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PRIME MINISTER

embargo: 8pm Saturday 12 August

**JOINT STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING
MP AND THE MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS, THE HON CON
SCIACCA MP**

AUSTRALIA REMEMBERS PRISONERS OF WAR

Federal Cabinet has agreed to exempt Australian ex-prisoners of war who are receiving nursing home care from the cost of nursing home resident contributions.

This decision is a special initiative to mark the Australia Remembers commemorative year, and to recognise the unique sacrifice made by the 6,600 living Australian veterans who were prisoners of war while on operational service.

The exemption will apply from 1 November this year, and will mean initially that about 250 former prisoners of war who are currently residents of nursing homes will be relieved of the financial burden associated with their nursing home care.

The recent commemorative trip to Borneo highlighted the appalling experiences which were endured by some war prisoners. Their suffering was both physical and psychological. Their privations were profound.

Former prisoners of war, including their passionate advocate Mr Tom Uren, have campaigned for a long time for this particular form of recognition, and the Government is pleased to agree to it during the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War Two.

**CANBERRA
13 AUGUST, 1995**