



Terry White Chemists

Our Stories - A Great Place To Do Business

Right dose of holistic health care

Terry White Chemists Port Macquarie has been lauded as one of the national franchise's flagship stores successfully operating for the past 13 years under a philosophy of 'The People Make The Difference'.

This store philosophy is ingrained at every level of the pharmacy's operation where staff are encouraged to listen to, care for and laugh with customers. Owned by local pharmacist Trevor Coles, the Terry White Chemists brand made its mark in Port Macquarie in November 1995 as a part of the opening of the Port Central shopping precinct.

Establishing a national pharmacy brand came with its own challenges though.

"Firstly, there had been divided community opinion on the development of a shopping centre in the heart of the CBD, so once opened, Port Central had to work hard to establish its benefit to the whole community and build its customer base over the next two to three years," Trevor explained.

"Secondly, there was also local community suspicion that a national pharmacy brand could provide the personal service which community pharmacy is traditionally renowned for. "We quickly proved that we could deliver on that pre-requisite of personalised service, and have continued to do so consistently for over 13 years now."

In that time, the business has continually evolved but a recent major refurbishment completed that period of evolution. The completely new look pharmacy has now cemented its place not only as the largest pharmacy in Port Macquarie, but is now well known up and down the whole North Coast and is a sort after destination for locals, visitors and tourists to Port Macquarie.



Experienced pharmacist, Wendy Eccleston manages the pharmacy and together with more than 30 staff, provides a huge diversity of product range and specialised services. In fact, it is a one-stop destination for health, wellness and beauty.

"One of the benefits of belonging to a national franchise is that the pharmacy is provided ongoing business, merchandising and marketing support from the franchise head office. This allows the local team of staff to totally focus on front of shop customer service with minimal back office administration," Wendy said.

"But no matter what support services are provided by a distant head office, both Trevor and I understand that the essence of success is dependent on quality service implementation by a well-trained team of staff.



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Strength to strength:

After a successful career in Queensland politics, Terry White with his wife, Rhonda (both pharmacists), established the Terry White Chemists group of pharmacies. They appointed their first franchisee in 1994 and now there are 150 stores from Cairns to Perth and from Hobart to Darwin with a combined turnover of \$900 million.

In the years since 1959, the Terry White Chemists name has grown from being a small pharmacy at Redcliffe in Queensland into Australia's leading national retail pharmacy brand.

This growth, which continues today, has been driven by a business philosophy focused on providing products and advice that help customers look good and feel better.

"As the manager I delegate a lot of responsibility to each team member and I encourage development of their personal skills to create great relationships with our customers.

"This style of pharmacy is complex to manage due to the many different facets of the business. Dispensing, medication advice, staff recruitment, rostering for seven day trading, multiple supplier relationships, security, stock selection, ordering and staff training – the list seems endless at times.

"We set high standards and have high expectations of the team, but this is necessary to ensure the business delivers on its promise of quality customer service.

"That's one of the reasons the pharmacy supports the local Customer Care program."

Disease prevention is now a focus of the Australian health landscape. Accordingly, the pharmacy has responded quickly and efficiently to the changing needs of its community.

"As a result the range of services we now offer in our pharmacy has also changed. We are offering more counselling services to our customers, and counselling on more topics. We committed to a heavy staff training program some time ago and now have a team of consultants to help deliver those services.

"In doing so, we have created a career pathway for local people wanting a respected career without the specific requirement of higher education."

The \$1 million investment in the recently completed refurbishment of the pharmacy is a significant investment in the local community, Trevor Coles added.

The decision to expand has resulted in a pharmacy that can offer a much more diverse range of products and extra services including the Tony

Ferguson Weight Loss Program and Value Vision Prescription Glasses, the Today Stop Smoking program, medication administration aids, a diabetes nurse, a naturopath and fully trained cosmetic consultants.

"To justify my business expansion and associated high financial commitment, I considered two basic principles.

One, future growth opportunities and secondly, competitor environment," Trevor explained.

"The first one was easy to justify as Port Macquarie's growth and potential for growth is before our eyes, happening every day.

"Official data supports current growth trends into the future, so by factoring all that into the equation, I thought okay, I could sit on my hands, do nothing and let the business grow naturally. But then you have to consider what your business competitor is doing.

"By doing that I don't specifically mean other pharmacies, because pharmacy

as an industry is being bombarded with threats from the major supermarkets. Supermarkets are good at what they do – mass market, no advice, impersonal checkout style operation.

"To survive the future, pharmacy's point of difference will be how we deliver on specialised health services which we will continue to develop through relentless innovation."

And it is that innovation which is a key factor in the successful branding of Terry White Chemists along with ensuring staff maintain a united approach in the services they deliver.

"We have an interesting mix of employees aged from 15 into their late 50s and they all bring their own personality to the store, each person contributing to a fun yet professional working environment," Wendy added.

"It is important they can all be individuals within the business, but it's as equally as important that we all work with the same vision in mind."

Our journey:

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Trevor Coles, Terry White Chemist

- *Terry White Chemists Port Macquarie is a proud supporter of the Customer Care Program*



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