Health and Community Services Minister Jane Aagaard is urging Darwin residents to attend a public consultation meeting with members of the Taskforce on Illicit Drugs being held on Monday.

Mrs Aagaard said the forum was an opportunity for community members to contribute their views and experiences in relation to illicit drug use in the Territory.

The Darwin Public Consultation Meeting will be held on Monday 15th April from 6pm – 8pm at the Darwin Entertainment Centre in Mitchell Street.

"Territorians are being urged to join the effort to tackle the increasing use of illicit drugs, particularly among young people," Mrs Aagaard said.

"The Taskforce has been established to advise the Government on strategies to try to stop the harmful spread of drugs, to break the cycle of crime, and to help users and their families on the road to better health.

The 12-member Taskforce has been travelling the Territory listening to Territorians' views on drug abuse, in order to develop effective rehabilitation and prevention strategies. Hearings have already been held in Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy.

Mrs Aagaard urged community groups, families and individuals with experience on the illicit drug issue to make submissions to the Taskforce, which is due to report to the Minister by 31 May 2002. The scope of its inquiry will cover heroin, amphetamines, and prescription drugs used in an illicit manner, hallucinogens, cocaine, and designer drugs such as ecstasy.