



**RICHARD MARLES MP
SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE
MEMBER FOR CORIO**

ADDRESS TO SHIPBUILDING WORKERS

**OSBORNE SHIPYARD
SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

WEDNESDAY, 8 MAY 2019

***** CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*****

Well thanks, Glenn. It's great to be here, and it's great to be here with Peter Malinauskas, my good friend, the State Labor leader, and thank you all for coming out today. Can I acknowledge all the work that all the unions here at Osborne do in representing a workforce which is doing such a fantastic job for our nation in building our naval assets.

As Glenn said, when we were last in government the impending valley of death was known to us, and with that in mind Prime Minister Rudd brought forward the construction of supply ships which we imagined would be done here at Osborne so that the valley of death would not occur and the jobs that have been built up, 3,800 as Glenn has said, will continue. This made sense in terms of structuring the procurement for the Defence Force [inaudible] really efficient and effective way which is done here at Osborne for our nation's benefit.

One of the worst acts of the Coalition Government was to reverse that decision

and see the supply ships be sent off to Spain to be built there. Now, that's fantastic for the Spanish industry. It doesn't do much for us here at Osborne and has created a situation where we've seen thousands of job losses around Australia. We've seen Forgacs in Newcastle mothballed; Williamstown in Victoria mothballed; and a thousand jobs lost here at Osborne.

We're now in the crazy situation where since Christopher Pyne announced in October of 2017 that the valley of death was over that a further 450 jobs have been lost in that period of time alone. This is the reality of what is being faced here at Osborne in relation to actual jobs in the Australian Defence Industry. For all the press releases, for all the hoopla of this government, the facts on the ground are people are losing their jobs as recent as last night. That's what's going on here at Osborne.

The crazy situation is this: that within a couple of years, we are wasting really good news in terms of the build-up of our naval shipbuilding program, building the new generation of frigates, the future submarine and offshore patrol vessels here at Osborne, and the single biggest capacity constraint which has been identified in that process is having the right number of people with the appropriate skills to do that work.

Yet this morning, this very morning, we've watched skills walk out the door as people have been forcibly told that they're no longer required to work here. This is a ridiculous situation and it speaks to a government which has lost control of managing our nation's defences and our nation's defence industry. That's the truth of it.

It oughtn't to be a surprise, because the Coalition go to this election with a proposition of having their fifth defence minister in as many years.

I know the uncertainty that you're facing here. What I want to say to you today is that a future Shorten Labor government, if we were fortunate enough to be elected on Saturday week, is utterly committed to you and to your jobs. We will,

within four weeks of being elected if we're fortunate to be elected, hold a summit here in Adelaide about Osborne; a summit which would have at it, ASC, BAE, Lurssen, Navantia, and all of you, the unions representing the workforce here, to talk about how we can make sure that we save every job that is possible, how we can save every skill that is possible in terms of what needs then to be done for the building of our naval shipbuilding program going forward.

Now, that is obviously deeply important for everybody who works here and for your families. It's actually critically important for our nation. It is critically important that we're able to bring about the naval shipbuilding program that this country desperately needs, and so what I can absolutely guarantee is that a future Shorten Labor Government, if it's elected in a week and a half's time, will be completely committed to not leaving a single stone unturned in doing everything we can to defend every job we possibly can here at Osborne. Thank you.

ENDS

Authorised by Noah Carroll, ALP, Canberra.