Chief Minister, Clare Martin, today said that the Territory construction industry could look towards a very strong future with many large scale projects on the horizon.

Ms Martin said that one of those exciting capital works projects – a Darwin Convention Centre - was now being considered for nine possible sites.

"There are nine sites, within and around the Darwin CBD area, that are being considered - they cover a wide range of location, price, availability and suitability," she said.

"As far as this Government is concerned the Convention Centre is not a matter of if but when, and we want to deliver an effective, long-term asset.

"We believe the Centre will provide a strong economic boost for many years to come and today’s announcement shows that the project is moving ahead."

Ms Martin also announced that advertising would begin this week for a series of forums, scheduled for mid February, dealing with the Convention Centre feasibility study. The study will be conducted by consultants Pricewaterhouse Coopers and should be completed by April.

"The public can attend these forums/briefings to give their input into the study to make it the best possible examination of how we can make this project work," Ms Martin said.

"There are many areas to finalise including site analysis plans, size and configuration details and other associated issues including hotel accommodation, restaurants and taxi demand.

"Importantly, the Pricewaterhouse Coopers study will examine how recent factors, including the Bali Bombings and collapse of Ansett, may affect these decisions.

"We also want to avoid negatively impacting on the recently opened Alice Springs Convention Centre, and that we build the Territory as an events destination."

Her comments followed the release of the latest BIS Shrapnel study *(Engineering Construction in Australia 2002-17)* which predicts a decade of strong construction growth in the Territory from 2006 – the best in Australia.

"The study is another sign that the Territory is moving in the right direction and with Timor Sea gas, and other, large scale projects firming up the future looks very bright."