



Australian  
Wednesday 4/11/2009  
Page: 17  
Section: Letters  
Region: Australia Circulation: 138,765  
Type: National  
Size: 105.57 sq.cms.  
Published: MTWTF

Brief: CALVARY

## Calvary Public Hospital

I READ with interest Angela Shanahan's opinion piece on the proposal for the ACT government to buy Calvary Public Hospital from the current owners, Little Company of Mary Health Care ("Sickness that curbs religious freedom", Inquirer, 31/10-1/11).

Shanahan attempts to argue, and indeed attributes a quote to me, to support her argument that the sale is being ideologically pursued by anti-Catholic sentiments. The quote she used and attributed to me was incorrect. I did not and have not ever used the words "coming into our secular health system". The adding in of those words by Shanahan is disingenuous and misleading.

Shanahan also refers to "confidential minutes" of a meeting I attended along with Chief Minister Jon Stanhope on April 6. I have not seen these minutes she refers to. At this meeting Stanhope and I spoke with the Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn Mark Coleridge and Bishop Power about the challenges facing the government over our community's future health needs. We talked about the need to invest heavily in Calvary Hospital and that those investments would be easier to make if the hospital was owned by the ACT government. There were no threats at this meeting to starve the hospital of funds or to "respond aggressively" to any campaign to prevent the sale from proceeding.

The potential sale of Calvary Public Hospital is not about religion, it's not about being Catholic or anti-Catholic — it's about how our community pays and prepares for the ACT's future healthcare needs.

### **Katy Gallagher**

ACT Deputy Chief Minister and  
Minister for Health

THANK you for bringing a national focus to the proposed purchase of Calvary Hospital by the ACT government. The government has praised the Little Company of Mary for the way that the hospital is managed and has promised to do so publicly once the sale is complete. The government's secular aims to exclude any religious influence from public healthcare, in spite of that praise, are well known to ACT residents. The article, and author, are to be commended for incisiveness and honesty.

### **Geoff Mongan**

Canberra. ACT