The Chief Minister Paul Henderson announced today his priority next year will be continuing to manage the Northern Territory’s high levels of growth.

Mr Henderson told a gathering of industry leaders in his annual State of the Territory speech that his Government faced the challenge of managing the growth generated through strong economic performance.

“We live in a prosperous, exciting, can-do place and my focus is to not only continue to grow the Territory but manage that growth responsibly,” he said.

“We started the year determined to weather the global financial crisis as best we could. We have finished the year with the highest retail trade growth in Australia, the second lowest unemployment rate, strong population growth and the highest levels of business confidence in the country.

“Those sorts of growth levels have brought benefits – businesses are doing well and if you want a job in the Territory, you can get one.

“Of course they have also brought their challenges – housing and planning for instance. We have moved to address those issues with our 20-year Housing the Territory strategy, which has resulted in land release five times faster than before.

“We have also increased our public housing program and begun work to establish an affordable rental company.

“Housing the Territory is working alongside our Working Future policy to deliver housing in the bush. Despite the publicity, the Strategic Housing and Infrastructure Program is building and upgrading houses across the Territory.

“Working Future is a significant, ground-breaking policy that will see real towns and real opportunities for Indigenous Territorians in 20 growth towns.

“Yesterday I launched another first – the Territory 2030 plan. This is a plan developed from the ideas and aspirations of Territorians to manage our growth over the next 20 years.

“Not only is it the first time a Territory Government has committed to a long-term strategic plan, but it’s the first time a State or Territory Government has engaged an independent committee to seek out what the community wants to see in the future.
“The core of Territory 2030 is education. Our Smart Territory strategy, which shapes the delivery of education, will dovetail into Territory 2030.

“Earlier today I announced a reshaping of my Ministry in line with the new structure that 2030 will demand. A similar restructuring of Government agencies and how Government does business will come over time.

“Implementing this refocus, working on these plans and building our economy is my priority in 2010.

“I’m looking forward to another year of growing this great Territory.”

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