

COMMENT Tasmanians can come together to reshape governance

Opportunity looms for a shared approach

SPECULATION is swirling about an early state election. However, the most interesting thing about the next election isn't the possible date, but the opportunity for a different approach. Regardless of when it is called, the next election is guaranteed to deliver a different parliament. With 10 restored seats up for grabs, 18 seats required to form government, neither Liberal nor Labor are likely to win outright.

For the Liberals, this would mean holding its 11 seats, winning back two that shifted to independents and winning five of the 10 new seats. Unlikely. Labor would need to hold its eight seats, bring David O'Byrne back into the

PLP and win nine of 10 new seats. Highly unlikely. A party brand alone will not be enough to win seats in the next parliament. Voters are learning fast to have a higher expectation for quality elected representatives.

Recent history has shown genuine community representation and a real difference are delivered when communities have the opportunity to choose high-quality independent candidates of character and integrity. By necessity, the next government of Tasmania will be collaborative, and will likely have evolved beyond past models made up of a major party plus the Greens.

The next parliament presents an oppor-

tunity for a step-change in good governance - an opportunity to break free of vested interests and the usual suspects who have pulled the strings for decades while delivering no real progress on the significant challenges we face. A collaborative government, inclusive of strong independents, can restore confidence that community interests will be prioritised at the heart of decision-making.

This next parliament is an opportunity to vote in good people who will work differently. A collaborative, negotiated approach based on merit rather than simplistic party lines will mean better policy, better legislation and better outcomes. Which prompts

the question: What will leadership look like in our next parliament? An autocratic approach will not deliver results, which is a pivot we already see the Rockliff government struggle to make. Negotiation, cooperation and inclusion will be the strengths needed in a collaborative government. This will require the community and media to update its understanding of what effective leadership looks like. Combative parliaments drive division in our community. But at the next election, the community can come together to reshape the governance of our state. Whatever the date, let's seize the day.

■ Meg Webb, Independent for Nelson