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Committee Secretary
Health, Community and Disability Services, Domestic and Family Violence Parliamentary
Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

09 July 2018

**RE: Inquiry into the establishment of a pharmacy council and transfer of pharmacy
ownership in Queensland**

Dear Mr Hansen,

I have recently been made aware of the inquiry into the pharmacy sector, which is currently
underway in Queensland.

As the General Manager of Vision Australia, I believe our constituents have an important stake in
this inquiry, so I write to submit the views of our organisation.

Vision Australia is a leading national provider of blindness and low vision services in Australia.
We work in partnership with Australians who are blind or have low vision to help them achieve
the possibilities they choose in life.

Our constituents come from all walks of life, and like most Australians, many visit community
pharmacies regularly. We are concerned about the committee's decision to review the existing
regulations around pharmacy ownership, which we believe ensure a local connection in
pharmacies that understands disability and vision impairment.

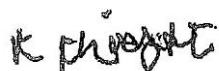
Everyday activities, like visiting the pharmacy, can be a challenge for people with blindness or
low vision, so having a pharmacist who is prepared to take the time to work with a blind or low
vision person is essential. We are concerned that under a corporate model, pharmacists would
no longer provide the sort of care that our constituents need, given that this service is not in itself
profitable for pharmacies. Our experience with community pharmacy makes us confident that
pharmacists who own their own pharmacies understand the importance of supporting members
of their community with disability, including vision impairment.

While many medications are now sold with braille, there is not universal braille on medications.
This makes it essential that a supportive pharmacist be available to talk through medications with

a blind or low vision customer. We also believe that the current model ensures that there is clinical accountability for pharmacists. We are concerned that under the management of a large business, the sort of personalised service on which our constituents rely, and the accountability which ensures that they receive the care they need, may disappear.

Vision Australia does not support the deregulation of pharmacy ownership in Queensland. We believe the current system serves our constituents well, and have serious concerns about the sort of impacts corporatisation of the sector could have on vision impaired Australians.

Regards,



Karen Knight
General Manager Advocacy & Engagement
Vision Australia