# 2005-2006 Annual Report

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On Sunday 28th May 2000, we were among the 250,000 Australians who braved a cold early winter’s day to march across the Sydney Harbour Bridge to demonstrate Australians’ commitment to reconciliation. The walk for reconciliation was just one of several major moments in the last 10 years – like the war in Iraq and the Tampa controversy – when Australians mobilised in large numbers in favour of a more progressive vision of the country.

Although Australia has enjoyed great economic prosperity over the last decade, those of us who want to be part of a more just and progressive country have found ourselves disappointed and disheartened. Popular movements like the one opposing the Iraq war quickly appeared, raising hopes, but then dissipated. There had been no strategy or organisation to capture that energy and turn it into permanent, broad-based national movement.

What did one do after walking to the other side of the bridge?

It was this question that inspired the creation of GetUp. During the 2004 US Presidential elections, we saw first-hand the potential of the internet to change politics, helping unprecedented numbers of people to get involved and take action.

Our vision was to create an organisation that would use technology to make it easy for Australians to take real political action on the major issues facing our country, and to help form a new progressive movement – a community working to advance social justice, economic fairness and environmental sustainability.

It was not easy. Sometimes it’s tough for Australians to throw off our cynicism, especially when politics is involved. But we were fortunate to find people who shared our vision, believed it could work and helped us make it happen.

We launched GetUp with a national TV ad and email campaign a week before John Howard took control of the Senate. The response was overwhelming – many Australians were looking for a new way to have a voice and participate in politics again. By the end of the 2006 financial year GetUp had 100,000 members and had already made a critical impact on a number of major national issues.

This would not have been possible without those who took a chance on us when this was just an idea, or without the extraordinary passion and creativity of GetUp’s staff, led by Brett Solomon. But most of all it would not have been possible without the tens of thousands of Australians who care deeply about the future of our country and took to heart GetUp’s motto: “Don’t give up, GetUp!”

As we approach the 2007 Federal election, we’re excited about what the GetUp community can achieve together.

With hope,
Jeremy Heimans & David Madden
Founders
GetUp is the only organisation of its kind in Australia; an independent, not-for-profit campaigning organisation using new technologies to inform, connect and empower Australians to have a voice on a range of national issues.

Our vision is to build a progressive Australia.

In our first year GetUp helped achieve three key political victories:— overturning the Health Minister’s veto of RU-486, successfully spearheading a campaign to increase ABC funding to the tune of $88 million over three years, and stopping changes to our migration laws that would have seen asylum-seekers, including children, processed and detained offshore.

GetUp is a citizen’s movement. Our initial hope was to reach 100,000 members by the time of the 2007 Federal Election. The 100,000th Australian joined GetUp at 2.19pm on Tuesday 20 June 2006.

As we head in to the next year, GetUp will continue to work with Australians across the nation to change the face of Australian politics – to one that has social justice, economic fairness and environmental consciousness at its core.
CAMPAIGNS

Here is a selection of GetUp campaigns run during 2005-2006.

“Excellent campaign, GetUp! What a great way to feel empowered as a citizen. You are doing great work for all of us out here in the suburbs that we can participate in and keep our dreams alive - for a better, just and more humane society!”
Rosie, SA

“Keep up the great work!... Get Up is Democracy at its very best.”
Tom, Victoria

Now You Answer To Us
GetUp’s launch campaign sees 55,000 emails sent to senators, by citizens concerned about Coalition control of both houses of Parliament lessening accountability.

Defend Australian Rights
A sustained and multi-faceted campaign to Bring David Hicks Home; including a 50,000 strong petition, outdoor advertising, national polls, and community events across Australia. The Government changed its policy on Hicks as the community demanded action.

Put Communities First
Rallying against voluntary student unionism, GetUp members lobby 10 key coalition Senators. A TV ad airs in rural communities, and a further campaign focuses specifically on Senator Fielding.

Honest John’s Crazy Bargains
Hundreds of GetUp members submit pictures of personal objects in poor shape they would like John Howard to spruik on their behalf, as he spruik Telstra.

