

Calvary unveils plans for private hospital

By Victor Violante
 Chief Assembly Reporter

While the future of its Calvary Hospital sale to the ACT Government hangs in limbo, the Little Company of Mary has unveiled its proposed new \$45 million, 75-bed private hospital it will build with the proceeds of the sale.

The proposal involves the sale of the public hospital to the Government for \$77 million. The Government would in turn sell Clare Holland House to the Catholic health care provider for \$9 million in what has proven to be the most controversial aspect of the deal.

Little Company of Mary issued to *The Canberra Times* yesterday an artist's impression of the new hospital – which would be called Calvary

Private – it plans to build if the sale goes through, subject to additional planning and approvals.

The new facilities would be built in three stages over several years.

When complete, they could include new operating theatres, diagnosis and cancer care services. The company said the private services would complement existing and planned services at the public hospital in Bruce to create a major health precinct which would rival Canberra Hospital. The first stage, a day surgery centre, would be completed by 2012.

Stage two – comprising 60 beds, four to six operating theatres, a 15-bed maternity unit, and a chapel

– would be completed by 2014, and the third stage, an oncology centre, would be completed by 2018.

Little Company of Mary Health Care national director of public hospitals, Walter Kmet, said the new private hospital was an important way of maintaining a strong presence in the ACT.

“Developing better health facilities and services for staff, patients and their families has always been critical to our thinking around the sale,” Mr Kmet said.

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NEXT STAGE: An artist's impression of the proposed 75-bed hospital in Bruce

Calvary's private hospital plan

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“The sale of Calvary Public to the ACT Government gives Calvary the opportunity to build new world-class health facilities that adds to the ACT's overall health system.”

The ACT Greens declared last week they did not support the deal as it currently stood, objecting in particular to the sale of the hospice as part of the purchase of the hospital.

The ACT Government needs the support of the Greens to pass the

sale in the Legislative Assembly. ACT Health Minister Katy Gallagher presented an amended proposal on Friday, which had sought to address areas of concern but still included the hospice sale. The amended proposal is expected to still be unpalatable to the Greens.

Mr Kmet said that over the next 12 to 18 months the company would consult with doctors, staff and the community, but added that construction of the new hospital was contingent on the deal going through.