

Attorney General  
McMurtry-Scott Building  
720 Bay Street  
11th Floor  
Toronto ON M7A 2S9  
Tel: 416-326-4000  
Fax: 416-326-4007

Procureur général  
Édifice McMurtry-Scott  
720, rue Bay  
11<sup>e</sup> étage  
Toronto ON M7A 2S9  
Tél.: 416-326-4000  
Télééc.: 416-326-4007



Our Reference #: M-2020-400

FEB 18 2020

Ms. Aline Vlasceanu  
Executive Director  
Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime  
100-141 Catherine Street  
Ottawa, ON  
K2P 1C3

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

Dear Ms. Vlasceanu:

Thank you for your letter regarding the dissolution of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board and the enhancements to the Victim Quick Response Program+ (VQRP+).

First, I would like to thank you for your contributions in this sector and acknowledge the work your organization does to support victims of crime in Canada.

The Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG) is committed to providing quality and timely services and supports to victims in need. As you note, the government recently made changes to the approach to financial compensation for victims of crime in Ontario. With our recent amendments, our goal was to modernize how victim services are delivered in Ontario to ensure that victims of crime can more easily and quickly access supports by removing a lengthy and cumbersome adjudicative process.

Towards that end, as you know, on October 1, 2019, the government announced enhancements to the existing Victim Quick Response Program to better support victims, their immediate family members, and witnesses to access urgent supports in the immediate aftermath of a violent crime. VQRP+ provides financial support with essential expenses in order to lessen the impact of the crime, enhance safety, and meet immediate practical needs arising from the commission of the crime.

Victims do not have to pay out of pocket for any eligible expenses or re-live their trauma through a long and complex process. The government heard from the service providers who work on the front lines with victims that practical and immediate support is vital in helping victims. We understand that not all victims are the same, that each survivor must come forward in their own time, which is why enhancements now available through VQRP+ include such things as:

- expanded timelines to access counselling services;
- additional funding for cell phones, accommodation and transportation, and other supports; and,
- new supports towards dental expenses, serious injuries, and to support homicide survivors.

.../2

In addition, the program added new eligible crime types, such as historical childhood sexual abuse, where victims can apply following their disclosure to an intimate partner violence shelter, sexual assault centre, Indigenous social service provider, or other community victim support agency. These decisions were made based on ongoing feedback from victims and service providers across the province.

The enhancements to VQRP+ are a first step in the government's plan to transform victim services across government. MAG is undertaking a comprehensive review of programs and services to ensure victims of crime and their families can access the help they need when and where they need it most.

As part of the review, MAG in partnership with the Office for Victims of Crime held several engagement sessions across the province in June and July 2019. We heard valuable feedback from a wide group of stakeholders, including victims and their families, and service providers. MAG is now determining next steps in moving forward with further improving victim services, taking into account feedback from our partners, stakeholders, and victims. Your concerns will help inform this work.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to write, and for your ongoing work and advocacy in support of victims of crime.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Downey", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Doug Downey  
Attorney General