

Julia Banks reveals 'devastation' over Scott Morrison leadership win



Ms Banks said when Mr Morrison became PM she was shocked. Picture: Getty

Remy Varga, Reporter,
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Julia Banks says she was “devastated” when Scott Morrison emerged victorious from August’s leadership spill. Ms Banks quit the Libs last month to sit on the crossbench as an independent, plunging Scott Morrison further into minority government. The member for Chisholm cited the leadership coup against former prime minister Malcolm Turnbull as the main reason for her defection as well as alleged bullying within the party.

In an interview with the Australian Women’s Weekly, Ms Banks said knew she couldn’t stay with the Coalition when the party line moved to the right. “I spoke up many times and particularly on programs about women I’d get the eye roll from the right-wing reactionary group.” she said.

Ms Banks said the messy leadership coup, which intended to deliver the top job to Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton, was driven by former PM Tony Abbott’s camp. “It was all driven from Tony Abbott’s opposition,” says Julia. “Tony Abbott, Peter Dutton, Greg Hunt — that whole program to knife Malcolm was driven by and led by them.”

Ms Banks said the bullying that went on during the coup made people fearful. "I said no, I'm voting for Julie in the first round, and then I had people sent to me and phone calls, trying to move my vote."

"The thing that happens with bullying is people were afraid. They started becoming really concerned that Peter Dutton was seriously going to win. Men and women were being harassed and bullied." "If it wasn't going to be Malcolm it had to be Julie. She's 20 years in the parliament, lauded as the best foreign minister in the world, communication skills of a genius, and a woman. Seriously, a true Liberal and we knew Julie Bishop was Labor's worst nightmare. I thought if it loses by one vote and it's Peter Dutton then I'll quit straight away."

Ms Banks said when Mr Morrison became PM she was shocked. "I felt devastated." she said. Ms Banks said when she spoke publicly of bullying within the party she was painted as hysterical. "I've seen it in the business world, where the woman is either a liar or she made it up or she's doing it for publicity or notoriety. She's emotional or she's overemotional," she said.

Ms Banks described Mr Morrison as a traditional man and said the party still largely viewed women as caregivers. "I think John Howard is his mentor and it was only two years ago, the week before my maiden speech, I remember when John Howard said, we will never get to 50-50 representation in politics because women focus on their caring responsibilities. ... I think that view is quite entrenched."

"Most of the men in the Liberal Party, their wives don't work. They're at home with the kids. Now I don't have an issue with stay-at-home mums but I do in the sense that I believe all women should be, if not at some period in their life, they should ensure their financial independence ... and not to be dependent on anyone."

Remy Varga