

George Fotinos Pharmacist

Health, Community and Disability Services, Domestic and Family Violence Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
Dear Mr Hansen,

I am writing to you as the owner of TerryWhite Chemmart West End and George Fotinos Chemist Ayr (now Terry White Chemmart Ayr). I am really concerned about the inquiry into the pharmacy sector of Queensland.

While I fully support a pharmacy council for Queensland to regulate the State's industry, I'm worried about the potential deregulation of pharmacy ownership laws.

The current model is a safeguard for the public, and it serves our patients and communities well. I believe any deregulation of current ownership laws will threaten any rural and community-based pharmacies in Queensland like my own. I run both rural and metro pharmacies, and I can see threats to both businesses if the deregulation goes ahead. My pharmacies are invaluable to the community, and I believe that a big business takeover of pharmacies would see services like the ones I provide disappear.

Given the diversity of the communities I service, I provide a range of different services to meet the needs of my community. I offer opioid replacement programs, staged supply and local delivery for customers who can't make it to the pharmacy. These aren't particularly profitable services, but I provide them because I see the need in the community. I am concerned that these sorts of services wouldn't be offered by a big corporate.

I also work closely with vulnerable patients. These patients include people who inject drugs and patients with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. I work hard to ensure these patients are taken care of and provided with extra support. This is another thing large corporations wouldn't do but that is vital to people's health.

What we really need is to expand our services, not take them away. I entirely support any extension of scope which allows me to provide more of the services my community needs. This would be extremely impactful in rural communities, where certain health services are hard to come by. Being the most accessible health professional in Ayr, providing additional services to my patients such as vaccinations and screenings could make a great difference for early detection, ongoing monitoring and disease prevention.

Pharmacies play an essential role in the health system as primary health providers. I am a proud pharmacy owner and work hard to provide quality care to members of the West End and Burdekin community. As a result, I am concerned deregulation in the pharmacy sector would undermine the current model which supports and protects patients like my own.

Regards,

George Fotinos Owner,

Terry White Chemmart West End and Terry White Chemmart Ayr