



Media release

21 November 2022

Walter Mikac launches Parliamentary Friends of Firearm Safety: “After 25 years, the fight to keep our children safe continues”

Walter Mikac AM will launch a bipartisan Parliamentary Friends of Firearm Safety group at Parliament House tomorrow (Tuesday 22 November).

Mr Mikac lost his two children and his wife through gun violence at the Port Arthur tragedy in 1996 and founded the national children’s not-for-profit organisation, the Alannah & Madeline Foundation, in his daughters’ names a year later.

The tragedy was the impetus for bipartisan gun reforms through the National Firearms Agreement, spearheaded by then-Prime Minister John Howard, who was the Foundation’s first national patron. This role has been held by every sitting prime minister since, including the current PM, the Hon Anthony Albanese, MP.

The bipartisan Parliamentary Friends of Firearm Safety group is co-chaired by Mr Josh Burns MP (ALP) and Mr James Stevens MP (Liberal Party).

Mr Burns said Australia must remain vigilant and maintain the legislative framework that has kept us safe and has remained above politics since the Port Arthur tragedy.

“This Parliamentary Friendship Group is key to maintaining our strong bipartisan firearm laws and I look forward to working with my colleagues and the Alannah & Madeline Foundation on this important cause,” he said.

Mr Stevens said that while we have a strong consensus on the need for strict firearms regulation in our society, it is important that we remain vigilant, particularly as firearm technologies continue to evolve.

“The Parliamentary Friends of Firearm Safety has a significant role to play in maintaining awareness of this important issue and ensuring we do not become complacent.”

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Alannah & Madeline Foundation. During that time, the Foundation has placed the safety of our children and young people at the heart of its work, which includes ensuring laws around gun safety through the National Firearms Agreement stay strong and intact, Mr Mikac said.



“Our work has changed over the years, although our mission remains the same – to champion the rights of children and young people to be safe, wherever they live, learn and play,” he said.

“Our purpose continues today through care, prevention and advocacy – from supporting children and their families experiencing family violence to working to reduce online bullying.”

Over the next four years, the Foundation will advocate to ensure:

- children and young people are included in the decisions that affect their futures
- the technology sector and governments make online spaces safe for children and young people
- children are recognised as victims of crime and that their needs are enshrined in policy, service design, and resourcing
- no jurisdiction weakens its position on gun safety, through its work through the [Australian Gun Safety Alliance](#).

“After 25 years, that fight continues. There are still too many children and young people exposed to violence and trauma,” Mr Mikac said.

“The challenges facing children and young people may have changed, but our mission has not. We fight for their right to be safe, so their future is strong.”

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