

Monday, 14 September 2015

VA100

FUNDING ROUND OPENS FOR VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATIVE GRANTS

Funding applications for initiatives that recognise the contribution of Australian servicemen and women who served our country during the Vietnam conflict are now open, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson, announced today.

The Vietnam War Commemorative Grants have been established under the *Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants* Programme. Grants between \$4,000 and \$20,000 are available for community-based projects and activities that directly commemorate any aspect of the Vietnam War, and which focus on camaraderie.

Senator Ronaldson said he was honoured to provide support for community activities that acknowledge the service and sacrifice of Australia's Vietnam veterans.

"Following the tremendous success of the Anzac Centenary Local Grants Program in bringing communities together to remember and commemorate our First World War veterans, the focus is moving to other conflicts in which Australians played a role during our century of service," Senator Ronaldson said.

"In August next year we will mark the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan. This will be a major commemorative occasion for the Vietnam veteran community and our nation.

"These grants provide an opportunity for Vietnam veterans to be respectfully commemorated, recognise the hardships these servicemen and women faced and acknowledge their camaraderie."

Vietnam veterans groups are supportive of the funding that has been made available to commemorate the Vietnam War.

Mr James Wain, National President of the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia, said, "This commemoration is important because it highlights the sacrifice that Vietnam veterans made over a long period of time in what was a very controversial war. We will remember them."

National President of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, Mr Ken Foster OAM, reinforced the positive impact of the grants on the Vietnam veteran community.

"The 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan is a significant event," Mr Foster said. "It will be an emotional event for veterans and their families and this significant contribution towards the commemoration is extremely welcome."

Applications for funding must be received by 5.00 pm AEDT on 31 October 2015.

Programme guidelines and application forms are available on the Department of Veterans' Affairs website <http://www.dva.gov.au/consultation-and-grants/grants/grant-and-bursary-programs/saluting-their-service-commemorative>.

Media enquiries:

Minister Ronaldson: Mark Lee 02 6277 7820 or 0408 547 381

Department of Veterans' Affairs media: 02 6289 6203

Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) and Veterans Line can be reached 24 hours a day across Australia for crisis support and free and confidential counselling.

Phone 1800 011 046 (international: +61 8 8241 4546).