.

4.12 The Socialist Alliance is politically pluralistic and encourages all individuals and affiliates to participate fully in our struggle for socialism. Members of other parties, organisations and groups who join the Socialist Alliance may keep their identity as members of these organisations while participating fully in the development of the Alliance.

4.13 Membership assumes a commitment to a non-sectarian and co-operative way of working and respect for the democratic decision making processes in Socialist Alliance. When members participate in discussion and debate, they shall do so in a positive manner and without personal attacks. As such, members are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct.

4.14 Once decisions have been taken by the elected bodies of the Alliance all members are expected to present that decision as the position of the Alliance, both in public and in dealings with other political organisations. At the same time, individual Alliance members and affiliate organisations are free to indicate their agreement or disagreement with any Alliance decision.

4.15 The assets and income of the Alliance shall be applied solely in furtherance of its objectives and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the members of the organisation except as bona fide compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation.

## 5. National conference #

5.1 Policy shall be decided democratically by a National Conference, which shall normally be held annually but at least every two years, or by Special Conference. These conferences shall be open to all members but decisions shall be made by delegates proportionally representing the Voting Membership of local branches. Branches may elect alternate delegates to replace regular delegates in conference sessions.

5.2 Conference decisions shall be by show of delegate cards and by simple majority vote.

5.3 A delegate ratio shall be decided by the National Executive after consultation with local branches.

5.4 National working groups and other bodies may be formed by National Conference or the National Executive.

5.5 The National Conference shall elect the following National Officeholders:

- National Convener(s)
- National Treasurer

5.6 The National Executive shall be composed of:

- The National Officeholders and 12 other National Executive members directly elected by National Conference
- One representative per affiliate organisation that chooses to exercise the right of representation on the National Executive.

5.7 If one-quarter of the paid-up membership or a majority of State executives/State committees request it by petition to the National Executive, a Special Conference of the Alliance shall be called in addition to National Conferences.

5.8 The implementation of policy and new activities between Conferences, and the organisation of annual and any other Conferences, shall be carried out by the National Executive, and any national body constituted by the National Conference or National Executive.

5.9 The National Officeholders and National Executive shall be accountable to the National Conference and to any Special Conference called for the purpose of considering their actions.

# 6. National executive and national officeholders #

6.1 The National Officeholders and National Executive shall be responsible for the running of the organisation and for finance, membership, arrangements of meetings, communications with local groups and individuals, national bulletin production and distribution, liaison with other groups and organisations, and arrangements for seeking and enabling electoral registration and compliance with electoral laws; and any other matters delegated to them by the Alliance as a whole.

6.2 The National Executive has the power to appoint:

- A National Secretariat to implement decisions of the National Executive and to prepare National Executive meetings;
- National Working Groups;
- National Conveners of Working Groups; and
- Other officers of the Alliance where required to implement its duties as outlined in this constitution.

6.3 The duties of the National Convener/s comprise:

- ensuring that the appropriate notice of National Executive and National Executive Secretariat meetings, agenda and motions on notice are provided in good time;
- ensuring that a chairperson and minute taker is appointed for each meeting;
- contacting other available National Executive members to facilitate a quick response to any urgent and pressing political matters;
- attending to national correspondence;
- maintain the Alliance membership and affiliation records (this duty can be delegated to a membership officer appointed by the National Executive); and
- performing other duties as the National Executive may from time to time determine.

In the case that the national conference decides to elect more than one National Convener (that is, National Co-Conveners), the incoming National Executive shall nominate one of the National Co-conveners to act as "secretary" in accordance with Section 123(1) of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, to be responsible for the carrying out of the administration, and for conduct of correspondence, of the Socialist Alliance, as directed by the National Executive.

6.4 The National Executive may appoint (from within its membership) a replacement of a National Officeholder should s/he resign in between National Conferences.

6.5 The National Executive has the duty to both canvass the broadest possible consensus within the Alliance and to initiate and lead political discussion throughout the Alliance to clarify and resolve differences on all important matters whilst continuing to take decisions on behalf of the Alliance on immediate decisions consistent with the platform and decisions of the National Conference.

6.6 In between National Conferences, the National Executive may convene a National Council comprising National Executive members and delegates elected by each branch (2 delegates for branches with 15 or fewer Voting Members and 3 delegates for branches with more than 15 Voting Members) at their first meeting following a national conference. National Council shall have the power to set broad political directions for the National Executive. Where a branch delegate is no longer able to fulfil that role, either through election to another body that has representation on the NC or for any other reason, branches may elect a replacement delegate, in accordance with the Constitution.

