Chief Minister, Clare Martin, today congratulated Alice Springs on hosting one of the most extraordinary events of the Year of the Outback, Outback Central 2002.

"The enthusiasm and the feedback from participants in the Desert Knowledge Symposium and Outback Expo has been overwhelming," she said.

"I attended many of the Wednesday and Thursday sessions and enjoyed the energy levels and the excitement that was in corridor conversations, workshops and seminars.

"Visitors from around the world joined local experts in discussing ways forward in desert living and the role the outback of Australia plays – this was no more evident than in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Texas to work in partnership on research projects."

Symposium chairman Bob Collins shared the Chief Minister's comments.

"This conference has been invaluable," he said.

"It has involved over 300 participants from all over regional Australia and overseas, and has paved the way for Desert Knowledge to progress with the support of our desert regions."

Bruce Campbell, MBE, Founder and CEO of Year Of The Outback, said that Outback Central 2002 had set the stage for a movement of growth centred on outback Australia of a magnitude we have never seen before.

Ms Martin also complimented the Alice Springs Festival organisers.

"The Alice Springs Festival, the third part of Outback Central 2002, has complemented the symposium with some wonderfully imaginative events - Friday night's Samba Parade and Wearable Art Workshop is just one example.

"The involvement of so many volunteers and artists in this event indicates the extent to which it has captured the imagination of the community."