

**Health, Community and Disability Services, Domestic and Family Violence
Committee**

Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

6th July 2018

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Inquiry into establishing a pharmacy council and pharmacy ownership in Queensland

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.

I own 1 community pharmacy in the regional city of Toowoomba, the clientele which includes the elderly, working families and a significant proportion of less fortunate members of our community.

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-pharmacists 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 Toowoomba, 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.

Our pharmacy provides a level of service to our elderly community who often find it difficult to get around, because of a variety of health-related issues. We provide many professional services to our community including Dose administration aids to both community and hostel patients, medication review services, FREE health advice, dispensing and counselling services, vaccination services, diabetes management and screening services, blood pressure services and a FREE delivery service to our local community.

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 them 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 I really am the most accessible health professional in Toowoomba.

We already provide the above services and many of them are FREE. And we are hoping to continue this process by offering more and more services like Screening for lung disease, screening for STIs, increased limited prescribing rights and minor ailments advice and care.

Pharmacies are incredibly important to regional, 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 Queensland a better chance at a healthier life.

Regards,

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