alannah & madeline foundation

Media Release

NSW Government's deal with Shooters Party puts public safety at risk

The Australian Gun Safety Alliance (AGSA) is calling on the NSW Government to reject the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party's (SFFP) proposed Hunting Bill, warning it poses a serious threat to public safety and undermines Australia's proud firearm safety legacy.

Despite being packaged as a conservation measure, the Bill is being celebrated by the gun lobby not for its environmental benefits, but for what one shooting group is calling "the biggest victory for hunters in two decades."

"This Bill is not about conservation," said Stephen Bendle, Convenor of the Australian Gun Safety Alliance. *"It's being ushered in through political deals that prioritise special interests over the safety of communities."*

The Bill includes alarming provisions such as:

- The establishment of a Conservation Hunting Authority, controlled by hunting organisations, reviving the discredited Game Council that was scrapped in 2013 after a damning review found it prioritised hunter interests over public safety.
- Enshrining a "right to hunt" — in direct contradiction to the National Firearms Agreement and NSW's own Firearms Act, which clearly state that gun ownership is a privilege, conditional on public safety.
- The creation of a Minister for Hunting and Fishing, effectively a government advocate for the commercial shooting industry — a move that would be unthinkable for other commercial industries like gambling, tobacco or alcohol.
- Legalising silencers, expanding access to night-vision hunting, opening more Crown Land to shooters, and implementing bounty programs — policies that further normalise and expand firearm use in ways that have nothing to do with conservation.

"Let's be clear — this Bill is about enabling more people to use more guns, more often," Mr Bendle said. *"It reads like a wish list for the shooting industry, hidden in the belly of a conservation-themed Trojan Horse Bill."*

NSW already has more registered firearms than any other state or territory — more than 1.1 million[1], with over 30% stored in suburban homes. Despite this, there is no limit on the number of guns a licensed individual can own, with some owning upwards of 300.

[1] P1606-Gun-control-in-Australia-report-WEB.pdf

Yet, the overwhelming majority of Australians continue to support strict gun laws. Since the Port Arthur tragedy in 1996, nearly 90% of Australians have backed our national gun safety framework, or want it strengthened. In NSW, 97% of people do not own a firearm.

"Gun safety should never be up for negotiation," Mr Bendle said. *"No backroom deal is worth risking public safety. Australians — and especially the 8 million people in NSW who don't own a firearm — deserve laws that protect them, not policies written to appease a well-funded and vocal minority."*

AGSA, which was founded by the Alannah & Madeline Foundation, represents a broad coalition of organisations from the health, medical, education, emergency services, faith and domestic and family violence sectors — all of whom see firsthand the devastating impacts of gun misuse, from suicide to family violence and accidental deaths.

The Alliance is urging the NSW Government to uphold the core principle of Australia's firearm laws: that public safety must come first.

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Available for comment:

Stephen Bendle – Convener, Australian Gun Safety Alliance / Advocacy Advisor, Alannah & Madeline Foundation
Joel Negin - Professor of Public Health, University of Sydney
Tim Quinn – Gun Control Australia
Emma Hurst MP Animal Justice Party

For further information please contact:
Simone Redman-Jones - Media & Communications Manager, Alannah & Madeline Foundation
0499 202 001 or simone.redmanjones@amf.org.au

About the Australian Gun Safety Alliance
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

About the Alannah & Madeline Foundation
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