

Media Release

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The Alannah & Madeline Foundation commends the WA Government tough firearm reforms

The Alannah & Madeline Foundation commends the Western Australia Government on proposing the strongest firearm safety framework in Australia.

The WA Minister for Police, Paul Papalia's announcement today signifies a commitment to elevating public safety as the primary purpose of the proposed *Firearms Amendment Bill*. These reforms should help keep Western Australians safe from firearm violence and reduce the likelihood of criminal access to dangerous firearms.

The 2017 National Firearms Agreement states clearly that the use and possession of a firearm is a privilege that is secondary to public safety. The Agreement also invites jurisdictions to adopt additional and more restrictive regulations.

Alannah & Madeline Foundation Founder, Walter Mikac AM, acknowledged this positive progress saying, *"Minister Paul Papalia, and the government should be congratulated for introducing the strongest firearm reforms in Australia since Port Arthur. These new laws will significantly reduce the number of firearms in the community, and I expect most Australians agree that is a good thing."*

There are many strengthened initiatives that cumulatively will have a significant impact on community safety. The reforms have been designed to minimise the risks of persons causing harm to themselves or others. However, there remains some areas that the Foundation feel could be further strengthened.

Stephen Bendle, convenor of the Australian Gun Safety Alliance (AGSA), of which the Alannah & Madeline Foundation is a member, highlighted these concerns, saying *"If the WA government truly believes that the number of firearms a person owns is a public safety risk, the Foundation contend that a total of 5 firearms per person should be the absolute maximum able to be held."*

"We also believe there could be a stronger framework around 3D printed firearms and their digital files, however the Foundation will eagerly wait for confirmed legislation on this", Mr Bendle added.

The Alannah & Madeline Foundation remain steadfast on the issue of children lawfully being able to use firearms. The National Firearm Agreement states that no one under the age of 18 should be



licensed to use or possess a firearm. All jurisdictions across Australia circumvent this by having a permit system for children as young as 12 years old.

Mr Bendle stressed that, *“We don’t let 12-year-olds drive a car or have access to other lethal activities, so it doesn’t make sense to allow them access to potentially dangerous weapons.”*

He added *“These reforms are an opportunity for the WA government to be the first jurisdiction to fully comply with the National Firearms Agreement. Minister for Police, Paul Papalia is missing an opportunity to lead the nation in fulfilling the promise his State and every other state and territory made to the Australian public when they signed the Agreement.”*

The Alannah & Madeline Foundation will remain vigilant in advocating to ensure Australia’s gun laws remain responsible, safe and strong. We will continue to build a future where children – and all people – can live safe from gun-related violence.

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The Alannah & Madeline Foundation was founded 26 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

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