

Walter Mikac on Remembrance Day

In April 1996 Walter Mikac's wife Nanette and daughters Allannah and Madeline were killed in the Port Arthur massacre. Australians grieved with him. Following his loss, Walter set up the Allannah and Madeline Foundation to help children who have suffered violence or sudden loss. Walter addressed Victoria's National Police Remembrance Day ceremony this year.

When you look at the job description for being in the police force it is fair to say that the average person would baulk at putting themselves in this scenario. It's for this reason and the fact that police place their safety and lives on the line pretty well every time they leave for work that I feel they deserve true recognition. As a young boy I was like so many other young boys around Australia, saying that I wanted to be a fireman or a policeman. Well it didn't turn out that way, but as life unfolded, like in most of our lives I had contact with the police. Unfortunately for me it was something as grave as Port Arthur and the death of my then wife and



Walter Mikac

daughters.

When I look at all the unenviable tasks that police have to perform I recall the officer who was sent with the personal effects of my family. Whilst I was surprised by the bag of earrings and rings, the look on that officer's face said it all. He wanted to say that somehow things would be OK but knew that they couldn't be. This is a tough job. Just like telling relatives that someone has died or having a gun held to your head. I think each and every Australian should be proud of the job the police do. I take my hat off to you and say 'GOOD JOB'.

My involvement with the police since Port Arthur has been in the form of the AMF. It was set up in the name of my two daughters and helps children who've suffered from violence or sudden loss. It will celebrate its 10th anniversary next year and there has been a close

relationship with the police from the start. Helping restore kids faith in the world when something bad happens is the ultimate challenge for parents. You would love to say "It can't happen here" but if you want to be truthful and accurate, you'll say "It's not likely to happen here". In many ways the innocence of our society has been lost. Our children are our future and they deserve to live without fear in a kind, loving environment. Our police members strive to make this a possibility.

Finally to all the police officers who did NOT make it back from work – we remember you and thank you. To their families, we feel for you. I personally relate to your loss and hope today's service at least gives them the recognition they deserve. To the serving Force, may God look over you, bless you and keep you from harm.