



PRIME MINISTER

42/92

FOR MEDIA

STATEMENT FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

The Prime Minister regrets not being able to attend Saturday's celebrations in Townsville to mark the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea.

There have been several Coral Sea commemorative events, some of which the Prime Minister has attended.

Unfortunately, he is unable to attend all of them.

Some time ago the Prime Minister was invited by the Australia-United States Coral Sea Council to attend the wreath-laying ceremony on Sunday, May 10 which has been designated an Event of National Importance.

He agreed to attend this event.

Contrary to some media reports the Prime Minister did not "promise" that he would be able to attend Saturday's events.

When this office declined the invitation to Saturday's events it was explained that the reason for this was the need for the Prime Minister to prepare for the special Premiers' Conference to be held on Monday May 11.

It was also stressed that the Prime Minister deeply regretted not being able to attend the Townsville ceremonies but that this was unavoidable.

CANBERRA
May 5, 1992