

# Aim high on polling day because the standard we vote

**F**ormer Australian of the Year General David Morrison made the powerful observation, “that the standard that you walk past is the standard you accept”. His words emphasised that everyone has a role to play in ensuring integrity in leadership and culture; this is never more starkly true than when we choose who will govern our state.

On Saturday, the standard Tasmanians vote for will be the standard they are willing to accept. Recent polls suggest they are ready to set a higher standard for leadership

## Pick candidates suitable to a collaborative parliament, writes **Meg Webb**

and political representation.

Surging support for independents and minor parties connects to a tangible sense in the community that major parties have failed to deliver and people are hungry for genuine community representation and greater integrity at the heart of our democracy.

With the emergence of courageous, values-driven independents at all

levels of politics, voters can increasingly see the power and benefit of placing their vote outside major parties.

Community interest is not served by the divisive and out-of-date model which frames elections as a sporting match between two teams; a “battle” which can only serve to deliver a winner and a loser.

When major parties and the media

treat elections as a binary sport, it does a disservice to mature political leadership. It also prevents meaningful, long-term improvement on the substantial challenges we face in this state. It sells us short, and Tasmanians deserve better.

We don’t need a political “battle” – we need a rich choice of creative,



**Meg Webb**

collaborative leaders worthy of our confidence, admiration and trust.

In this election, we’ve seen constant, unedifying displays of political self-interest, petty divisiveness and juvenile stunts. Not to mention barefaced pork-barrelling, thought-bubble policy announcements and attempts to erode our democracy.

The manic promises of funding and abrupt policy announcements ring hollow to a community that is all too familiar with governments failing to deliver and Tasmania’s outcomes going backwards.

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## for is the standard we accept

At election time it is telling to notice the political leadership styles promoted to the community. For three elections, the Tasmanian Liberals were able to gain a majority on the back of either a “nice guy” or “strong man” leader. However, the political bonus points historically gained by those personas seem to have lost salience this time around.

We’ve seen frenzied efforts from spin doctors to present the current leader as a Jekyll-and-Hyde amalgam of both nice guy and strong man, and it has looked like an uncomfortable performance, to say the least. The

assertion of each has only served to undermine the authenticity of the other.

And while there may be a diminishing return from these decidedly male leadership personas, their persistent remnant appeal may explain the Tasmanian Labor leader’s failure to launch in capturing the public imagination.

It’s time for us all to step up: our communities need to find and support excellent independent candidates; political parties, big and small, need to carefully select candidates with the qualities and

values suited to a modern collaborative parliament; and our media needs to carefully consider the way it presents and critiques new ways of working in politics.

I hope Tasmanian voters embrace that opportunity to give their votes to candidates who will genuinely represent them in parliament, who have proven integrity and can earn their admiration and trust.

Remember: the standard we vote for is the standard we accept – so aim high.

**Meg Webb is the independent member for Nelson**

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