

It's absolutely insane but the major parties are still

Front of mind for the establishment parties contemplating this new parliament must be the well-proven maxim: "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

Tasmanians went back to the polls after barely 16 months due to serious concerns over the state's deeply precarious financial situation and the Rockliff minority government's inability to honestly acknowledge the depth of the problem or propose a coherent plan to address it structurally.

Business as usual will not deliver budget repair or a successful parliament, writes **Meg Webb**

This was further compounded by the inability of the Rockliff minority government to work constructively and respectfully with the duly elected crossbench.

Despite these two key drivers of the ultra-early state election, during the campaign period what did we see?

Both Labor and Liberal parties continued to stick by the same old

election playbook, trotting out thought-bubble spending promises while presenting no intelligible plan for budget repair. None.

Quite the opposite in fact. The establishment parties continued to try to out-compete each other by gaslighting voters and fearmongering over alleged tax increases, cuts, closures and more debt.

We saw a great deal of political energy and donors' money thrown at trite pointscore games and an unedifying indulgence in name-calling and juvenile misrepresentation of opponents.

If this was the best the establishment parties have to offer the Tasmanian electorate, it is unsurprising the voters delivered a short, sharp message: Take the hand we give you and do better.

A priority for all in this parliament must be developing a coherent plan to provide the urgently needed corrective action to address the state's

deteriorating fiscal position.

Growing the economy on its own will not deliver necessary budget repair, as stated very bluntly in the Treasury Department's Pre-Election Financial Outlook Report.

We desperately need a circuit breaker to cut through the current stalemate mired in political self-interest.

One option could be an independent expert panel charged with consulting, investigating and reporting back to the whole parliament on a range of implementation options for financial

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not listening to the voice of the Tasmanian people

structural reforms and time frames.

This investigation could test current taxation and revenue streams, expenditure on government services, and infrastructure priorities – including whether these support, or risk undermining, a robust, sustainable, and inclusive community.

We need rigorous and independently developed options to responsibly and equitably diversify our current narrow taxation and revenue base to meet Tasmanians' immediate, medium and long-term needs.

We need to assess with clear eyes government expenditure and investment priorities which will effectively drive progressive budget repair and set our financial framework upon solid foundations.

Most crucially of all, we need political leaders prepared to honestly prosecute the arguments for the best indicated evidence-based options to the Tasmanian people, and bring the community along for what will, without doubt, be a hard road to our fiscal recovery.

Time to end the political cowardice that reduces us to predictable, faint-

hearted tinkering around the edges, and tokenistic lip-service to structural reform at some later date.

A courageous new parliament would prioritise the establishment of depoliticised mechanisms to develop responsible and equitable corrective options to put Tasmania back on the path of fiscal sustainability.

A courageous new parliament, as a matter of priority, would also look to allay the disruptive impact of early elections by introducing fixed four-year terms for the Tasmanian House of Assembly.

The political jeopardy of serial

early elections present a constant, looming threat to constructive, challenging long-term reform.

Currently, Tasmania is the only state or territory jurisdiction without legislated fixed terms for the Lower House.

Fixed four-year terms would not have necessarily prevented this 2025 election triggered by a no-confidence motion but it may have prevented the previous two snap early elections of 2021 and 2024.

Repeatedly storming off to the polls in search of an elusive majority is irresponsible and politically self-

serving madness.

Repeating the same budgetary thinking that contributed to the current fiscal crisis while hoping for the opposite is madness.

Refusing to budge from autocratic intransigence when governing in minority is madness.

The new state parliament must act decisively to break these destructive cycles. It must do better.

Tasmanians have demanded – and deserve – political sanity.

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