6.7 The National Executive shall meet formally at least every two months. It shall establish new national sub-committees as required, coordinate election campaigns nationally, and shall allocate specific national tasks such as media liaison and the development of draft policy documents in specific areas.

6.8 The National Executive Secretariat, national working groups and individuals acting on behalf of the Socialist Alliance nationally, or the National Executive, should regularly report the substance of their work to the National Executive.

# 7. Local branches #

7.1 The basic unit of the Socialist Alliance is the local branch. A branch shall have at least seven Voting Members. Each new branch must be ratified by the National Executive taking into account the location of other branches, including in relation to Federal and State electoral work. All Alliance members will be assigned to a branch by the appropriate district organising committee (see below) or, in the case of remote regions, by the National Executive. Members will normally live in the area covered by their branch, but alternatively may indicate the branch in which they will be active to the district organising committee or the National Executive. The National Executive may charter branches on a non-geographical basis where this helps the organisation of members.

7.2 A branch meeting shall be properly convened if it is held on a regular scheduled day (or days) of the month, or else called by authorised branch officers or on receipt of a petition by 25 per cent of voting branch members to a branch officer and notified by mail or email with at least seven days notice to each voting branch member.

7.3 Each branch meeting shall have a chair and a minutes secretary. The approved minutes shall be forwarded to the relevant State, District or City Organising Committee, and branch members as requested. A properly convened branch meeting which achieves a quorum can make decisions for the branch. Decisions shall be made by show of hands by simple majority vote. The quorum at a properly constituted branch meeting is 5 Voting Members or 10 per cent, whichever is the greater.

7.4 Branches shall elect office bearers, including a Convener, Treasurer and Returning Officer, at least annually. Office bearers can be voted out at any properly convened branch meeting. Office bearers shall be subject to the specific direction of the branch.

7.5 Branches shall be responsible for ensuring a political discussion at branch meetings, carrying out campaigns to build the Alliance in their area in support of workers' and social movement struggles, and for the running of election campaigns.

7.6 Providing their material does not contradict the Alliance platform and policy as adopted, Alliance branches shall be free to raise additional, specific demands within their material.

7.7 Where branch meetings will conduct elections for office bearers, delegates or candidate pre-selections (except where a public election called at short notice makes this notice impossible), or consider a motion to close the branch, then at least 14 days' notice of the meeting and the intended ballot or motion shall be given to all Voting Members of that branch, and the National Executive shall be advised of the motion. In the event that electoral law in a particular jurisdiction requires longer notice for such a ballot or motion, the branch will be required to give notice in compliance with that law.

# 8. States and districts #

8.1 The Alliance may hold State or Territory Conferences.

8.2 States and districts shall elect their own executives and office bearers, as required, and shall have control of all campaigns at their corresponding level. Affiliate organisations operating within a state or district have the option of appointing a representative to a state or district committee.

8.3 All Voting Members of Socialist Alliance who reside in the relevant state or territory shall have the right to vote at a State or Territory conference, unless a previous state or territory conference properly constituted establishes that future conferences shall be delegated.

8.4 The quorum at a properly constituted State conference is 5 Voting Members or 10 per cent of the Voting Membership, whichever is the greater.

8.5 Two or more branches may decide to form a district.

8.6 A Special State or District conference shall be called if the State or District executive decides, if at least one branch in the state or district demands it or if 25% of the Voting Membership of the state or district petition for a state conference. In the case of a conference called for by a branch or petition the conference must be held within 30 days.

8.7 States or districts, or two or more neighbouring branches, may choose to have organising committees to coordinate campaigns across branches and to coordinate state electoral campaigns.

## 9. Caucuses #

9.1 Any oppressed group within the Alliance shall have the right to form a caucus. All Voting Members of the Alliance who are part of a particular oppressed group shall have the right to participate in a caucus if it is formed. Caucuses are expected to abide by Alliance policy and are not permitted to organise public campaigns in opposition to Alliance policy.

9.2 Any individual or affiliate organisation shall have the right to form a political tendency for the purpose of influencing Alliance policy and activity. It is the responsibility of any members who have formed a tendency to advise the national executive as soon as practicable about the tendency's formation and the political basis for the tendency. Once Alliance policy and campaigning priorities are decided, tendencies are expected to abide by them and not organise public campaigns in opposition to Alliance policy.

