

Dear Senators,

Although I am a senior employee of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, I am writing this in my personal capacity.

In spite of multiple defamatory comments repeatedly posted by Mr Stuart McCarthy about me (and many other Defence and DVA personnel) on Mefloquine/Tafenoquine social media platforms over the last few years, I have so far resisted publicly commenting or seeking legal remedy.

However, I now believe that he has seriously overstepped the mark, and that my excellent global professional reputation has been seriously harmed by the untrue, offensive and factually incorrect information provided to the Committee Inquiry by him under privilege in Brisbane on the morning of Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2018.

His reported comments to which I not only take exception – but which I categorically state as being false – are shown at the top of page 8 of the DRAFT Senate Hansard.

I quote:

*Mr S McCarthy: "What you need to understand is that, when you're stonewalled and you're lied to, when you sit in a Minister's office, as I have with Mr. Tehan, and the most senior – the principal medical officer for DVA, repeatedly lies to the Minister, you correct those lies, and he then continues to lie. This goes on and on ....."*

These are very serious statements – which are absolutely untrue and have no basis in fact.

To be accused of repeatedly lying to a Minister is an egregious action, especially in the Canberra Parliamentary and Public Service environment.

I have at all times provided to the Minister, both verbally and in writing, my most honest, frank and fearless professional advice on all matters, including on the Mefloquine/Tafenoquine issues.

Although not named specifically in this case, I have been clearly identified by my DVA title. I am widely known as DVA's Principal Medical Adviser throughout

Australia and internationally, not only by my specialist medical professional colleagues but also by many veterans.

I certainly acknowledge that my specialist medical understanding of the medical, toxicological and epidemiological facts as presently known and understood from the globally-accepted, peer reviewed literature is very different from Stuart McCarthy's perceptions. Just because my professional advice to the Minister does not accord with Mr McCarthy's version of the "truth" does not mean that I am lying.

The documented evidence upon which I have relied and continue to rely is extensively referenced in the Defence, DVA and RMA submissions, as well as those from multiple Australian malaria specialists which are already on the Inquiry public record.

I am seeking to have the Senate Hansard amended to either delete his comments (if possible) or note that his false allegations about me have been rebutted.

I look forward to further putting my comments on record when I give evidence as DVA's Chief Health Officer to the Inquiry in Canberra on a date yet to be announced.

Dr Ian R Gardner MBBS MPH FAFOEM

Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> September 2018.