

GetUp!
Action for Australia



Post Election Report

August 2010

Election 2010

How 370,000 determined
GetUp members:

- Helped shift the country's issue agenda;
- Changed Australian electoral law;
- Enrolled over 100,000 new voters; and
- Ran the largest independent election effort in Australian history.

A movement made for this moment

GetUp are a very influential and powerful group. They have a community of over 300,000 Australians. But the thing I love about them is they get real things done. Their approach to advocating for whatever cause is so creative, unique, and in the end effective, that they really see results. If ever you think Aussies are getting apathetic about social or political issues, just take a look at these guys and what they do.

- David "Kochie" Koch

GetUp started in 2005 with a simple idea: to give everyday Australians an easy way to work together and change politics.

Since then, we've grown into a movement of 370,000 dedicated Australians from around the country. GetUp is non-partisan; but that doesn't mean we're apolitical. We don't endorse any particular candidate or party, and we don't shy away from calling it like we see it: congratulating good policies and demanding better when required.

We don't always vote the same way, but we share a concern for our country – and a set of basic values: economic fairness, environmental sustainability, political accountability and a fair go for all.

Sadly this election, the two major parties ran campaigns that appealed more to our basest fears than to the better angels of our nature. But GetUp members were never going to be content with an election about personalities and fears, and we knew many, many more Australians felt the same way.

So instead we:

- ran over 700 television ad spots advocating for a fair go for refugees, better mental health funding, respect for women's rights and action to reduce carbon pollution;
- mobilised over 7,000 volunteers on the ground to personally contact voters;
- distributed over 1.1 million issue scorecards;
- won a constitutional challenge before the High Court that enfranchised 98,138 voters who otherwise wouldn't have voted at this election;
- enrolled over 10,000 voters on the ground; and
- revolutionised voter enrolment by building Australia's first online enrolment tool, and winning a Federal Court case paving the way for the Government to offer online enrolment for all.



The election the people won

What the major parties saw reflected back to them was disappointment and distrust as voters left them in droves.

Labor lost nearly 500,000 voters – yet remarkably the percentage increase in those who “voted informally” (code for ‘filled in incorrectly, left blank or other’) was more than the percentage increase in the Coalition’s vote.

Votes flowed instead to Greens, minor parties and Independents, giving the Greens the balance of power in the Senate, and an historic lower house victory in Melbourne.

The result of this election is more than a mandate for climate action: it’s a mandate for government that is truly more representative and responsive to the people it serves. It is a mandate for government that serves the people, over and above the party powerbrokers, industry lobbyists and other special interests.

“One explanation for the election being so boring, and so unsuccessful for both the ALP and the Coalition, is that the so-called major parties were determined to talk about minor issues.” -Richard Denniss, Australia Institute Director, “Major parties pay the price for lack of courage on big issues,” The Sydney Morning Herald, August 24, 2010

What Getup members did

1) Enrolled hundreds of thousands of voters

This year, GetUp broke new ground by venturing into the world of legal advocacy. Such was the courage of our movement’s conviction that we took the Commonwealth to the High Court and the Electoral Commissioner to the Federal Court to protect Australians’ right to vote.

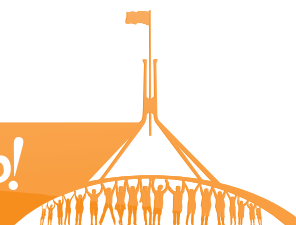
With 1.4 million Australians missing from the electoral roll, we started with a simple principle – that enrolling to vote should be quicker and easier. With bureaucratic enrolment processes and the autocratic “Electoral Integrity Act” implemented by John Howard’s Government,

GetUp members felt that it was time to take the matter of voting rights to the highest courts in the country.

