

Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023

Submission No: 89
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Publication:
Attachments:
Submitter Comments:

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Economics and Governance Committee](#)
Subject: Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill - TWC Valley Metro
Date: Friday, 19 January 2024 1:06:14 PM
Attachments: [REDACTED]

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

How are you? Thank you for reading my email. I am acting as a pharmacy owner in Queensland, I hold the following concerns about the Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023.

The definition of core pharmacy services (Clause 8(3))

Issues:

- 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 a pharmacist provides and means that, for example, where the dispensing of a medicine is considered a pharmacy service, the provision of advice about that medicine, is not.
- By having a narrow definition of pharmacy services, it limits how the Bill is able to deal with the concept of external control of how pharmacy services are delivered to the public (clause 22). If control of pharmacy services is linked to the definition of core pharmacy services then there is a risk that a number of relevant pharmacy services will be left outside the regulatory control of the Bill.
- Where the intent of the Bill is to describe who may own a pharmacy business, a robust definition of what constitutes a pharmacy business (through definition of the services that business provides) must be offered as part of the Bill.

How the issues raised here will affect my patients, as a business owner, and the pharmacy profession:

My pharmacist performs a multitude of healthcare services. For example at my pharmacy we performs; UTI (including dispensing of UTI antibiotics), sleep apnoea, and travel health consultation, packing dose administration aids, performing vaccination as well as providing advice on many health conditions, heart health, diabetes, asthma just to mention as few, assessable to any patients every day of the year, in addition to dispensing as one of many pharmacy services, these and many other services we currently and will be introducing in the future, can impact on the viability of my business. Every patient should be able to assess all these additional health services at their local pharmacy. My patient's health and wellbeing has been benefited from these additional health services on top of getting their medicines dispensed at my pharmacy thus far.

Proposed change:

- To adopt a broader definition of 'core pharmacy services' as 'pharmacy services':
pharmacy services means –
(a) health services (including dispensing, supply, prescribing, selling, administering, repackaging, compounding, possessing, disposing of medicines and the provision of clinical service or advice (either at or from a licensed premises or through digital

platforms)) provided in the course of practice by a pharmacist or a person who holds themselves out, or is held out by another, as a pharmacist;

The definition of a supermarket (Clause 11(3))

Issues:

- The definition of a supermarket is not broad enough to capture the likely increase in online supermarket businesses in the future.
- By inclusion of the word 'premises' in the definition, it ties the concept of a supermarket to a bricks and mortar place, and it is not able to capture the growing online marketplace.
- To ensure that the policy objective of the Bill to 'prohibit the council from issuing a licence if the pharmacy business is located in a supermarket' is met, the Bill must have application to pharmacy businesses and supermarkets whether they are online or physical locations.

How the issues raised here will affect my patients, as a business owner, and the pharmacy profession:

As small business owner, online supermarket businesses threatens the profitability and survival of pharmacy in Australia. Pharmacists are professional who are assessable and are part of the community, we're independently owned and can open at time of crisis, to provide unbiased advice and selling products which has clinically proven this including all over the counter products, vitamins, supplements and Schedule 2, Schedule 3 medicines. Supermarkets, no matter it is online or physical locations should only used primarily for selling a range of food, beverages, groceries and other domestic goods.

Proposed change:

- To adopt the following definition of a supermarket:
supermarket means a premises or online store used primarily for selling a range of food, beverages, groceries and other domestic goods.

What is a material interest in a pharmacy business (Clause 13)

Issues:

- The definition of a material interest is inadequate in capturing the interest that may be held in a pharmacy business.
- The definition is inconsistent with other jurisdictions as it does not use the terms 'legal' and 'beneficial'.
- A failure to appropriately define a material interest means that interests that are not expressed in the current definition may not be able to be deemed unlawful interests.

How the issues raised here will affect my patients, as a business owner, and the pharmacy profession:

The current clause definition need to change in order protect pharmacy ownership as it will affect both pharmacy profession, my patients and livelihood of my employees.

Proposed change:

- To adopt an amendment to the definition of 'material interest' to include the words 'legal' and 'beneficial':

Clause 13(1)(c) should say:

(c) any other interest, legal or beneficial in the business, other than an interest of an owner of the business.

(2) to remove any doubt, an interest includes, but is not limited to, having a right to receive consideration directly or indirectly that varies according to the profits or takings of the pharmacy business.

The existing clause 13(2) would be renumbered 13(3).

Matters relating to the Queensland Pharmacy Business Ownership Council (the council) (Clauses 147, 150, 153, 207)

Issues:

- One of the main purposes of the Bill is to maintain public confidence in the pharmacy profession. To ensure this can be achieved, it is not acceptable that there is no mandatory requirement that the register of licensed pharmacy businesses is listed on the council's website. This will ensure there is transparency for the public so that they know who the owner of the pharmacy is.
- The council is funded by the industry to perform a critical function in registering and licensing pharmacy businesses. The function of the council must not be diluted by becoming involved in the functions of any other Act.
- The composition of the council membership as it is currently stated is unacceptable. The council is an industry body that has the potential to be weighted inappropriately, where industry experts may be significantly outnumbered. There must be a majority of pharmacy business owner members to ensure that the council is able to function as intended.
- There is currently no limit to the number of terms that a member of the council is permitted to serve. To ensure a contemporary and representative council, there should be a limit to the number of consecutive terms, and terms in total, that a member is permitted to serve. The term of membership is one year longer than councils in other states and territories, so a maximum number of terms is needed.

How the issues raised here will affect my patients, as a business owner, and the pharmacy profession:

There needs to be transparency in who owns a pharmacy business and should be accessible to the public as they have the right to know.

There needs to be a balance and fairness in how our pharmacy profession is represented in the council. At the moment, this is not happening, and we need to have pharmacy owners as representatives who understand the pharmacy industry. To show how the pharmacy body as a whole can benefit the Australia healthcare system.

Proposed changes:

- Clause 207 (5) must be amended:

The council must publish the information contained in the register on the council's website.

- Clause 147 (1)(g) must be amended:

any other function given to the council under this Act.

· Clause 150 (4) must be amended:

the council must consist of –

(a) a majority of persons mentioned in subsections (3)(a)(i) and (3)(a)(ii) with the actual number dependent on the size of the council

· Clause 153 (2) should be amended to include a limit to the number of times a council member can be reappointed:

(2) a council member may be reappointed a maximum of two terms

Yours sincerely

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