

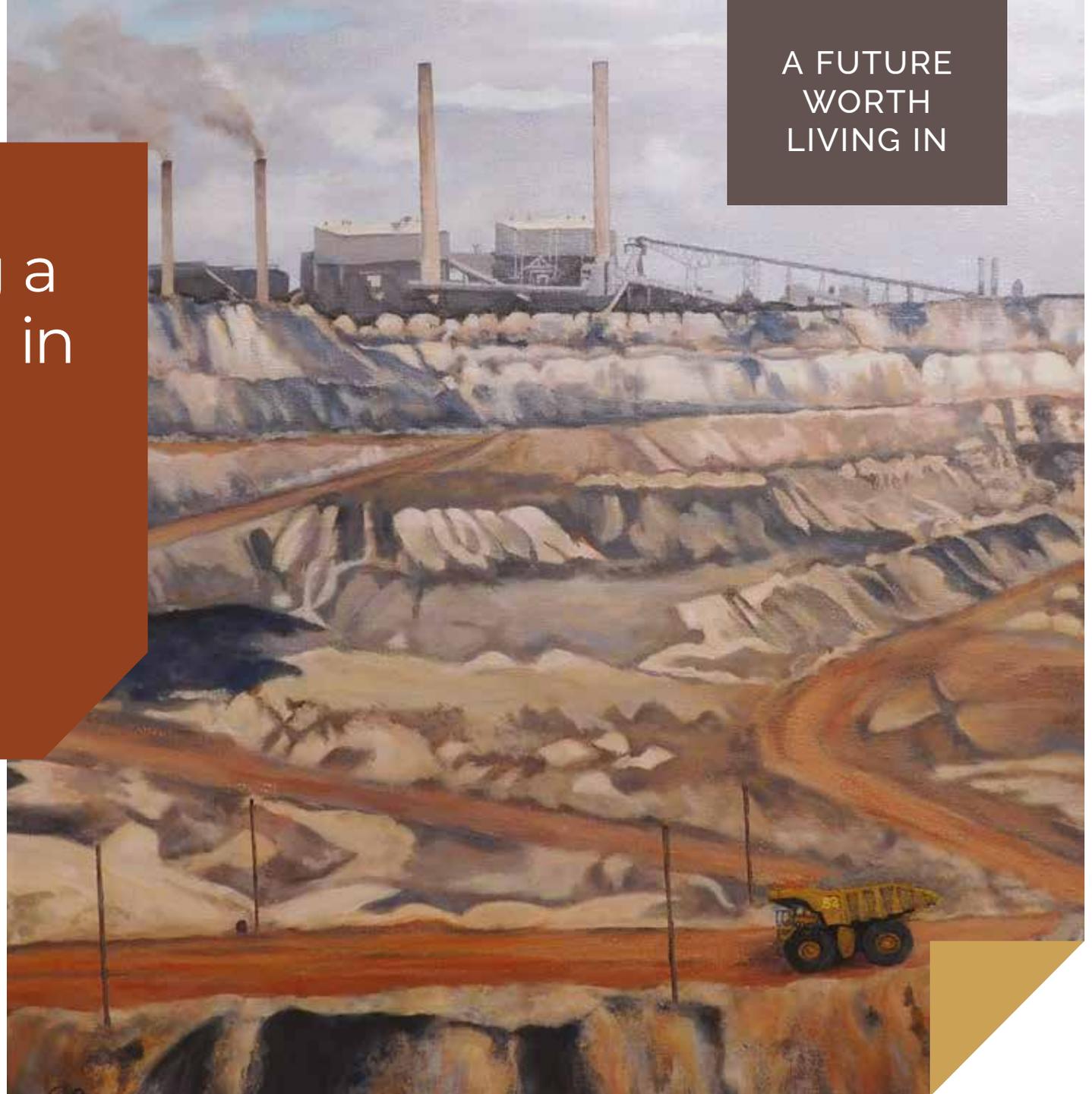
A FUTURE  
WORTH  
LIVING IN

From theory to action:  
Implementing a  
Just Transition in  
rural Australia



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A FUTURE  
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LIVING IN

At A Future Worth Living In, we help financial institutions understand their role in addressing the climate crisis.

