Deputy Chief Minister Syd Stirling today welcomed more than 700 competitors to Darwin for the 2002 Australian Polocrosse Championships, being held from 2-7 July at Fred's Pass Reserve.

Mr Stirling said it was the second time the Championships had been held in Darwin, in recognition of the wonderful facilities available and perfect Dry Season weather.

"With support from the NT Government, members of the local polocrosse community have put in a tremendous amount of voluntary work fundraising for and building first-class facilities at Fred's Pass," Mr Stirling said.

"With some 700 competitors and 300 horses, the National Polocrosse Championships are a major sporting event for the Territory. I'm sure the 2000-odd spectators expected to attend the competition over the next five days will see some superb riding.

"For the first time, the championships include a masters competition with men over 50 and women over 40 represented.

"I wish each competitor, particularly those from the Territory, the best of luck over the next five days."

In addition to the competitors from Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia, a number of overseas delegates will also be in Darwin for a general meeting of the International Polocrosse Council following the Championships.

"On behalf of the Government, I would like to welcome delegates from the United States, Ireland, Great Britain, South Africa, Zimbabwe and New Zealand," Mr Stirling said.

"Their involvement certainly bodes well for the internationalisation of this uniquely Australian sport."