



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

20 March 1987

JOINT STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE TREASURER, MR PAUL KEATING, MP AND THE MINISTER FOR ARTS, HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENT, MR BARRY COHEN, MP

The Government has decided not to approve a proposal to develop a silica sand mining project at Shelburne Bay, Cape York.

The project would have satisfied the ownership and control provisions of the foreign investment guidelines. However, the Government has decided that the proposed mine at Shelburne Bay would be contrary to the national interest, chiefly because of its impact on the environment.

The Government's decision follows detailed and careful consideration of the proposal. Sand mining at Shelburne Bay would have damaged the wilderness value of the area and would have involved some damage to the Great Barrier Reef. It also would have had an adverse effect on the Aboriginal community.

Our decision on Shelburne Bay is part of the Government's commitment to the environment. In our nearly 200 years of European settlement Australian governments too often have paid scant regard to the environment. This Government accepts its responsibilities to protect environmentally valuable areas for future generations.

The Government's decision on Shelburne Bay has no implications for the strength of its commitment to encourage foreign investment. The decision that the project will not proceed has been made on environmental grounds, not foreign investment grounds. Indeed, the Government would not allow a locally-owned operation at Shelburne Bay. The Government has the capacity under its export control powers to ensure that no locally-owned operation would proceed.