

## PETITION: PHARMACEUTICAL BENEFITS – 22 October 2009

**Mrs VALE** (Hughes) (9:30 AM) —I rise to present a petition from the residents of Wattle Grove, Holsworthy and surrounding suburbs in my electorate of Hughes. It draws the attention of the House to the fact that this community does not have reasonable access to the supply of pharmaceutical benefits by an approved chemist. Chen's Pharmacy, which is located in the Wattle Grove Shopping Village, has operated as a non-PBS pharmacy since February 1998 and has cared for this community despite not being able to provide medicines that are subsidised by the Commonwealth government. A section 90 approval has been denied to this pharmacy due to the current pharmacy location rules criteria. We therefore ask the House to give Wattle Grove and Holsworthy reasonable access to the supply of pharmaceutical benefits by requesting that the Minister for Health and Ageing exercises ministerial discretion so as to provide a section 90 approval to Chen's Pharmacy at Wattle Grove.

Mr Chen's application to supply pharmaceutical benefits under rule 113 was refused by the Australian Community Pharmacy Authority on the grounds that the catchment area did not have greater than 3,000 people. It said also that there was not more than one doctor serving the area and that the proposed premises was not at least 1.5 kilometres in a straight line from the nearest approved premises. However, the catchment area of this particular part of my electorate does have greater than 3,000 people and it is serviced by more than one doctor. I note that there is another pharmacy within that 1.5-kilometre range. However, that is also owned by Mr and Mrs Chen. That pharmacy, in Hammondville, is separated from the populations of Wattle Grove and Holsworthy by a major road, Heathcote Road. It is almost impossible for mothers with prams or for elderly people to access this pharmacy. If they do not have their own private transport, it can be a walk of something like two kilometres from their residence—not from the pharmacy—to actually access pharmaceutical benefits. It is a great privilege to tender this petition on behalf of my constituents so that they may be heard by the minister.

The petition read as follows—

To the Honourable The Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives

This petition of the local community of Wattle Grove/Holsworthy and the residents of surrounding suburbs draws to the attention of the House that this community does not have reasonable access to the supply of pharmaceutical benefits by an approved pharmacist. Chen's Pharmacy which is located in Wattle Grove Shopping Village has operated as a non-PBS pharmacy since February 1998 and has cared for this community despite not being able to provide medicines which are subsidised by the Commonwealth Government. A Section 90 approval has been denied to this pharmacy due to the current pharmacy location rules criteria.

We therefore ask the House to give Wattle Grove/Holsworthy reasonable access to the supply of pharmaceutical benefits by requesting that the Minister for Health exercise Ministerial Discretion so as to provide a Section 90 approval to Chen's Pharmacy, Wattle Grove.

from 1,331 citizens

Petition received.