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**The Hon Warren Snowdon MP**  
**Minister for Veterans' Affairs**  
**Minister for Defence Science and Personnel**  
**Minister for Indigenous Health**  
**Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Centenary of Anzac**

Senator Trish Crossin  
Senator for the Northern Territory  
PO Box 946  
PALMERSTON NT 0831

Dear Senator <sup>Trish</sup> Crossin

Thank you for your letter of 7 July 2011 concerning a day of national recognition for the bombing of Darwin during the Second World War. I apologise for the delay in responding.

I have noted the points you raised in your letter and attached speech concerning the proclamation of 19 February as a national day of recognition for the bombing of Darwin, rather than it being commemorated as part of Battle for Australia Day.

As you would be aware, there are four officially gazetted days of remembrance in Australia. The two principal days of commemoration remain Anzac Day and Remembrance Day. The other two days are Merchant Navy Day on 3 September and Battle for Australia Day on the first Wednesday in September.

The Battle for Australia Day commemorates the attacks on the Australian mainland and around Australia's coast and the battles to the immediate north of Australia in 1942 and 1943. The intention of proclaiming this day was to encapsulate all the events associated with the threat to Australia and not to focus on any one place, such as Darwin. It was a 2007 Labor election commitment and the day was put forward by the ex-service community.

There are other days of commemoration that have come into being by general acceptance from the veteran and wider communities, and successive Ministers for Veterans' Affairs have been asked to consider proclamation of these days. Examples include Kapyong Day on 23 April, VP Day on 15 August and Vietnam Veterans' Day on 18 August. I do not believe there has been any diminution of the significance of these commemorative days because they have not been proclaimed. The declaration of a national day of observance is generally a complex and lengthy process.

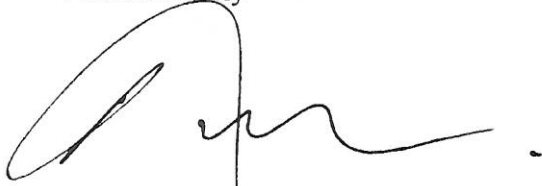
That said, there is no question that the bombing of Darwin was a major event in Australia's wartime history. The 70th anniversary of the bombing next year will have special prominence. As you are aware, the Government has announced an \$80,000 grant to Darwin City Council for the event on 19 February 2012 and a \$250,000 grant to the Defence of Darwin Museum.

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While Darwin was the first time we were attacked on our own soil, there were many subsequent bombing raids on Australia impacting across the continent from Exmouth to Townsville. In one attack on Broome, as many as 100 people died. These are also relevant events in our history.

The Government is committed to looking at options to further recognize the bombing raids that took place in Darwin and across Australia's north. I will keep you informed on the consideration of this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Warren Snowdon', with a large loop at the start and a horizontal flourish at the end.

**WARREN SNOWDON**

**21 SEP 2011**