Stop Preventative Detention
Thousands of emails are sent to State Labor Premiers asking them to block the proposed preventative detention regime.

It’s Up to You
GetUp members send emails to Senators Barnaby Joyce and Stephen Fielding asking them to stay strong and independent, especially on IR. This is followed-up with a national telephone campaign.

Please Show Clemency
8,000 emails are written through the GetUp website to the Prime Minister of Singapore, requesting clemency for Van Nguyen.

November 15th Rally
Thousands of GetUp members attend the November 15th National Community Day of Protest against the Government’s IR changes.

Get Politics Out of Medicine
GetUp members successfully lobby for Federal Parliament to remove the ministerial veto on RU486. Nearly 8,000 people sign the original petition, and thousands write directly to their MPs.
There Is Something You Can Do
In the wake of the Cronulla riots, thousands of people sign a personal pledge to take responsibility for racism in their lives and communities.

15 December 05

Stop The Endless Summer
1340 Letters to the Editor on climate change are sent to major newspapers through the GetUp site calling for real action on climate change.

10 January 06

Mate for a Head of State
GetUp members attend events across the country around the push for Australia to become a Republic.

20 January 06

Authorised Bribes
GetUp creates a flash spoof of a Government ad to drive home the real meaning of AWB scandal; downloaded more than 50,000 times.

16 March 06

Fund Our ABC
More than 77,000 Australians sign the Fund Our ABC petition, and the Government grants the ABC an extra $88.2 million, the best budget result in over 20 years.

23 March 06

Media Monopoly
More than 5,000 personal emails are sent directly to Coalition MPs expressing concern over the Government’s changes to media ownership laws. The law passes, but with forced amendments.

12 April 06

No Child in Detention
More than 104,000 people sign GetUp’s petition rejecting the Government’s Migration Act Changes. With a TV campaign, skywriting, and behind the scenes lobbying – and senators planning to vote no, the PM pulls the bill.

03 May 06

Stop Deceiving Women
20,000 people sign GetUp’s petition to end deceptive advertising practices by “pregnancy counseling services” that don’t disclose their anti-abortion views in their advertising.

07 June 06

Stop The Land Grab
Thousands of citizens make urgent calls to their senators, calling for a delay to little-known changes to the historic Northern Territory Land Rights Act, to allow time for proper consideration and debate.

Climate Action Now
GetUp’s campaign to tackle global warming sees more than 75,000 individuals join an online “Climate Action Map”. Many thousands also hit the streets to share a Walk Against Warming around the country.

Our Own Plan for Iraq
Almost 20,000 sign a petition calling on the Prime Minister to stop blindly following George W. Bush’s failed Iraq policy; and to articulate a new plan for Australia’s military engagement in Iraq – including a clearly defined exit strategy.

03 May 06

Save Our Heritage
More than 25,000 GetUp members write personal submissions to an inquiry into heritage-listing historic Indigenous rock art threatened by misplaced industrial development. A further 11,000+ rally in just one day to sign a petition to decision-makers.

07 June 06
“Vote No” - GetUp’s skywriting above Parliament House
GETUP LAUNCHES

GetUp began with a bang in August 2005, just as the Coalition took control of the Senate, giving them more power than any government in a generation. A national TV advertising campaign sent a strong message to the Government: that while the other parties no longer had the power to hold them accountable, the people would – through GetUp.

GetUp’s launch campaign made it simple for people to email their Coalition senators to express their views and concerns. After more than 55,000 emails deluged their inboxes, the Government responded. Then-Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister Andrew Robb appeared on the ABC’s 7.30 Report, where he said the personal emails from constituents were essentially little more than spam. He wished! Our supporters instead successfully argued it was about political accountability. GetUp’s launch was extensively covered by a curious media including The Australian, The Sydney Morning Herald and The Daily Telegraph.

“I’d just like to congratulate you on a great idea, a balanced and un-hysterical presentation of your arguments, and a fantastic modern way of making people feel like they have a voice again... Well Done!”

