

The Labor logo consists of a red horizontal bar with the word "Labor" in white, sans-serif font. To the right of the bar is a blue square containing five white stars, representing the Australian flag.

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SHADOW ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR DEFENCE INDUSTRY AND
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LIBERALS BUNGLE CRITICAL DEFENCE PROJECT...AGAIN

Labor has criticised the Liberal Government over its continued mismanagement of the LAND 400 project to acquire and support the next generation of armoured fighting vehicles.

Project LAND 400, which is intended to replace Army's ASLAV and Vietnam-era M113 armoured vehicles, has been beset by delays under the Liberals. Under Labor, First Pass Approval for the LAND 400 project would have occurred in March-April 2014 and included two linked phases for combat reconnaissance and infantry fighting vehicles.

Instead of following Labor's plan, the Liberals delayed First Pass Approval by a year, split the acquisition into two separate phases, and extended and delayed the tender process. This raises questions about the timely replacement in particular of the M113 in meeting the capability needs of the Army.

Now only weeks after the election, the Government has announced the shortlist for Phase 2.

Today's announcement was originally planned for March 2016, leaving serious questions about why the Government chose to wait until after the election before making this announcement.

It is clear that the Liberal Government is determined to exploit defence industry for political purposes and to protect Liberal marginal seats. The Government needs to be transparent as to what requirements have been made of the two shortlisted bidders and whether there has been interference by Minister Pyne in this process.

This \$10 billion project should be determined through a careful and considered process, not political opportunism.

LAND 400 is a critical project for the Australian Army and this Government simply must get on with the job of providing our defence personnel with the modern armoured fighting vehicles they require.

Our defence industry requires proper support to create and maintain jobs and not be the subject of political exploitation by the Liberal Party.

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