



VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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PROGRESS ON CHILDREN OF VIETNAM VETERANS HEALTH STUDY

After twenty five years of agitating and lobbying the Department of Veteran Affairs and the Australian Government the Minister for Veteran Affairs has made a number of significant announcements in the past few weeks concerning Veterans' and in particular Vietnam Veterans, those being, "The final Study relating to the Vietnam Veterans Mortality Study" that, has raised more questions than it answered in regard to Vietnam Veterans health. An injection of \$600m per year to fix the perennial problem with specialist accepting the Gold Card, without much significant data on how the allocation in percentage term will satisfy the Specialist concerns. The increase in amounts for, "Long Tan Bursaries", and Major Commemorative funding commemorating "The Battle of Long Tan".

These initiatives are welcomed by the VVAA and congratulate the Minister in taking steps to address some of the issues that affect the Veteran Community. We however do not necessarily agree with announcement or if they will meet the needs of the veteran community.

Now the Minister has announced the long awaited progress report on the Children of Vietnam Veterans Health Study. Unfortunately not releasing the study makes it difficult for the VVAA to make sound conclusions or accept the Ministers progress report.

The VVAA along with a number of other ex-service organisations have lobbied the government for a full study into the mental health, emotional well being and the physical health of our children and to the extent of the effect on their children.

The National President of the VVAA Mr. Ron Coxon said, “though the progress announcement issued by the Minister gives us an indication of what the Department and government propose in developing protocols and putting expert panels together with the aim of obtaining results by the end of 2007 the non release of the feasibility study leaves us unsure in the conclusion that have been reached”.

The report is long on words and short on detail. The access to VVCS for our children is only an ongoing commitment that was fought for, with an extension of age. The “Long Tan” bursaries are also a continuing commitment that has been extended and more money and opportunities opened. The VVAA thanks the Minister and government for this,. However, we see no real tangible substance being offered in the short term to assist our children’s health needs.

The VVAA looks forward to consultation in this whole process.

Ron Coxon OAM
National President

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