

Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023

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Committee Secretary
Economics and Governance Committee
EGC@parliament.qld.gov.au

Subject: Submission on the Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my views and concerns regarding the Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023 currently under revision by the Economics and Governance Committee.

Firstly, I would like to commend the Government for taking significant steps towards strengthening the integrity of community pharmacy in Queensland. The proposed reforms in the Bill are a positive move towards closing existing loopholes that have been exploited in the past. However, there are critical areas in the Bill that require further refinement to ensure the full protection and advancement of community pharmacy.

As a community pharmacist and pharmacy owner in Queensland, I am deeply committed to providing quality healthcare to our community. The prospect of large corporations and supermarkets entering the pharmacy sector poses a significant threat to this commitment. The experiences of the grocery sector, where competition was significantly reduced due to corporate dominance, serve as a cautionary tale. The same scenario in the pharmacy sector could lead to increased costs for Queenslanders and a decline in the quality of personalised care that community pharmacies are known for.

One area of concern is the current definition of 'pharmacy services' in the Bill, which is limited to dispensing and compounding. This narrow definition fails to encompass the full range of services that pharmacists provide, including medication management, health screenings, vaccinations, and wellness advice. To ensure that all these vital services remain within the realm of community pharmacy and are properly regulated, it is essential that the Bill's definition of 'pharmacy services' be expanded to include these additional services.

Furthermore, the composition of the Pharmacy Council as proposed in the Bill is a matter of concern. To ensure that the council truly understands and effectively regulates the industry and businesses, it is crucial that the majority of its members are pharmacy owners. The current proposal of having only one mandatory pharmacy owner on the council could lead to a situation where this member is outnumbered, and the council's decisions may not adequately reflect the needs and realities of the pharmacy sector. This could potentially lead

to the council becoming involved in functions beyond the scope of the Act, which could have unintended consequences for the industry.

To ensure robust reform, the Bill should unequivocally state that:

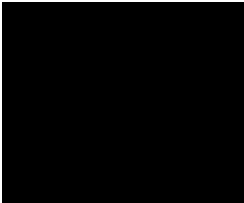
1. Only a licensed pharmacist can own a community pharmacy business.
2. The number of pharmacies owned by a single pharmacist should be capped at five.
3. There should be a strict prohibition on non-pharmacists controlling community pharmacies.
4. The definition of 'pharmacy services' should be expanded to include a broader range of services provided by pharmacists.
5. The composition of the Pharmacy Council should include a majority of pharmacy owners.

These measures will safeguard the community pharmacy model, ensuring that it remains diverse, competitive, and primarily focused on the well-being of Queenslanders.

In conclusion, while I support the modernisation of the Pharmacy Business Ownership Act, it is crucial that its foundational principles are preserved and that the Bill reflects the comprehensive role of community pharmacies. I urge the Committee to consider these points in your deliberations to ensure that the Bill truly reflects the needs and values of the Queensland community.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Rick Howell
Pharmacist & Pharmacy Owner
Priceline Bribie Island, Bribie Community Pharmacy, Star Discount Chemist Arana Hills