

12 July 2018

Committee Secretary
HCDSDFVPC
Parliament House Qld 4000

pharmacy@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Madam/Sir

Re Inquiry into the establishment of a pharmacy council and pharmacy ownership in Queensland

Spinal Life Australia represents people with spinal cord injury, the late effects of polio and transverse myelitis. We appreciate the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry and do so in the hope it can foster the best pharmacy outcomes that are critical for people with physical disability across Queensland.

With kind regards,



Michael Powell
Chief Executive Officer

Submission from Spinal Life Australia

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

Spinal Life Australia is a leading provider of advocacy, therapy and supports for people with spinal cord damage and related physical disabilities. We are pleased to comment as follows.

With the funding supports from the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the National Injury Insurance Scheme Queensland, people with disability are contributing significantly to the social and economic performance of every region across Queensland. However, it must be acknowledged that all the aspirations of people with disability rely on maintaining good health and wellbeing - and qualified pharmacy services are critical to that.

In the two matters that are the focus of this Inquiry, our view is this:

The establishment of a pharmacy council in Queensland

Queensland had a Pharmacists Board of Queensland. It was abolished in 2010 and regulatory functions since then have been managed by Queensland Health. We believe there should be an independent pharmacy authority and therefore we support the establishment of a pharmacy council.

And given Queensland's increasing populations with diminishing functionality due to aging, medical condition and disability, we hope consideration will be given to consumer representation on the Council. Some key indicators for this:

People with a permanent disability 18.5%

Source: ABS

By 2031, the over 60s are forecast to become 26% of the population

Source: South East Queensland Region of Councils

Medical conditions:

Diabetes 4.8%

Arthritis 14.8%

Asthma 10.2%

Osteoporosis 3.3%

Source: ABS 2012

Pharmacy ownership in Queensland

Our interest in this matter is quality of service. These are our concerns for our members.

When people are seeking pharmacy advice, they do not seek to obtain it from staff at the checkout. They want qualified advice. This is true for the general public but it has an even higher emphasis for people with disability because of their vulnerability and susceptibility due to their disability.

The spinal cord damage cohort for example have loss of bowel and bladder functions and can experience a range of issues, from bladder infections to respiratory and muscular difficulties – and being seated in a wheelchair constantly causes skin to become thin and can lead to pressure sores. We cannot emphasise too highly the importance of achieving advice and direction from qualified pharmacy professionals who better understand the ‘lived experience’ of the customer with disability.

In urban areas, there is more choice and shorter distances between pharmacies. In regional and rural areas across a vast State, the role of the qualified pharmacist is pivotal to their communities. People with disability place great reliance upon them.

In regional and rural areas, the distances between hospitals becomes greater, the GPs are not as plentiful and their surgery hours generally do not approximate those of the chemist, who is so often called upon to get a person through the night or the weekend when other services come on line again.

Quite simply, our members and people with disability generally place great faith in their chemist because their lives often depend on it. Therefore, we believe the qualified pharmacist is an essential safeguard for Queenslanders with a disability to contribute to the fabric of our communities state-wide – and that requires a qualified pharmacist to be available at all times during a pharmacy’s hours of operation.