



Archbishop  
Christopher Prowse

On Wednesday the Legislative Assembly enacted a draconian bill to remove Calvary Health Care as a public health provider in the ACT. This has been done without regard or respect for staff, patients or the citizens of Canberra. In the process, the government exempted this Act from the oversight of other ACT Acts and avoided the scrutiny of a public inquiry. This is hardly a move toward greater accountability.

I want to assure the staff of Calvary that I stand with them and will continue to seek that their voices be heard and their concerns understood. The view of nurses, midwives and doctors working at Calvary is that the hasty timelines of only a few weeks pose a risk for patient safety. All Canberrans can only hope and pray that the government can manage their health needs appropriately in this transition.

This compulsory acquisition places all Canberrans in uncertainty. Can all property leases and government contracts now be acquired for efficiency purposes? Where is the concern for the people? Will all Canberrans now be at risk of being counted as line items in the drive for ever greater government control? It may be a case of the battle being won for a government seeking its own agenda, while the war will be lost for future generations who now face the prospect of no choice or diversity in public healthcare.

# CATHOLIC VOICE

ARCHDIOCESE OF CANBERRA AND GOULBURN



SIGN the Save Calvary Petition  
[www.savecalvary.com.au](http://www.savecalvary.com.au)

## 'Efficiency wins, but humanity loses'

### Archbishop Prowse meets with Calvary Hospital staff

"EFFICIENCY has won, but humanity has lost," Archbishop Christopher Prowse said as he met with Calvary Hospital staff less than 24 hours after legislation had been passed for the ACT government's forced takeover of the hospital.

"The arguments presented by the government focus just on efficiency but what happens at Calvary Hospital is more than that – profound human values are at play. The Catholic ethos gives a real soul to the place rather than it being just a facility."

Archbishop Prowse told staff he was "eager to have the opportunity to listen to their concerns" and assured them of his support.

"We are not machines," he said. "We are human beings with deep aspirations, cherished Catholic values and a sense of family. Change can not be achieved just with a click of the finger."

"Some of you have told me, 'Well, we have survived the pan-

demic; we will survive this'. This is a great Australian attitude – to be determined to move forward despite difficulties."

Administrators, nurses, midwives and doctors attended the morning tea with the Archbishop, with many expressing their determination to continue the culture of Calvary.

"I've worked here for over 20 years," said one of the doctors. "Many of the staff have grown because of Calvary's values, and we're not going to drop them. We hold those values dear."

"No matter what happens in the future, working for Calvary has been a privilege."

One of the managerial staff said that people were putting on a brave face, but she believed some were close to breaking point.

"In any organisation, a percentage of staff are already dealing with difficulties – financial, mental health or family issues. This uncertainty adds to that pressure,"



she said.

"When staff are unsure about the process – what they do and how they do it – patients can potentially be at risk. The current transitional timeframe doesn't allow policies to be rewritten or pathways to be reconsidered, which may create an aftershock."

"It is impossible to cover all aspects in just 30 days given the enormous detail. For example, in my previous position with

the Public Service, it took us 18 months to transition two services into one, and we were in the same directorate!"

On Thursday, Calvary Health Care sought an injunction to stop the compulsory acquisition in the ACT Supreme Court.

The ACT government plans to transition operations away from the Catholic healthcare provider to Canberra Health Services in the weeks leading to July 3.

## One Step Back, Two Steps Forward

BY FR TONY PERCY

VLADIMIR Lenin wrote (1904), One Step Forward, Two Steps Back.

Thinking of the ACT Government and Calvary Hospital we can transpose it:

One Step Back, Two Steps Forward.

Our recent stoush with the ACT Government is just that. We might have lost the round, but we won't lose the fight.

Over 37,000 people have signed the [savecalvary.com.au](http://savecalvary.com.au) petition. No one predicted this.

The aggressive and unlawful action of the ACT Government has galvanised us – just when we needed it.

You can't win every fight in life. It's not even desirable. Win after win breeds arrogance.

But when you fight clean against those opposed to fundamental human values, you mobilise the silent and inert.

The rule of law and religious freedom are foundational to free and fair countries.

