



Secretary Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000

**RE: Inquiry into establishing a pharmacy council and pharmacy ownership in Queensland**

Dear Mr Hansen,

I recently heard about this inquiry, and I'm writing to voice my concerns as the owner of a pharmacy in rural Queensland.

I own Clermont Pharmacy, a local pharmacy in Clermont, Queensland. We're a small business but we are vital to the community members' health and wellbeing, being the first point of contact for locals seeking advice and assistance with medical or health issues. We have built strong relationships with our patients and care very much for our community. We are very focused on going the extra mile for our patients, providing additional support and health services for those in need of extra help.

I understand the government is planning to set up a pharmacy council, which I believe is a great move for Queensland. We need a local body to regulate pharmacies, particularly to support rural and independent ones. While I support this, I am very worried about what changing the pharmacy ownership laws would mean for my pharmacy and my patients.

Letting non-pharmacists own pharmacies could lead to a corporate takeover of the sector, and see the end of community pharmacies like my own. Rural and remote communities need the health services that a local pharmacist provides. Many of my customers struggle to get to the GP for minor issues, and I'm there to provide health advice when this happens.

Businesses like mine are already struggling so the offer of purchase by a large corporation may seem like a good idea, but I care about my patients and my community. I know that big businesses wouldn't provide the additional services that I do, because many of them aren't profitable.

At the beginning of this year, I put on a mental health night for men with guest speakers and information for men struggling in the community. The night was well received with 126 people attending. That's 126 people just in the Clermont community that need extra support large corporations won't provide. I raised the money myself to fund the night and got no profits in return. But it's what we do. I've also made a health program that is being used in three local schools.

I also think that the scope of services pharmacists can provide should be expanded in Queensland, at least to bring us in line with other states. Considering my pharmacy is the most accessible health provider in Clermont, I need to be able to provide more services to my community. Simple services and programs such as immunisations, disease screenings and even monitoring of blood pressure or glucose levels could make a great difference to rural communities.

Pharmacies are incredibly important to rural Queenslanders. We need regulations that help us to care for our communities, and continue to serve them as effectively as we do. We also need to be able to meet more of the health needs of our patients, to close the gap between the health of rural Queenslanders and those living in the city.

Regards,

Grant Oswald

Owner, Clermont Pharmacy