PRIME MINISTER

Vietnam Veteran's Day

Today is Vietnam Veteran's Day. It is an occasion to remember and honour all Australians who died in the Vietnam War and also to thank those other Australians who served in that conflict. We remember with pride and gratitude their courageous service.

Vietnam Veteran's Day is an occasion when those Australians who served in Vietnam remember their comrades who did not return, the hardships and sacrifices. They remember too the mateship and teamwork which helped them through the difficult times. Vietnam Veteran's Day also marks the battle of Long Tan on 18 August 30 years ago.

The Australian soldiers who served in that battle displayed the finest traditions of the Australian armed forces.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Fischer, and the Minister For Veteran's Affairs, Mr Scott, are in Vietnam today with a group of veterans taking part in the commemoration ceremony at Nui Dat. The ceremony recalls the sacrifices and courage of our soldiers who fought in Vietnam. It takes place at a time of growing trust and friendship between Australia and Vietnam. Both nations look to the future with a genuine desire for closer relations.

18 August 1996