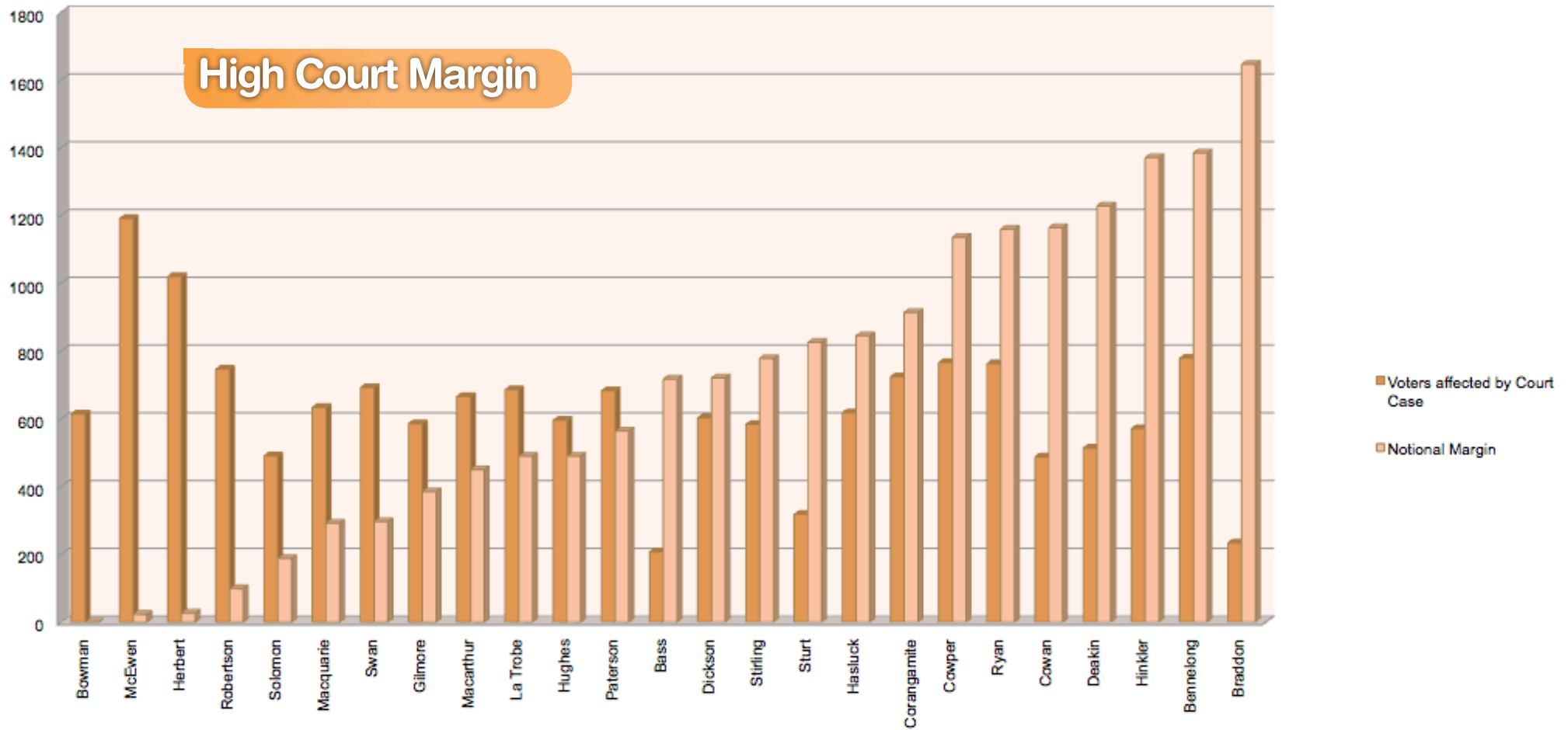
As a result of this High Court case, an additional 98,138 Australians - who wouldn’t otherwise have had the chance - were able to vote this election. The case also built on constitutional principles guaranteeing that in the future laws cannot arbitrarily remove or impair Australians’ right to vote without substantial reasons.

In many marginal seats, the number of voters added to the rolls because of the High Court case numbered more than the margin between the parties. In an election as tight as this one, they were instrumental in influencing the final outcome.

*“Amid all the election confusion one winner appears to be GetUp”
ABC News, August 25, 2010*



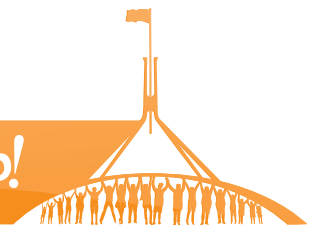
High Court Margin



GetUp members also revolutionised voter enrolment by funding Australia’s first online enrolment tool and winning a Federal Court case to pave the way for the government to offer online enrolment for all.

While pursuing these legal paths, GetUp members also took to the streets, handing out over 10,000 enrolment forms to young Australians at universities, cinemas and door-to-door.

