

**From:**  
**To:** [Pharmacy](#)  
**Subject:** Costigans Pharmacy Maryborough  
**Date:** Tuesday, 10 July 2018 10:15:36 PM

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Health, Community and Disability Services, Domestic and Family Violence Committee

Parliament House

George Street

Brisbane QLD 4000

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

I recently found out about this inquiry, and I'm writing to express my concerns as the owner of a pharmacy in a rural area in Queensland.

My wife Cheryl and I own a pharmacy in the rural town of Maryborough which has a population of approximately 27 000 people. We employ 3 pharmacists and 14 staff and have been providing services to the town for 18 years since 2000 .

I understand that the government is planning to set up a pharmacy council, and I think this is a good idea. We need a local body to oversee pharmacies But I'm really worried about what any changes to the laws around pharmacy ownership would mean for my pharmacy and my patients.

Deregulating the sector and opening it up to non-pharmacists owners could mean the end of community pharmacies like my own. Pharmacies are not like other businesses. Rural and remote communities, like the one I service in Maryborough, need the health services that a local pharmacist provides. Many of my customers struggle to get to the GP for minor ailments, and I'm there to provide health advice when this happens.

Our pharmacy provides services like Med Check services, Home Medication review services, unit dose packing, free delivery services, Medibank private agency, NDSS (National Diabetes Supply Scheme) and diabetes counselling, Vaccinations and Immunisation services, Blood pressure monitoring services and at least one pharmacist available for general counselling at all times. Because of long association with the town, we have developed close relationships with many local associations in the town including sponsorships for local schools, sporting clubs, RSL club, and more. We have close working relationships with local doctor's surgeries, knowing most of the staff and GPs personally, and also with other allied health providers such as Physiotherapists, Psychologists, Counsellors, Dentists and Headspace. Additionally, we work with all the local nursing homes to provide best practice services in the provision of advice and medication to residents as well as working with other community organisations, providing free unit dose packing for the local mental health unit and work closely to provide advice and medication to the local Aboriginal Health unit.

Businesses like mine are already struggling, and the offer of purchase by a large corporation might seem attractive, but we are health care providers first and foremost. I know that Coles or Woolworths wouldn't provide the sorts of services to my community that I do, because many of them simply don't turn a profit.

I also think that the scope of services pharmacists can provide should be reviewed. I need to be able to provide more services to my community, as we are the most accessible health professional in Maryborough. Pharmacies are incredibly important to rural and remote communities in Queensland. We need to have confidence that regulations will let us continue to serve our communities as best we can. We also need to be able to meet more of the health needs of our patients, to give every rural Queenslander a better chance at a healthier life.

Regards,

Patrick Costigan Bpharm

Costigans Good Price pharmacy warehouse

Maryborough