Tim, NSW
This campaign launched in August 2005 with a call to the Government to defend the human rights of David Hicks - an Australian who had been detained in Guantanamo Bay for years without trial.

The campaign continued to develop over 2006, and by the end more than 55,000 people had signed GetUp's petition to bring David Hicks home. In July 2006 the online letter of demand was complemented with full-page advertisements in major national and metropolitan press.

In August, more than 2000 Australians came out on a wet Adelaide evening for GetUp's Candlelight Vigil for Justice with Major Mori and Terry Hicks, to deliver our petition to the office of Foreign Minister Alexander Downer. Mr Downer did not accept it. In response, GetUp launched a fundraising appeal to purchase prominent outdoor advertising to bring the message for justice directly to the streets where the responsible Government ministers live and work. Within 72 hours, more than $180,000 was donated through the website, and prominent stationary and carbon-offset mobile billboards got going around Australia.

When the Prime Minister claimed Australians had little sympathy for David Hicks' situation, GetUp commissioned a series of independent Newspolls demonstrating two-thirds of Liberal voters felt Mr Hicks should be returned to Australia even with the possibility he would not face any charges. The polls sent shockwaves through political circles and the Coalition backbench, and the Government quickly changed its message, advocating for the return of David Hicks.
In November 2005, GetUp launched a campaign in support of a Parliamentary conscience vote to determine whether the Health Minister should have veto power over the legal sale of the abortion drug RU486. The legislation to overturn this veto power was co-sponsored by an alliance of women senators from all five of the major parties.

Working closely with Reproductive Choice Australia, a coalition of organisations and individuals promoting women’s reproductive rights, GetUp coordinated a national petition of nearly 8,000 signatures – calling on all Federal Parliamentarians to end the ministerial veto and let the independent experts of the Therapeutic Goods Administration decide whether the drug should be available in Australia.

Over 4,000 GetUp members also sent emails to their MPs expressing their support for keeping politics out of medicine, along with more accountable and transparent decision-making within government. In a country where abortion is legal, GetUp members rightly asked why a non-medically trained politician with outspoken views on abortion should have veto control over women’s access to RU486.

In February 2006, GetUp and Reproductive Choice Australia presented the petition to the cross-party alliance of senators and the conscience vote successfully passed.

“Congratulations you guys for using a powerful tool for the right purpose!!! I’m with you on RU-486 and will do whatever I can to fight the cause. Thanks you blokes – keep going – we’re with you”

Gaye, NSW
On 23 March 2006, GetUp launched a campaign with the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance in support of the ABC’s triennial funding request, which was to be determined in the Government’s next federal budget.

At the time, the ABC was sitting $264 million poorer in real terms than it had been 20 years ago and the programs Australians rely on, from independent news and current affairs to quality children’s content, were under extreme pressure.

GetUp launched an online petition and immediately found the level of community support exceeded all expectations. The first petition target of 10,000 signatures was smashed in just 12 hours, and numbers kept soaring to more than 79,077 signatures. The campaign’s response exceeded earlier records by a country mile.

GetUp staff and actor Penny Cook presented the petition to senior members from the Coalition and opposition parties in Canberra, and told them of the public’s far-reaching and passionate support for a well-funded and independent ABC. The petition, then more than 41,000 signatures-strong, was tabled in the Senate and mentioned three times that very day in Parliamentary debates over the ABC’s future.

The campaign received attention in the national press, and after twenty years of knock backs, the ABC received an extra $88.2 million.

“I couldn’t live without the ABC. I listened to it since the day it started - July 1932. I owe the ABC a great debt for topping up an inadequate education. Deeply appreciate GETUP’s campaign to increase the funding of the ABC.”

Peter, WA
When 42 West Papuans sought refugee status in Australia in May, the Government faced diplomatic pressure from Indonesia to change Australia’s Migration Act, to process all asylum-seekers arriving by boat in offshore detention centres such as Nauru – including women and children.

