

**7.2 LMM 22/08/2023 - 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF AUSTRALIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE VIETNAM WAR**

**MOTION:**

That City of Newcastle:

1. Acknowledges 18 August 2023 marked the 50th Anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War.
2. Recognises the immense suffering endured by Australia's service men and women, as well as by the Vietnamese people, both during and the decades since the end of the conflict, leaving an indelible mark on countless lives both physically and psychologically that persist to this day.
3. Notes that Newcastle, like many communities across Australia, witnessed the involvement of its residents in the conflict, with many brave individuals from our city serving in the Australian armed forces and contributing to the war effort.
4. Acknowledges that Greater Newcastle based Vietnam Veterans have always been at the forefront of advocating for their fellow veterans – that from a small gathering of about a dozen Veterans at the Gallipoli Legion Club in 1972, the Newcastle Vietnam Veterans Association was formed and after an amalgamation with the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia has grown to a total membership in excess of 800, has attained national recognition with the Ex-service Organisations with many achievements realised by the Newcastle Vietnam Veterans over the past 50 years.
5. Acknowledges that Newcastle was one of the first communities in the country to recognise Vietnam Veterans, through the dedication of a small memorial plaque in the early 1980s, in the south east corner of Civic Park, which is reported to be the first memorial in Australia to the Vietnam Conflict.
6. Notes this motion seeks to honour the sacrifices made by the 60,000 Australian service men and women who were sent to the battlefields of Vietnam, and who displayed courage, resilience, and dedication in the face of adversity, and acknowledges those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

**BACKGROUND:**

<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/commemorating-50th-anniversary-end-australias-involvement-vietnam-war>

**COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF AUSTRALIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE VIETNAM WAR**

*MEDIA RELEASE*

*18 Aug 2023*

*Prime Minister, Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister for Defence Personnel*

Today our nation will pause to mark Vietnam Veterans' Day, the key commemoration in this 50th anniversary year of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War.

Thousands of Australians will gather at the Vietnam Forces Memorial in Canberra, and across the country, to honour the service and sacrifice of our Vietnam veterans.

On 18 August 1966, Australians and New Zealanders were outnumbered 10 to one in the battle of Long Tan.

It was the single greatest loss of life Australia suffered during the Vietnam War - 18 Australians were killed and 24 were wounded.

In the years that followed, Vietnam veterans gathered to commemorate those lost at Long Tan.

Now we gather on 18 August each year to mark Vietnam Veterans' Day, paying tribute to all those who served in Australia's longest conflict of the 20th century.

60,000 Australian personnel served in Vietnam over more than a decade, which sadly resulted in 523 lives lost, and some 3,000 wounded. For their service, and the sacrifices of their families, we say thank you.

**QUOTES ATTRIBUTABLE TO PRIME MINISTER ANTHONY ALBANESE MP:**

“This year, as we mark the 50th anniversary since the role of Australian troops in the hostilities in Vietnam came to a close, we acknowledge the service and sacrifice made by our veterans.

“Their experiences during and after the war are a powerful reminder of the sacrifices made by those who have served our country and the debt of gratitude we owe each and every one of our veterans.

“Many of our troops returned to face new battles at home and not every one of those battles was won – it is important as Australians we know the stories of service in Vietnam and what our veterans faced when returned home.

“We honour you, we thank you and we are so sorry it took us so long as a nation to do so.”

**QUOTES ATTRIBUTED TO MINISTER FOR VETERANS AFFAIRS' AND DEFENCE PERSONNEL MATT KEOGH MP:**

“When we speak of the Anzac spirit, we speak of having your mates' backs, no matter how dire the circumstances.

“But when our veterans returned home from Vietnam many felt unsupported, unrecognised.

“In marking 50 years since the end of Australia's involvement in Vietnam, we honour and thank all those who served, and the sacrifices of their families.

“You have made your nation proud.”