

Rockliff 'bullying' new members

David Killick

Non-government politicians have called on Jacqui Lambie Network MPs to tear up a deal they have signed with the government – saying the new parliamentarians have been duped.

Premier Jeremy Rockliff on Wednesday revealed the deal under which the three JLN MPs – Miriam Beswick, Andrew Jenner and Rebekah Pentland – have agreed to support the Liberal government.

But the conditions involve the crossbenchers giving up the ability to vote against the government in a wide range of circumstances in return for number of initiatives either already under way, or of little practical effect.

For example, Mr Rockliff on Thursday admitted a clause pledging to close the Ashley Youth Detention Centre would not do anything to accelerate the centre's already-planned closure.

Greens leader Rosalie Woodruff said the Lambie Network MPs had been taken advantage of.

"I think the deal the JLN members have struck is incredibly disappointing," she said.

"They have sold themselves, signed themselves up to an agreement and they got nothing for it. They could have had an ICAC, they could have had actual electoral law reform.

"It shows that Jeremy Rockliff has been essentially bullying and throwing the power of his office at new members who've got no experience."

Legislative Council member Meg Webb said the deal should be torn up.

"What we've seen with this agreement is an absolute shocking display of, I think, bad-faith negotiation by the



Independent MLC for Nelson Meg Webb is disappointed in the deal the Jacqui Lambie Network trio has done with the Liberals.

government," she said. "It seems that they have gone into this with a view of pulling the Jacqui Lambie Network members along by the nose and having them agree to situations that are not to their advantage in parliament, that are not delivering on their promises of accountability and transparency and have really given them virtually nothing in return.

"It appears that the Jacqui Lambie Network members may not have fully understood some of the things that they have signed up to.

"It is always going to be a situation of a power imbalance when you've got a government negotiating with people entirely new to parliament, who may not have availed themselves of appropriate advice and expert input."

Independent member for Clark Kristie Johnston said the JLN MPs had "signed away their ability to represent Tasmanians".

"They have completely silenced themselves on the floor of the parliament," she said.

"It is really disappointing that they have given away those opportunities to hold the government to account, to demand greater integrity and transparency and they've given that away for practically

nothing. I suspect there are many Tasmanians that are disappointed that they have put their faith and trust in the Jacqui Lambie Network, only to find that the first point, they've abandoned them, and they have sided with the Liberal government."

And Labor's Luke Edmunds described the agreement as "a dirty deal, done dirt cheap".

"It will be interesting to know if they do have buyer's remorse or signer's remorse," Mr Edmunds said.

"The feedback is pretty universal that this wasn't exactly the greatest deal of all time.

"Everybody who's in the Tasmanian parliament gets an office, it's not something that you need to barter away when you're compromising on your principles.

"It's quite outrageous to think that you've walked away with a win when you get things like office space and a staff member."

Mr Rockliff rejected criticism of the deal and the Lambie MPs.

"They are a constructive group of people and individuals, and I reject any criticisms of new members of parliament," he said.

The Mercury sought comment from the Jacqui Lambie Network.

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