



## Media Release

### **The Governor General, our First Responders and Integra Assistance Dogs support World Record Attempt**

Canberra's ACT Emergency Services, Integra Assistance Dogs and their Veteran and First Responder handlers will cheer on Grant Edwards, formerly Australia's strongest man and current FearLess Ambassador as he attempts the fastest time to pull a 10 tonne fire engine 50 metres. ACT Emergency Services are supplying the 10 tonne Fire Truck.

"This record attempt is more than achieving a personal goal it's about raising awareness of PTSD in our community and the important work of FearLess. FearLess is a charity that works with people living with the consequences of PTSD.

I suffer from Complex PTSD and I know how tough it is to acknowledge having it. I want people to know that it is still possible to lead a full life. I would strongly encourage any person who is struggling with their mental health to seek help. Don't self-diagnose reach out and seek help," said Grant Edwards.

FearLess CEO Alex Gerrick said "There is a common yet misplaced understanding that PTSD is a condition that targets only military personnel or first responders, but we know it affects the broader Australian community.

We should be significantly concerned about the increase, and evolving impact, of mental health illness and PTSD in the community. Approximately over 1 million Australians are currently suffering PTSD but if we add family members there could be 3-5 million Australians currently affected by PTSD. These numbers are expected to grow due to the impact of COVID.

Help FearLess help those who are currently suffering from PTSD– sponsor Grant Edwards as he attempts to break the Guinness World Record by pulling a fire engine 50 metres. Donate at <https://www.mycause.com.au/page/284025/raising-awareness-and-funds-for-national-ptsd-awareness-day-27-june-2022?popup=1>"

Their Excellencies, The Governor General of Australia General the Honourable David John Hurley AC DSC (retired) and Mrs Linda Hurley will host the event at Government House at 10.00am on Tuesday 28 June.

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# FEARLESS

## Grant Edwards

Grant joined the police force in 1985, working in Sydney, Newcastle, Canberra and overseas. Grant had a diverse career working across family law, international drug trafficking, major organised crime, drug smuggling, child exploitation and human drug trafficking. Most recently, he completed a 3-year posting to Washington DC as the Australian Federal Police's most senior officer in America responsible for all law enforcement engagement with Canada, USA, Mexico, Central and South America. During this time, he hosted two global mental health symposiums for police bringing together experts from law enforcement, academia, policy, and the medical profession across the world to identify and enhance a unified universal best practice for managing the mental health of police, family and retired members.

He is also well-known for his sporting endeavours, winning Australia's Strongest Man in 1999 and was mentioned in the 2001 Guinness World Record book for his strength feats. He has represented Australia in Athletics, Bobsleigh and Scottish Highland games. He has competed across the world in Strongman events including the 1999 World's Strongest Man competition in Malta.

He has been a strong advocate for discussing post-traumatic stress and his own mental health struggles. He discusses the misconception that police must always be strong and unshakeable, which in turn creates immense pressure for those in the police force. *"We have a highly stressful job and coupled with our personal lives. Things aggregate and it's not good when the two collide. But most importantly, as individuals we need to look after ourselves first and foremost."*

Grant wrote a book in 2019, 'The Strong Man', in which he discusses his career and his struggles with his physical and mental health. Nowadays, Grant is the head of Aspect Frontline, a program created to support the mental health of Police and First Responders. *"Mental health in our organisation and our profession isn't a stigma. It's a result of the highly demanding, stressful and confronting job we have chosen to do and the burden of wearing the badge."*

## FearLess

FearLess is a charity that works with people living with the consequences of post traumatic stress (often referred to as PTSD). We also help family members in any way affected by it. Our members come from all walks of life including those living with PTSD and their families or people who want to do their bit to make the lives of people living with post traumatic stress more enjoyable and fulfilling. Our work complements the activities of other community-based organisations and government agencies that provide services to people with post traumatic stress.

We have a growing national presence throughout both Australia and New Zealand, with the aim of having local representation in areas where there is a concentration of people who live with post-traumatic stress.