**Acknowledgements** - We would like to thank all our interviewees for taking the time to be part of our research. This report would not have been possible without them sharing their valuable experiences and knowledge. Thank you as well to Aakash Sachdeva and Kate Donnelly for their advice and contributions. The cover art is by Cheryl Rochester. Her painting, *Collie is a Coal Town*, won the Collie Art Prize 2023 and is a testament to Collie's identity of Coal and Power, and the miners and families who have been part of this history. We recognise and respect the Wilman Tribe and the Noongar people and their natural right the land on which Collie is found.



# 1. Executive Summary

This report has developed a Just Transition Implementation Framework. The framework can and should be used by a broad range of stakeholders concerned with the Just Transition. It is a comprehensive guide for designing and implementing Just Transition policy, with clear actions for governments, unions, industry, and investors. We have intentionally kept the recommendations high level in order for the framework to be adapted to different contexts and for use beyond transitions away from coal.

Our framework offers recommendations for key transition stakeholders which include all levels of government, unions, industry, and investors. Each of these stakeholders has an important role to play in the implementation of a Just Transition. In our framework we offer recommendations which cover the Just Transition process from policy development to implementation, outlining actions and identifying each stakeholders' different role.

There are four themes that emerged from our research findings which form the framework to enable the move from theory into action. These themes are broadly transferable to other locations and contexts, which combined with the specific recommendations to stakeholders, makes this framework unique.

The framework was developed from research conducted on Collie, WA, over a six month period. Collie is a small rural town of 7,599 people with a significant number of citizens employed by the coal mines, power stations and surrounding heavy industry. In 2020, the WA Government published Collie's Just Transition Plan in response to the rapidly changing energy landscape of the state and the main power station approaching the end of its lifespan. There will be limits to the transferability of the findings from Collie, especially as each town or region's Just Transition should be grounded in the local context. However, there are valuable lessons on how to catalyse, fund and implement the Just Transition that are broadly applicable to other locations.

The themes are articulated in the following table:



At COP26, over 40 countries committed to a Just Transition away from coal power. This was a critical moment in climate negotiations as global emissions have continued to rise since the Paris Agreement was signed in 2015. It's been predicted that the use of coal will reduce in the next decade, but this is dependent on the stringency of climate policy introduced. What is certain is that the energy mix is set to profoundly change, and support for the consumers, workers and communities who depend on coal is essential. There are many examples around the world where transitions have been badly managed, and the effects are still felt by those communities decades later. We are now at a crucial moment to take action to ensure that the coming transition does not further entrench existing inequalities and provides support for affected workers and communities.

We hope this framework can be used by practitioners to develop town, region and country level Just Transition approaches that incorporate the various responsibilities of different stakeholders, and also hold these stakeholders accountable for delivery. Further information on stakeholder recommendations can be found in the body of the report (page 28).

At COP26,  
**over**  
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## Just Transition Framework and Stakeholder Specific Recommendations

The framework on the next page provides an overview of our findings and recommendations to stakeholders, outlining for different actions who is responsible, who should support, and who needs to actively engage in order for the transition to be collaborative and attuned to the needs of workers and communities.



