



PRIME MINISTER

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VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

The Australian Government has approved the entry into Australia of 8 South Vietnamese refugees who are on board a Japanese ship, the Kenkai Maru, which is due to reach Brisbane tomorrow.

The decision was taken in response to a request from the Australian representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The refugees - 3 soldiers and 5 students - were rescued by the Kenkai Maru off the coast of Vietnam. They were apparently refused permission to land in Bangkok when the ship called there. The ship's next port of call after Brisbane will be the North Vietnamese port of Haiphong.

The 8 Vietnamese have been granted temporary residence in Australia. It is expected that eventually some of them may choose to travel to other countries for resettlement.

CANBERRA. A.C.T.