

COVVHS welcomes the Minister's Media Release from the 'Long Tan' dinner at Frankston, which advises of some of his intentions in relation to the progress of the Children's Health Study.

COVVHS agreed with the Ministers statement in his media release of the 31st May 2006, VA 036. "A staged approach will better support early action where services can be improved in parallel with further research".

The feasibility Study has been identified as a source of significant issues. The media release also implies a response by the end of 2007,

This is a lengthy time lag considering 'a staged approach' is intended. From the Ministers web site there have been approx 45 media releases since 31st May, many about memorials, etc.

It would appear that some of Minister Billson's senior bureaucrats are opposed to progressing this Children's Study.

As key stakeholders in this research, the sons and daughters, and their families need to be involved from the planning stages. Results of the study are dependent upon the protocol developed and the design of the study. The key stakeholders can provide important information...

Stakeholders need to make representation to the Minister to ensure veterans families are informed, on a regular basis, about progress of the study design, and be included in a forum.

For the past four years COVVHS has been inviting members of the Vietnam Veteran community to register their email address on our web site, our email list is massive and we believe that we can now reach more than 50% of the Vietnam Veteran community, that is veterans, spouses and children.

This government and the next government would do well to make themselves fully aware of the hurt in this community.

Excerpt from Speech by Mr Alan Griffin, MP, Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs to RSL National Congress, Perth 12 September, 2006; "With an issue as important as this there needs to be full, open and transparent communication between the Minister and the veterans' community"!

COVVHS fully concurs with Mr Griffin; the study must be open to the full scrutiny of the Veterans Community.

Kind regards,
David Matheson President,
COVVHS