



## PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 538  
6 August 1975

### ENTRY OF FURTHER GROUP OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

The Prime Minister announced today that Australia had agreed to resettle approximately 300 more refugees from Vietnam.

The refugees will be flown by chartered Qantas 747 jet to Brisbane on Saturday morning, 9 August, where they are due at 11.00 a.m.

They will be resettled in Brisbane, where Queensland authorities have assured support and assistance.

At present about two-thirds of the refugees are on St John's Island in Singapore harbour, with the remainder on Perhentian Island off the East coast of Malaysia.

In June Australia selected 200 refugees who have been settled in East Hills, Sydney,

Mr Whitlam said that as part of its commitment to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees program Australia had now taken refugees from Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia.

In each case, Mr Whitlam said, Australia had selected refugees who were least likely to be selected for entry to other countries and those who appeared most in need of the humanitarian assistance which entry to Australia would provide.

Most of the refugees have no recognised skills or qualifications and under normal migration criteria would not be eligible for entry to Australia. They would need extensive long-term assistance from the Australian Government and the community, Mr Whitlam said.

He recalled his announcement of 23 July of a long-term study of the Vietnamese refugees and the problems which they encounter and said that he hoped this study would identify early any problems which refugees were facing and the means of resolving them.

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Mr Whitlam said the refugees ranged in age from infants to an 81 year old woman, and included a Cistercian Monk, a former interpreter for an Australian civil affairs unit stationed in Phuoc Tuy Province, a number of single parent families and a number of adolescents who had become separated from their parents.

He emphasised that in their immediate resettlement all the refugees would be provided with the maximum assistance available through agencies of the Australian Government for housing, welfare, language training and employment.

Mr Whitlam expressed his gratitude for assistance provided to the Australian Immigration selection team by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the Governments of Singapore and Malaysia.

CANBERRA, A.C.T.