

Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023

Submission No: 42
Submitted by: Sai Milan Tappoo
Publication:
Attachments:
Submitter Comments:

Committee Secretary
Economics and Governance Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Date

Via: EGC@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Committee inquiry into the Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023

As a pharmacy owner in Queensland, I hold the following concerns about the Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023

While some of my concerns have been addressed, which has been welcomed, it is still not enough, and I encourage further consideration by the committee.

The current version of the Bill does not adequately define what a pharmacy service is. The definition is too narrow and is limited to dispensing and compounding of medicines only. This is not an accurate reflection of the services that we provide and means that, for example, where the dispensing of a medicine is considered a pharmacy service, the provision of counselling about that medicine, is not. Where the purpose of the Bill is to describe who may own a pharmacy business, a specific definition of what constitutes a pharmacy business (through definition of the kinds of services my pharmacy provides) must be offered as part of the Bill.

While I acknowledge the necessity of updating and modernizing the Pharmacy Business Ownership Act to introduce a Pharmacy Council, it should not come at the expense of altering its fundamental principles, including the exclusive ownership of community pharmacy businesses by pharmacists, capping the number of pharmacies owned by a pharmacist at five, and prohibiting others from controlling a community pharmacy. The current structure of the council's membership is suboptimal, potentially leading to an imbalance where industry experts may outnumber pharmacy business owner members. Ensuring a majority of pharmacy business owner members is crucial for the council to function as intended.

The current definition in the Bill refers to a supermarket as a 'premises' which suggests that it can only exist in a physical location. With the likely increase of online supermarket businesses due to rapid changes with technology, the definition of a supermarket needs to be updated to ensure it is uniquely defined as selling food, beverages, groceries, and other household items. Having clarity of what a supermarket's primary purpose is sets it apart from a pharmacy business and is in the best interests of our patient's healthcare.

The definition of a material interest in the Bill still lacks clarity. Incorporating terms such as 'legal' and 'beneficial' would enhance understanding and align with practices in other regions. Specifying that an interest includes the right to receive consideration based on pharmacy profits addresses potential ambiguities. Without a proper definition, interests not covered in the current definition may escape classification as unlawful interests.

The community has high expectations of pharmacy and the services provided in Queensland, and I believe the proposed changes still don't meet those expectations. I am proud of the work pharmacists do for our patients and the wider community, so I encourage you to consider my concerns.

Thankyou for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Sincerely,

Sai Milan Tappoo

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]