



**DEPARTMENT OF  
FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS**

**NO**

**DATE**

M/26

24 January 1973

CEASEFIRE IN VIET-NAM

The Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Whitlam, made the following statement this afternoon welcoming President Nixon's announcement of a ceasefire agreement in Viet-Nam.

"I am confident all Australians will rejoice at President Nixon's historic announcement. The Australian Government greets his statement with full approval and the deepest satisfaction.

I personally extend the warmest wishes to President Nixon on an achievement which establishes him firmly in the foremost ranks of modern statesmanship.

The conclusion of a ceasefire agreement is a hopeful first step towards the goal of an eventual reconciliation between the contending forces in Viet-Nam. Many months of patient and difficult negotiation will be required before progress towards this goal can be achieved. The divisions caused by years of hatred, bitterness and mutual suspicion will add to the difficulties of an already complex task.

As the fighting recedes, opportunities will emerge for relief and reconstruction work in the devastated

areas of Viet-Nam - North and South - and in Indo-China as a whole. It is in this field that the Australian Government sees itself as making a particular contribution.

It is still too soon for detailed aid programmes and machinery to have been worked out but as I agreed with Mr Kirk in Wellington at the weekend, Australia, along with New Zealand, is prepared to take part in an international rehabilitation programme throughout Indo-China. We stand ready to subscribe on a generous basis to international efforts to restore and develop all the ravaged countries of Indo-China. Indeed, it is to be hoped that, as the energies of the people, particularly in South and North Viet-Nam, become more and more engaged in the tasks of peaceful reconstruction, so there will be a movement from antagonism to reconciliation and cooperation throughout the whole area."