



# Govt alters Calvary deal, but Greens remain wary

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The ACT Government has amended its proposal to buy Calvary Hospital and sell Clare Holland House, but the main sticking points remain.

The Government needs the Greens' support in the Legislative Assembly to approve the deal, but changes to the proposal revealed yesterday might not be enough.

In particular, the 99-year lease over the hospice land and building and the 30-year contract for the provision of service remained, despite the Greens' objections.

But ACT Health Minister Katy Gallagher said the Greens' demands were unrealistic and she had negotiated amendments with the hospital's owners, The Little Company of Mary Health Care, specifically to address concerns raised during public consultation.

"We might not be able to [address all concerns] 100 per cent but I think it goes a significant way to putting in some additional safeguards."

The new provisions include a right for the ACT to resume ownership of the hospice at any time if it is concerned about the quality of the service, a review of the service

agreement every five years against national palliative care standards, and an overarching review of palliative care services in the ACT.

Greens health spokeswoman Amanda Brennan said her party would consider the amended proposal but, at first glance, it did not seem to meet their demands.

"It doesn't address all the concerns we raised yesterday, in particular having one player providing palliative care services in the ACT. If we have a 99-year lease and a 30-year contract that is still a major concern for us," she said.

The proposal includes buying Calvary Hospital from the Little Company of Mary for \$77 million, and in turn selling the hospice to the company for \$9 million.

At present, the company has a lease for ownership of the public hospital until 2070; the \$77 million would be compensation for the surrender of that lease.

The company's chairman, Tom Brennan, said the 99-year lease and 30-year service contract were non-negotiable, but he would accept Ms Gallagher's proposed amend-

ments. He said there was a misconception about the 30-year service contract, which has been a sticking point for the Greens and the ACT Palliative Care Society. In particular, the existing arrangement provided for the company to provide palliative care services at the hospice for a further 61 years, as it was linked to the lease for the public hospital.

"Under that agreement there is requirement for annual service-level agreements."

He said the company insisted on the 30-year contract as the rest of its 99-year agreement would be surrendered once it transferred ownership of the hospital to the Government.

Mr Brennan said the Greens objected to the existing service arrangements anyway, as their preference was for palliative care services to be put up for tender.

"The Greens indicated in correspondence with me that there should be a tender for the operator of the hospice within five years."

The debate and negotiations will continue next year.