Territorians. It could have, and should have been, a budget to deliver all of the 48 new hospital beds promised, and one that certainly should have delivered the five-year-old promise of an oncology unit. But it did not and therefore it failed.

Madam Speaker, Budget 2006-07 is a budget of lost opportunity, wasted opportunity, and lost promises. The Territory has received more money than it has ever had before. The Northern Territory Branch of the Australian Labor Party, this Labor government, is the highest taxing government the Territory has ever had. Australia's economic climate is probably as good as it gets. Despite this incredibly significant factor, this government is taking us to unprecedented debt. At the same time, departmental budgets continue to blowout, and public service wages get larger, particularly for fat cat executives.

While all of this is happening, high quality service delivery is not being achieved. The mums and dads of the Territory want to see those services being delivered, they want to see better outcomes in law and order, health and education. Those services are the ones that all governments, any politician, should know and well understand. They are health, education and law and order. Sadly however, those areas seem only to come within Labor's collective consciousness at election time. Shame on this government. Labor may have forgotten how critical these areas are, but we and other Territorians have not.

Madam Speaker, I said at the outset that this government should have done better and that this Treasurer should have done better. Indeed, they should have. This budget stands condemned as the budget of lost opportunities.

Debate adjourned.

VICTIMS OF CRIME
RIGHTS AND SERVICES BILL
(Serial 44)
VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE BILL
(Serial 45)

Continued from 29 March 2006.

Ms CARNEY (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, the bill is not supported nor should it be.

I would like to spend a moment dealing with some history under this government in relation to this important area. Labor changed the *Crimes (Victims Assistance) Act* in 2002. We had a lengthy debate, and at times very robust debate, and I was concerned that ultimately the government was going to go down this track. In fact, the Attorney-General indicated that he was always going to take us to the position we now have before us.

The problem however is that at the time the original amendments were made, the Attorney-General made much of the improvements. He talked about judicial registrars being appointed to deal with these matters, yet a judicial registrar has only recently been appointed in Alice Springs. He talked about how the amendments were designed to: 'streamline court procedures, improve efficiencies and better address the needs of victims'.

Clearly, by bringing in this bill, there is a concession that he has failed. The changes back then did not achieve what he wanted them to achieve. So I ask: what makes the Attorney-General think that the changes in this bill will be good for victims?

Here we are again and we have the Attorney-General saying this bill will be good for victims of crime in much the same way that he described in the bill in 2002. This bill will not - I do not know how to make this point more strongly - be good for victims of crime. In the course of my reply to this bill I plan to outline why this bill will sell victims of crime short.

I am sure the Attorney-General will not comment in his reply but I feel compelled to put on the *Parliamentary Record* that my take on this is that this is not an agenda driven by the Attorney-General himself. This is an agenda driven by others – a few of us know who they are. This is an agenda driven by public servants who, from 2002 and perhaps even earlier, were hell-bent on changing this scheme. If ever there was a case of a minister being captured by his public service, it is the Attorney-General - a man who, for the most part, I like and respect. However, on this important issue, he has been sold a pup. It is very unfortunate that he does not even know why.

There are a number of components that I would like to deal with in this reply. The Attorney-General has represented that there was consultation about this bill. No, there was not! The Law Society Northern Territory and the Northern Territory Police Association have said in very clear terms they were not consulted. If they were not, why were they not? Who was consulted? The public servants were the ones who were consulted. The people in the minister's office and in the department appear to be the only ones. It is irresponsible in the extreme to bring this legislation into this parliament and not consult with two major stakeholders - the Law Society and the Police Association.

The day before the Attorney-General introduced this bill during the last sittings, when I saw his media release and other documentation, I issued a media release and touched upon just a