

From: pccos@big.net.au
To: [Pharmacy](#)
Subject: RE: Submission
Date: Friday, 10 August 2018 1:42:20 PM

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From: pccos@big.net.au [<mailto:pccos@big.net.au>]
Sent: Friday, 13 July 2018 8:25 AM
To: Pharmacy
Subject:

Health, Community and Disability Services, Domestic and [REDACTED] 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 husband Patrick and I own a pharmacy in the rural town of Gympie which has a population of approximately 20 000 people. We employ 2 pharmacists and 10 staff and have been providing services to the town for 12 years since 2006, having purchased the shop from another sole operator.

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-pharmacist 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 Gympie, 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. Gympie is a small rural town which has a shortage of General Practitioners and we are often called upon to counsel and advise patients on various health issues, and regularly triage patients and refer on to the local hospital as required. Because we are a very service orientated industry, we would not be able to provide this without the support of qualified pharmacy assistants. Our staff are called upon to undertake specific training via the Pharmacy Guild programs which ensure that they are in a position to provide the best possible service to our patients. "Big Business" such as Woolworths or other supermarket chains, would not be as focused on these optimal health outcomes and would be more focused on the bottom line. Large companies would work on a lower wage percentage which would translate to a lower level of service provided, particularly in the area of pharmacist expertise.

We provide a minimum of one qualified registered pharmacist at all times to be

available to provide free advice to members of our community. Our pharmacy provides services like Med Check services, Home Medication review services, unit dose packing, free delivery services, NDSS (National Diabetes Supply Scheme) and diabetes counselling, vaccinations and immunisation services, blood pressure monitoring services, staged supply of medications, Methadone and Suboxone dosing and at least one pharmacist available for general counselling at all times.

Because of our 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 and with other allied health providers such as Physiotherapists, Psychologists, Counsellors, Dentists, Speech therapists and other pharmacies within the town. 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.

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 these services 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 Gympie.

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 Queenslanders a better chance at a healthier life.

I can be contacted at [REDACTED] if you have further queries.

Regards,
Cheryl Costigan (Proprietor)
Good Price Pharmacy Warehouse

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