# Just Transition Implementation Framework

Framework Findings		Recommendations		Government				Unions	Communities	Industry	Investors	
				National	Subnational	Local						
<p>Coordinates stakeholders to articulate the vision.</p> <p>Sets direction and pace of change.</p>	<h3>Vision and Leadership</h3> <p>Convene local stakeholders for a Just Transition Working Group.</p> <p>Allow time to build consensus and develop a collective vision.</p> <p>The national government then has the foundation to set the policy direction and create an enabling environment for other stakeholders to act.</p>	<p>Identify key local stakeholders to form cross-sectoral working group.</p> <p>Allow time (&lt; 1 year) to build relationships and develop a collective vision.</p> <p>Use this collective vision as the foundation from which policy and delivery can be planned. This includes companies' own Just Transition Plans.</p>	☹️	✅	☹️	⊕	⊕	⊕			Responsible	
			☹️	✅	✅	✅	⊕	✅				
			✅	✅	☹️	⊕	⊕	✅	☹️			
<p>Clear targets, timelines and funding provide certainty for workers and the community, but also for industry and investors.</p>	<h3>Targets and Timelines</h3> <p>Set clear targets for mine/power station closure.</p> <p>Power stations should not be closed with less than three years notice.</p> <p>Long timelines are necessary to diversify the local economy and retrain workers while winding down fossil fuel infrastructure.</p>	<p>Allow enough time to set targets for power station/mine closure in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Plan for a 10-15 year transition process.</p>	☹️	✅	☹️	☹️	⊕	☹️	⊕		Support	
			☹️	✅	☹️	☹️	⊕	☹️	☹️			
<p>Enables delivery by coordinating across government: embedding Just Transition across existing departments and Commissions.</p>	<h3>Coordination and Delivery</h3> <p>The Collie Delivery Unit, which is locally based and well-resourced, has been essential to overcome government silos and catalyse action.</p> <p>Funding needs to be targeted and comprehensive to support scale of action needed in Collie.</p> <p>A Just Transition needs multi-partisan commitment and cross government collaboration to deliver across long timelines.</p>	<p>Create a locally based delivery unit that can coordinate across government departments to fast-track transition actions.</p> <p>Develop a comprehensive funding package that addresses worker/ community support, economic diversification and environmental remediation.</p> <p>All levels of government commit to Just Transition and utilise their legislative powers to create an enabling policy environment.</p>	☹️	✅	☹️	☹️		☹️			Engage	
			☹️	✅	☹️	☹️		☹️	☹️			
			✅	✅	✅							
			✅	✅	✅							
<p>Input: Informs the vision and communicates priorities of the community and workers.</p> <p>Output: transition addresses community's needs and is attuned to local identity.</p>	<h3>Place and Identity</h3> <p>Honouring the work done by miners and power station workers and celebrating this history is important.</p> <p>Delivering climate action through social and economic policies: this addresses the concerns of the community.</p> <p>Tangible changes early on in the transition process demonstrate government commitment and can build community support.</p>	<p>Engage with workers, unions, and the community on the local issues that matter to them.</p> <p>Structure transition policy around social and economic issues/ concerns to deliver effective and just outcomes.</p> <p>Plan to deliver positive, impactful changes early on to build community support for the transition.</p>	☹️	✅	✅	☹️	⊕	☹️				
			☹️	✅	☹️	⊕		⊕	☹️			
			☹️	✅	✅		⊕	☹️	☹️			

## 2. Introduction

### Why are we doing this research?

The Just Transition has been referenced in international climate treaties, government policy and business alliances. Investors are increasingly aware of the need to take a more rounded approach to climate action, however, translating high-level ambitions into operational action remains a challenge.

While there is extensive literature on Just Transition principles and frameworks, there are few in-depth case studies exploring how the process plays out in practice, especially at the regional level as opposed to within a company. Using Collie as our case study, we want to understand what the barriers and enablers of action are when implementing a Just Transition process.