“It wasn’t a political motive for me at all. I just thought that the current law was wrong... I just jumped at the chance to get involved with something that would give people more time to be able to put themselves on the electoral roll or to change their details and make their vote count.” - Doug Thompson, GetUp member & plaintiff, Rowe vs Electoral Commissioner



2) Gave voice to different kinds of election ads

At GetUp, we don't believe that only political parties or wealthy special interests should have a say on the airwaves during an election campaign. But what makes it possible for us to live these values is the commitment and generosity of GetUp members who fund and, in some cases, even star in the ads we create.

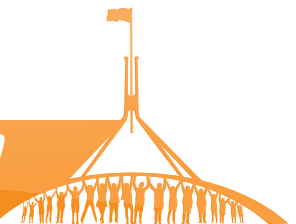
Two ads in particular featured prominently: the first a parody of the popular "Dare Iced Coffee" ad, where a Julia Gillard impersonator appeared on screen attempting to talk her way around some bad climate policy. Then, breaking all campaign fundraising records was an ad starring women – all GetUp members – putting the words of Tony Abbott back on the airwaves. This ad raised \$359,384 from GetUp members, was aired all across the country and received nationwide media coverage.

In total, GetUp placed ads in over 700 ad spots between Election Day and the blackout (and many more beforehand). If you think an independent people-powered political movement can't possibly compete with the status quo, consider that in the election period period, the:

- The ALP aired 2951 ads
- The Liberals and Nationals together aired 3408 ads
- The Greens aired 525 ads
- Family First aired 113 ads

And of course, it wouldn't be a GetUp ad strategy if we didn't include at least one viral video.

At the start of the campaign, we released a cut-through 'action parody' YouTube video encouraging people to enrol to vote. In addition to being seen by millions on television, it quickly became the #1 most viewed YouTube video in Australia, engaging voters of all ages, demographics and encouraging its more than 400,000+ viewers on YouTube and 1 million+ viewers in total to enrol.



3) Forged a massive on the ground presence in key seats

This election GetUp volunteers proved a force to be reckoned with in marginal seats – outnumbering representatives from political parties in many electorates. GetUp volunteers gave out fliers, knocked on doors, held vigils on mental health and walked against global warming. We have quizzed our candidates at forums, held GetTogethers at our homes and plastered GetUp posters in all the major cities.

How did we do it? We organised for GetUp members to take action in all 150 electorates across the nation. We focused our resources on 10 marginal, high-impact seats that gave GetUp the greatest opportunity to effect change and the national agenda.

GetUp members:

- Held over 200 GetTogethers to plan our election strategy.
- Held over 50 mental health vigils, bringing much needed attention to the cause.
- Held packed candidate forums in the key marginal electorates of Ryan, Wentworth, Robertson, Swan as well as South Australia and the ACT, focused on GetUp's core election issues: carbon pollution, refugees and mental health.
- Distributed more than 1.1 million issue scorecards that ranked the 3 major parties on GetUp's core election issues.

"Candidates forums have a long history in democracies. Ultimately, our politicians work for us and they need to be reminded of that at every opportunity. When they see a packed room full of people right before an election and are forced to answer their questions, our democracy gets a little stronger." – Tom Swann, Wentworth Campaign Coordinator.

"One gentleman came up to me after voting and handed me back the flyer, a conscientious gesture as it is, and then said, "thanks so much for handing me this information, without it I would have just been at a loss of who to vote for." It gave me such a warm fuzzy feeling, like the entire day's effort was worth just that moment" – Craig, GetUp Member, Melbourne Town Hall (VIC)

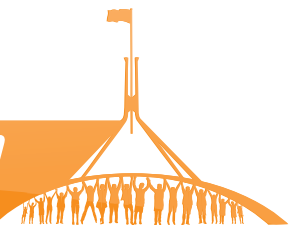
In total, more than 3000 volunteers covered polling booths all across the country on Election Day! Over the course of the whole election campaign, 7000 people volunteered with GetUp.

Direct Voter Contacts

An incredible effort: with GetUp volunteers creating a staggering 1.1 million voter contacts prior to Election Day! As the parties argued over who was less qualified to lead, leaving the debate largely devoid of substance, GetUp members brought issues back into the national conversation, and made policies rather than personalities central to the election.

Camp GetUp

GetUp brought Camp Obama to Australia, where we trained volunteers on the use of their own powerful personal narratives, as well as mobilising skills and strategy. We held Camps in Sydney, ACT, Brisbane, Perth and Melbourne, empowering hundreds of local leaders to drive positive change within their own communities throughout Australia.



4) Championed the issues that mattered

As a member-driven movement, GetUp chooses the issues we campaign on by consulting with members. We look for the most pressing, urgent, nationally-significant issues - even if they aren't the most popular.

