



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WALTER MIKAC AND THE ALANNAH & MADELINE FOUNDATION CELEBRATE 20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY IN TASMANIA

The Alannah & Madeline Foundation was set up in memory of Alannah and Madeline Mikac, aged six and three, who were tragically killed with their mother and 32 others at Port Arthur, Tasmania on 28 April 1996.

This year the Foundation marks its 20th Anniversary and Walter Mikac, father of Alannah and Madeline, will speak publicly in Tasmania for the first time.

Ms Lesley Podesta, CEO Alannah & Madeline Foundation, said she was thrilled the Foundation was holding events in Tasmania to acknowledge the work being done to build a safer world for children. "We will never forget the tragedy that led to the creation of the Foundation and we invite all Tasmanians especially survivors, their families; everyone affected by that terrible day to connect with us on this visit," she said.

In addition to a private function in Hobart on Friday 12 May, Walter Mikac along with Foundation Ambassadors Melissa Doyle AM and ex-AFL player Dan Jackson, invite the public to join them to launch *Letters of Love: Words from the Heart Penned by Prominent Australians*, a new book published to celebrate the 20th anniversary, at Fuller's Bookstore in Hobart on Saturday 13 May.

Walter Mikac, Founding Patron of the Foundation acknowledged the work of the Foundation and the hope that it brings him. "It is a wonderful testament to the spirit and generosity of Australians that in the wake of such a tragedy 2 million children have been assisted," he said. "I am proud of the work that is being done in the name of Alannah and Madeline, to care for Australian children and keep Australia safe."

The Tasmania government recently announced a \$630,000 commitment to support the Foundation's cyber safety eSmart program across its 180 schools in the state over the next four years. eSmart also operates in every Tasmanian public library.

To coincide with the anniversary and to assist a new generation of Tasmanians the Foundation is committed to expanding their Buddy Bags program, which assists children in emergency accommodation. To date the foundation has supported 4207 Tasmanian children in care with Buddy Bags.

The Foundation receives written feedback from parents, carers and children about their experience every day. Miki, whose children have previously received Buddy Bags from the Foundation, said the program had supported her and her young family during an extremely traumatic time.

"My kids still have their teddies that came with their Buddy Bags when we first went to the women's refuge over three years ago," Miki said. "It's a great incentive to put a smile on children's faces who have had to deal with domestic violence."

[FULL DETAILS OF THE TASMANIAN EVENTS ARE ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.](#)

For more information or to request an interview with CEO Lesley Podesta or Founder Walter Mikac, please contact Terri King at Pitch Projects on 0488 036 740 or terri@pitchprojects.com



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20th Anniversary Tasmanian Events

FRIDAY 12 MAY (Invite Only):

The Hon Will Hodgman MP, Premier of Tasmania, Walter Mikac, Founding Patron Alannah & Madeline Foundation, and host Melissa Doyle AM will host an intimate cocktail event at Henry Jones Hotel to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Foundation.

SATURDAY 13 MAY (Public Event):

Letters of Love Book Launch

Readings from Walter Mikac, Melissa Doyle & Dan Jackson

1.30pm for 2.00pm

Fullers Bookstore, Hobart

Free event, but please contact fullersbookshop.com.au to reserve your seat.

For more information about *Letters of Love* visit here: <http://affirmpress.com.au/publishing/letters-of-love/>

Survivors of the Port Arthur tragedy, families and responders are invited to connect with the Foundation.

About the Foundation

The Alannah & Madeline Foundation is the leading national not-for-profit organisation working to protect children from the effects of violence and bullying.

The Foundation has assisted 2 million children in 20 years.

We believe that no child should feel unsafe or be threatened with violence.

The Foundation's vision is that every child will live in a safe and supportive environment.

For more information or make a donation, visit amf.org.au