ACT's abrupt move to seize hospital is disruptive and unnecessary

Catholic Health Australia has today expressed deep concern about the ACT Government's abrupt and unprecedented decision to compulsorily acquire the Calvary Public Hospital Bruce.

The Territory Government made the unexpected announcement today.

Catholic Health Australia's chairman, the Hon John Watkins AM, said the move was disruptive and worrying.

"Catholic hospitals have been caring for and healing Australians for 170 years and have long enjoyed a constructive and cooperative relationship with all Australian governments," Mr Watkins said.

"This abrupt decision by the ACT Government is a worrying rejection of a system that has served millions and millions of Australians well.

"Our immediate concern lies with the 1800 employees at the hospital who have not been consulted about the potential ramifications of this decision. But longer term this is a distributing precedent for any government to set.

"Catholic hospitals account for around 10 per cent of the country's total hospital services and treat more than 1.5 million patients annually. If they are to continue to provide their vital role they need to know their long-term arrangements will not be unilaterally terminated on a whim.

"Catholic hospitals are a bedrock of the Australian health system providing holistic care to all who need it, especially our most vulnerable. Many patients specifically seek out Catholic hospitals for their unique approach to healthcare. Their focus on compassionate care and social justice has been invaluable as has their contribution to medical research and education.

"Taking over a Catholic hospital is very disruptive and could compromise distinctive institutional values and culture.

"I know this move will be alarming to not just Catholics, but all communities of faith.

"I have spoken to Calvary and despite their disappointment and this decision, they remain committed to continuing care throughout Canberra through their services at Calvary Bruce Private, Calvary John James, Clare Holland House, Haydon residential aged care home, and our mental health services at Hyson Green and home care."

About us:

Catholic Health Australia (CHA) is Australia's largest non-government grouping of health and aged care services accounting for approximately 10 per cent of hospital-based healthcare in

Australia. Our members also provide around 25 percent of private hospital care, 5 percent of public hospital care, 12 percent of aged care facilities, and 20 percent of home care and support for the elderly.

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