Minister for Community Services Bess Price said excitement was building ahead of the 29th Barunga Festival which kicks off tonight.

“Attending the Barunga Festival is one the highlights of the Dry Season,” said Mrs Price who will be attending the Festival for the third year in a row.

“It is one of the Territory’s top Aboriginal cultural, music and sporting events and draws in different communities and visitors from all walks of life.

“The festival is a great opportunity to see and share the joy of music, sport and culture – which are so important to life in our communities.”

Mrs Price said the Northern Territory Government had provided funding of $20,000 through the Northern Territory Arts Grants Program, to support the festival and a further $14,750 in arts project funding to the Gurrumul Yunupingu Foundation for Barunga Beats, which is a new project designed for remote Indigenous kids to produce their own upbeat, celebratory electronic dance tracks with a performance opportunity at the Barunga opening night.

“The Barunga Festival provides a fantastic platform for sharing modern and traditional music to celebrate individual stories and passions for this land and now our young people will get their turn to show their talent tonight,” said Mrs Price.

“The 2014 program will once again see some of the best Indigenous performers from Arnhem Land and across Australia, as well as emerging bands and artists from the bush. The famous bush bands line-up on Saturday night will not disappoint with a program that will feature Lonely Boys, Mambali Band and Manuel Dhurrkay from Saltwater Band.

“Another new feature to look forward to this year will be a fashion parade by young women of the region who have been developing skills and confidence through a YMCA self-esteem project. They will be parading day and evening wear and I hope everyone shows their support.”

The Government has also provided an additional $30,000 to SkinnyFish Music to deliver the sporting component of the festival.
“It’s always fantastic to see the enthusiasm at the sports competition at Barunga,” Mrs Price said.

“The Barunga Festival is a great event and will contribute to the Government’s new Festivals NT program and calendar of cultural and sporting events for all Territorians to enjoy.

“It’s all set for a fantastic weekend and I encourage everyone to attend the Festival, they won’t be disappointed.”

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