

**From:**  
**To:** [Pharmacy](#)  
**Subject:** Submission to the inquiry into laws governing pharmacy ownership  
**Date:** Wednesday, 11 July 2018 1:26:10 PM  
**Attachments:** [image003.jpg](#)  
**Importance:** High

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To whom it may concern,

As a pharmacist having devoted over 30 years to community pharmacy (and my father before me) I can safely say that a relaxing of the controls/laws controlling the current ownership structure for pharmacies would be extremely dangerous and costly in every sense.

There are so very many reasons why a registered pharmacist should be the person who owns and controls the responsibility for community pharmacy, but 2 questions of massive concern immediately spring to mind:

1. Would you want such people/organisations as biker gangs being able to own (and therefore hold the keys to) pharmacies? What potential could this offer to the wrong type of people with the ability to obtain precursor substances for the manufacture of illegal substances such as Methamphetamine and more? The cost to society for this alone could be huge, with no foreseeable benefit/positive outcome whatsoever.
2. Under the current system doctors prescribe purely based on which medication/treatment would provide the best outcome for the patient. If doctors were to own pharmacies. one would question whether the financial gain made by selecting certain products to prescribe might sway their decision making in any way. We would certainly hope that this wouldn't be the case, but would be naïve to think that a direct financial implication would have absolutely no impact on the decision making process for every practitioner in the country, even if just to use up medication before it expires on the shelf (a cost that we as pharmacists currently wear constantly). As said, under the current system the cost, profits from the pharmaceuticals have absolutely no relevance to the doctor in deciding the best medication to prescribe. Why change that?

What would the cost of the above 2 concerns be to Australian communities, and to the secondary healthcare system in our country? Astronomical.

There is widespread agreement that the preservation of the current model has served Queenslanders well over many decades. Our industry – made up of thousands of small businesses in every corner of the State– has adapted and changed to meet the needs of patients who live everywhere from our large cities to small rural and remote communities. Under this structure pharmacists remain, and have always been, the most accessible of all health professionals. This includes all settings, urban, regional and rural Australia.

Pharmacies are the most accessible primary healthcare provider in the community, where patients can walk in and get FREE professional medical advice from their trusted community pharmacist. Why change this?

It has been shown repeatedly in other countries where the corporates control such things, the very bare minimum in professional staff numbers (registered pharmacists) are hired (just to meet the minimum legal requirements of having a pharmacist on duty), but that leaves

pharmacists inaccessible to the general public and often results in enormous wait times for prescriptions, dispensaries actually closed for lunch breaks etc etc, all the things that are currently covered by the owner/pharmacist in the current successful model.

With the large corporates owning pharmacies, MANY community pharmacies will close. Currently, we offer SO much more than just the supply of prescription medicine. We are there for the benefit of our community members for their mental health status, their primary health checks, family support, compliance monitoring, health advice and much, much more. We're there as the health professional they can trust and confide in with a decent heartfelt chat – for free - about all and any health and wellbeing concerns. With a corporate structure (in a Coles or Woolworths or so) there will be no time for such essential community services by the overworked pharmacist employed through the corporate system, battling purely to keep up with massive dispensing numbers.

I could go on & on about the huge number of benefits the current system of community pharmacy offers the people of Australia, but cannot think of even one reason why such a preposterous change would be of any benefit whatsoever (other than perhaps to the feed the greed of a few corporates, at the enormous expense of the Australian Public, both financially and health wise).

As the old saying goes “if it ain't broke, why try and fix it?”.

Our current system of community pharmacy in my opinion (and I have worked in pharmacies in many other countries around the world) offers some of the best primary healthcare services available anywhere. Our current system definitely “aint broke”. It works exceptionally well and is the envy of many other countries.

To even consider changing this is preposterous.

Regards,

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