

## The New Rules of Leadership in Tasmania

*Angela Driver, CEO, Tasmanian Leaders*

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Leadership in Tasmania has never been more demanding. Across sectors and industries, leaders are under pressure – navigating workforce shortages, succession challenges, digital disruption, and burnout – all while trying to adapt to shifting systems with limited resources.

This may come as no surprise, but what we're seeing now is a sharp rise in complexity. It's no longer just about doing more with less – it's about managing competing demands across cultural, structural, and political systems that are interconnected and often in tension.

Our new report, *Leading in Complexity 2024: An Initial Enquiry in Tasmania*, led by leadership expert Dr Aiden M. A. Thornton, explores the unique challenges facing Tasmanian leaders. It also offers practical recommendations to help leaders and organisations better navigate today's complex landscape.

The research drew on the experiences of dozens of leaders through an in-person workshop and statewide survey. These conversations revealed that complexity shows up in many forms – from generational divides and fragmented systems to increased demand for social support, and growing gaps in digital skills.

Participants reported limited capacity, outdated management practices, and a loss of institutional knowledge. The pandemic's shift to virtual work has weakened team cohesion and reduced informal support networks, all while community and workplace expectations grow more demanding.

Technological advances, while exciting, often outpace capability. Leaders spoke of the challenge of integrating new tools in teams with varying levels of digital literacy, along with the risks of cyber threats and change resistance that slow innovation.

Political complexity adds another layer. While Tasmania offers direct access to decision-makers, this doesn't always translate into coordinated action. Leaders spoke of navigating short-term thinking, policy trade-offs, and the difficulty of balancing public good with political and economic pressures.

In light of these findings, the report outlines practical ways forward. It doesn't just diagnose the problem it offers a roadmap for strengthening leadership capability across the state.

Key recommendations include:

- **Fourteen essential skills** needed to lead in complexity, ranging from self-awareness and systems thinking to digital competency and emotional resilience

- **Embedding these skills** into education and leadership development programs
- **Investing in digital and technological capability** to keep pace with innovation
- **Creating frameworks for shared vision and conflict resolution** to address polarisation and competing priorities

At Tasmanian Leaders, we are already putting these insights into action. Our *Leading at the Edge* series provides future-focused leadership development through dynamic, one-day workshops tailored to Tasmania's unique context. It's just one example of how we're equipping leaders to thrive – not despite complexity, but through it.

To explore these ideas further, we are hosting a free public webinar on **Friday 9 May**, where Dr Thornton will unpack the findings and open up a conversation about what's next for leadership in Tasmania. Details and registration are available at [www.tasmanianleaders.org.au/leading-in-complexity](http://www.tasmanianleaders.org.au/leading-in-complexity).

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### About Tasmanian Leaders:

Tasmanian Leaders is Tasmania's premier leadership development organisation amplifying purposeful and inclusive leadership for greater social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

No one understands leadership in the Tasmanian context better than us. We deliver unparalleled excellence in leadership development through our high-impact programs and events, equipping individuals with the skills, knowledge, and mindset necessary to positively influence our future. Our social impact work supports the wider community to thrive. Our influential Network connects current and emerging leaders to foster meaningful change together.

[www.tasmanianleaders.org.au](http://www.tasmanianleaders.org.au)

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