The 10th Alice Springs Masters Games is clear evidence of the value of the sports tourism dollar to regional economies such as Central Australia and the Territory Sports Minister John Ah Kit said today.

“With 4559 participants—including 3000 interstate and overseas visitors—Alice Springs is buzzing with virtually all accommodation full, and restaurants and bars overflowing, the local economy is gaining enormous benefit,”

“Independent research estimated the value of the 2002 Games at around $7.4 million to the Central Australian economy.

“This time around, with 28 per cent more participants, we are looking to nudge the $10 million mark in 2004,” said Mr Ah Kit.

“There is growing research in Australia and overseas that clearly indicates the important links that exist between sports based tourism and sustained economic growth—Alice Springs is showing that to us in spades.

“With the biggest Masters Games on record, we are already seeing teams booking their accommodation for 2006.

“As well as government support to the Games, there are more than 20 private enterprise sponsors of the Games, from organisations and businesses big and small.

“Again, some of those sponsors have already indicated support through to the next Games in two years time.

“All of us seeing the direct benefit to local enterprise and employment through the Masters Games.”