Education Minister Marion Scrymgour will today tell the Budget Estimates Committee that students in the major centres in the Northern Territory were achieving outcomes comparable to, or better than students in other States or Territories.

“Six of the 29 primary schools in Darwin and Palmerston equalled or outperformed the Australian Metropolitan averages at all levels on reading and numeracy. 12 more schools have achieved this in at least half of these measures,” Ms Scrymgour said.

“Last year we had an increase of 52 in the number of NTCEs awarded in the Territory from 933 in 2006 to 985 in 2007.”

Ms Scrymgour said concrete outcomes in remote education were also being achieved under the Closing the Gap package to combat Indigenous disadvantage, including extra teachers, teacher accommodation and classrooms.

“Fifteen extra classrooms are in place or about to be put in place in remote communities, the first 19 of an additional 50 Commonwealth funded teachers to be recruited this year have been employed and 22 extra teacher houses are in place or will be in place by the end of the dry season,” she said.

“I have also released the Transforming Indigenous Education reform with its focus on increasing attendance levels in remote communities,” Ms Scrymgour said.

“We have also put in place the Middle School Reform, including the new Darwin Middle School, giving students the best possible path through primary and secondary schools and on to further education or employment.”

Ms Scrymgour said education funding had increased by $719 million or 50 per cent since 2001.
“There are further commitments in this year’s budget to upgrade education facilities in remote, regional and urban areas – including two new schools for Palmerston.”

Ms Scrymgour said the Government was also well on track to achieve its target of 10,000 apprenticeship and traineeship commencements – with over 9,200 having already started over the last three years.

“We are committed to filling the positions created by our fast growing economy,” she said.

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