



# ACT, Calvary in hospital deal

**By Peter Jean**  
 Health Reporter

Calvary Hospital's future as an acute-level public health facility will be cemented today under a deal between the ACT Government and Little Company of Mary Health Care worth in excess of \$170 million a year.

Under a series of agreements to be signed by Chief Minister Katy Gallagher and LCM Health Care chairman John Watkins, the Catholic health provider will continue to run Calvary Public Hospital but integrate its operations more closely with the rest of the public health system.

The signing marks the end of more than 2½ years of uncertainty about the future of the hospital, which began with a controversial proposal for it to be sold to the Government.

Ms Gallagher said the agreements would deliver a new collaborative approach to the planning and delivery of health care services across the ACT and give Calvary certainty over its future.

A master plan would be developed for the Bruce health precinct, enabling new services to be offered.

"I think what it means for both organisations is that we get the flexibility we need in order to look at a health system as a whole and Calvary gets the certainty they need to get on and be the manager of the acute system," she said.

Ms Gallagher said LCM Health Care had agreed to a dispute resolution process for dealing with any problems which arose between the hospital and the Government. There needed to be a better understanding of the roles to be played by Canberra and Calvary Hospital.

"We've made changes about fractured hips, we've made changes about hearts. They all go to Canberra Hospital now, they don't go to Calvary," she said. It was likely that Calvary would increase its focus on elective surgery while the Canberra Hospital continued its role as the region's tertiary referral centre.

"I think there's a reasonable agreement that Canberra maintains its role as the emergency tertiary provider and that we increasingly look for opportunities for Calvary to be the elective surgery provider," Ms Gallagher said.

"They've got a good intensive-care unit, they've got great staff, good operating theatres, they've got access to [visiting medical officers] who work across the private sector so it makes sense."

Mr Watkins said the agreements delivered certainty to Calvary staff and to the citizens of north Canberra.

"It clearly maps out a defined role for Calvary and makes very clear our responsibilities to deliver essential

services to north Canberra in emergency, maternity, elective surgery, coronary and intensive care and the clarity that that will continue in the long term," he said.

The former NSW Labor deputy premier praised Ms Gallagher's leadership in finalising the agreements.

"It wouldn't have happened without the ... clear thinking of the leadership and I compliment her on the work she's done in recent months," Mr Watkins said.

Ms Gallagher said her preferred option had been for the territory to own and run the hospital but the agreements had delivered 95 per cent of what she had wanted. In 2009, Little Company of Mary pulled out of the proposed \$77 million sale of Calvary public and private hospitals to the Government after objections were raised by Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn Mark Coleridge.

The Government said it needed to own the hospital in order to invest in improvements and later proposed purchasing the buildings but allowing LCM Health Care to continue managing services. The offer was withdrawn when new international accounting standards were issued which allowed the Government to account for Calvary on its books without actually owning it.



**INTEGRATION:**  
 Chief Minister Katy Gallagher is to sign a \$170 million a year agreement.