



Archbishop
Christopher Prowse

CATHOLIC VOICE

ARCHDIOCESE OF CANBERRA AND GOULBURN



SIGN the Save Calvary Petition
www.savecalvary.com.au

What is the problem? Why is this the solution?



Archbishop Prowse during a pastoral visit with Calvary Hospital Staff

FOR over two centuries religions have been central to public life in Australia. Even now with declining religious adherence, religions have an ongoing commitment to human flourishing and the common good that is vital to the good of Australia and of Australians.

The ACT Government has stated that its plan to compulsorily acquire the Catholic Calvary Public Hospital was not an attack on 'religion', further that it was not due to Catholic opposition to anti-life processes and procedures.

If opposition to religion in the public sphere is not the reason, then I have to consider the reasons offered by the Government: that it seeks greater integration of public health facilities in the ACT; that it wants to commit substantial money to a new hospital that it can own, build and operate. At the same time, the Minister for Health has stated frequently that Calvary has provided excellent health care; that there are no clinical concerns with the current model; and, that Calvary has been greatly valued by the Canberra community for 44 years. These statements give rise to two questions: What is the problem? Why is this the solution?

To meet its self-imposed timeline, the Government announced the decision on May 10, and will debate and pass the Bill on May 31, with an effective take-over date of July 3.

The purported reason for the haste: to provide certainty to staff. Why might staff be uncertain you may ask? Because the Government has chosen to tear up a 99 year lease and a 99 year operating contract. These are not agreements signed by some long past government – it is the same ACT Government that signed the deal that now wants to tear up a contract it signed. A contract, in fact, signed by the Federal Finance Minister when she was Chief Minister in the ACT. The approach of the ACT Government does not meet any sense of transparency or accountability; rather it raises wider fears about

Continued on page 2

Calvary's Compulsory Acquisition

BY FR TONY PERCY

The ACT Government is about to make a compulsory acquisition of Calvary Hospital.

No one disputes that governments can do compulsory acquisitions on just terms. They are often undertaken for the benefit of the community ('Common Good').

No one likes compulsory acquisitions, naturally enough, especially a medical institution like Calvary Hospital.

However, if governments are going to do compulsory acquisitions, they need to do them according to the rule of law and on just terms.

The ACT Government is not doing this.

We need to know two things.

First, the government has suspended its own Standing Orders.

That is, the government has said that in this case, they don't need to have the customary two-month period of discussion, en-



"The ACT Government can do a compulsory acquisition, but they must be forced into doing it according to the rule of law and on just terms." Fr Tony Percy

quiry and reports, before the ACT Assembly votes on the compulsory acquisition.

They introduced the Bill on 11 May 2023 and want to do the compulsory acquisition on 3 July

2023.

Second, the ACT Land Acquisition Act 1994 deals with compulsory acquisitions on just terms.

The government says this Act will not apply with the Calvary Hospital compulsory acquisition.

Rather, the ACT Government says that they will do the compulsory acquisition and then work out the just terms later through regulation.

Now that we know this, we

should act.

The bottom line is this:

The ACT Government can do a compulsory acquisition, but they must be forced into doing it according to the rule of law and on just terms.

Is this too much to ask?

If this does not happen, then a precedent is being set in the ACT that will have grave consequences for any other community group, not just here, but around the country.

What can we do?

Sign the petition: www.savecalvary.com.au

Contact the Prime Minister's Office: <https://www.pm.gov.au/contact-your-pm>

The Prime Minister must force Chief Minister Barr back to the bargaining table to defend the property rights of ordinary Australians.

Much is at stake. We must act now.

Ecumenical and inter-faith leaders give their support

THE planned takeover of Calvary Hospital by the ACT Government brings back memories of dark days for Rev Gabor Szabo.

The Lutheran pastor spoke at a prayer vigil attended by ecumenical leaders and parishioners from around the Archdiocese on Wednesday evening.

"I simply couldn't believe the manner in which the ACT government is planning to carry out this acquisition," he said.

"I grew up in a country, Hungary, that was not free for over 40 years after the second world war by a socialist government. Now, the planned acquisition of Calvary Hospital brings back bad memories – the dark times of the 1950s and 60's, when hospitals, schools, land, and real estate were confiscated from Christian churches with no negotiation possible. I thought all this was in the past. The acquisition of Calvary Hospital sends alarming signs that something is going very wrong."

