

The Aust August 2 2019

Lendlease leaves Gladys in lurch, again

ANDREW CLENNELL
NSW POLITICAL EDITOR

The NSW government has had to go back out to tender on a second major project after another dispute with construction giant Lendlease — this time over the \$344 million Art Gallery of NSW redevelopment Premier Gladys Berejiklian took to the election.

The move to re-tender for the project — after Lendlease was the last bidder standing in the original tender — comes after the government last week severed ties with Lendlease on the Allianz Stadium redevelopment.

That occurred after the company said it required tens of millions more to finish the \$729m stadium redevelopment, throwing that job into chaos.

The Australian understands Lendlease was the last company standing in an original tender for the Art Gallery and the company had told the government the project would cost tens of millions more than first thought.

Senior government sources confirmed yesterday that it then decided to get other bidders into the market with a builder expected to be announced shortly.

Arts Minister Don Harwin's office declined to comment.

Shadow treasurer and opposition spokesman for the arts Walt Secord called on the government to reveal the "current cost" of the Sydney Modern project, saying there are "serious questions including concerns about possible major cost blow-outs and whether it will make its 2021 completion date".

"Another day, another cost blowout," Mr Secord said.

"Unfortunately, the Berejiklian government has a dreadful record on managing infrastructure projects. It comes off the back of the Sydney Light Rail, the Sydney football stadium fiasco and the Powerhouse Museum move.

"There is a cloak of secrecy around the Sydney Modern project. There are major concerns in the arts community about the lack of transparency surrounding the actual cost of the project.

"In November 2018, the Arts Minister Don Harwin boasted that he had secured \$100m from private donors and another \$244m from NSW taxpayers for the project."

Lendlease said it had lodged a bid under the new tender process last week.