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## Rockliff Faces Crossbench Challenge to Form Tasmanian Government

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Tasmanian Premier Jeremy Rockliff claims formal agreements with crossbenchers are unnecessary to form a minority government, but securing support from four independents remains critical.

Tasmanian Liberal Party Premier Jeremy Rockliff has declared that formal confidence and supply agreements with crossbench Members of Parliament (MPs) are not required to form a minority government, despite the Liberals securing only 14 seats in the recent state election, four short of the 18 needed for a majority, according to ABC News projections. Speaking ahead of his visit to the Governor, Rockliff expressed confidence in governing without signed agreements, citing his 16 months of minority government experience since the March 2024 election. However, with one independent, Craig

Garland, ruling out support due to dissatisfaction with the Liberals' handling of the Marinus Link deal, Rockliff must secure the backing of the remaining four crossbenchers to maintain power.

The crossbench, comprising five Greens MPs, independents Kristie Johnston, David O'Byrne, Peter George, and potentially a Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party candidate, leans heavily progressive, complicating negotiations. Garland's refusal stems from the Liberals' lack of transparency on the Marinus Link, a multi-billion-dollar undersea cable project, which he claims reinforces a pattern of secrecy. Johnston and George, both vocal opponents of the proposed Macquarie Point stadium, also supported a no-confidence motion against Rockliff in June, citing budget mismanagement and project delays. O'Byrne, the only pro-stadium crossbencher, has indicated openness to working with either party but emphasizes stability over transactional demands.

Rockliff's draft "Stability Agreement," released on July 22, 2025, proposes collaborative governance, including regular briefings and a Crossbench Liaison Office, but has not yet secured commitments. Labor Party leader Dean Winter, with only 10 seats, has also begun talks with independents, excluding the Greens, though his path to government appears steeper. Election analyst Kevin Bonham noted that Rockliff could govern without formal agreements if fewer than 18 MPs support a no-confidence motion against him.

The Liberals' 3.3% swing in their favor contrasts with Labor's historic low of 26.1% primary vote, reinforcing Rockliff's claim to govern. Yet, with a crossbench opposed to key Liberal policies like the stadium, Rockliff's ability to navigate these negotiations will determine Tasmania's political stability.