

## Ordinary Australians unite with pleas to the Prime Minister

What would you say to the prime minister if you had the chance? A new craftivism exhibition launched at MoAD (Museum of Australian Democracy) explores that question, showcasing what 121 people would say in *Prime Minister Please*.

Australian craftivist, Tal Fitzpatrick came up with the idea after Malcolm Turnbull was sworn in as our 29<sup>th</sup> prime minister – the fourth prime minister within three years. Ms Fitzpatrick said, “At the time there was a very palpable shift in the way people perceived the government as a result of the latest leadership change, a shift marked by a renewed hope that it may once again be possible to engage in more complex and inclusive dialogue about the future of Australia.

“With a federal election less than 12 months away I felt that there was no better time to reach out to the prime minister in order to try communicate what’s really important to us ordinary citizens.”

Using the power of social media, a call was put out for all Australians to send their messages for the new prime minister. 121 messages were received and hand stitched on to old suit swatches by a group of art festival goers and these, along with second hand ties, were used to create the intricate quilt.

Visitors can see this piece of socially engaged artwork that was first gifted to the newly appointed prime minister in 2015, then donated by Ms Fitzpatrick on behalf of Mr Turnbull to MoAD.

The launch of this exhibition comes at a time when trust in democracy and public institutions is at an all-time low, and Malcolm Turnbull is no longer prime minister after yet another leadership spill.

MoAD Director, Daryl Karp believes, “Over the last decade there has been a large breakdown of trust in our political institutions.

“One of the best ways to rebuild that trust is to have active and engaged citizens, like the ones who participated in the *Prime Minister Please* quilt project,” Ms Karp continued. “The choice of fabric was deliberate, suits and ties are synonymous with politics, and by utilising them in a new way the craftivists reclaimed the fabric of power.”

Visitors can write their own messages in the exhibition’s interactive space, giving voice to what they would say to the prime minister if given the opportunity.

An inspiring digital display created by Victorian College of the Arts student, Jess O’Meara, will also be featured in the exhibition. The engaging video includes additional messages to the prime minister, as well as interviews on whether every-day people think they can contact the prime minister directly.

### About MoAD

The Museum of Australian Democracy celebrates Australia’s proud history as a democratic nation and actively promotes the participation of its citizens in determining its future.

MoAD is a museum not just of objects but of ideas. In our iconic heritage building, we tell the story of Australia’s journey to becoming one of the world’s most vibrant and multicultural democratic nations.

MoAD is a place where stories, conversations and narratives from myriad perspectives can be heard and discussed.

# MEDIA RELEASE

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**INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES:**

Daryl Karp – Director, MoAD