



## PRIME MINISTER

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING, MP

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL DEDICATION - ATTENDANCE BY  
NEXT-OF-KIN  
30 JULY 1992

I am pleased to announce today that the Government will assist in helping next-of-kin of those who died in Vietnam to travel to Canberra for the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in October.

The Government will contribute the cost of a return air fare to one next-of-kin of each of the 504 men and women who died in Vietnam during the War.

The Government has strongly supported the building of a Vietnam Veterans' Memorial. We have contributed \$250,000 towards the cost, and provided administrative support and accommodation in Canberra for the organising Committee.

However, we are seeking now to make a more personal contribution. The Memorial is dedicated to all those who served, suffered and died during the Vietnam War. There is no doubt, though, that its dedication will have a special significance for those who lost a family member during the War.

The offer is limited to next-of-kin because they have suffered more than most through the loss of their loved ones. The Vietnam War was traumatic for Australia and those who lost next-of-kin suffered doubly.

I observed the emotion of the Welcome Home Parade in 1987 and the entombment ceremony early in July. I want now to ensure that at least one family member of the 504 who did not return home has the opportunity to attend the Memorial dedication - perhaps the final symbolic welcome home."

Details are as follows:

- . The offer covers travel to and from Canberra for the Weekend of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Dedication, but neither accommodation nor movements in Canberra over the weekend will be covered.
- . Where airtravel would be the most appropriate form of transport, the Commonwealth will provide economy travel from the airport nearest the next-of-kins home to Canberra and return, or, alternatively the equivalent of the Commonwealth negotiated fare will be given to the next-of-kin on the basis that the money will be spent on travelling to and from the dedication.
- . the offer applies, in the first instance, to those people originally nominated as next-of-kin. Where this person is unable to accept the offer, the family of the next-of-kin will be asked to nominate a replacement.
- . Next-of-kin who wish to accept the Government's offer of travel assistance should contact Department of Veterans' Affairs on 06-289 6541, before 18 September.