



**THE HON PETER DUTTON MP
MINISTER FOR HEALTH
MINISTER FOR SPORT**

Ref No: MC14-008363

Dr Dennis Jensen MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Chair

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 June 2014 regarding a petition submitted to the Standing Committee on Petitions, regarding a request for approval of a pharmacy for the Valla community.

Following receipt of a request by a pharmacist seeking the exercise of my discretionary power to approve a new pharmacy in Valla Beach, New South Wales, my Department recently presented me with a submission outlining the circumstances of the request. I have decided to consider the request, which is the first stage of the process.

I now have three months, from the date I decided to consider the request, to decide if I will approve the pharmacist to supply Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicines at the proposed pharmacy. The reason for the three-month period is to allow time for my Department to seek further information and evidence to assist me to make my decision, including seeking comments from nearby pharmacists, and further information from the pharmacist who made the request. The terms of the petition will also be taken into account during my consideration of this matter.

My discretionary power is designed to address circumstances where there is an unintended consequence of the Pharmacy Location Rules. I can only exercise my discretionary power if I am satisfied that a decision to not approve a pharmacist will result in a community being left without reasonable access to PBS medicines, and it is in the public interest to do so.

Thank you for drawing this petition to my attention and I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

15/7/14.
PETER DUTTON