

# Art of a disaster



An artist's impression of how the Sydney Modern project will take shape.

## Government loses Lendlease from second major project

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THE state government has been forced to reopen a critical tender process to build the \$344 million Art Gallery of NSW expansion after another blow up over costs with builder Lendlease.

The construction giant has resubmitted its bid for the massive Sydney Modern project after the disagreement with the Berejiklian government over its initial tender application.

It is the second major government project in the space of a week to be left Lendlease limbo after the government announced last Friday the developer would not be able to build the Sydney Football Stadium within the \$729 million budget.

Lendlease was announced as the "construction contractor" for the project last December, but last week Sports Minister John Sidoti revealed it had only signed a deal to demolish the Moore Park stadium.

The gallery debacle is a major blow for the Berejiklian government, which has recently been under fire for failing to give planning approval to the Ritz-Carlton hotel and Sydney Fish Market redevelopment in Pyrmont, and the Bylong coal project in country NSW.

Despite the dispute, The Daily Telegraph understands Lendlease has offered a new bid for the gallery build. The \$344 million expansion includes updating the facade of the building,

increasing the green space and almost doubling the size of the exhibition area for artwork.

The proposed building has been designed by architects SANAA, and will combine art, architecture and landscape "in spectacular new ways with dynamic galleries and indoor and outdoor art spaces in one of the world's most beautiful cultural precincts".

A Lendlease spokesman confirmed it had submitted its new bid for the Sydney Modern project last week.

An Infrastructure NSW spokesman

said last night that a competitive tender process for the expansion was underway.

"Lendlease have not walked away from the Sydney Modern project at the Art Gallery of NSW," the spokesman said.

"The government has received bids from a healthy field of capable builders, including Lendlease. Bids are now being evaluated.

"We're confident of delivering a world-class, high quality expansion of the Art Gallery of NSW within the budget set by government.

"We expect a contract to be awarded

in the near future and construction to be underway in 2019."

Opposition Arts spokesman Walt Secord called on Premier Gladys Berejiklian (left) to explain the status of the current tender process.

"There is a cloak of secrecy around the Sydney Modern project," Mr Secord said.

"There are major concerns in the arts community about the lack of transparency surrounding the actual cost ... The Berejiklian government has the reverse Midas touch.

"Every project that it manages bad and it goes into cost overruns. We have been told that the Sydney Modern Project is running into the tens of millions of dollars over budget."

