Women from across the Northern Territory will now have direct access to Cabinet members through the new Community Cabinet Women’s Forums announced by the Chief Minister, Clare Martin, today.

"Safety and policing, health and education, planning and public transport - these are the issues of concern to women across the Territory," Ms Martin said.

"These forums will allow more women to discuss issues of importance directly with the Chief Minister and Cabinet members when we visit in their towns."

The reforms follow a review of the Women’s Advisory Council. The aim of the review was to look at the Council, which had been established in 1983, and determine ways in which more women would be able to provide advice to government.

The review team - chaired by the member for Karama Delia Lawrie - included Jodeen Carney, Sharon Kinraid, Dr Robyn Thompson and Jill Huck. It held two periods of public consultation, during which more than 20 written submissions were received, and will provided its final report to the Chief Minister in June 2003.

"I thank the previous Council for the important work they did, and look forward to building an even better future with women in the Territory through the new forums," Ms Martin said.

"More women from across the Territory will now be able to provide representations to Government through a separate process of regional forums.

"The new process elevates the priority of issues important to women by allowing access to the Chief Minister and Cabinet Ministers, rather than the previous process of reporting to the Chief Minister alone."

The new Women’s Community Cabinet Forums will be held in communities, towns and suburbs - wherever women live and work – a significant improvement on the previous model.

"The new process is more representative, meets more frequently at more locations and brings women face-to-face with Cabinet Ministers," Ms Martin said.