



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**

I write in reference to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the potential establishment of a Pharmacy Council to oversee the community pharmacy sector, and, in particular, to that part of the terms of reference calling for a review of the current laws governing pharmacy ownership.

I strongly oppose any deregulation and big business takeover of community pharmacy.

There is no doubt in my mind that deregulation will result in the closure of many local pharmacies. As a practising pharmacist for almost 50 years I believe that apart from the traditional medication dispensing, many pharmaceutical health services currently provided to members of the community will disappear. Our pharmacy provides nursing home services, diabetes services, home delivery and numerous health programs and screening services and these will disappear. This view is based upon overseas experience and will result in a decline in overall patient care.

Pharmacists practising in the community are the focal point for basic health care needs in many communities, operating as the first point of call and providing triage, advice, referral and support services to our patients.

In many rural and regional communities, a pharmacist's role as a first point of contact is even more significant, with access to other health services restricted by distance and availability. Deregulation would threaten pharmacies and will result in the closure of pharmacies in rural and remote areas, and eliminate a vital service for these communities. Access to the most accessible health professional, the pharmacist, would disappear.

There are currently 1140 pharmacies in Queensland, employing approximately 4,500 pharmacists. The Pharmacy Guild estimates that the sector employs approximately 12,000 Queenslanders including pharmacists and pharmacy assistants.

Pharmacies in Queensland are the most frequently visited and accessible primary healthcare destination in the State, with more than 70 million individual patient visits annually. The pharmacist is accessible, usually without an appointment, and primarily advice is provided without charge.

Closures caused by deregulation will threaten the jobs of these healthcare providers and increase the healthcare burden on GPs and the hospital system.



Closures will threaten, in particular, access to primary healthcare services in rural and remote communities.

Deregulation would bring many unintended consequences and scenarios that create moral hazard. Everyone acknowledges that supermarkets, with their selling of cigarettes and their affiliated companies selling alcohol, should automatically rule them out of owning pharmacies. Doctors and medical corporates should also not be allowed to own pharmacies and thus profit from the more medicines they prescribe. Equally drug manufacturers should not own pharmacies. The list goes on and on and the unintended consequences would result.

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

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

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Tucker".

Ken Tucker B Pharm M.P.S.

13/7/2018