9.3 Caucuses, tendencies or affiliates within the Alliance have the right to produce and circulate literature publicly.

## 10. Election campaigns and pre-selection #

10.1 Branches shall pre-select the candidate or candidates for their electorate(s). The pre-selected candidate must receive an absolute majority of votes. If no candidate receives an absolute majority in the first round of voting, the candidate with the least number of votes shall drop off and further rounds of voting conducted until one candidate gains an absolute majority.

10.2 Branches shall also be responsible for their own election campaigns, including raising finances, to nominate candidates and production of material (above and beyond whatever common election material is provided centrally). They shall also be responsible for fulfilling any local legal requirements and providing necessary information to the National Executive for the purposes of complying with the election legislation (records of membership, donations, etc.)

10.3 Senate, state upper-house and city-wide candidates shall be preselected by state or city-wide conferences of the Alliance called for this purpose with 14 days notice.

10.4 In the event of disputes about candidates within or between branches or affiliate organisations the National Executive shall have the final say.

## 11. Accountability of Socialist Alliance representatives #

11.1 The Alliance does not allow its elected representatives (local, state or federal) to exercise a conscience vote. As they have been elected on the basis of the Alliance platform they are required to vote in accordance with that platform and publicly advocate it.

11.2.1 The Alliance elected representatives and persons employed to work in the offices of Socialist Alliance elected representatives shall be subject to the specific direction of the Branch that covers the electorate except that if their electorate is covered by more than one branch or their electorate is not covered by any branches they shall be subject to specific direction by their state organisation.

11.2.2 The Alliance elected representatives and persons employed to work in the offices of Socialist Alliance elected representatives shall be subject to the specific direction of the National Executive where such directions relate to Alliance platform or national policy, which shall override any specific directions given by their local branch or state organisation.

11.2.3 The Alliance elected representatives and persons employed to work in the offices of the Alliance elected representatives shall be subject to the specific direction of the National Conference which shall override any specific directions given by their local branch or state organisation or the National Executive.

11.3 The Alliance elected representatives shall be accountable to the National Conference of the Alliance, and in between conferences, elected representatives shall be accountable to the National Executive.

11.4 Once elected, Alliance candidates to political office shall donate any part of their salary that exceeds the average worker's weekly wage to the Alliance to help fund its work.

11.5 The Alliance elected representatives shall be required to gain the consent of the body they are accountable to in Section 4.2.1 to be able to employ persons to work in their office(s).

## 12. Electronic voting and postal ballots #

12.1 The decision to hold a meeting or election via teleconference or to hold an election via electronic or postal ballot at a Branch, District or State level rests with the relevant Branch, District or State Committee. The National Executive can determine to hold a national meeting via teleconference, or to hold a vote on a resolution via electronic or postal ballot, however elections for national leadership bodies shall occur in person at a National Conference, in accordance with Section 6.

## 13. Amendments #

13.1 Amendments to this Constitution shall be made by simple majority vote of the National Conference.

## 14. By-laws #

14.1 Interim by-laws dealing with matters pertaining to the structure and functioning of the Alliance not set down in this Constitution may be adopted by the National Executive. Such by-laws shall be submitted to the following National Conference or Special Conference for ratification.

## 15. Dissolution of the Socialist Alliance #

15.1 The Socialist Alliance may be dissolved by a special conference called for this purpose by the National Executive, or by one quarter of the Voting Membership (as above). Any assets of the Socialist Alliance will be distributed to any non-profit organisation or organisations having aims consistent with those of the Socialist Alliance as determined by such a special meeting or conference. The delegate ratio for such a special conference may be no less that the delegate ratio used for the last properly constituted National Conference.

[As amended by the 16th national conference of Socialist Alliance, 15-16 January 2022.]

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Our Common Cause

Socialist Alliance column (/our-common-cause) in *Green Left*

» Labor's Palestine hypocrisy (/our-common-cause/2024-06-15/labor%E2%80%99s-palestine-hypocrisy)



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» Why can't we all have housing? Or even secure, affordable housing? (/our-common-cause/2024-06-12/why-can%E2%80%99t-we-all-have-housing-or-even-secure-affordable-housing)



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» End the hypocrisy on Iran; stop Israel's war on Palestine (/our-common-cause/2024-04-18/end-hypocrisy-iran-stop-israel%E2%80%99s-war-palestine)



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YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4AmNKHRl5VWnVjj-GeC9Iw)

**Resources**

Socialist library (/socialist-library-pdfs-study-education)
Socialist education (/socialist-classes-education-activists)
Green Left (https://www.greenleft.org.au)
Resistance Books (https://www.resistancebooks.com)
Links Journal (https://links.org.au)

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