Housing finance commitments in the Northern Territory dropped slightly in the month of October (down 0.2%), but continue to outstrip the rest of Australia.

Treasurer Syd Stirling said comparing October 2003 with October 2002, the Territory continued to record the strongest growth in the number of housing finance commitments of all jurisdictions, up by 44.5%. Nationally, growth was 15.3% over the same period.

“Territorians are continuing to invest in homes at a high rate,” Mr Stirling said.

“The value of housing commitments has also remained strong, rising 3.1% from September to October.

“In dollar terms, September housing finance commitments were worth $63.8 million, compared to $65.7 million in October.”

Owner-occupied housing finance commitments are dominated by the purchase of established dwellings, with construction of dwellings and the purchase of new dwellings also making up a component of the figures.

Treasurer Syd Stirling said steady growth in housing investment in the Territory was a positive sign for the economy.

“Boosts in housing finance commitments have been helped along by Government’s decision to cut stamp duty for first homebuyers and provide a new rebate of up to $1500 for Territorians buying a principal place of residence.

“While the Reserve Bank's decision to increase interest rates may have some effect on our housing market, the Territory can still claim to have the most affordable housing in Australia.”