

region. In the present period characterised by intensification of struggle on a global basis, further development of these connections is imperative.

Links with suitable organisations and alliances will be pursued.

Rectification requires constant study and its integration with mass struggle.

Party leaders and members must find appropriate ways to promote widely and clearly the immediate and intermediate demands of the organisation; these must be taken to the people in a systematic way, be tested in practice, refined and then taken back to the struggles of the people.

One of the tasks of the

incoming Central Committee will be to revisit the Fighting Program and immediate demands of the Party and ensure that they comply with the current requirements of the Australian people's struggle.

We need to develop detailed study of Australian conditions through social investigation by the Party, and by learning from and discussing social reality with the people.

The study of the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Zedong and Australia's own Ted Hill provide a theoretical framework for developing our understanding of current reality. There is a danger of the framework being

an empty one if those trying to use it are not keeping their ears to the ground and picking up on the situation and the mood of the people. There is good contemporary economic research arising from the current crisis which is capable of leading people who are ready to question the system towards a Marxist viewpoint. The booklet *Marxism Today: For Australian Independence and Socialism* reproduces ideological presentations from *Vanguard* and has had an impact among members and friends in clarifying what Marxism-Leninism means in the Australian context.

Our ability to work amongst all sections of the people is

enhanced by an organisational requirement that members do not publicly divulge their links to the Party. It reflects our desire to protect the organisation from ruling class surveillance and to protect our members in the event of hostile repression from the state apparatus of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. It assists political work with people where barriers might otherwise exist.

A more visible public presence is required nationally and regionally. One of the tasks of public spokespersons will be to grow the organisation through facilitation of recruitment into the Party. We need to raise our practical work

and profile among working class activists and take some of the mystery away from our existence. In diverse ways, and in consultation with the organisation, members will take steps, where appropriate, to raise the Party's profile. The dialectical principle being, in non-public work there is an element of public work.

Above all, the CPA (M-L) and its members must work tirelessly and selflessly to serve Australia's working class and its allies, defending the interests of the people and charting Australia's road to anti-imperialist national independence, socialism and the ultimate goal of communism.

## Older Australians living in poverty

by Jim H.

An OECD report on pensions says that one in four Australians over the age of 65 is living in poverty. Australia has the fourth highest figure of all OECD members, except Ireland, Korea and Mexico. Australia spends a mere 3.5 percent of GDP, while the OECD average is 7 percent. It is an indictment of the Australian political scene.

Whether there is a Coalition or Labor government, very little has changed. Pensioners have been getting a raw deal for ages.

Government pensions and unemployment benefits are provided through Centrelink. They are all inadequate as a result of deliberate neglect. With the deterioration of the economic situation, the inadequate payments are becoming even more inadequate. A caring social system would not tolerate this.

A further problem is that nearly half of retirees get their pensions out of superannuation schemes. They are often inadequate to start with. The economic crisis has slashed their value in a big way.

Little was done to address the situation in the last budget. It was more of the same, except that new changes will actually reduce the yearly increases to Centrelink payments, age pensions included. Welfare groups have already stated their fear that older people and poorer families will fall back



even further.

Older Australians have contributed a great deal to Australia over a lifetime. They have paid a fortune in taxes. They deserve to be rewarded with a reasonable level of comfort during their retirement.

Unfortunately the capitalist ethos is that working people are only worth anything when they are put to work to generate profits. When they no longer serve this function they are discarded. Providing decent pensions is a waste of money that could be used to bolster business.

Older Australians are still of value. They have a wealth of experience and skills that can be utilised to make Australia a better society. But to harness this requires a social system that puts people first. We don't have this in Australia.

It is not going to change in a hurry. Capitalism gets in the

way. Australia's domination by foreign imperialism, where the main decisions are really made in foreign boardrooms, makes it even worse.

Efforts to increase the position of pensioners form a component of the overall struggle of the Australian working class and working people to bring about fundamental social change. It is important to raise the demand for decent pensions, and older Australians play a very big part in organising to put this forward.

In doing this it is also important to recognise that at best only a few crumbs are likely to be won and the ruling class will strive to take back any gains as soon as possible. In the longer-term, the only solution is to get rid of the present social system and start on the road of genuine independence, and ultimately socialism.



### World Environment Day rally in Melbourne

**Thousands of people gathered in Federation Square in Melbourne on June 5 to show their concern about the lack of progress on key environmental issues.**

They wanted to send a message to the politicians in Canberra that the Rudd government's proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme was weak and insufficient. More and more evidence is coming out to show that climate warming is accelerating at a faster rate than believed only a few years ago.

Many were also concerned about the state of the nation's river systems and the failure of successive governments to do anything meaningful about overcoming the degradation of the waterways and the consequent loss of valuable ecosystems, natural habitats and farming land.

Opposition to the desalination plant at Wonthaggi was also an issue that stirred many people.

There was condemnation of Environment Minister Peter Garrett's decision to cut off the solar rebate scheme as well as the minimal investments being made in alternative energy development. Meanwhile, investment in so-called 'clean coal' is attracting plenty of government assistance.

Apart from the Greens, the other main parliamentary parties have underestimated the determination of the people on environment issues.