Climate Change

As both parties tried desperately to 'clear the decks' before the election contest, climate change limped along, an issue hampered by broken promises and political cowardice.

GetUp members never let up. Together, we:

- Welcomed the new Prime Minister with over 8000 email messages and a 50 metre long banner flying over Parliament House urging her to "Aim Higher on Climate";
- Chipped in over \$135,000 to air a biting spoof ad, "Coffee with Julia," highlighting the PM's failure to address carbon pollution;
- Raised over \$90,000 for massive billboard and print advertising campaigns making clear that "abstinence is not a climate policy";
- Placed nearly 800 calls to MPs urging climate action now, after the budget failed to address the issue or allocate any meaningful resources to reducing Australia's carbon emissions; and
- Turned out in massive numbers in Sydney and throughout the country, joining over 10,000 climate activists nationally in the "Walk against Warming."



Refugees

GetUp members spoke for a constituency of Australians who believe refugees should be respected as human beings, not used as political pawns. Driving this home was our cut-through ad featuring Riz Wakil, a refugee who arrived by boat, speaking directly to Tony Abbott. GetUp members then rallied to fundraise for Riz and fellow refugees to win a charity auction offering of a surf lesson and breakfast with Tony Abbott (which Mr. Abbott has yet to honour).

GetUp members also:

- Donated over \$70,000 to counter fear-mongering Liberal Party mobile billboards with fair-go billboards in the Western Australia marginal seats of Hasluck, Swan and Canning.
- Produced a myth-busting viral video that reached almost 50,000 views online in the last two weeks of the election

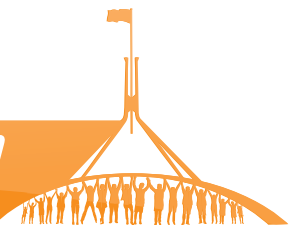


Mental Health

Prior to the election campaign, neither major party had a comprehensive policy to address mental illness – the leading killer of Australians under 44. Complimenting online advocacy with offline actions, GetUp members extracted not just formal policies, but funding pledges from both major parties, helping break the silence and stigma which has kept mental health off the public political agenda.

GetUp members:

- Raised over \$85,000 to air the ad, “No Health Reform Without Mental Health Reform” featuring Australian of the Year Prof. Partrick McGorry;
- Held a massive mental health candlelight vigil in Melbourne and more than 50 locally-organised mental health vigils in communities across Australia;
- Gathered over 100,000 signatures calling for mental health reform, which was delivered to the Prime Minister Julia Gillard; and
- Achieved pledges of \$1.5 billion from the Coalition and \$250 million from Labor to help fund additional mental health services throughout Australia.



Internet Censorship Gender Equity

Since the 2007 election, the Labor party has been advocating a mandatory internet filter, putting Australia far outside the mainstream of other democracies with respect to digital freedom. The grassroots pressure exerted by GetUp members and our allies resulted in a resounding victory. Only weeks before the election, the Coalition joined the Greens to officially oppose the filter, effectively ensuring that the internet remains open and free from inefficient and ineffective government censorship.

GetUp members:

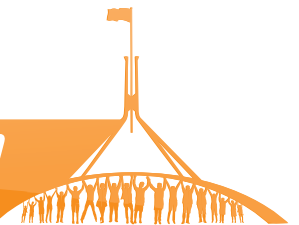
- Gathered over 126,000 signatures against the filter – one of GetUp's biggest petitions ever;
- Raised over \$100,000 for a massive anti-filter ad campaign – on TV, online, and in print;
- Flooded Communications Minister Conroy with an unprecedented "avalanche" of questions during his appearance on Q&A;
- Sent over 12,000 messages to politicians, focussing on the Coalition and Shadow Minister for Communications;
- Met with politicians from around the country to express their concerns.

Australia's first woman Prime Minister was standing for election, yet female voters were being treated with gobsmacking condescension. The turn of female voters away from Tony Abbott was being dismissed as a turn towards Julia Gillard's gender, while apart from his paid parental leave policy, many of Tony Abbott's views on issues affecting women were going unexamined and unchallenged by the mainstream media.

GetUp quickly produced an ad to put Tony Abbott's views on the record.

