The Territory’s first ever comprehensive crime and justice statistics were released by Minister for Justice Dr Peter Toyne today.

The NT Quarterly Crime and Justice Statistics, September 2002, compiled by the Office of Crime Prevention, reported encouraging drops across the Territory in property crime and offences against the person.

Dr Toyne said property crime in the NT has dropped by 21% or 1644 offences on the last quarter (June 2002) reflecting the Government’s commitment to crime prevention and police efforts to tackle property crime.

"The Quarterly Crime and Justice statistics reports a 17% (1265 offences) fall in property offences on the same time last year. This represents 1265 less property offences than for the same period last year.

"Most heartening is the significant drops in home break-ins across the Territory by 31% or 272 offences from the June quarter and 43% or 453 offences from the September quarter last year.

Break-ins to commercial or other premises also fell by 22% (127 offences) from the June quarter 2002 and 4% (20 offences) from the September quarter last year.

"The Government is encouraged by the significant falls in property crime across the NT. However, too we need to keep up the hard work to consolidate on these figures.

The total number of offences against the person dropped by 2% (16 offences) with sexual assault down by 28% (24 offences), but assault increased by 2% (20 offences).

Dr Toyne said the collection and publication of such comprehensive statistics that refer back over the past two years, and report on a quarterly basis, provide a sound base for accurate information on crime for both the public and the government.

"The Territory community is now completely informed of the true picture of crime across the Territory with regional breakdowns.

"This accurate and comprehensive collection of crime statistics will also lend some science and rigour to the political debate over crime.

"While the quarterly figures are valuable, they only add to the overall picture.

"Looking at the whole two years to analyse crime rates in the Territory community is fundamental to gaining a real and accurate sense of whether crime is going up
or down, given the potential for volatility in the figures caused by our small population base.

"The two year analysis provided here for the first time gives a true indication of trends in crime across the NT and will underpin the evaluation and development of crime prevention programs and strategies.

"Reviewing the court outcomes for reported crimes, something never done before in the Territory, will enable Government to systematically review whether crimes are being dealt with appropriately in our courts.

"At a community level, these comprehensive figures that show the real state of crime over time will give the community real opportunity to judge whether the government’s strategies to reduce crime are having an effect," he said.

The Quarterly Crime and Justice Statistics collect figures on all types of property crime, offences against the person, and drug offences. The report also provides court outcomes for offences which are published for the first time in the Territory.

Dr Toyne said the Quarterly Crime and Justice Statistics will continue to be produced indefinitely by the Martin Government whether the figures were good or bad.

The Quarterly Crime and Justice Statistics can be accessed on the website www.nt.gov.au/justice/ocp