Minister for Central Australia Dr Peter Toyne has congratulated the Alice Springs youth sector for putting together a wide-ranging program for children over the school holiday period.

Dr Toyne said the range of extra activities and support services available to youth over the Christmas and New Year period would be a vital adjunct to the more formal services that will be operating.

“Too often kids and teenagers have been left to their own devices over the long end-of-year holidays and this can sometimes lead to kids getting into trouble,” Dr Toyne said.

“Government agencies have been working with the many dedicated people in the local youth sector to ensure that young people have a choice of activities and are looked after these holidays.”

Some of the programs and activities on offer include:

- The popular Tangentyere school holiday program aimed at children from town camps and a separate program will also be run by Tangentyere at the Larapinta Valley camp;
- The Gap Youth Centre has a range of activities and excursions on offer during the school holidays;
- The GYC’s Internet Café will be open during the holidays where kids can learn computer skills, e-mail their friends or just surf the net and also operates a;
- Drop-in service for high school-aged youth Wednesday to Friday evenings.
- The Alice Springs Youth Centre has a huge range of activities planned for the holidays.

“A new youth drop-in centre is also expected to open during the holidays, operating until later at night and also acting as a referral service for youth at risk,” Dr Toyne said.

“This list is not all that’s available with organisations like the YMCA and the town library for example also offering school holiday programs.”

Dr Toyne said many of the programs are aimed at kids at-risk and will work in with accommodation and care services to provide support to young people.

“The Youth Night Patrol operated by ACCA will run 6 nights a week over Christmas and the New Year, as will the Tangentyere Night Patrol.

“Programs such as Safe Families, which works with young people and families to resolve conflict and homelessness, and will have a crisis accommodation house open early next year, will continue to offer support to kids in need.
“For organisations like ASYASS, Congress, Reconnect, Tangentyere, FACS, and Bush Mob this time of year is a very busy time.

“They will be out there caring for Alice Springs kids during the holidays, a time when young people can unfortunately be vulnerable, and I congratulate them on their dedication and hard work.”

Dr Toyne said the Youth Sub Committee of the Central Australian Safer Communities Committee, as the Regional Crime Prevention Council, handed their draft Child and Youth Safety Strategy to Government yesterday for consideration.

The Draft Child and Youth Safety Strategy, funded through the NT Government Crime Prevention Grant Scheme, has been developed in partnership with child and youth agencies in the Centre.

The Strategy aims to support the work of the many organisations in Alice Springs working with youth, young people at risk and their extended families.

The need for a comprehensive strategy was in part highlighted by the need to address the numbers of unsupervised children on the streets of Alice Springs late at night and a spate of juvenile crime and anti-social behaviour earlier this year.

The Office of Crime Prevention and key Government agencies will contribute to the draft strategy and further development of associated action plans with the final Strategy to be presented to Government for endorsement and implementation.