



## **PREMIER ATTENDS VIETNAM VETERANS AND LONG TAN DAY COMMEMORATION SERVICE AT MARTIN PLACE CENOTAPH**

Wednesday 18 August, 2010

Premier Kristina Keneally today laid a wreath at the Martin Place Cenotaph, commemorating the Battle of Long Tan in Vietnam – 44 years ago.

The battle saw the largest number of casualties to date in an operation since the Australian forces arrived in Vietnam.

The August 18, 1966 battle was fought in a rubber plantation in Long Tan under heavy machine gun fire and mortar attacks.

At the Battle of Long Tan, 108 men of D Company, 6RAR, fought and 18 Australian lives were lost with a further 24 Australians wounded.

After the battle, the bodies of 245 enemy soldiers were found, and many more were wounded.

The Vietnam War was the longest major conflict in which Australians have been involved; it lasted ten years, from 1962 to 1972, and involved some 60,000 personnel.

A limited initial commitment of just 30 military advisers grew to include a battalion in 1965 and finally, in 1966, a task force.

Each of the three services was involved, but the dominant role was played by the Army. In total, 521 Australians died in the Vietnam War.

“Today I acknowledge those brave young men who fought a ferocious battle in monsoon rain against some 2,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops,” Ms Keneally said.

“The Commemoration of the Battle of Long Tan symbolises the contribution of all Australia’s service men and women who gallantly fought in Australia’s longest war.

“It is also an occasion to remember the loyalty and enduring support of the families of the soldiers who served overseas, during often difficult times of separation.”

Ms Keneally was joined by Minister Assisting the Premier on Veterans’ Affairs, Frank Terenzini.

“It was only 38 years ago that the last Australian soldiers returned from Vietnam and today we honour all of those who served their country,” Mr Terenzini said.

“We must never forget the courage and valour demonstrated far from home by these brave Australians.

“I would like to personally thank the Vietnam Veterans Association for their organisation of today’s event.”