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The Secretary
Senate Economics References Committee
Room S.G. 64
Parliament House
Canberra, A.C.T. 2600

27/10/2003

Dear Sir/Madam,

There has been a large number of recent announcements emanating from two major food retailers, suggesting that Pharmacy should be the next take over target for this duopoly. All these announcements generally centre supposedly on price differences. Interestingly there are 5000 Pharmacies competing against each other in Australia. In grocery perhaps two or three major ones.

However, when one looks at their recent track record in regards to public morality one would have to be very wary of price driven and profit driven major companies.

Both major retailers were guilty of importing banned overseas Norwegian fish to the Tasmanian Market. Every Tasmanian knew that the ban on imported fish was set by our Tasmanian Government to protect an industry worth millions of dollars to the Tasmanian economy. Worse still, the major grocery outlets did not inform the Tasmanian public it was imported fish. What moral grounds have they not to inform Tasmanians of this subterfuge. They stated they did not know, however every Tasmanian knew it was illegal. The import of the fish was price driven and was in the majors dollar driven interests only, not the survival the Tasmanian Aquaculture Industry.

In the health industry, both majors had to remove all Pan Pharmacy products from the shelves when it was discovered that some of the Pan products could endanger the health of Australians.

The major food companies removed the products, but when things had quietened down, began putting them back on the shelves. They said that it was a mistake, but one has to ask what sort of health controls are in place at these two companies or is it again only price and profit driven.

Can we trust these companies even to administer Pharmaceutical products, let alone sell and promote them. Are these motives solely and coldly profit driven? Are we to have our health compromised by food managers who have no idea of the health industry, promoting scheduled drugs as price driven commodities.

Many politicians including the Premier of N.S.W. have realised the dangers of big business interests taking over health and pharmacy of our community. The politicians have stated clearly that Pharmacists have been the guardians of our health. The politicians know how responsible Pharmacies are in looking after the average persons health and the correct and careful administration of drugs into our bodies.

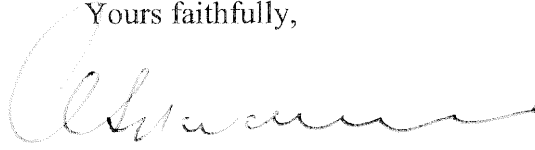
There can be no doubt that the major food retailers are only after the bottom line and have little or no interest in this countries health outcome.

The major outlets' inappropriate actions speak for themselves. There is an old saying 'leopards never change their spots'.

Look forward to a major push by food outlets for the downgrading of schedules on medications, the ability of non qualified people to promote drugs to you on price alone, and this is with no idea at all of one's medical history and with no care at all to one's welfare and health outcomes.

Health is definately different to tobacco, liquor, petrol, newspapers, and groceries.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'A.G. Hayward', written in dark ink.

A.G. Hayward Phc
(Former President Pharmacy
Board of Tasmania)