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## Former Premier Bartlett Confident Minority Tasmanian Government Can Succeed with Pragmatism

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Former Tasmanian Premier David Bartlett asserts that a minority government can function effectively if political leaders remain level-headed, drawing on his experience with the 2010 Labor-Greens agreement. This article examines Bartlett's insights, the challenges of

Tasmania's hung parliament following the 19 July 2025 election, and the risks of instability amid a progressive crossbench.

The Tasmanian state election, held on 19 July 2025, delivered another hung parliament, with the Liberal Party securing 14 seats and the Australian Labor Party (ALP) gaining nine, short of the 18 needed for a majority in the 35-seat House of Assembly, according to the Tasmanian Electoral Commission (TEC) (ABC News, 20 July 2025). The Greens, with five seats, and up to five independents, form a largely progressive crossbench, complicating government formation. Bartlett, who led a minority government with the Greens from 2010 to 2011, told 6 News that “cool heads must prevail to avoid exploding the whole government” (6NewsAU, 15 July 2025). His 2010 deal with Greens leader Nick McKim, formalised through trust-building protocols and weekly meetings, avoided chaos by prioritising stability over policy disputes.

Bartlett's optimism contrasts with the current ALP approach under Dean Winter, who has rejected a formal Greens coalition, citing concerns it could be perceived negatively by voters (6NewsAU, 15 July 2025). Winter's no-confidence motion against Premier Jeremy Rockliff triggered the snap election, a gamble that backfired with Labor's primary vote falling to a historic low of 26 per cent (The Guardian, 20 July 2025). Critics argue this reflects voter distrust in the ALP's tactics. Meanwhile, Rockliff's Liberals face challenges negotiating with a crossbench opposed to projects such as the Macquarie Point AFL stadium, which eight of ten crossbenchers reportedly reject.

Bartlett's experience suggests a pragmatic path forward, emphasising trust and clear protocols, as demonstrated by his 2010 bike ride meeting with McKim at St Crispin's Well (Tasmanian Times, 4 April 2024).

However, the fragmented crossbench, including independents like Kristie Johnston and Peter George, complicates negotiations. Without maturity, as Bartlett warns, Tasmania risks prolonged instability, undermining public confidence in a parliament already strained by frequent elections.