### Who is this research for?

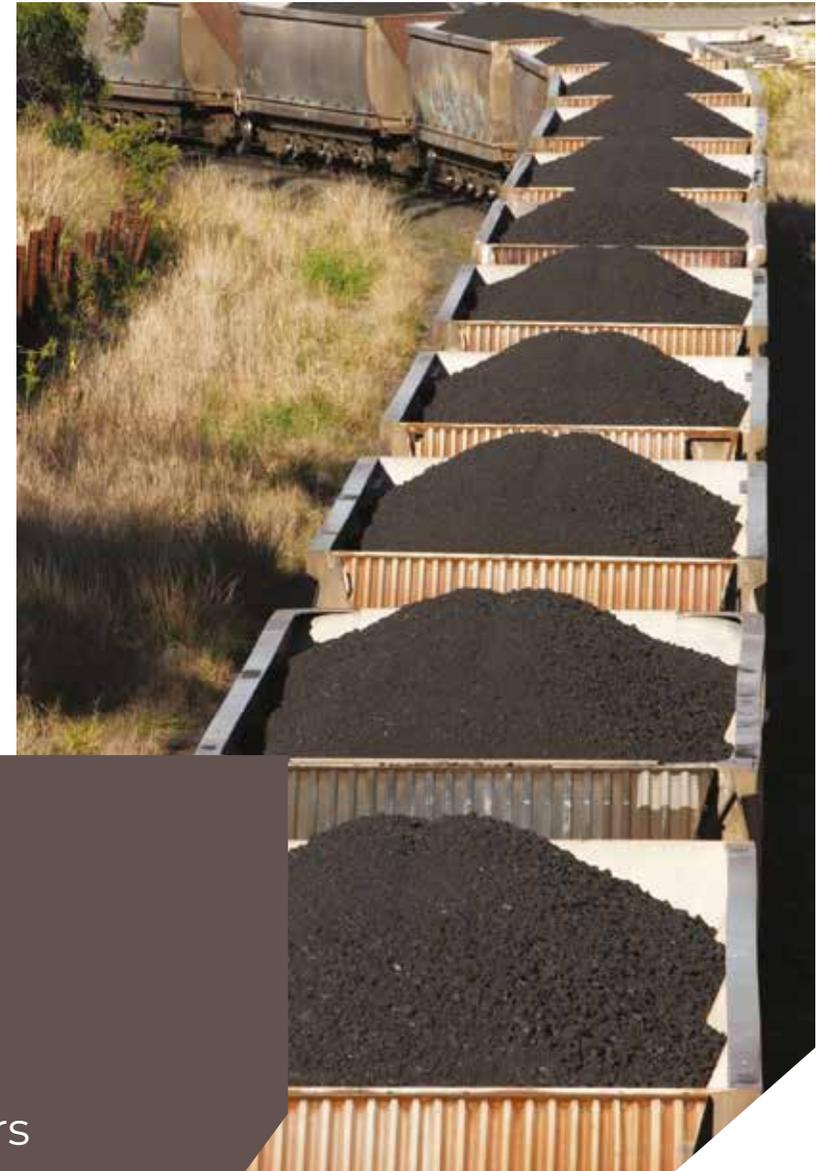
This research was initially undertaken for institutional investors and the financial services sector more generally. However, as the research has developed, it became clear the findings were relevant for all stakeholders involved in Just Transition, particularly policymakers.

### What gap is it filling?

There have been calls for a deeper understanding of what Just Transition means in practice (Muller, et al., 2021). This research addresses this need for a deeper understanding and makes high level recommendations for all Just Transition stakeholders.

### What is this research about?

This research uses the case study of Collie, Western Australia (WA). Collie is a small town that has been the backbone of energy production (coal mining and coal-fired power) in WA for over 100 years. In 2020, the Western Australia Government released the town's Just Transition Plan. We spoke to members of Collie's Just Transition Working Group and the government to understand how this approach to transition came about, and what the key enablers and lessons learned so far have been.



Collie has been the  
**backbone  
of energy  
production**  
in WA for over 100 years



# 3. Literature Review

170 years ago, coal powered the Industrial Revolution in Europe and the United States. Today, it remains a fundamental energy source and the primary source of electricity globally (Our World In Data, 2023).

Thermal coal is used to generate electricity for public power grids and for industry requiring electrical power, for example, manufacturing chemicals. Metallurgical coal is used for iron and steel making, as well as producing cement and aluminium.

In 2021, at COP26, more than 40 countries committed to (UK Gov, 2021):

- > Ending investment in new coal power generation
- > A rapid scale up of clean power generation
- > Phasing out coal power in 2030s for major economies and 2040s in rest of world
- > A Just Transition away from coal power that benefits workers and communities

This commitment is crucial as emissions from fossil fuels have continued to rise since the Paris Agreement in 2015 (Our World in Data, 2023). The energy crisis prompted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine meant coal consumption reached an all-time high in 2022 (International Energy Agency, 2022). The IEA's scenarios predict a reduction in coal use in the coming decade, however the speed of this decline depends on the stringency and effective implementation of climate policies (IEA, 2022). What is certain is that the energy mix is set to profoundly change, and support for the consumers, workers and communities who depend on coal is essential.

