Country Liberals Minister for Education Peter Chandler has today welcomed all school students to the start of the 2014 school year.

"More than 33,000 students return to 154 government schools this week and I wish them all the best in their studies in 2014," Mr Chandler said.

2014 stands as an exciting year for education and the Northern Territory Government is firmly committed to assisting students, schools, teachers and school councils to achieve better outcomes in the years ahead.

"We are determined to give all our kids the best chance in life and the current system is not delivering that. We can and must do better," Mr Chandler said.

"To this end, 2014 will see the release of several reviews into different areas of education.

"Wide consultation will be conducted on all of them to get community feedback on their recommendations for improving educational outcomes before government responds.

"The first of the reviews into remote Indigenous education will soon be released by its author Bruce Wilson.

"This review is one of the most important bodies of work undertaken by any Northern Territory Government and will inform our policies as we endeavour to close the gap in Indigenous education.

"70 per cent of our schools are located in the bush, teaching almost half of the student population and we are determined to make sure these children are leaving school with the skills they need to get a job and prosper.

"This year we will also announce the author and terms of reference for the Middle Schools review.

"The Middle School model was introduced more than six years ago. A review is now timely to assess its progress and see if any tweaks are required to achieve the best results.

"Parents will also notice more decisions being made at a school level this year as the government's restructure of the Education Department's school support services swings into effect. It will mean the department can be far more responsive to the dynamic needs of individual schools."
"Importantly, I'd also like to remind all Territory parents that the Government's $75 sport Vouchers and $150 Back to School Payment Scheme return in 2014."

Together the schemes are worth around $10 million and can be redeemed through schools right now.

“We know every little bit of financial assistance counts and these two schemes will not only help the hip pocket but will also ensure sport is accessible to all young Territorians,” Mr Chandler said.

“Finally, Open Education will get a huge boost this year as design work on the new purpose-built NT Open Education Centre begins at Darwin High School. This will play a huge strategic role as we seek to improve the delivery of education in the bush and further engage with our Asian neighbours.”

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