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**Inquiry into the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Amendment Bill 2023**

**Submission Cover Note:**

I do not wish my name to be published.

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Committee Secretary  
Senate and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
AUSTRALIA

### **Inquiry into the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Amendment Bill 2023**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee.

I am making this submission as private Australian citizen. I am deeply concerned by the actions of the Australian Capital Territory and the legislation enacted by the Health Infrastructure Enabling Bill 2023 and the precedent that has been set and future implications.

#### **SUBMISSION**

It recent times Australia and in particular the people of the ACT have been treated to a dismal display of heavy handed and unscrupulous government action. The process under which the Calvary Public Hospital has been compulsory acquired by the ACT Government is another low blow to the state of Australian politics. The way the ACT Government introduced legislation, suspending normal processes, passing an act that forcibly acquired the hospital should be a concern to all fair-minded Australians. The apparent lack of consultation, opportunity for negotiation and the draconian threat of police action that accompanied the announcement all smacks of an authoritarian style of governance. The fact that the Prime Minister of Australia can not see a problem with the ACT Government actions is genuinely concerning. The legislation may be legal, but it does not make it right!

There are or were 21 public hospitals, 54 private hospitals, and 550 aged care facilities operated in Australia by Catholic Health Australia and have been providing medical services for a long time. In the case of Calvary Public Hospital, did it fail to meet the

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contract conditions and obligations? Did it fail to provide adequate and professional services? Did it fail to provide professional care of patients? Did it fail to pay the staff? Or was this for ideological reasons that clashed with that of the Territory Government. Have we just witnessed an act of discrimination against a religious body who holds different views on abortion and euthanasia? Did the ACT Government take this path to avoid protests and the examination of its actions? In effect, the legislation appears to be an ambush on the Calvary Hospital. It must be pointed out that the ACT Government was preparing well in advance with videos and website regarding employment conditions for the Calvary staff. So, the charge that the government pulled out of discussion with Calvary in Nov 22 is very believable.

Is this to be the way the people of Australia are to be governed in the future, where those who act in good faith will be treated in this manner and where actions of this kind will be tolerated and endorsed? Where those of dissenting views are crushed and those who hold them destroyed or marginalised by government legislation with a thin veneer of justification. If the reasons why the ACT Government acted in such a way and the reasons could sustain examination, why was it not willing to lay them out in the open and justify them while the proposed legislation was tabled and taken through the normal processes. Exacting standards of governance will always have hurdles, but it appears those who are being trusted with the task are opting to go under those hurdles rather than over them and the country is the poorer for it.

There has been wholesale condemnation of Scott Morrison for the secretive way he made himself the “minister of everything” but extraordinarily little condemnation by the Federal Labor Government for what we have seen unfold in the ACT.

I support the inquiry in the hope for more accountable governance. All other bodies are held accountable by a significant degree of legislation and those who make the legislation should be held to higher degree of accountability.