The Minister for Business, Industry and Resource Development Paul Henderson today congratulated his department for successfully hosting a five day visit by a group of senior local government officials from Kwazulu Natal and Free State Provinces of South Africa.

Mr Henderson said the Northern Territory had been included in the study group’s itinerary because of the Territory’s unique system of municipal and community government.

“There is a potential for this type of legislative structure to meet the needs of local government in South Africa,” he said.

“The study group has met with heads of municipal and community government administrations, government officials and members of the business community.

“I am very pleased that we are able to host this study group in Australia to learn about our system of local government.

“I am also pleased that this visit presents an opportunity to expand the Northern Territory’s network of friends and contacts in South Africa.

“South African firms have taken a significant interest in our mining industry in recent years.

“The Territory has hosted trade delegations from South Africa as well as sending our own delegations to promote trade with South Africa.

The Department of Business, Industry and Resource Development has worked in partnership with similar organisations in Queensland and Western Australia to host the visit.

The study tour is a part of the South Africa Capacity Building Program, which is an aid program funded by the Australian Government through the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAid).

The study group arrived in Darwin on 7 February 2002 and departed today.