St Christopher's Cathedral was filled almost to capacity with over a thousand watching via live-stream as the faithful gathered to pray for the ACT Government to reverse their decision to imple-



Lutheran Pastor Rev Gabor Szabo.

ment a compulsory acquisition of the hospital.

Introducing the rosary, Archbishop Christopher Prowse said Calvary was facing its own 'Calvary moment'.

"This is a catastrophe rapidly unfolding at our beloved Calvary Hospital," he said.

Head of the Archdiocese task-force Fr Tony Percy thanked the crowd for attending and inspired hope in those gathered.

"Jesus said to us 'If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, say to this mountain 'move', and it will move," he said.

"This moment tonight is possibly the most important, given what Jesus has said to us. We've



Ecumenical and inter-faith leaders at St Christopher's Cathedral

got a mountain here, for sure. We've got a real problem."

Fr Tony said the Save Calvary petition had reached 30,000 signatures, but he still believed the prime minister had to get involved.

"The question must be asked – if they go through this illicit procedure, this unlawful procedure, then there will be an educational institution that is next, and there will be community groups in the ACT, and then it would enliven, one would think, people in other states to do the same thing. So, we have to pray with faith. This is a mountain that is too big for us."

Anglican bishop Mark Short said the ecumenical leaders and

parishes were gathered at the bottom of the mountain together.

"Christians have a 2000-year history of caring for human health at every dimension – body, mind and soul," he said.

Coptic Orthodox Church Fr Michael Zamer said the actions of the ACT Government spoke louder than their words.

"To bypass standard procedures to progress the takeover, to fast track, to not engage in consultation is concerning behaviour," he said.

Also in attendance were leaders from The Salvation Army, Greek Orthodox Church, Presbyterian Church and the Canberra Interfaith Forum.

What is the problem? Why is this the solution? *continued from page 1*

the intent of Government toward religious services in Australia.

Last week I met with staff of Calvary from senior doctors and nurses to administrative and facilities personnel. I went to listen. In return I heard of commitment of the staff to the values of Calvary as a Catholic public hospital: hospitality, healing, stewardship and respect. People of all faiths and none expressed their anxiety at the takeover and its pace; they openly wondered how ACT Health could continue these values. One member of staff, a Muslim, spoke of the welcome and respect he had received at Calvary as a person of faith.

We are seeing an experiment being played out in real time with real impact in the lives of real people. It will have substantial impact on the lives of clinicians and other staff; it will challenge their values and their practice. I believe the haste means that patients will be at risk in the Bruce Public Hospital. It has wider and

deeper implications.

As an Australian citizen I ask, if this can be done in a matter of weeks in the ACT, what prevents other Governments acting to improve integration and efficiency in other jurisdictions?

Never before has a government, Commonwealth, State or Territory, sought to acquire the assets, operations, staff and clients of a Church agency with the effect of ceasing its ministry. This raises the actions of the ACT Government to national significance and creates a dangerous and unpredictable precedent.

Some have suggested that my reaction to this unparalleled action is an unwillingness to give up control. Nothing could be further from the truth. Religions generally, and the Catholic Church in particular, have worked throughout the centuries for the common good in order to bring about human flourishing. It is the reason why the Church initiated hospitals over a millennia ago; it is

why we seek to continue to work in public health care – so that protection of life and healing can be offered to all in the community from conception to natural death. I have held that this has been a goal common of religion and the role of government. We share a mutual purpose – at least that was my view until two weeks ago.

The last two Federal Governments have pledged, as a priority, the protection of religious freedoms. Nothing has been done to give effect to these pledges, but governments around the country increasingly marginalize those of religious faith. Now we have direct legislative action to disenfranchise a religious entity that the very same government says has provided excellent service.

I find myself wondering if I understand the purpose of government in Australia any longer. If the Catholic Church, despite long years of service, is a target for government take-over, who is safe from similar predations?

At a Glance

On the 11th of May, the government put forward the Infrastructure Enabling Bill 2023.

By the 3rd of July, they will make a compulsory acquisition of Calvary Hospital.

Governments can make compulsory acquisitions, but they have to do it under the rule of law, and they have to do it on just terms.

In the Infrastructure Enabling Bill, the standard two-month period by which discussions of bills occur in this instance will not apply.

