Justice Minister Dr Peter Toyne said the 2002 Recorded Crime Statistics released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics have put the nail in the mandatory sentencing coffin.

"According to the ABS figures, house break-ins increased steadily under the CLP’s mandatory sentencing regime after it was introduced in 1997, to reach an all-time high in 2001.

"They only started to drop after mandatory sentencing was replaced with Labor’s targeted property offence regime.

"This is further proof that property crime in the Territory has come down under the Labor Government.

"In stark contrast to the figures under mandatory sentencing, the ABS statistics report the Territory recorded the second highest drop in break-in victims in Australia last year, down by 15.2%.

"These ABS statistics provide unquestionable proof that mandatory sentencing failed to reduce property crime – it was never a solution only a smokescreen," Dr Toyne said.

"The facts show crime spiralled out of control under the CLP but the CLP trickery of mandatory sentencing and their refusal to release comprehensive crime statistics hid the real facts from Territorians.

"In the face of all the evidence, the CLP again shows it arrogance and disregard for Territorians and the truth by continuing to claim their discredited regime worked.

"The nail is now in the coffin for the discredited mandatory sentencing regime."

Dr Toyne said the Territory had moved on to a targeted sentencing regime for property offences which was showing real results with a huge 49% increase in the average sentence length for property offenders in the first 12 months of the Government’s regime.

"The first drop in house breaks-ins last year after years of rises under mandatory sentencing is encouraging, and shows our law enforcement and crime prevention strategies are starting to bring results – although we still have a great deal of work to do.

"The 2002 ABS statistics also support the statistics released to date by the Office of Crime Prevention that have overall reported stable or dropping crime trends.
"We will continue to fight crime on all fronts to reduce the number of victims and build a safer community for Territorians," Dr Toyne said.

CLICK HERE to view the statistics.