



PRIME MINISTER

Press Statement No. 490
7 April 1975

CANCELLATION OF SECOND ORPHAN FLIGHT

A second charter flight by a Qantas aircraft which was to have departed this afternoon to bring a second group of Vietnamese orphans for adoption in Australia has had to be cancelled.

The Prime Minister, in announcing the cancellation of the flight, said the Australian Embassy in Saigon had been advised late this morning by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam, Dr Dan, that the quota of orphans for emergency evacuation from South Vietnam had been filled, and that there was no present intention to consent to additional blanket waivers for bulk emergency evacuations. The Australian Ambassador in Saigon has been given to understand that the Government of the Republic of Vietnam wishes to review its practices following the initial emergency evacuation and is reverting to the normal adoption procedures. The Australian Ambassador has reported that, following the first emergency evacuation, there are very few Vietnamese children who have been released to the adoption agencies.

Mr Whitlam said that the Australian Government noted the Republic of Vietnam's position and the implication that the most pressing problem which had faced it in relation to the tragic problem of orphans, the innocent victims of war, had been relieved by the emergency uplift in which Australia had participated.

The Prime Minister said that urgent consideration was now being given to the means by which the considerable quantity of relief supplies which had been assembled by the Government and private agencies in Australia for humanitarian use in South Vietnam, and part of which was to have been sent on the Qantas charter flight, could be delivered to South Vietnam.

CANBERRA. A.C.T.