

A socialist feminist response to COVID-19

Fighting demands from the Freedom Socialist Party & Radical Women

✧ Free, universal, quality healthcare run by workers

- Nationalise the medical system with workers' control over decision-making and management.
- Make the industry nonprofit, including pharmaceuticals, hospitals, supply companies, and nursing homes.
- Guarantee a living wage for healthcare, aged care and homecare workers.

✧ Protect lives

- Distribute free quality personal protective equipment (PPE) to workers in essential services, including healthcare, food supply and retail, transport and logistics, education and childcare.
- Require employers to provide safe conditions on the job. Unlimited hand sanitiser to be supplied to all workers.
- No safety, no work! Workers and their unions must have the final say over workplace health and safety and not be forced to return to unsafe workplaces.
- Rapid expansion of free testing, treatment and vaccines, including seasonal flu vaccines. Ramp up contact tracing and research into treatment and a vaccine.

- Make Covid-19 services free to all, regardless of visa status.

✧ Guarantee livelihoods

- Launch an immediate mass public jobs program to train people and put them safely to work producing medical supplies, testing for the virus, carrying out privacy-protected contact tracing, supporting research and building community infrastructure, including public housing.
- Scrap the public service staffing cap and pay freeze — recruit and train permanent public servants to perform essential jobs, including delivery of COVID-19 relief programs.
- Reduce hours of work with no cut in pay to employ more people while reducing their potential exposure.
- Increase the JobSeeker and other income support payments to at least that of JobKeeper, and expand cover to all unemployed workers, regardless of visa status. All exclusions, waiting periods, cashless debit cards and mutual obligation activities must be scrapped.
- Expand JobKeeper to cover all workers stood down, including gig economy, casuals and sole traders, without regard to visa status.
- Stop cuts to pay and conditions — overturn the reduced consultation time to change enterprise



May Day 2020 car convoy in Sydney. Photo by the May 1 Movement.

agreements. Unlimited paid sick or carers leave for all workers, including casuals, who need to self-isolate or care for others.

- Provide hazard pay for frontline workers.
- To fund programs for workers and assistance for small businesses, scrap promised corporate tax cuts, eliminate corporate tax dodging, rescind the past decades' tax cuts for the rich and immediately reinstate the pre-1988 corporate tax rate of 49%.

✧ **Aid parents and children**

- Childcare is an essential service – provide childcare, at no cost for parents, on a permanent basis that is high quality and available round the clock.
- Offer free laptops and home Wi-Fi for school and university students to facilitate a staggered return to the classroom based on evidence about what is safe.



First Nations children keep safe. Photo by Paul Braven.

✧ **Support the most**

oppressed and the hardest-hit

- Prioritise help for people without shelter, overseas students and others on temporary visas, people of colour including First Nations, women, seniors, people with disability and LGBTIQ+ people.
- Aboriginal control of the response to Covid-19 in First Nations' communities.
- Cancel student HECS debts. Suspend debt payments for working-class consumers and small businesses.

✧ **Ban profiteering**

- Prohibit corporate patenting of a Covid-19 vaccine; no profiting from its use and distribution.
- Reject bailouts of big business and multinational corporations. Nationalise failing industries, starting with the airlines, while maintaining existing working conditions.

✧ **Preserve human rights and political freedoms**

- Honour the rights to protest, strike, and refuse to do unsafe work.
- Guarantee housing for all. No evictions, foreclosures, or utility shut-offs. Cancel rent and mortgage payments for those in need.
- No COVID-19 deaths in custody – release everyone in immigration detention. End prison over-crowding: fully fund diversionary programs, making imprisonment the last resort. Immediately release all nonviolent prisoners, providing financial support, housing and healthcare. Full precautions and care for those who remain incarcerated.
- End the scapegoating of Asian communities.
- Stop police abuse under the guise of enforcing social distancing.

✧ **Extend international solidarity**

- Place a moratorium on all payments of foreign debt by poorer countries.
- Distribute food aid and medical supplies to countries in need, at no charge.
- Collaborate internationally on virus treatment and vaccine research, without profit-based competition or restrictions.
- End U.S. sanctions, including those against Cuba, Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Venezuela.
- Open the borders; artificial boundaries offer no defence against the virus.

✧ **For a socialist society**

- Make human needs the driver of production and distribution of goods and services.
- Eliminate the profit motive underlying systemic sexism and racism and the destruction of a habitable planet.
- Give workers decision-making power over how society is run.
- Shared abundance for all.