Chief Minister, Clare Martin, and the Minister for Lands and Planning, Kon Vatskalis, today announced that the Land Development Corporation has released five (5) rail frontage lots in the Darwin Business Park area.

Ms Martin said that the call for Expressions of Interest had gone out in local, interstate and international markets.

"This Expression of Interest process will formalise the strong interest shown by companies in getting access to land in the Business Park," said Ms Martin.

"We expect to receive strong bids from companies who want to get in at the start of an exciting new phase of development for the Territory and capitalise on the new AustralAsia trade route.

"By attracting these companies to the Business Park we will increase our export performance - leveraging off the railway, port and emerging oil and gas industries - and create more jobs for Territorians.

"The Expressions of Interest process will be open until 15 January 2004 and will be marketed into South East Asia as well as locally and nationally through newspaper notices."

The Minister for Lands and Planning, Kon Vatskalis, said by attracting support industry for the Territory’s major industrial activities and building appropriate linkages, our economy will continue to grow and prosper.

"Well positioned land is an essential requirement for any on-shore industry," he said.

"The Land Development Corporation has been created to provide quick access to suitable land allowing businesses to focus on their core activities and producing for the Territory."

The Territory Government has committed a total of $11.125 million for the construction of the Darwin Business Park in the East Arm Development Area, providing opportunities for businesses to access the Alice Springs to Darwin Railway and East Arm Wharf.

"The Business Park offers connections to the national rail, highway networks and a dedicated intermodal facility on East Arm Wharf, providing direct transfer to international shipping," Ms Martin said.

"All interested parties should contact the Land Development Corporation to register their interest in this exciting opportunity," she said.

(Background material attached)

BACKGROUND MATERIAL:
The Darwin Business Park is being developed by the Territory’s Land Development Corporation, which came into being on 1 July 2003, principally to develop and manage the proposed industrial estates at East Arm, Middle Arm and Glyde Point.

Work on the park is progressing well and includes:

- the $3.5 million earthworks contracts are complete;
- work is also complete on the $1.5 million culvert supply contract; and
- the $6.125m subdivision works contract including the road, water, power, drainage and sewer service subdivision development works are targeted for completion by early 2004 but with foundation tenants having access to development sites now.

There are a total of eight (8) rail frontage lots within the Business Park, but only five (5) remain on offer for Expressions of Interest.

Of the three lots already taken up, one is being used for the Darwin Rail Passenger Terminal, another offered to Toll Holdings, with the third parcel allowing the LDC to have flexibility with regards to lot sizes of the adjacent lots should the EOI responses request extra land.

Toll Holdings has already commenced construction of a $17 million two-stage development of a state-of-the-art freight consolidation and distribution centre in the Business Park. Toll is Australia’s leading company in the transport and logistics sector and is the first business to set up in the new Business Park.

The concept of an industrial and commercially oriented land corporation was developed to ensure the Territory is in the best position to take advantage of major industrial projects that have commenced or accelerated this year. The projects include the completion of the Adelaide to Darwin rail link, the completion of Stage 2A of the East Arm Port and onshore and offshore oil and gas projects.

The LDC has been established with a land estate at East Arm, including the former Trade Development Zone. Other areas at Middle Arm and at Glyde Point on the Gunn Point peninsula will be added as the areas are required.

The Corporation will be provided with freehold title over the various estates to enable the management and lease of appropriate areas in a commercially oriented manner. The Corporation is able to arrange leases under the Real Property Act with terms and conditions more often seen in the private sector.