The Northern Territory Government’s delegation to Greece, Istanbul and Cyprus has secured a number of important meetings Chief Minister Clare Martin confirmed today.

Before flying out from Darwin this afternoon Ms Martin said the delegation would meet with the President of the Hellenic Republic - His Excellency Constantinos Stephanopoulos - and the Greek Prime Minister - His Excellency Costas Simitis.

"The purpose of this visit is to maintain and build the strong social, cultural, sport and economic relationship between the Territory, Greece and Cyprus," she said.

"This Government is aware of the magnificent contribution of the local Greek and Greek Cypriot communities to the Northern Territory and since coming to office I have been asked many times to head a delegation to Greece.

Ms Martin said that it was important continue relations and attract more cultural, sporting and business exchanges and said that one area of interest would be meeting with local fish breeding organisations.

Kon Vatskalis, Minister for Ethnic Affairs, is already in Athens and has held a number of Government to Government meetings with the Minister for Education and Religious Affairs Mr Petros Efthymiou, Minister for Culture Mr Evangelos Venizelos, Secretary-General for Greeks Abroad Mr Pavlos Geroulanos and the Managing Director of Aramark-Desko.

Aramark-Desko, will cater for the Olympic Village and the option of sourcing products of Territory origin will be discussed.

The official delegation - including the Chief Minister - will meet influential Ministers, politicians and community leaders including the President of the Hellenic Republic His Excellency Constantinos Stephanopoulos, Prime Minister His Excellency Costas Simitis, His all Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

Ms Martin said she believed this might be the first occasion on which the Patriarch has directly invited a Territory / State delegation to Istanbul.

"We will also meet with Professor Priovolos, who is responsible for the education of Greek Children abroad, and will explore opportunities for assistance with the introduction of Modern Greek at the Charles Darwin University," she said.

"There are also opportunities to establish links between Greek University Schools for Hospitality and the Charles Darwin University."

Other members of the official delegation including his Honour
the Administrator and Mrs Anictomatis, the Honourable Kon Vatskalis Minister for Ethnic Affairs and a delegation from the local Greek community. That comprises George Kapetas (Honorary Consul for Greece, Businessman), Ros Bracher (Honorary Consul - General for Japan, Businesswoman), John Nicolakis (President of the Greek Orthodox Community, Private Businessman, Property Developer), John Halkitis (Private Businessman, Property Developer), John Vrodos (Private Businessman, Property Developer), Tony Miaoudis (Secretary of the Greek Orthodox Community, Private Businessman, Property Manager, Representative on the Kalymnos Sister City Community Committee representing Darwin’s Sister City program.), Rena Miaoudis (Private Businesswoman Catering), Savvas Hatzivalsamis (President of the Greek Orthodox School Darwin).

The itinerary for the official visit includes Kos, Kalymnos, Athens, Istanbul, and Cyprus.