The level of recorded criminal offences in the Christmas period in Katherine was stable compared to the same three months in 2001.

While there was an increase in the December quarter 2002 compared to the previous quarter, the overall number of offences remained relatively stable.

A total of 374 offences were recorded by police in the Christmas quarter (69 against the person, 305 property), almost the same as the same period in 2001 (370) and down from 2000 (390), but an increase of 88 on the previous quarter. (p53 of report)

The report shows a decrease of 10% or 8 offences in the December 2002 quarter from the same period in 2001 for offences against the person, but a 53% or 24 offences increase from the previous quarter. (p54).

Property offences increased by 4% or 12 offences in the December 2002 quarter compared to the same quarter in 2001, and increased by 27% or 64 offences from the previous quarter. (p56)

Minister for Justice Dr Toyne said that while there had been an increase in the number of break-ins to homes and business premises in Katherine in the December quarter, the figures were either down or comparable on the same quarter the previous year, but year on year comparisons showed significant drops in these areas.

"In the December 2002 quarter house break-ins in Katherine increased by 7% or 1 offence from the same quarter the previous year, but increased by 50% or 5 offences from the previous quarter.

"The figures also show the underlying average level of house break-ins is at the lowest it has been over the past two years, at 4 offences per month, from a range of between 4 to 17 offences per month. (pg57)

"Break-ins to business and commercial premises is also at the lowest underlying average over the past two years at an average of 9 offences per month, from a range between 9 to 21 per month." (pg58)

"Over the last quarter break-ins to commercial or other premises fell by 11% or 5 offences against the same quarter the previous year, but increased by 95% or 19 offences from the previous quarter.

"We have seen some increase over the quarter but keeping this in perspective by looking at the long-term trend, there are significant drops in property crime year on year.

"House break-ins were down 64% in 2002 (61 offences) compared to 2001 (168 offences) and break-ins to commercial or other premises were down
41% in 2002 (116 offences) compared to 2001 (196 offences).

"It’s a similar situation for the number of assaults in Katherine with the underlying average for assaults at the lowest it has been in the past two years at 18 offences per month, from a range of between 18 to 27 offences per month," Dr Toyne said.

"Over the December quarter there was a decrease of 12% or 9 recorded assault offences from the same quarter last year, but an increase of 51% or 22 offences from the previous quarter.

"Over the long term we are making some in-roads and will continue the efforts on all fronts – law enforcement and crime prevention measures to continue to bring the rates of crime down," Dr Toyne said.

December Quarter 2002 Crime and Justice Statistics and regional fact sheets are available online at www.crimeprevention.nt.gov.au