

32 Hastings St Noosa Heads 4567

Committee Secretary
HCDSDFVPC
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Hansen,

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

We have been made aware of the abovementioned inquiry, and we write to submit our views on issues within the terms of reference of this inquiry.

- Currently accountability for prescription services can be enforced via the professional standards expected of the pharmacist as an owner – if this is a corporate as it is in America they pay fines at a corporate level but there is no individual accountability, in Australia if the owning pharmacist does not act in the best interest of the customer there can be significant ramifications for them maintaining their professional registration & therefore business
- Competition in the retail space – supermarkets in Australia are dominated by 2 players there is a risk to the numbers of owners if corporate ownership is allowed
- Regional access – pharmacies current exist in many small communities where there are no other health services – the current model of ownership and location rules supports the current model which provides healthcare and pharmacy services in regional locations
- Continuity of care of having local pharmacist owners living in regional communities for many years

As a patient/community group who is supported by our local community pharmacy, we are concerned about the possibility of a big business takeover of community pharmacies in Queensland.

We have seen the important contribution that pharmacists make to their local communities, and we believe that any deregulation of the laws around the ownership of these pharmacies could cause these pharmacies to be bought out, or simply forced to shut their doors. We want the current system where the pharmacy owner has health outcomes as their business priority backed by their professional ethics and priorities. Big business would have as a focus shareholders and bottom line profit.

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) is too important a piece of public health policy to place in the hands of corporates.

We understand that if pharmacy ownership laws were changed many unintended consequences would result.

Communities rely on the health services provided by community pharmacies.

While we understand there are other matters before the inquiry, our main concern is ensuring that community pharmacies continue to be able to support their communities.

We request that the committee consider the important role of pharmacies and recommend against deregulation.

Regards,

R. J. RANSON R.C.