

## Media Release

For Immediate Release

### Western Australia's tougher gun laws soon to take effect – will other states & territories follow?

The Alannah & Madeline Foundation welcomes the implementation of Western Australia's revised Firearms Act, which takes effect on Monday, 31 March 2025. The new laws prioritise public safety and fully comply with the National Firearms Agreement, reinforcing that firearm possession and use are a privilege—one that is conditional on ensuring community safety.

The reforms introduce crucial measures, including restrictions on the number of firearms individuals can own, mandatory safety training, health assessments, stricter storage requirements, and the introduction of new offences and orders. These changes set a new benchmark for firearm safety in Australia - one that all jurisdictions should follow and that the majority of Australians support. According to [findings from polling](#) by [The Australia Institute](#) released in January this year, three in four Australians support limiting the number of firearms an individual can own, regardless of their state or political affiliation.

*"These reforms reflect a significant step forward in firearm safety,"* said Alannah & Madeline Foundation spokesperson Stephen Bendle. *"The National Firearms Agreement established minimum requirements, and WA's decision to build on those standards is commendable. We applaud the WA Government and former Police Minister Paul Papalia for their commitment to ensuring firearm laws prioritise public safety above all else."*

The changes come amid growing concerns over the increasing number of firearms in Australia. There are now over four million registered firearms in the country, with one-third of these stored in suburban homes. The proliferation of illicit and privately made firearms also presents an ongoing challenge for law enforcement and a real threat to community safety, yet many jurisdictions have yet to ban the possession and distribution of easily accessible 3D blueprints for homemade guns.

In addition to Western Australia's reforms, all states and territories are working to upgrade their firearm registries to contribute to a National Firearms Register, which was first agreed to in 1996 in the wake of the Port Arthur tragedy. While this initiative is still roughly four years from completion, it promises to provide better data for first responders and improve the understanding of firearm distribution across the country.

Key findings from [recent research](#) conducted by [The Australia Institute](#), in collaboration with [Gun Control Australia](#) and the [Australian Gun Safety Alliance](#) – of which the Alannah & Madeline Foundation is a founding member – highlight the need for continued progress in gun control:

- There are more firearms in Australia today than there were before the Port Arthur tragedy in 1996.
- At least one licensed firearm exists for every seven Australians.
- Firearms are not confined to rural areas—one-third of all registered guns in New South Wales are located in Sydney, Newcastle, and Wollongong.



- No state or territory, apart from Western Australia, limits the number of firearms an individual can own.
- On average, licensed firearm holders possess more than four guns, with some individuals in suburban Sydney owning over 300 firearms.
- Three in four Australians support limiting the number of firearms a person can own.

Despite Australia's strong gun laws, the misuse of firearms—including self-harm, threats, and assaults—still occurs. While most licensed firearm owners are responsible, the promotion of firearms as a form of entertainment remains inconsistent with community expectations and the intent of Australia's gun safety framework.

Western Australia is the only state with a limit on the number of firearms a licence holder can own, while New South Wales is the only state making comprehensive data on gun ownership publicly available. This inconsistency across the country has facilitated access to new weapons that are illegal in one place but not in another. Stronger national regulations are needed to close these loopholes and to ensure that firearm safety is consistently upheld across all states and territories.

*"The WA Government's reforms follow extensive consultation and achieve a fair balance—ensuring licensed firearm owners can continue to use their firearms responsibly while strengthening public safety," Mr Bendle added. "We look forward to the implementation of the new laws in WA and will continue discussions with other jurisdictions."*

The Alannah & Madeline Foundation is proud to be a founding member of the [Australian Gun Safety Alliance](#), and we stand alongside over 30 national organisations that share a commitment to community safety and ensuring that Australia's gun laws remain responsible, safe and strong.

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### **For further information or interview requests, please contact:**

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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, 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](http://www.alannahandmadeline.org.au)

