Business and Industry Minister Paul Henderson today released a draft plan to help Territory businesses through attracting skilled migrants to live and work in the Northern Territory.

“The Martin Government’s Jobs Plan NT has laid out the blueprint to train and develop the skills of Territorians to create a more flexible, more highly skilled workforce,” Mr Henderson said.

“But like other regional areas around Australia, the Territory faces the difficulty of attracting and keeping appropriately skilled, qualified and experienced people for our workforce.

“That means that sometimes Territory businesses miss out on contracts and sales because they don’t have access to people with the necessary skills. Also, when specialist skills are imported on a short-term basis, money goes elsewhere.

“Attracting more skilled and professional migrants to live and work in the Territory will increase our skilled workforce, helping Territory businesses target more opportunities and keeping the money here in the local economy.”

Central to the Government’s finalised migration strategy will be plans to see the Territory get the most benefit from recent Commonwealth Government announcements of a greater emphasis on regional migration.

“The Territory currently attracts only about 0.3% of the total number of migrants coming into regional Australia,” said Mr Henderson.

“Some of the proposed methods to increase this number better promotion of the Territory as a place to live and work, greater support for migrants, and an increased focus on student migration.”

The Northern Territory Business and Skilled Migration Strategy will be a five-year plan, and the discussion paper calls for feedback community and industry groups on the draft plan.

Copies are being distributed amongst community and industry groups, and community consultations will be held across the Territory.

“This discussion paper gives industry and business an opportunity to consider the draft plan and be involved in developing the final strategy,” said Mr Henderson.

Submissions close in early March, and the final strategy is due for completion in April.