A battle won for pharmacy

By Joni Scanlon

A PRIVATE pharmacy will soon open in Hackett despite the federal government's rejection of the original application under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

Pharmacist Rhonda Warne will open the private, non PBS-approved pharmacy in early December. The pharmacy is being stocked and signage is already in place.

While the pharmacy would operate privately, Ms Warne said she would still work towards getting approval to operate under the PBS.

"We haven't given up," she said.

Hackett is unable to qualify for a pharmacy under the federal government Pharmacy Agreement, which has a location rule preventing a pharmacy opening with 1.5 kilometres of another pharmacy.

The nearest pharmacy to the Hackett site is 1.345 kilometres away in Watson, just 155 metres short of the cut-off.

Ms Warne and her business partner Yuko Raimoto put a submission to the Australian Community Pharmacy Authority to override the location rule in their case. However, Health and Ageing Minister Tanya Plibersek declined to approve the application.

Despite not gaining government support for a PBS pharmacy, Ms Warne decided to open the pharmacy in a limited capacity while she reapplies for a PBS number.

Ms Warne said the non PBS-approved pharmacy would still be able to meet some of the needs of the community, despite customers not being able to access the scheme.

"It's putting at least a health professional into a community that doesn't have anybody at the moment," she said.

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Dickson resident Brian Palmer with pharmacist Rhonda Warne and other Hackett residents are pleased about the opening of the new Hackett Pharmacy.

Picture: Elesa Lee