



## QUINOLINE VETERANS AND FAMILIES ASSOCIATION

### SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION TO THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE REFERENCES COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO THE USE OF THE QUINOLINE ANTI-MALARIAL DRUGS MEFLOQUINE AND TAFENOQUINE IN THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE

Mr Stuart McCarthy, 4 September 2018

#### Introduction

QVFA thanks the Committee for their continued efforts with this inquiry. The purpose of this supplementary submission is to provide the Committee with evidence on the operation of the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) "dedicated mefloquine support team" including the information provided by staff who answer the toll free number advertised on the DVA website and elsewhere.

#### Purpose of the Dedicated Mefloquine Support Team

On 6 Aug 2018 I received an email from DVA Secretary Liz Cosson which explains the purpose of the "dedicated mefloquine support team" (Attachment 1):

*... my focus is on **the treatment for veterans who need assistance** and the department will set up a new phone line for any veteran prescribed mefloquine and tafenoquine who is seeking support from DVA.*

*Through this phone line, the veteran will be asked to stay on the line and will be provided three options:*

*1 do you want general information on mefloquine and tafenoquine?*

*2 do you want to lodge a claim?*

*3 are you seeking urgent assistance?*

The DVA "Mefloquine Information" webpage provides the following information on the "dedicated mefloquine support team":

*For assistance with mefloquine-related claims, call DVA on 1800 555 254 and ask to be put in touch with the dedicated mefloquine support team.*

#### 31 August 2018 Phone Call to the "Dedicated Mefloquine Support Team"

At 11.45 am on 31 August 2018 I called 1800 555 254. A recorded message said press 1 if you need to talk to someone about mefloquine (no mention of tafenoquine). After I pressed 1 my call was answered by Officer A.

I told Officer A my name and explained that I was calling on behalf of an ADF tafenoquine clinical trial subject in Townsville, then asked to be provided with contact details for a medical specialist to refer this veteran to.

Officer A answered: "We do not hold contact details for any medical providers."



