Job numbers in the NT Public Sector rose by 685 in the 12 months to the September quarter 2004, Employment, Education and Training Minister Syd Stirling said today.

Mr Stirling said the average NTPS staffing level for the September quarter 2004 was 15,224 compared to an average 14,539 in the September quarter 2003.

“The public sector workforce plays a crucial role in the development of the Territory and it’s great to see so many more job opportunities being created within the NTPS,” Mr Stirling said.

“Many of the new NTPS positions can be attributed to Government’s commitment to fund the employment of more police, more teachers and more nurses.

“As one of the Territory’s biggest employers, the Government is committed to making the NTPS an attractive employer.

“We are providing an extra $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 introduced 14 weeks’ maternity leave for public sector workers – the first Australian jurisdiction to do so – and removed the compulsory retirement age of 65 years.

“We have injected record amounts of money into our capital works budget over the past three years.

“We have also developed comprehensive strategies aimed at increasing the number of Indigenous people and people with disabilities in the NTPS.

“Our $160 million Jobs Plan includes a commitment to employ an extra 200 apprentices in the NTPS over three years.

“Job creation in the public sector has positive spin-off benefits throughout the economy. The wages generated will provide a boost to consumption, and have other positive flow-through effects for local business.

“All of these initiatives are aimed at boosting jobs in the Territory – in both the public and private sector – and keeping the Territory moving ahead.”

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