GetUp launched a petition on May 3, 2006, coinciding with a television ad voiced by legendary actor Jack Thompson. The petition soared to more than 80,000 names in two months, and gave substantial strength to Coalition MPs and senators with their own grave concerns about the impact of the legislation.

Throughout the campaign, GetUp worked with other refugee rights groups such as ChiOUT and A Just Australia, as well as a broad array of community, religious and business leaders.

On the eve of the anticipated vote in Parliament, GetUp sent a challenge to our members: help us get the petition to 100,000 names and we would write the message in the sky above Parliament House! With the target quickly reached, our skywriter took off with the message “VOTE NO” for all to see. Hours later, the Prime Minister, aware that the bill was unpopular in the community and that members of his own party were prepared to cross the floor, announced its withdrawal.
GetUp’s first annual report covers an extended financial period from 29 April 2005, the date of incorporation, until 30 June 2006 as provided for in S323D of the Corporations Act.

GetUp’s board was established in mid 2005, and brings together an impressive selection of Australians from all sections of the political spectrum: GetUp’s co-founders David Madden and Jeremy Heimans, company director Don Mercer, union and community researcher Amanda Tattersall, environmental leader Cate Faehrmann, union leader Bill Shorten and internet entrepreneur Evan Thornley.

GetUp’s first year of operation was truly inspiring – successfully completing 17 campaigns whilst emerging as a fully-fledged and viable not-for-profit organisation.

Following incorporation, GetUp’s initial focus was to conceptualise and build its web interface, design new technology for Australia’s political landscape and establish a robust organisational infrastructure.

GetUp’s founding staff were Jeremy Heimans, David Madden, Toby Brennan and Lachlan Harris. By the end of the financial year, GetUp had a permanent staff of three: Brett Solomon (Executive Director), Lilian McCombs (Campaigns Director) and Nick Moraitis (Online Director). Throughout the year, a strong team of interns and volunteers increased the capacity of the organisation while keeping expenditure to a minimum.

GetUp receives no funding from political parties or governments – as is its policy. As the organisation grows, GetUp is increasingly sustained by the extensive GetUp membership that contributes financially to support its work. Our philosophy is that by a lot of people giving a little, we’re able to flourish as a true, independent organisation.

Encouragingly, GetUp began to receive important income from an increasing number of supporters online through our secure payment gateway, including from donors who wanted to give on a monthly basis. This has allowed us to achieve a strong financial base from which to make longer term operational decisions.

GetUp is acutely aware of the value of donations from the public. As an online-based research and advocacy organisation, our key expenses are our talented campaign staff and new technology. GetUp’s lean, no fuss structure enables it to achieve social and political outcomes without spending significant resources on administration or bureaucracy.

As such almost all donations are channelled directly to GetUp campaigns. We research, analyse, consult, mobilise, publicise, rally, lobby and influence. As this Annual Report reveals, community donations have been used to affect real change on a complex range of political and social issues.

For the end of this period, GetUp held overall retained donations ($40,430.00) which have been rolled forward for the following year’s campaigning.

We look forward to achieving our goals in 2007, continuing to win campaigns and to build a progressive Australia.

“Thank you, also, for providing a forum for the ordinary person. When we have numbers, we are not powerless, but a force for good. Keep watch and keep urging us to ‘get up’.”

Mhairi, SA

1 Evan Thornley and Bill Shorten have both left the GetUp board to pursue party political careers. GetUp’s constitution prevents GetUp from having sitting MPs on its board.
Where the Campaign Time Was Spent

- Climate Change: 15%
- ABC and media ownership: 5%
- Refugees: 5%
- Industrial Relations: 7%
- Preventative Detention and Sedition: 7%
- RU486: 13%
- Voluntary Student Unionism: 8%
- Anti Death Penalty: 6%
- AWB: 2%
- Other – GetUp Launch, Cronulla Riots and the Sale of Telstra: 4%

Expenditures

- Campaigning: 25%
- One off set-up costs/administration: 2%
- Premises: 73%
Cate Faehrmann  BA (Humanities)
Cate Faehrmann is the executive director of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, the peak environment organisation in NSW, representing 120 member groups across the State. Cate has managed media and election campaigns in NSW, Victoria, South Australia and New Zealand and been a media adviser in State Parliament. Cate is also on the Board of the environmental law organisation the Environmental Defender’s Office.

