



# Submission on the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Amendment Bill 2023



Dear Secretary,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee regarding its inquiry into the *Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Amendment Bill 2023*.

As the background to our submission, it is well known that Calvary Hospital has long been the best performing hospital in the ACT, across a range of metrics including patient care and staff performance. Prior to the Government takeover, Calvary Hospital was a valued part of the ACT health system, particularly for those who share its pro-life values.

The Democratic Labour Party has serious concerns about the takeover and the precedent it sets, which we outline below.

## Lack of Scrutiny

It is clear that the *Health Infrastructure Enabling Bill 2023 (ACT)* was passed through the Legislative Assembly with undue haste.

This prevented the Bill from being scrutinised properly, including preventing appropriate debate of the Bill, referral to a Parliamentary Committee for public submissions and the decision to ignore a petition of over 48,000 signatures against the move.

The speed with which this Bill was rushed through Parliament within two sitting days sets an undemocratic precedent that must not be repeated elsewhere. For this reason alone, an Inquiry is justified.

## Attack on Freedom of Religion

We are deeply concerned about the motives of the ACT Government in taking over Calvary Hospital.

It appears from the timing of the decision that the Government acted in response to Calvary's long-held and clearly stated values on issues like euthanasia. This amounts to a government attack on a faith institution on the basis of that institution's values because they are at odds with those of the current ACT Government.

A government attack on a faith institution because of its values is an attack on freedom of religion.

A government attack on freedom of religion is an attack on our democracy.

This is Marxist totalitarianism at its worst. We cannot allow this to stand.

We cannot allow the takeover of Calvary Hospital in Canberra to set a precedent for governments around Australia (including in our State) to take over institutions whose values do not align with theirs.



# Submission on the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Amendment Bill 2023



## Attack on Private Property

Another critical issue warranting investigation is the attack on private property by the ACT Government through the *Health Infrastructure Enabling Act 2023 (ACT)*.

The takeover authorised the government's confiscation of land under a long-term lease, the confiscation of medical equipment, the takeover of all private records and staff and the breach of an 88-year contract signed in 2011 by the Government on behalf of the ACT population.

This attack was all permitted by a single Act through the ACT Parliament. This shows the fragility of the right to private property. It is clear that the ACT Parliament does not have sufficient checks and balances to prevent this assault on private ownership.

It is also worth noting that the Government expenditure of health funds is under question. Monies used for compensation to Calvary could have been spent instead on building an additional hospital as promised prior to the last ACT election. This would have represented better value for ACT taxpayers' money.

Again, this shows that the rush to legislate the takeover led to the wasting of taxpayer funds, further warranting an inquiry.

## Recommendations

The issues surrounding the *Health Infrastructure Enabling Act* are serious and set a groundbreaking precedent for other Governments around Australia.

Please support *The Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Amendment Bill 2023* and require the Government of the Australian Capital Territory to conduct an inquiry into the *Health Infrastructure Enabling Act 2023 (ACT)*.

On behalf of the Democratic Labour Party of South Australia,

Patrick Amadio (State Secretary and National Vice President);  
Peter Heidenreich (State President).