GetUp members:

- Stepped forward to star in an ad, highlighting Tony Abbott's archaic views on a number of issues including women's equality and safe access to abortion;
- Raised an all-time record-breaking \$359,000 from members to air the ad across the country;
- Elicited a response almost immediately, when – only days after the ad was released – Tony Abbott was forced to announce that he would make any changes to abortion access were he to win office (*Abbott denies he will change abortion law, The Australian, August 10, 2010*).



Outcomes in the key electorates:

GetUp is its membership.

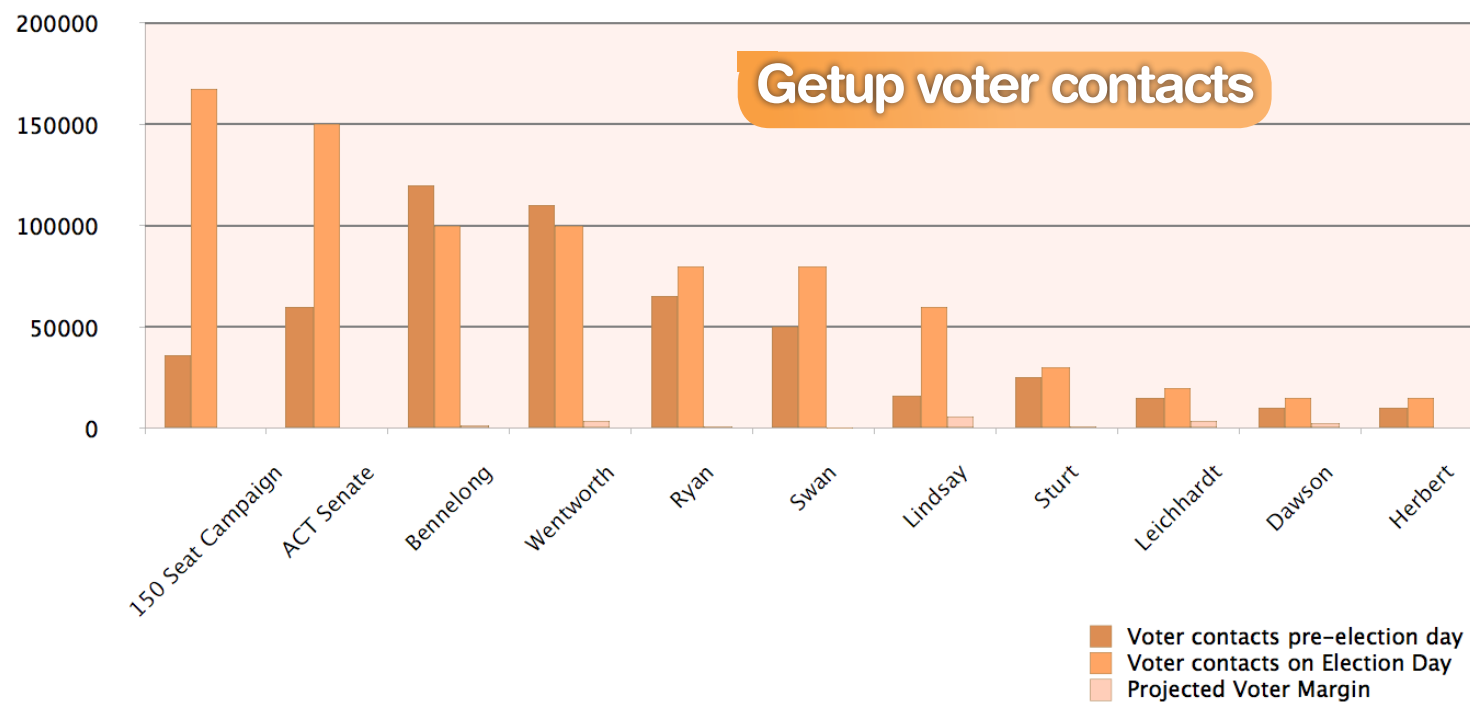
People made this happen. These efforts, the 20,000 hours of time volunteered by individuals all around the country, could not have been bought. These achievements are not the successes of a few, but a reflection of the passion and commitment of a great many.

GetUp is its members. We don't receive any government political party funding; nor can any single donor 'commission' campaigns through a financial contribution. We set our agenda based on the views and values of our members, and the best opportunities we can see to have an impact.

To each and every member, we say thank you.

Australia is in the midst of a fundamental political shift. More than 1 in 5 voters chose someone other than the major parties – demonstrating that they, like GetUp members, are searching for more conviction in their politics.

This movement is made for these moments, and although the election is over – the work for a progressive Australia continues.



Thank You

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