The Government will continue to work in partnership with crime prevention groups and the community to tackle the causes of crime in Alice Springs to make the community safer for everyone, Minister for Central Australia Dr Peter Toyne said today.

"For the first time, the Northern Territory Government has formed partnerships with crime prevention groups to tackle the cycle of anti-social behaviour and crime in our community, and this partnership is getting results," Dr Toyne said.

Independent crime statistics released for the December quarter 2002 showed the crime rate in Alice Springs has decreased significantly over the last two years.

There were 1043 offences against the person and property recorded for the quarter, compared with 1345 in the 2001 December quarter and 1286 offences in the 2000 December quarter.

Property offences alone fell by 24 per cent in the December 2002 quarter compared to the same quarter in 2001.

"This is a good start, but the Government recognises there is still a long way to go," said Dr Toyne.

"We will continue to work with the Crime Prevention Council, the Northern Territory Police, the Alice in Ten Project and other community groups to not only deal with those responsible for committing criminal acts but to attack the causes of crime to prevent it happening.

"Recipients of the Government’s crime grants will be announced this month, and the successful projects will have the full support of Government in addressing the causes of crime in our community."

Dr Toyne said it was disappointing that a flyer released by the CLP showed they still hadn’t learnt and had developed no new ideas on this important community issue.

"The CLP haven’t changed. Instead of working with these important community groups to develop ideas on how to fight crime, they scare-monger for political points."

"This Government is committed to dealing with the true facts and issues about crime in our community, and we are going to continue to build on the positive starts we’ve made so far in bringing down across the Territory."