NT Public Sector staffing increased by 75 from the June quarter to the December quarter in 2002, Minister for Employment, Education and Training Syd Stirling said today.

Mr Stirling said the latest Office of Public Employment staffing figures showed that staff levels had gone from an average of 14,303 in the June quarter to an average of 14,378 in the December quarter.

"Chief Minister Clare Martin last year committed to publicly releasing these figures on a regular basis to put a stop to Opposition scaremongering over public sector employment numbers," Mr Stirling said.

"Unfortunately, the Opposition is still using the figures to scaremonger by suggesting that public sector staffing levels are decreasing.

"The most recent figures make a mockery of their claims, clearly showing that public sector staffing is on the rise.

"Government values the public sector workforce for the crucial role it plays in the development of the Territory.

"We will continue to do everything we can to make the NTPS an attractive employer.

"I recently announced an additional $1.3 million a year to enhance living conditions and improve access to skills development for the Territory’s 1700 public sector workers based in remote locations.

"We have also developed a comprehensive strategy aimed at increasing Indigenous employment in the NTPS.

"As well as delivering the biggest capital works budget the Territory has ever seen, we will also increase training opportunities for Territorians on those capital works projects.

"The Government remains committed to developing the Territory economy and creating jobs for Territorians – in both the public and private sector."