



# Leave hospice out of Calvary deal: Labor

## EXCLUSIVE

**By Victor Violante**  
 Chief Assembly Reporter

The ACT Government is facing pressure from within the Labor Party to abandon the sale of Clare Holland House as part of its bid to buy Calvary Hospital.

Government backbencher John Hargreaves and former minister Wayne Berry, who retired last year after 19 years in the Legislative Assembly, weighed into the debate yesterday, calling on the Little Company of Mary and the Government to exclude the hospice from the deal.

Both ACT Health Minister Katy Gallagher and Little Company of Mary chairman Tom Brennan have repeatedly said the sale of the hospital to the Government for \$77 million is dependent on the sale of Clare Holland House to the

company for \$9 million.

Mr Hargreaves and Mr Berry – senior party figures within the right and left factions respectively – told *The Canberra Times* yesterday there was strong opposition within the party over the inclusion of the

hospice in the deal. Mr Hargreaves said, “Labor Party policy is that we should not dispose of public assets unless there is a good public interest reason to do so, and I don’t see that that has been provided in this instance.”

“The majority of Labor Party members that I’ve spoken to, and the majority of people in the general public and at Calvary that I’ve spoken to have said that they either don’t care or they support the sale of Calvary, but quite seriously most of them say they don’t support the sale of Clare Holland House.”

Mr Berry said under no circumstances should the hospice be sold, even if it meant the collapse of the deal to buy Calvary. “The hospice

should not pass into private hands, that’s the bottom line.”

“I would think that philosophically almost all [Labor] party members would be opposed to the way it’s going. The difficulty for party members is that the Government’s adopted a course, and party members are supportive of their Government and sometimes they end up supporting things that in the clear light of day they might not.”

Mr Berry feared a political backlash for Labor if it gave in to the Little Company of Mary’s terms.

“I’d like to see the public hospital in public hands ... but I think by throwing in the hospice and it being such a high price there will be some political consequences, and that’s my concern from a political point of view. I just don’t think it’s politically sensible,” he said.

.....  
**Continued Page 2**



**STOP:** John Hargreaves, left, and Wayne Berry revealed opposition to the sale.

## Leave out hospice, critics say

From Page 1

But Ms Gallagher rejected Mr Berry’s claims. She said she had put it to the Little Company of Mary to exclude the hospice from negotiations but it had declined.

“Wayne’s never agreed with anything I’ve done, and his response to buying the hospital was we should just build another one and let Calvary die a slow death,” Ms Gallagher said last night.

She conceded there were concerns within the party but there was no organised opposition within Labor ranks.

“The ACT Labor Party is a snapshot of the community so

there are groups within the party that are very supportive and there’s groups in the party that have concerns, and they’re largely around Clare Holland House but they’re also around buying something that people think we already own.”

Mr Hargreaves praised Ms Gallagher’s efforts to broker a palatable deal for the community and stakeholders, and called on the Little Company of Mary to listen to the community. Despite his views he would not vote against the deal when it came to the Assembly, which Ms Gallagher said would not happen until next year.