In the Infrastructure Enabling Bill 2023, the ACT Land Acquisition Act of 1994 will also not apply. That's the act that sets out for the government how to do a just terms compulsory acquisition.

As it stands at the moment, the government will acquire Calvary, and then decide on the just terms.



Kudos to Fr Percy for his righteous anger displayed on Sky TV. It is well placed, well directed and good to see the Church (ie:all of us) stand up for the right to life in the public square! The behavior of this ACT Gov is just morally bankrupt on many fronts.

Best service to the local and beyond for nearly half century. I pray that we all, in solidarity, maintain and protect this service for many generations to come.

If they can take over a hospital what business is next. Better invest some where else

Don't stay silent. They are relying on people being too intimidated to speak up. SPEAK UP.

I'm a nsw resident and extremely alarmed and disgusted at this unwillingness to engage with and/or ignore the community concerns in this matter.

"Why do you need coordinated care across both hospitals". If they can't manage one hospital how would they manage two?

I am wondering if the Catholic schools will be next. They operate on a lot of Government funding.

Many Australians including me came to this country because this is/was a free country where you could buy land and establish businesses without the threat of acquisition or takeover by government. This is the most antidemocratic thing I have seen in my 50 years here.

Australia is a democratic nation, known for a "fair go", ACT government hands off Calvary Hospital

WHY ACT Government? How about one in Tuggeranong or Gungahlin to meet the needs of an explosively increasing population? What. Possible. Reason..... would you just update the old one instead of increasing medical capability in the ACT, decrease wait times and increase the number of beds for a Increasing population.

Laudato si' Action Plan launched in the Archdiocese

THE end of Laudato si' Week culminated with the launch of the Archdiocesan Laudato si' Action Plan for 2023-2030.

Archbishop Christopher Prowse said he was delighted to endorse the action plan, which "provides practical guidance and outreaches to this form of evangelisation using the inspiration of integral ecology."

Archdiocesan Laudato si' Action Plan member Megan Thompson said the group had worked on the plan for "quite a while."

"It will provide suggestions for parishes, schools, organisations and families and provide inspiration for them to think about their own plans."



Archbishop Prowse endorses the Laudato si' Action Plan

Several parishes also launched parish-level action plans on the same day.

Students at St Matthew's Primary School in Page, led by Religious Education Co-ordinator Louise Vance said the school marked Laudato si' week in communion with the wider parish as part of this focus.

"It was a timely celebration to join with the parish and continue building relationships with our wider community and make connections to our Laudato si' five-year plan."

Mrs Vance said all the school grades had just finished units of learning centred on sharing the planet and how human activity impacts on all creation.

The most important lesson, Mrs Vance said, is to share with students that small acts make a big difference.

• For more information contact LaudatoSiACT@gmail.com
Access the draft plan at <https://cgcatholic.org.au/services-directory/caring-for-creation/>

The power of music, prayer and humour to teach and evangelise



Entertainer, Chris Padgett

NEW York-based speaker, musician, and author shared his unique style of evangelisation at a one-day whirlwind tour through Canberra.

Chris Padgett began the day-joining men from various walks of life at an early breakfast where he spoke on sacrifice, service, advocacy and mediation.

"I use these categories because they are recognisable, somewhat universal and directly connect to

Christ."

"Sacrifice, in particular, is intrinsically connected to love. You can't say "I love you", and it's only self-gratifying and just an emotion."

Mr Padgett also highlighted isolation and the lack of resilience as common challenges and said they were prevalent in the demise of marriages.

"No matter where you are on the planet, people are struggling

with isolation even now more so than ever due to COVID. We like to think we are globally connected but anyone who has been on a Zoom call knows it's not the same as being with a person.

The same day, Mr Padgett presented at an evening event at the Australian Catholic University, hosted by the Archdiocesan Marriage & Family team.

The cocktail-style gathering focused on marriage, with single

people, newly married and couples married for over 50 years in attendance.

Mr Padgett used music, prayer and humour to encourage his audience to step out to love others and to build strong relationships.

An unconventional presenter, the tattoo-covered entertainer boasts nine children, eight grandchildren and several degrees in theology, including a pontifical licentiate.



A number of men bought their sons along to the breakfast



Attendees at the cocktail-style event