



716

2

PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 479

3 April 1975

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER TO LAUNCH THE INDO-CHINA/VIETNAM APPEAL

I know that I speak for all Australians in expressing my deep concern at the current plight of refugees in Indo-China.

Today, the Disaster Emergency Committee of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid opens the national Indo-China Vietnam Appeal so that Australians will have an opportunity to contribute personally to the organisations which are helping suffering people in these areas.

As a Government we have acted promptly to assist the plight of these homeless refugees. Already this financial year we have given \$2.4 million to international agencies which are working on both sides of present lines of military control and we have reaffirmed our commitment to contribute generously to the future reconstruction of post-war Indo-China.

We are conscious of the depth of feeling on this humanitarian issue among the Australian people and their desire to help personally. I therefore warmly commend this national appeal to the Australian people and have pleasure in launching it with a donation from the Government of \$50,000. I know that individual Australians will express their personal concern by responding quickly and generously to this appeal.

The Australian Council for Overseas Aid coordinates the work of the 32 voluntary aid agencies in Australia, including such organisation as the Australian Red Cross, Australian Council of Churches, Australian Catholic Relief, Freedom from Hunger Campaign, Austcare, Community Aid Abroad, and other major organisations in this area.

The Australian people have the assurance from past work by the Disaster Emergency Committee that the money given will be sent quickly and spent wisely by reputable organisations.

TOWNSVILLE, QLD.