



## **The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP**

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**Deputy Prime Minister  
Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources  
Leader of The Nationals  
Federal Member for New England**

### **A Message from the Leader of The Nationals**

The Nationals recognise the critical role that community pharmacies play in regional Australia in delivering the PBS and quality use of medicines, health services and advice to their patients.

The strength and health of our regions are enhanced by the dependable professionalism of community pharmacists, and our regional economies are made stronger by their dedicated endeavours and the financial and social investment made by pharmacists in local communities.

The Nationals are proud of our record consistently standing up for community pharmacy small businesses in repelling the big supermarkets who seek to deregulate the tried and trusted community pharmacy model which continues to serve regional Australia so well.

We support the pharmacy ownership laws, which deliver a diverse ownership base of thousands of small business proprietors rather than concentrating pharmacies in the hands of a handful of large corporates.

The owner-operated model of pharmacists owning pharmacies mean that the health of regional Australians is put first and foremost by small business proprietors who live in and invest in their local communities.

The Nationals are committed to ensuring that people living in rural and regional Australia have equitable access to the PBS and the pharmacy services that their city counterparts take for granted.

We strongly support the role that the pharmacy location rules have played in providing equitable access to the PBS for people living in regional Australia, encouraging pharmacies to locate in smaller regional communities rather than clustering in the big cities.

The Liberal and National Government's \$18.9 billion Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement signed in May 2015 provides a significant investment in the future of community pharmacy in a very tough budgetary climate.

The Agreement provides a strong foundation for community pharmacies in regional Australia.

With the strong advocacy of the Nationals, the Agreement includes a major increase in the funding for regional and rural pharmacy services, through the \$50 million Pharmacy Trial Program and the \$600 million for new and enhanced evidence-based services. The Nationals support the current model of community pharmacy.

Under my leadership with Nationals Deputy Leader and Minister for Rural Health, Senator the Hon Fiona Nash, the Nationals will work hard with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia to ensure the community pharmacy network in Australia has the confidence to invest, employ staff, innovate and continue to maximise its capacity to deliver improved health outcomes.

Finally, can I take the opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for the work you and your colleagues do and for your enduring commitment to the patients and communities you serve.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BJ', written in a cursive style.

Barnaby Joyce MP  
Leader of The Nationals

5 May 2016