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E&OE TRANSCRIPT

DOORSTOP

ADELAIDE

WEDNESDAY, 8 MAY 2019

Subject: Labor's plan for shipbuilding industry jobs.

RICHARD MARLES: So perhaps it's just worth reiterating what we've announced today. The decision by this Coalition Government to send the supply ships to be constructed in Spain has resulted in thousands of jobs being lost around Australia. We've seen the closure of Forgacs in Newcastle. We've seen the closure of Williamstown in Melbourne. We've seen a thousand jobs be lost here, and it's what has created the valley of death.

In October 2017, Minister Pyne said the valley of death was over and since then we've seen more than 450 jobs be lost.

The ridiculous side of this is that at the same time, in a year or so, we will be ramping up employment here at Osborne to build the next generation of Australian frigates, in time the next generation of Australian submarines and offshore patrol vessels, and the single biggest capacity constraint which has been identified in that project is having the right number of workers with the right number of skills. So, the idea that workers are being laid off now, as recently as last night, with the result that skills are walking out the door and yet

we face the potential of a skills shortage going forward is patently absurd.

With that in mind what a future Shorten Labor Government will do if we are fortunate enough to be elected to government on Saturday week, is within four weeks of being elected to government we will hold a summit here in Adelaide which involves the unions, which involves ASC, BAE, Lurssen, Navantia, of all the players here at Osbourne, to look at every single possible way in which we can save every job and every skill that we possibly can because we need to be retaining those skills.

That is a critical undertaking that we are giving and what we've said to the workforce today is that a Shorten Labor Government absolutely guarantees that it will leave no stone unturned in its efforts to defend every job that it possibly can and every skill that goes with it.

That's really important for the workers here themselves, of course, and their families. It's critically important for our nation.

JOURNALIST: What happens if there not work for 450 staff to keep them on until December?

MARLES: Well, it's really important that we look at all the options; that we do do an audit of the work that's being undertaken across the country from the perspective of Navy right now; that we talk to all the players here about ways in which this period of months can be bridged in order to retain as many people and as many skills as possible, because the idea that people are walking out the door and we are losing skills at a time when we're identifying going forward that we can have a skill shortage makes no sense.

It speaks to the degree to which this government is not running the show - and they're not. How could they possibly be running the show when they got into this election with the prospect of their fifth defence minister in as many years. It is simply a joke.

JOURNALIST: Is it 450 jobs here?

MARLES: Well, 450 jobs have been lost since October of 2017 when Christopher Pyne declared that the valley of death was over. That is clearly not the case

JOURNALIST: But there's 600, sorry, that will be lost, so even more? So is that 600 here?

MARLES: The representatives of the workforce here are saying that hundreds of people face the prospect of losing their employment if nothing is done between now and the end of the year.

JOURNALIST: But what if there is no work?

MARLES: We will do everything we can as an incoming government if we're fortunate enough to be elected on 18 May to retain every possible job we can and we will be working with all the players to see how that can occur, and we'll start that process within four weeks of the election, if we do win, by having a summit here in Adelaide here about it.

JOURNALIST: Thank you so much

MARLES: No worries

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Authorised by Noah Carroll, ALP, Canberra.