**"Mr Barr is an atheist. He is respected and protected. Mr Albanese is a non-practising Catholic. He is respected and protected. I am a Catholic Priest - practising, but not perfect. Will I be respected and protected?"**

Governments are subject to the rule of law, as are we. The ACT Government has acted contrary to the rule of law, with the Prime Minister supporting.

Remember. Elected representatives are meant to represent every Australian, not their own political parties. ACT Chief Minister and the PM have failed us.

By suspending their normal parliamentary procedures, and in bypassing the 1994 ACT Land Acquisition Act, Mr Barr and Mr Albanese have acted contrary to the rule of law and justice.

Our free and fair nation is now threatened. Who is next in the ACT? Which State in the Federation is next?



Calvary is a medical institution inspired by faith.

Remember. Section 116 of the Constitution of Australia defends the right to religious liberty. Written by people who were not overtly religious, it says:

No official religion. No compulsion in religion. No restriction on religion. No religious discrimination.

How utterly brilliant.

The most important human right is the right to life. Then follows the right to religious liberty.

This right allows people to search for the meaning of life, in and through communities. It is forfeited when violence is employed.

Some will find meaning in religion. Others in various philos-

ophies. Some will seek haven in atheism or perhaps agnosticism.

The constitution respects their search and their right to adherence.

Mr Barr is an atheist. He is respected and protected.

Mr Albanese is a non-practising Catholic. He is respected and protected.

I am a Catholic Priest – practising, but not perfect. Will I be respected and protected?

Have confidence to fight the good fight (2 Timothy 4:7) for a free and fair nation.

The stoush with ACT Government reveals that we are not on our own.

And as we know, 'most of life depends on the company we keep.'

• Fr Tony Percy's new book *'Australia: What went right? What went wrong?'* is available from Concorcourt Publishing, or copies can be purchased at the Canberra Catholic Bookshop in Manuka, (next to St Christopher's Cathedral) Call: (02) 6239 9888 or 0478 248 679 (mobile)

# Calvary Hospital compulsory acquisition at a glance

Legislation giving the government the power to forcibly acquire Calvary Public Hospital passed the ACT Legislative Assembly on Wednesday 31st May.

On Thursday, Calvary Health Care sought an injunction to stop the compulsory acquisition in the ACT Supreme Court.

Officials will be allowed to enter the hospital and undertake a stocktake of hospital equipment.

The ACT government plans to transition operations away from Calvary Health Care to Canberra Health Services in the weeks leading to July 3.



## Over 37,000 sign petition

“As this debate has played out in the public sphere— well over 37,000 people have signed a petition to “Save Calvary”. I want to thank all those who have signed it; all those who have expressed to me their deep concerns with what is widely regarded as an extraordinary government overreach. I have been contacted by people of diverse faiths and none who are concerned that this high quality, health care establishment can be squashed by government.”

*Archbishop Christopher Prowse*



## Attack on religious freedom

“This bill tramples over staff, it tramples over trust and tramples over our democratic principles and over common sense. It is impossible not to conclude that there is an element that involves an attack on faith,” he said. “Whether Mr Barr denies it or not, that is how the people of many faiths are feeling.”

*Jeremy Hanson, Acting Opposition Leader*



## Financial accountability

“Calvary Health Care built a new private hospital in Adelaide with 342 beds for \$350 million, and the government said they’re going to build a hospital here for a billion, It’ll be more than that. So, they’ll be far better off saving \$500 million by letting Calvary build the hospital and spend half a billion dollars on other services in Canberra. I bet that would be a welcome decision.”

*Fr Tony Percy, Save Calvary Taskforce Chair,*



## Legal action

“We believe that it is an invalid piece of legislation, and we will challenge that in the courts,” he said.

Our review of the proposed legislation and associated regulation indicates that just terms are simply not available and outside of this, there is no indication that commercial terms are available to resolve this matter.”

*Martin Bowles, Calvary Chief Executive*

# Southside parish farewells long serving couple

BY LIBBY ANDREW AND FR RICHARD THOMPSON

LAST Saturday, a gathering of family, friends and parishioners farewelled two long-standing and much-loved parishioners of the parish of Our Lady of the Annunciation at Holder ACT, with a Thanksgiving Mass celebrated by Mons John Woods EV and Fr Richard Thompson VG.

