The level of recorded criminal offences in Alice Springs over the March quarter showed a decrease compared to the same three months last year, and the year-on-year data showed all offences recorded a drop over the past 12 months, according to the latest NT Quarterly Crime and Justice Statistics released today.

While there was an increase in the March quarter 2003 compared to the previous quarter, the overall number of offences remained relatively stable.

A total of 1103 offences were recorded by police in the quarter (261 against the person, 842 property), well below the same period in 2002 (1461) and 2001 (1119), but an increase of 53 on the previous quarter. (p43 of report)

Offences against the person remained stable for the March quarter compared to the previous December quarter at 261 offences, but fell 13% (or 40 offences) compared to the same period last year. (p44).

Property offences fell by 27% (or 318 offences) in the March 2003 quarter compared to the same quarter last year, but increased by 7% (or 53 offences) from the previous quarter. (p47)

Year-on-year data, which provides comparable information on how crime is tracking from one 12-month period to the next, showed that during the 12 months to the end of March 2003 compared to the previous 12 months:

- Assaults fell by 13% (or 138 less offences)
- House break-ins fell by 30% (or 99 less offences)
- Break-ins to commercial or other premises dropped by 21% (or 58 offences); and
- Motor vehicle theft and related offences fell by 6% (or 20 offences)

The Minister for Justice, Dr Peter Toyne, said it was encouraging that the level of recorded crime in Alice Springs was dropping with the figures reporting offence levels well down on previous years.

"In all of the major categories the numbers of offences has dropped significantly over the past 12 months compared to the previous 12 months.

"This means many less victims of these crimes, which is good news for our community.

"However, while these drops in crime levels are encouraging there is still more work to do to further reduce the level of crime in Alice Springs."
"In the March 2003 quarter, house break-ins in Alice Springs plummeted by 50% or 54 offences from the same quarter the previous year, and fell by 13% or 8 offences from the previous quarter.

"The figures also show the underlying level of house break-ins is the lowest it has been over the past two years, at 19 offences per month, from a range of between 19 to 35 offences per month recorded over the past two years.

"Break-ins to business and commercial premises are also at the lowest underlying average over the past two years with an average of 17 offences per month, from a range between 17 to 31 per month.

"Over the last quarter, break-ins to commercial or other premises dropped by a huge 49% or 51 offences against the same quarter the previous year, but increased by 6% or 3 offences from the previous quarter.

"Pleasingly, the levels of assaults have also dropped according to these latest figures, with the underlying level of assaults at a low, and drops on the last quarter and on the same period last year," Dr Toyne said.

Over the March quarter there was a decrease of 17% or 46 assault offences from the same quarter last year, and a fall of 2% or 5 assault offences from the previous quarter.

Sexual assault offences also fell in the March quarter with a drop of 11% (or 2 offences) compared to the previous quarter but increased by 6% or 1 offence on the same quarter last year.

NOTE: The Crime and Justice Statistics are a measure of recorded crime across the Territory.

- The data is collected from the Police Real-time On-line Management Information System and the Northern Territory Courts IJIS system
- Nationally it is recognised that there are varying levels of unreported crime in our community but that recorded crime is the best available measure of changes in the level of crime in a community.

March Quarter 2003 Crime and Justice Statistics and regional fact sheets are available online at www.crimeprevention.nt.gov.au