The announcement today that the Gove Alumina Expansion, Trans-Territory Pipeline and Blacktip Offshore Gas projects have received Major Project Facilitation (MPF) status moves these three projects one step closer to being realised Chief Minister, Clare Martin, said today.

“This is welcome news as, together, these projects potentially represent at least $2.5bn of new capital investment in the NT,” she said.

“The Territory Government has been working hard to assist the companies and a final investment decision is now expected in the 3rd quarter of 2004.”

Ms Martin described the projects as extremely important to the Territory and would see hundreds of millions of dollars injected into the economy - today’s announcement will go along way towards making it become a reality.

“This project will see the creation of 1,200 jobs during peak construction and 120 jobs during operations which will provide a significant injection into the local economy,” she said.

“My Government has been working with the companies and land owners to facilitate this important development, which would be the second largest project ever undertaken in the Territory.”

The Commonwealth Government awards MPF status to projects of national significance, effectively kick starting a ‘whole of government’ response to streamline the project development process. In many ways, it is the Commonwealth’s version of the NT Taskforce model put in place last year.

Ms Martin said that while Territory Government and company officials have been engaged with the Commonwealth before, MPF firmly puts these projects on the national agenda.

The Alcan Gove Alumina Expansion is a $1.5bn addition to the refinery on the Gove Peninsula. It currently produces 2 million tonnes of alumina; the expansion would see an increase to 3.5mtpa.

The Blacktip offshore gas project is a new platform in the Bonaparte Gulf and pipeline to Wadeye. The Joint venture partners, Woodside and ENI have signed a 20 year deal with Alcan for the supply of gas to power their refinery facility.

The two projects will be linked by the proposed 1000km pipeline from Wadeye to Gove providing an entirely new West to East corridor, potentially opening up a new link across the top end.

The Blacktip project will be the second major offshore gas field delivering gas to the Territory.