Chief Minister Clare Martin today launched the Katherine Regional Development Plan, which will become the blueprint for planning, infrastructure development and service delivery in the region over the next decade.

"Following two years of community discussion and consultation, the plan was released by Cabinet in Katherine today - we now have a way forward that has been chosen by the people of Katherine themselves," she said.

"Importantly, this wholehearted effort has been driven by a collaboration of business, community organisations and dedicated individuals who have the Katherine region uppermost in their minds.

"This document will be used by the Territory and other levels of Government to guide decision making in Katherine and the region over the next decade.

"It will also inform us about infrastructure development and the nature and shape of service delivery in the region.

"A major theme of the plan is the aspirations of the people of Katherine to create a safer and more secure community, where there are a wide range of options and opportunities available to young people."

Government has already committed to funding a number of important new initiatives that flow from the plan including:

- $50 000 to fund another community foot patrol run by the Kalano team -- this is on top of the additional $600 000 announced in the 03/04 budget to address itinerant issues in Katherine
- $200 000 for the development of a youth drop in centre
- $50 000 to enhance tourism signage – including at the entrances to town
- $80 000 for a school attendance officer
- $150 000 for a new Office of Territory Development position to co-ordinate tourism, horticulture and industry opportunities
- $50 000 to fund the further design work and development of the arts and cultural precinct

"A key issue identified in the plan is the need to develop recruitment initiatives to help stabilise and maintain the region’s workforce. This will be a priority issue for Government," Ms Martin said.

"It will include developing initiatives to attract and retain both trades people and professional people – especially health
workers – and will involve partnerships between the private and public sectors."

Ms Martin said this was the third regional plan produced by Government in conjunction with communities, following plans for Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.

"I would like to acknowledge the immense effort that has gone into creating the Katherine Regional Development Plan and thank the community for their input, particularly those community members who have actively contributed to the plan," she said.

"Copies of the plan will be available from the Government Centre and other locations around Katherine."