



Stuart Robert MP

Federal Member for Fadden

Shadow Minister for Defence Science, Technology and Personnel

****MEDIA RELEASE****

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BENDIGO DEFENCE JOBS AT EXTREME RISK DUE TO GOVERNMENT INACTION

Defence industry jobs in Bendigo are under increasing risk as the decision to award future Defence contracts are continually pushed back.

Shadow Minister for Defence Science, Technology and Personnel, Stuart Robert, said that Thales Bendigo was a manufacturing industry icon within the region.

'The jobs of hundreds of employees from central Victorian communities are hanging in the balance while the Government procrastinates on whether to award contracts for the Bendigo-made Hawkei vehicle and Bushmaster variants,' Mr Robert said.

'This is make or break for Thales in Bendigo. More than 100 staff have already been laid off in the past six months and there is a substantial risk that the remaining 300 jobs will be lost if Thales is not awarded the contract,' Mr Robert said.

Mr Robert said the current Member for Bendigo puts on a song and dance about the issue, but questioned the Gillard Labor Government's commitment to regional jobs at key employers like Thales.

'The current Member for Bendigo continually proves ineffectual in convincing his own party to support the jobs of local people at Thales,' Mr Robert said.

'Disappointingly for local workers, this is the same Member for Bendigo who supports the Gillard Labor Government's Carbon Tax, which will hit manufacturing jobs across Australia.'

Mr Robert said the Bushmaster vehicle was acknowledged by Defence to have saved more than 40 Australian lives in Afghanistan.

'It is a Defence export success story and the Hawkei and Bushmaster variants have the potential to prove equally valuable to our soldiers if the Gillard Labor Government would actually make a decision,' Mr Robert said.

Mr Robert is organising a visit to Thales Bendigo to meet local management, workers and community leaders on issues facing the manufacturing facility.

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