Darwin has recorded a 32% drop in house break-ins over the past 12 months according to the December quarter 2003 NT Quarterly Crime and Justice Statistics released today.

Minister for Justice Dr Peter Toyne said the large drops in crime levels in Darwin were significant and welcome signs of improvement.

“The 32% drop in house break-ins over the past 12 months in Darwin translates to 570 less offences than for the previous 12 months – welcome news for the community and a reinforcement of the good work of our police on the ground and crime prevention efforts.

The 12 month picture also recorded drops in commercial break-ins 44% (543 less) and a 28% reduction in motor vehicle thefts and related offences (511) less.

Sexual assaults fell by 8% or 11 less offences over the past 12 months.

“The Government’s new Sexual Assault Taskforce established in December is tackling this area by co-ordinating efforts across Government and developing a targeted action plan to reduce these offences in our community.”

The number of assaults increased by 4% (44 more).

“We aim to reduce the number of assaults through by working with itinerants through our $5 million Harmony Strategy, the development of the alcohol framework and addressing domestic violence.”

An important part of these overall positive results is the bolstering of police resources under the $75 million Building Our Police Force Plan.

There are more police in operational duties across the Territory.

Between August 2003 and the end of February 2004 the number of operational officers ranked constable and above has increased by over 40 and the number of Aboriginal Community Police Officers has increased by 11.

**Year on Year data results:**

Year on year data which provides comparable information on how crime is tracking from one 12-month period to the next, shows sharp falls in property crime.

- House break-ins fell by 32% or 570 offences
• Break-ins to commercial premises fell by 44% or 543 less offences
• Motor vehicle theft and related offences fell by 28 or 511 offences
• Sexual assault fell by 8% or 11 offences
• Assaults rose by 4% or 44 offences

Quarter on Quarter comparisons for the total number of offences report:

• a total of 2919 offences were recorded by police in the December 03 quarter (344 against the person and 2575 property offences)
  – a drop of 799 on the same quarter last year (317 offences against the person and 3401 property offences)
  – and a fall of 1553 offences on the same time in 2001 (359 offences against the person and 4113 property offences)

• a total of 344 offences against the person were recorded by police in the December 03 quarter, up by 44 offences against the previous quarter (300 offences against the person), and up 27 on the same time last year (317 offences against the person)

• a total of 2575 property offences were recorded by police in the December 03 quarter, down by 90 offences, against the previous quarter (2665 property offences), and down by 826 offences on the same time last year (3401 property offences)

Quarter on Quarter comparison for general offences show:
The December quarter 2003 data for house break-ins recorded a 21% decrease (or 63 offences) compared to the previous quarter, and fell 36% (133 offences) from the same quarter last year.

Break-ins to commercial premises increased by 20% (or 26 offences) over the

December quarter compared to the previous quarter and down by 46% (or 133 offences) from the same quarter last year.

The number of recorded assaults in Darwin increased by 15% or 37 offences on the previous quarter, and increased by 10% or 26 offences from the same time last year.

Sexual assaults increased by 5 offences or 14% over the December quarter and increased by 10 offences or 33% from the same quarter last year.

Trends:

Darwin is currently recording a two-year low in the underlying average level of house break-ins and the trend over the past 12 months is downward.

The underlying average level of commercial break-ins is also at a two-year low and over the past 12 months there is a stable trend.
“We have made some real inroads on arresting property crime levels in Darwin over the past two years and we will continue the efforts on all fronts – law enforcement and crime prevention – to continue to bring these levels down.”

The current underlying average level of assaults at 87 per month is in the middle of a range of between 76 and 99 per month, and the trend over the past 12 months has remained stable.

The underlying average level of sexual assaults has remained constant at 11 offences per month over the past nine quarters, and the trend stable over the past 12 months.

**NOTE:** The preceding statistics are a measure of recorded crime across the Territory.

- The data is collected from the Police Real-time On-line Management Information System.

- Nationally it is recognised that there are varying levels of un-reported crime in our community but that recorded crime is the best available measure of changes in the level of crime in a community.

December Quarter 2003 Crime and Justice Statistics and Regional Fact Sheets are available online at [www.crimeprevention.nt.gov.au](http://www.crimeprevention.nt.gov.au)