ADDITIONAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR AUSTRALIAN CIVILIAN SURGICAL AND MEDICAL TEAMS WHO WORKED IN VIETNAM 1964-1972

The Australian Government will provide additional health support for eligible members of Australian civilian surgical and medical teams contracted by the then Department of External Affairs to provide medical aid to civilian hospitals and training to local staff.

This was under a South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) civilian aid program in South Vietnam between October 1964 and December 1972.

The measure recognises that while the medical teams were not under direct command and control of the Australian Defence Force during the Vietnam War, they were exposed to hazards and dangers as a result of working in a conflict zone for the Australian Government. The measure also acknowledges the medical teams provided invaluable aid to Vietnamese civilians, often in difficult and traumatic circumstances.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

This measure will ensure former members of these teams can get access to treatment for all injuries or illnesses, not just those that may have arisen as a result of their employment in Vietnam.

Treatment will be delivered through the Department of Veterans’ Affairs Gold Card. Services available include visits to general practitioners, psychiatrists, psychologists, medication, public or private hospital treatment and counselling.

WHO WILL BENEFIT?

Australian members of the civilian surgical and medical teams (SEATO medical teams) who worked in Vietnam between 1964 and 1972 and are Australian Residents.

About 240 doctors and 210 nurses and a small number of administrative and technical staff were employed as part of the surgical and medical teams.

DATE OF EFFECT?

This measure will commence on 1 July 2019.

In the lead up to the commencement of the measure, eligible members of the Australian civilian surgical and medical teams will be able to submit an application for the Gold Card which will be available on the DVA website www.dva.gov.au.