Finke Desert Race fever has taken over Alice Springs with more than 2000 visitors in town to watch the world’s largest desert race.

The 2002 Tattersalls Finke Desert Race has 450 registered competitors, racing 260 bikes and 100 cars.

Minister for Central Australia, Dr Peter Toyne, will wave the starting flag on Sunday 9 June setting competitors off on a 460km course, over two days.

Dr Toyne said the Alice Springs community welcomes and greatly supports this event which has become an institution in the Territory.

"This premier off-road race is one of the biggest annual sporting events in the Territory and I congratulate all the dedicated drivers and revhead volunteers involved, who will make this year’s race another success," Dr Toyne said.

"The race has secured national media interest via the Today Show and for the first time it is hoped to a racecam can be mounted in the vehicle of Australian Safari winner Bruce Garland to capture all the heart-stopping action.

"The Finke Desert Race is reputedly the toughest desert race in the world, raced on a corrugated track through the Centre’s terrain of red dirt, sand, spinifex, and desert oaks.

"The 26 year old race began as a bike event, extending to include cars and off-road buggies in 1988 and the rivalry between the bikes and the cars has been intense ever since."

Campers are requested to camp on the western side of the track between the 30km-sand hill and the Deep Well Checkpoint, to minimise fire risk.

Campers and spectators can contribute to caring for the environment by limiting their use of firewood, removing rubbish and taking care on bikes and quads to avoid widespread erosion.

Alice’s new Convention Centre will host the presentation night on Monday 10 June featuring live entertainment, a video of race highlights and the trophy presentation.

Information on the race is available from www.finkedesertrace.com.au