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Description Notes Memo gives background on the Australian Royal Commission Hearings and points out issues for discussion which are of interest to the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

October 15, 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR JAY KEYWORTH

FROM: AL YOUNG

SUBJECT: Briefing Memorandum for the Meeting with the Honorable Justice Phillip Evatt DSC, Royal Commission on the Use and Effects of Chemical Agents on Australian Personnel in Vietnam, to be held October 16 at 11:00 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS: The Honorable Justice Phillip Evatt, Royal Commissioner (brief resume attached)
Mr. John Coombs, Queens Counselor, Senior Counsel Advising
Mr. Michael Wilde, Counsel Advising

OSTP staff: Al Young, Barbara Moore

BACKGROUND: The issues of Agent Orange and the Vietnam Experience have received heavy media attention in Australia. Australia provided 50,000 men as an allied contingent to Vietnam (1962-1970). As the Agent Orange issue has been fueled by emotion and scientific concern in the United States, a similar situation has occurred in Australia. However, in place of litigation activities, the Australian Vietnam Veterans Association sought and obtained Australian Royal Commission Hearings on the subject of chemical exposures. The "Royal Commission on the Use and Effects of Chemical Agents on Australian Personnel in Vietnam" has the responsibility to evaluate all the scientific evidence on the health impact of the chemicals used in Vietnam. The Commission must also examine the Government Programs that have been established to care for the Vietnam Veterans.

ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION:

- Judge Evatt has for the past two weeks been visiting various U.S. Government and privately-sponsored research programs on Agent Orange and the Vietnam Experience. His impressions of these research programs would be of interest to OSTP.

- Judge Evatt has a difficult task of trying to evaluate the science of this very controversial subject. The Commissioner has sought expert testimony from scientists throughout the United States, Canada, United Kingdom and Western Europe. In addition, he visited Vietnam in May 1984. His impressions of the scientific evidence to date would be of interest to OSTP.
- Judge Evatt is required to prepare and submit a final report on this issue to the Australian Government in April 1985. We may want to make an offer of assistance to provide additional scientific data from the Government studies currently underway.

THE HONOURABLE MR JUSTICE PHILLIP GEORGE EVATT, D.S.C., LL.B.

Mr Justice Evatt is the Royal Commissioner of the Vietnam Veterans Royal Commission. Following is a list of his official appointments:

- Judge of the Federal Court of Australia since 1977
- Judge of the Australian Industrial Court and the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory since 1974
- Judge of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory since 1976
- Judge of the Supreme Court of Norfolk Island since 1981

Mr Justice Evatt was born on 2 July 1922. He was a Lieutenant in the Royal Australian Navy Volunteer Reserve 1940 - 1946. He received his law degree from the University of Sydney and was admitted to the New South Wales Bar in 1951.

Mr Justice Evatt is married to the former Nancye Guy, and has two daughters.