Jeremy Heimans  BA (Hons), MPP (Harvard)
Jeremy Heimans is, with David Madden, the co-founder of GetUp. He has worked at the intersection of politics, media and technology in the United States, Australia and Europe. After starting GetUp, he co-founded Avaaz.org, a new global online political movement with more than one million members, formed in partnership with the US group MoveOn.org. Heimans has worked for the international consulting firm McKinsey & Company, been a research scholar at Oxford University and consulted for the UN, OECD and ILO. He was educated at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government and the University of Sydney. In 2006, Heimans was, with David Madden, named one of the ‘Top 10 people changing the world of internet and politics’ by the World E-Government Forum.

David Madden  BA (Hons), LLB (NSW), MPP (Harvard)
is the co-founder of GetUp and Avaaz.org. A former officer in the Australian Army, David has worked at the award-winning youth suicide prevention site www.reachout.com.au and online department store www.dstore.com.au and has acted as a consultant to the World Bank and the UN. He was educated at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government and of the University of New South Wales, where he was President of the Student Guild. He is the co-author of Imagining Australia: Ideas for our Future (Allen & Unwin, 2004).

Don Mercer  FAICD Bsc (Hons) MA (Econ)
Don Mercer is Chairman of Orica Ltd. and of Newcrest Mining Ltd. He is also Chairman of Australia Pacific Airlines Corporation and Chairman of The State Orchestra of Victoria. He was a previous Director of CSIRO, APRA and a past Director of Australian Institute of Company Directors, and past Chancellor of RMIT University. Don spent 19 years with Shell International Petroleum Co. Limited, with postings in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Canada, Indonesia and Australia. He joined ANZ in March 1984 and in June 1992, he was named Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, retiring in 1997.

Bill Shorten  BA LLB, MBA (Melbourne)
Bill Shorten is the National Secretary of The Australian Workers’ Union. Bill has an extensive history working with unions in Australia, serving as both the State Secretary of the Victorian Branch of the AWU as well as the National Secretary. He also serves on the ACTU Executive and as a Director of the Victorian Funds Management Corporation.

Amanda Tattersall  BA LLB (UTS) PhD Candidate
Amanda is an experienced union and community organiser, bringing significant campaigning, political and bridge building skills between social movements. She is the executive director of Working NSW, a research-driven campaign centre established by Unions NSW. She has submitted a PhD on Coalition Unionism, having studied and published research on coalition practice in the USA, Canada and Australia between 2004-2007.

Evan Thornley  B Comm, LLB
Evan Thornley has served as the chair of the board and CEO of LookSmart Ltd. He has also served as a member of the council of the University of Melbourne and as a member of the board of directors of the Chifley Research Centre as well as for the Brotherhood of St Laurence and is National Secretary of the Australian Fabian Society.

Cate Faehrmann is also on the Board of the environmental law organisation the Environmental Defender’s Office.

Jeremy Heimans is, with David Madden, the co-founder of GetUp. He has worked at the intersection of politics, media and technology in the United States, Australia and Europe. After starting GetUp, he co-founded Avaaz.org, a new global online political movement with more than one million members, formed in partnership with the US group MoveOn.org. Heimans has worked for the international consulting firm McKinsey & Company, been a research scholar at Oxford University and consulted for the UN, OECD and ILO. He was educated at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government and the University of Sydney. In 2006, Heimans was, with David Madden, named one of the ‘Top 10 people changing the world of internet and politics’ by the World E-Government Forum.

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“GetUp. You have not only proved to be an effective leading-edge part of our modern democratic system of governance – setting world standards and benchmarks on how to play the governance game smart – but your team of people and supporters (real & online) are manifesting a level of will, intent and confidence that is making the boffins stand up and take notice.”

Russell, WA