

Hawker Britton

Government Relations Strategy

Independent Senator Jacqui Lambie

November 2014

Senator Jacqui Lambie is an independent Senator for Tasmania elected at the 2013 Federal election. Senator Lambie forms part of a key group of minor party and independent crossbench Senators that hold the balance of power in the Senate.

Senator Lambie was originally elected as the lead candidate on the Palmer United Party (PUP) Tasmanian ticket. The PUP is a minor party run by Member for Fairfax Clive Palmer.

On 24 November 2014, Senator Lambie announced her resignation from PUP. In her resignation, Senator Lambie reaffirmed her commitment to improved pay and conditions for Defence personnel and economic assistance for Tasmania.

This decision by Senator Lambie has a significant impact on the capacity of the Government to implement its legislative agenda. The Government must now negotiate with Senator Lambie separately to PUP in order to secure the support of six of the eight crossbenchers in order to enact its legislative agenda, or five of the eight crossbenchers to oppose a non-Government motion. This is complicated by Senator Lambie's decision to oppose all Government legislation until it improves pay and conditions for Defence personnel.

The Hawker Britton Occasional Paper on the Senate is available [here](#).

The Hawker Britton Occasional Paper on the Palmer United Party is available [here](#).

Background

Senator Lambie was born in Ulverstone, Tasmania and now lives in the city of Burnie on the North Coast of the state. Senator Lambie served as a soldier in the Australian Defence Forces from 1989 until 2000. She served first in the Royal Australian Corps of Transport and later in the Royal Australian Corps of Military Police. During this time she achieved the rank of corporal.

In 1997 Senator Lambie suffered injuries during a field exercise. She was later involved in a longstanding dispute with the Department of Veterans' Affairs over her right to a military disability pension as a result of this injury.

Senator Lambie began her political involvement volunteering for Tasmanian Labor Senator Nick Sherry. In November 2011, she joined the Liberal Party and later decided to run for pre-selection for the Division of Braddon. She later left the Liberal Party and in 2012 sold her house to help fund her run as an



independent. In 2013, she joined the newly-formed Palmer United Party and was placed first on the PUP Senate ticket.

At the 2013 Federal election, Senator Lambie picked up Tasmania's sixth Senate seat, winning 6.58 per cent of first preference votes.

Her term commenced on 1 July 2014. At this time she was appointed Deputy Leader of the Palmer United Party in the Senate and Palmer United Party Deputy Whip.

The Hawker Britton Occasional Paper on the 2013 Federal election Senate results is available [here](#).

The Hawker Britton Occasional Paper on the Palmer United Party is available [here](#).

Key Policies

Senator Lambie has developed clear policy priorities in her two areas of interest: reform of veterans' entitlements and economic stimulus for Tasmania.

ADF Entitlements

In October 2014 the Government announced that Defence personnel would receive a pay rise of 1.5 per cent a year for three years. With inflation at 2.3 per cent, this amounts to a wage cut in real terms. Senator Lambie is demanding Defence personnel get at least 3 per cent and, as discussed above, has announced that until they do she will not vote for any Government legislation.

Tasmanian Economy

Senator Lambie has also pushed for changes to the Renewable Energy Target and has argued that aluminium and zinc smelting, newsprint and manganese production should be exempt from the Target to protect Tasmanian businesses. She maintains that the 2020 target of 20 per cent power supplied from renewable energy could still be met despite these exemptions.

While the exemptions would help key Tasmanian industry players – such as Bell Bay Aluminium, Nystar, Grange and Norske Skog – the proposed change would apply not only to Tasmanian industry but across all Australia.

Independence

Following the commencement of her Senate term, tension emerged between Senator Lambie and PUP Leader Clive Palmer MP over the Party's response to the Government's policy on remuneration and conditions for ADF personnel.

In October 2014, Senator Lambie made a unilateral decision not to support any Government legislation until it improved its pay rise to ADF personnel.



On 12 November, the Palmer United Party expelled Senator Lambie's Chief of Staff, Rob Messenger, a former Queensland Nationals and LNP MP. Mr Messenger was retained as Senator Lambie's Chief of Staff.

On 17 November, the first day the Senate sat following the above events, Senator Lambie voted against the Government's revised social services bill, despite the PUP abstaining. Notwithstanding Senator Lambie's opposition, the bill passed the Senate with bipartisan support.

On 19 November Mr Palmer removed Senator Lambie as the PUP's Deputy Senate Leader and Deputy Whip, and suspended her rights to attend PUP party meetings.

Mr Palmer's statement is available [here](#).

On 19 November Senator Lambie voted against the Government and in opposition to PUP to disallow changes to the Future of Financial Advice (FOFA) laws.

On 24 November, Senator Lambie announced her resignation from the PUP.

Policy positions announced following independence

At the time of announcing her intention to sit as independent, Senator Lambie announced further policy positions.

Senator Lambie indicated that her resignation from the party left her free to negotiate with the Government over both the scaling back of the Renewable Energy Target (RET) and the abolition of the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC), both of which the former PUP bloc has previously sought to block.

However, the Senator went on to state that she would continue to oppose Government bills until such time as the 1.5 per cent pay rise for ADF personnel is doubled and their leave entitlements are restored.

Senator Lambie also gave a '100 per cent guarantee' that she would not vote for the Government's changes to higher education or for Medicare co-payments.

Senator Lambie also ruled out joining another party.