There is only 100 days to go before the start of the 2002 Alice Springs Masters Games (ASMG), Sport and Recreation Minister John Ah Kit said today.

"The Alice Springs Masters Games is a Territory institution and created history as the first multi-sport event for mature-aged athletes in Australia," Minister Ah Kit said.

"Since the first Games in 1986, the Games have built a reputation as the friendliest Masters Games in Australia where old friends are reacquainted while new friendships are formed."

Minister Ah Kit joined the patron of the ASMG, Dawn Fraser, at the Alice Springs Golf Club to launch the 100-day countdown to Central Australia’s most popular sporting event.

With golf being a popular ASMG sport, the pair joined Minister for Central Australia Peter Toyne, ASMG Advisory Committee Chairman Peter Hoey and ASMG golf co-ordinator Paul Pearson in a longest drive competition.

"The Northern Territory Government is proud to be involved in hosting the 9th Masters Games, and we look forward to be involved for many years to come."

Minister Ah Kit said competitors were running out of time to have their entries in.

"Minister Toyne and myself have our entries in. Minister Toyne will be competing in athletics while I am going to have a go at darts and pool," he said.

"Registrations close on August 23 – that is only six weeks away – so it’s time to get involved in this wonderful event."

"The week is more than just sport. Not only is it a carnival-like atmosphere created through the week but the ASMG generates more than $4.8 million for the local economy," Minister Ah Kit said.

Would-be competitors can get an entry form from the website, www.alicespringsmasters.nt.gov.au, or freecall on 1800 658 951.

As always, the ASMG will feature a gala Opening and Closing Ceremonies which are open to all people, not just competitors.

"The Opening and Closing ceremonies are a major highlight of the ASMG week because everyone can taste the atmosphere of the Games," Minister Ah Kit said.

"Entry to Anzac Oval and the live entertainment is free while a smorgasbord of food stalls will tempt every taste and suit every hip pocket."

Community-minded citizens of Alice Springs are also encouraged to support ASMG entrants during the competition.
For those Alice Springs residents who want to get involved off the playing field, you can volunteer to work at the ASMG.

A variety of jobs are available for volunteers, from driving buses to working with individual sports. Volunteers gain satisfaction from their involvement in a community event, mingle with a range of visitors and most of all have fun during the "Friendly Games".

Any people wishing to volunteer should contact Merrilyn McIver at the ASMG office on (08) 8951 6443.