The Attorney-General revealed today that there was $5.9m in outstanding fines and penalties in the Territory. This represents half of all fines and penalties issued.

Opposition Justice spokeswoman, Jodeen Carney, said while this was a small improvement on last year, ($6.4m), it was still not good enough.

“This sends a terrible message to people who receive fines or have them imposed by a Court,” Ms Carney said.

“While the agency’s budget increased in 2010-11, it obviously wasn’t enough to increase its collection capacity.

“It is under-resourced and needs more funding to assist it in properly doing its job.”

The Treasurer also appears untroubled by a reduction in the recovery of money from offenders under the Victims of Crime Assistance Act, Ms Carney said.

“When Labor changed the compensation scheme, the recovery rate from offenders was 6%, now it is 1.5%,” she said.

“We would have expected to see a much higher recovery rate. Why is it so low?”

“Territory Labor obviously has a laid back approach to fines and debt recovery. It’s a shame because law abiding Territorians would welcome the extra money that would flow into Treasury coffers through the efficient collection of fines and crime compensation.

“The Crimes Victims Compensation scheme that Labor has dismantled since coming to office has not produced the savings the Government wanted.

“It was revealed today that the cost of the scheme during 2009-10 would be $5.23m. In 2001-02, it was $5.52m.

“What’s changed under Labor’s scheme is that there are more victims of crime; it’s harder to make claims for financial assistance; and compensation payments to victims are capped at lower levels.

“As usual, there’s a difference between the Government’s rhetoric and reality.”

Further comment: Jodeen Carney 0407 187 992