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**THE LIBERALS CAN STILL STOP ASC JOB LOSSES**

Today in Senate Estimates, the Liberals admitted that they chose not to save 223 shipbuilding jobs at ASC, despite having the means to do so.

In December last year ASC was awarded nearly \$30 million over three years for training scholarships, but this money has not been drawn down. No workers have been offered retraining or redeployment.

This has happened while ASC's order books are full and the industry will need 5000 highly skilled shipbuilders in the coming years.

The Liberals also admitted that no cost benefit analysis has been done on the impact of keeping the workers employed compared to letting them go.

The Australian National Audit Office's report on *Naval Construction Programs*, released last week stated that Defence repeatedly warned the government that these shipbuilding programs "carry high to extreme risk".

The report laid bare the incompetence of the Liberals' management of the \$89 billion Naval Shipbuilding Plan, and today's revelations at Estimates confirm that judgment yet again.

Just last December the Liberals promised that the valley of death was over and that the upturn in shipbuilding employment would continue with 200 jobs secured.

For all the promises and plans, this is the Liberals' legacy – job cuts after job cuts after job cuts.

A competent government would have seen this coming.

A caring government would have stepped up and prevented the loss of a fifth of ASC's shipbuilding workforce.

The only jobs the Liberals care about are their own.

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***Authorised by Noah Carroll, ALP, Canberra***