Chief Minister, Clare Martin, today introduced a motion into the Territory Parliament urging a peaceful solution to the crisis over Iraq disarmament, while fully supporting Australian personnel in the Persian Gulf and surrounds.

"People around the world voted with their feet at the weekend, with a large presence in Australia’s major cities and of course in Darwin," she said.

"There is no question that these people want this issue settled peacefully, and that they do not want any nation acting unilaterally to engage in armed conflict in Iraq - the United Nations is the forum for dealing with this issue.

"It would be a good thing for Prime Minister Howard, who is playing an active role in the international campaign against Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, to listen to the people of Australia on this issue."

Ms Martin said that whatever the political controversy over Iraq, this Government totally supports Australian personnel wherever they are sent, as well as their families.

"Today of all days, on the eve of the bombing of this city by enemy planes, 61 years ago, we acknowledge our obligation to our armed forces, and their proud history," she said.

Ms Martin said that the key to a peaceful resolution rested with the Iraqi leader.

"The regime of Saddam Hussein has refused to abide by resolutions of the international community, and has treated with contempt its binding obligations at international law.

"Iraq has failed to provide an accurate, full, final and complete disclosure of all aspects of its programs to develop weapons of mass destruction, all holdings of such weapons and related production facilities."

Ms Martin said it was properly the role and responsibility of the United Nations to debate and, if it finally becomes necessary, authorise the use of military force against Iraq. This in no way detracts from our alliance relationship with the United States, with whom this Government retains strong and binding ties.

"I am sure that I speak on behalf of everyone when I say that our prayers and hopes are with our servicemen and women at this time.

"We wish them a safe return to their families and loved ones, many of whom are Territorians, and who now face an anxious and difficult wait."

The terms of the motion are as follows:

(a) Supports the pursuit of a peaceful resolution to the current crisis over Iraq disarmament

(b) Calls on Iraq to fully comply with United Nations Resolution 1441 and give up its weapons of mass destruction, allowing international weapons inspectors to complete their task.

(c) Fully supports Australian troops engaged in potential combat zones in
the Persian Gulf and surrounds, and prays for their safe return to their families.

(d) Calls on the Prime Minister to only commit Australian troops to combat in Iraq as part of an UN-led coalition