Joe Polisi read a special personal message on behalf of Fr Kevin Brannelly, their former Parish priest, who could not be present. A celebratory morning tea followed the Mass.

Pat and John Andrew moved to Duffy ACT in 1972 when the suburban area of Weston Creek



*Pat and John Andrew*

was in its infancy. They joined numerous other young couples and their children supporting the then-fledgling parish of St Jude’s Holder under the care of the late

Fr John O’Connor.

St Jude’s Primary School was established not long after under the care of Sister Irmina and the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Later, momentum gathered to construct the parish church, followed by a presbytery.

John and Pat, together with the support of other parishioners, were very much in the thick of advising and assisting Father O’Connor with these developments.

For more than 50 years, they gave dedicated service to the former parish and, in more recent years, the newly combined parish of Weston Creek. Their unique talents and commitment to the life of the parish in-

involved them in every facet - while raising their seven children. They were tireless workers, and their influence spread throughout the Archdiocese and nationally.

In April 2019, John was recognised for his services to the church with a Papal Knighthood – Knight Commander of the Order of St Sylvester.

The Mass and function that followed enabled a large number of the former St Jude’s faithful to join Pat and John and to say thank you for their friendship, love, support and commitment to the Catholic community of Weston Creek.

Everyone will miss them as they move into retirement accommodation in the Tuggeranong Valley. We wish them good health and happiness.



My family came to Australia after WW2 from Europe because the communist took over our village. They took our land, our religious freedom and anything they wanted. Now we are faced with the same thing in Australia.

This sets terrible governance precedents. The ACT process seems ideologically driven and will destroy patient services. I am not Catholic, I am a retired doctor with a Masters in Health Planning.

This is a failure to plan for a hospital to meet the needs of all Canberrans. We have been hearing about population growth in Canberra north for more than a decade after-all population growth was the justification for light rail.

Every community and private hospital in the country should be concerned.

Abuse of power and in the process destroying a very well run organisation. Just look at the UK NHS to see what normally happens when government gets involved in private organisation.

The ACT government and the Prime Minister have now alienated previous, current and future patients, labor supporters, the Catholic Church and many other faiths who see this as a precedent for the future.

# Australian Indigenous leader in the Vatican for week-long visit

VATICAN NEWS

Dr Miriam Rose Ungunmerr Baumann, an Australian Aboriginal elder, teacher and artist, is in the Vatican for a week-long visit.

During her stay, she will meet with Pope Francis and senior Church officials.

Dr Ungunmerr Baumann, who is one of Australia’s most respected Aboriginal leaders, will also visit the Vatican Museums.

There, on Tuesday evening, she will unveil a new painting of hers, drawing—like much of her artwork, such as her renowned Aboriginal Stations of the Cross—on both Indigenous and Christian traditions.

Her new painting, Dr Baumann explains in an interview

with Vatican News, depicts the “dry season” in the Northern Territory, her region of Australia.

She wanted, she says, to illustrate the signs that nature gives to indicate the end of the rains: the arrival of dragonflies, for instance, and the appearance of barramundi fish in the river.

For Dr Ungunmerr Baumann, the relationship between these natural phenomena and her Catholic faith is clear: nature is the place she encounters God. When, before our interview, another journalist asks her about how her community of Indigenous Australians came to convert to Christianity, her answer is simple: “We found God in nature.”

She has also chosen this phrase—so central, it seems to



me, to her philosophy—to serve as the name of her new painting.

Dr Ungunmerr Baumann’s visit is timed to coincide with Australia’s Reconciliation Week, an annual celebration of Aboriginal history and culture.

On Wednesday, Dr Ungunmerr Baumann will also meet

with Pope Francis.

She hasn’t quite decided what she’ll tell him yet, she says, but she expects that the problems faced by Australia’s Indigenous communities will be on the agenda.

This is not, in fact, the first time that a member of Dr Ungunmerr Baumann’s family has met with a leader of the Catholic Church. During Pope John Paul II’s visit to Australia in 1986, he met her sister, and blessed her young son.

That son—Liam—went on, only two decades later, to commit suicide, in a stark reminder of the many struggles and inequalities still faced by Australia’s Indigenous communities.