

## Media Release

Wednesday, 29 January 2025

### Report reveals more guns in Australia today than before Port Arthur tragedy

New findings released today reveal alarming trends in firearm ownership across Australia, showing that the number of guns in private hands has grown since the Port Arthur tragedy, and regulation across states and territories is failing to keep pace with community expectations.

#### Key Findings:

- There are more guns in Australia than there were before the Port Arthur tragedy in 1996.
- There is at least one licenced firearm for every seven Australians.
- Firearms are not confined to rural areas, with a third of guns in New South Wales located in Sydney, Newcastle, and Wollongong.
- All states and territories are failing to meet key criteria for effective gun control, including data transparency and limits on the number of firearms a person can own.
- On average, a firearms licence holder owns more than 4 guns, with two individuals in suburban Sydney each owning over 300 firearms.
- 3 in 4 Australians support limits on the number of firearms an individual can possess.

The report conducted by The Australia Institute (TAI) with assistance from Gun Control Australia (GCA) and Australian Gun Safety Alliance (AGSA) - of which the Alannah & Madeline Foundation is a founding member - revealed gun ownership in Australia varies significantly across states.

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.

ACT performs the worst according to the criteria, with NT and SA coming second last. VIC and TAS are in the middle and NSW and WA are in the lead. NSW has the best data transparency and WA has firearm limits.

“The significant growth in firearms in Australia is a result of the commercial interests of an industry and the recreational pursuit of a few,” said Stephen Bendle, Convenor of the Australian Gun Safety Alliance.

“Many in this industry have forgotten the accepted principle that firearms are a privilege in Australia and not a right.

“The overwhelming majority of Australians expect that our gun laws strictly control the licensing and ownership of firearms and expect their governments to ensure our firearm laws and regulations are responsible, safe and strong, putting community safety before the needs of those people wanting firearms,” added Mr. Bendle.

For the past 28 years since its inception, the Alannah & Madeline Foundation has been taking decisive action to enhance public safety, agitating for stronger and more responsible firearm legislation. We’ve had some significant wins,



including the agreement to implement a National Firearm Register, the final unfulfilled part of the National Firearms Agreement that was agreed to in 1996. These findings show that we clearly have more work to do.

“The gun reforms introduced after Port Arthur have served Australia well. It is deeply concerning to see the firearm industry exerting influence on policy and marketing, resulting in over 4 million firearms now in circulation—a distressing reality for all who were affected by the tragedy of that day,” said Walter Mikac, Founder of the Alannah & Madeline Foundation, who tragically lost his wife and two young daughters at Port Arthur.

The findings are indisputable, Australians want strong regulations on firearm ownership. The Alannah & Madeline Foundation will continue to be 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 violence.

**A full breakdown for each jurisdiction can be found at: <https://australiainstitute.org.au/report/gun-control-in-australia/>**

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

**The Australian Gun Safety Alliance** is a broad coalition of voices representing the interests of the community to ensure we remain vigilant on gun safety. [www.gunsafetyalliance.org.au](http://www.gunsafetyalliance.org.au)

*The Australia Institute is a member of the Australian Polling Council. The polling methodology, long disclosure statement and margin of error for polling questions are included in the appendix of the report attached to this email.*

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

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