

Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023

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Submitted by: Davinder Bansal
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Committee Secretary
Economics and Governance Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

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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

I firstly want to express my appreciation that the government has been taking important steps to amend the proposed Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill; it's been greatly welcomed that consideration has been given to the previous feedback. However, further development is required.

As it stands, the Bill will deregulate the Community Pharmacy industry and allow non pharmacists to own a 'commercial material interest' in our industry; pharmacists should be the only person/profession to own a community pharmacy business. To provide clarity, including terms such as 'legal' and 'beneficial' would align with practices in other parts of the country. Specifying that an interest includes the right to receive consideration would vary based on the profits of the pharmacy and would address any potential doubt.

In its current form, the Bills definition of core pharmacy services isn't reflective of the services my pharmacy provides for my patients and the community. It's unfortunate that our main role is still being considered by the government as only compounding and dispensing. It should include (but is not limited to) dispensing, supply, prescribing, selling, administering, repackaging, compounding, possessing, disposing of medicines and the provision of clinical service and advice.

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 foresee a growing online presence. I suggest amending the definition of a supermarket to mean premises or online store used primarily for selling a range of food, beverages, groceries, and other household goods.

While I acknowledge that the Pharmacy Business Ownership Act needs to be updated and modernised to include a Pharmacy Council, it shouldn't be at the expense of changing its key foundations being:

- o Only a pharmacist can own a community pharmacy business
- o The number of community pharmacies owned by a pharmacist is capped at five and
- o Prohibition on the right of another person to control a community pharmacy

The structure of the council membership as it is currently stated is less than ideal. The council is an industry body that has the potential to be weighted inappropriately, where industry experts (community pharmacists such as myself) may be significantly outnumbered. There needs to be a requirement for a majority of pharmacy business owner members, making sure that the council is able to function as intended.

Community pharmacies are driven by the belief in small businesses, are dedicated to achieving better health care outcomes and overall improved community health. In an obvious contrast, corporate entities, who are so blatantly profit-driven, could compromise the reinvestment of time, professionalism, and money into local production, harmfully impacting the very heart of community pharmacy and why we do what we do on a daily basis, not just here in Queensland but all over Australia.

I'm requesting for the Bill be tightened to close the current loopholes and ensure that this important piece of legislation strengthens the integrity and transparency of the community pharmacy profession, ensuring safe, affordable, and accessible healthcare for all Queenslanders as we need this now more than ever. Particular attention should be brought to the number of Cannabis dispensaries appearing in numerous locations - as any loophole that has been exploited would only be a short step for the Supermarkets to become involved.

Regards,

[Davinder Bansal](#)

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