



Media Release

For Immediate Release

Alannah & Madeline Day on September 17 aims to raise \$350,000 to help support children escaping violence

Tuesday 17 September is Alannah & Madeline Day and national not-for-profit organisation the Alannah & Madeline Foundation is urging Australians to donate and help provide vital support to children and young people who are experiencing violence and trauma to heal, recover and thrive.

- Each year 11,000 Australian children are taken into emergency care because they're at serious risk of harm or have no safe place to live.¹
- We know that one in six women and one in 16 men experience violence at the hands of their current or former partner – and that more than half said their child saw or heard the violence.²

Most of these children are fleeing dangerous domestic and family violence situations. These experiences can leave children feeling scared and alone, often placing them in unfamiliar environments, and in many cases separated from parents and siblings. Many children arrive in emergency care with nothing but the clothes they are wearing.

The Alannah & Madeline Foundation provides these vulnerable children with Buddy Bags. These are brand new backpacks thoughtfully packed by volunteers with items to help meet their immediate material and personal care needs such as toothpaste, pyjamas, underwear, socks and a soft teddy bear – providing them with a sense of security and comfort as the first step on their journey to safety and recovery.

“There are still too many children and young people exposed to violence and trauma”, says Walter Mikac AM, who founded the Alannah & Madeline Foundation in 1997 in memory of his two young daughters who were killed in the 1996 Port Arthur tragedy.

“Madeline would have turned 31 last month. I think of my girls every day and wonder what they'd be doing if they were still here today. Children are precious and they have a right to be safe. It's our mission at the Foundation to uphold that right so that they can thrive – and with a kind donation, that can start with a Buddy Bag.”

Family and domestic violence continues to be a major health and social issue in Australia. The Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare told us that almost

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 'Child protection Australia 2019-20 Canberra, 2021, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/child-protection/child-protection-australia-2019-20/summary>

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Family, domestic and sexual violence data in Australia', Canberra, 2021. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/domestic-violence/family-domestic-sexual-violence-data>



2.1 million adults reported witnessing violence towards their mother by a partner before the age of 15.

Children witnessed family violence incidents on over 34,000 occasions, according to 2021 Crime Statistics Agency data.

The Foundation's CEO Sarah Davies AM said that family and domestic violence continues to be a major health and social issue in Australia.

“Experiencing family violence is traumatic for children and young people and can have lifelong impacts on their health and wellbeing. With the right support, children can recover, and a Buddy Bag can help a child take their critical first steps of that important healing journey.”

However, the Foundation only has the capacity to provide around 4,000 bags per year and currently has a 12-month wait list. With 11,000 children being removed by authorities from violent homes each year in Australia, this means children in crisis are missing out.

Donations made on Alannah & Madeline Day between the hours of 8am – 8pm AEST will be matched, so funds donated will go twice as far in helping support vulnerable children and young people in crisis.

- \$55 can provide ONE Buddy Bag to a child in need
- \$110 can provide TWO Buddy Bags to siblings escaping trauma
- \$275 can provide FIVE Buddy Bags to children who have fled violence
- \$550 can provide TEN Buddy Bags to ten children who have nothing

Walter is asking Australians to dig deep in memory of his daughters on Alannah & Madeline Day so the Foundation can continue to champion the rights of children and young people to be safe from violence and trauma, today and every day.

“Only when a child is safe is their best future possible,” Walter said. “That’s why we do what we do. Together, we can help children in crisis to recover, heal and thrive.”

Alannah & Madeline Day aims to raise \$350,000 this year to help support vulnerable children and young people in crisis. Donate today at www.alannahandmadelineday.org.au or call 1300 720 747.

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The Alannah & Madeline Foundation was founded 27 years ago by Walter Mikac AM, and a small group of volunteers in memory of Walter's young daughters Alannah and Madeline Mikac, aged just six and three, who tragically lost their lives along with their mother and 32 others at Port Arthur in Tasmania on 28 April 1996. The Foundation was established with the belief that “*all children and young people should be able to live a happy and safe life, free from violence and trauma.*” Our mission continues today through our Care, Prevention and Advocacy programs – we fight for their right to be safe, so their future is strong. www.alannahandmadeline.org.au

For further information or interview requests, please contact:

Simone Redman-Jones - Media & Communications Manager, Alannah & Madeline Foundation
0499 202 001 or simone.redmanjones@amf.org.au

For more Alannah & Madeline Day media resources please visit:

www.alannahandmadeline.org.au/supporterresources