## What is the Just Transition?

The Just Transition emerged in the 1980s in response to increased US Government regulation of polluting industries (Lee & Baumgartner, 2022). Industry workers advocated for retraining, community support measures and less environmentally intensive production methods.

In 2015, the preamble to the Paris Agreement included:

**“Taking into account the imperatives of a Just Transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities.”**

The scope of the Just Transition has continued to broaden, with the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2023) defining Just Transition as:

**“Greening the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind.”**

**“The Just Transition seeks to ensure no one is left behind in the transition to a Net Zero, sustainable economy and society.”**



In their Sixth Assessment report (IPCC, 2022) the IPCC outlined 11 principles for a Just Transition. These included the need for economic diversification, creation of decent jobs and retraining programmes for decent work, but also “social dialogue and democratic consultation of social partners and stakeholders” and “consideration of intergenerational justice concerns”. The Just Transition is therefore broadly based on social, environmental, and economic foundations.

The transition to a Net Zero economy and society needs to be carefully managed – both in building alternative energy generation and providing support for affected workers and communities. There are many examples where transitions have not been well managed. In the UK, communities worst affected by the de-industrialisation of the past 30 years still experience higher levels of unemployment and welfare spending (Beatty & Fothergill, 2017). In the Appalachia region of the US, increased environmental regulation and the falling price of natural gas have contributed to years of sustained job losses in coal plants and mining (Abraham, 2017).

With no transition plan in place for workers, the region struggles with significantly higher rates of unemployment, poverty, lack of services and infrastructure compared to other rural areas in the US (Smith, 2021).

Coal mines are often found in rural areas, which means it can be hard to find alternative employment in the instance of mine closure. Therefore, these 'mono-industry' coal towns and regions will and do suffer a substantial blow to income flows if there is a loss of mining employment or de-industrialisation more generally without a transition plan in place (Stanley, et al., 2018).

## Achieving a Just Transition away from Coal

This section will explore existing literature on the Just Transition, with reference to specific advice on managing transitions away from coal.



In their 2018 report *Managing Coal Mine Closure: achieving a Just Transition for all*, the World Bank outlined three key pillars to guide mine closure. We have added a fourth pillar, finance. Finance is an essential enabler of the other three pillars and a range of stakeholders have a role to play in raising the necessary capital for Just Transitions.

## Policy and Strategy Development

### Policy

The government has a fundamental role to play in enabling a national-level orderly transition to Net Zero and in local transitions. By establishing clear policy signals and targets, government will minimise risks associated with disorderly transitions, including impacts to the financial system and communities, while also enabling the private sector and communities to identify key opportunities in a decarbonised economy (IGCC, 2021). It is critical that renewable energy capacity is increased while supporting a transition for workers and communities (IEA, 2022), and national governments are best placed to assess the disproportionate impact of climate change and net zero transition on vulnerable communities (ACSI, 2022).

A Just Transition process needs strong political leadership and engagement with industry and finance. Mine closure is expensive and disruptive and therefore requires clear policy direction and budgetary interventions from government (Stanley, et al., 2018).

### Strategy Development

Coordination of policy development is best undertaken by a high-level decision-making body, incorporating sector agencies, industry and union representatives and spanning different levels of government, from national to local (Stanley, et al., 2018; Abraham, 2017; Popp & Heilmann, 2020).

It is essential that genuine stakeholder consultation starts at the planning stage and continues throughout the process to minimise social conflicts (Stanley, et al., 2018). Transition to a post-mining economy is best seen as a dynamic process; as the transition process is implemented it is important to continue to facilitate dialogue between different stakeholders (Measham, 2022).

## People and Communities

A Just Transition seeks to meet the needs of people, their families and the community – this includes not only miners, but those working in related industries (Stanley, et al., 2018). In a disorderly transition, loss of employment can reduce the flow of income through towns and regions, resulting in negative knock-on impacts for the local economy (ibid.).

**...as the transition process is implemented it is important to continue to facilitate dialogue between different stakeholders**

(Measham, 2022)



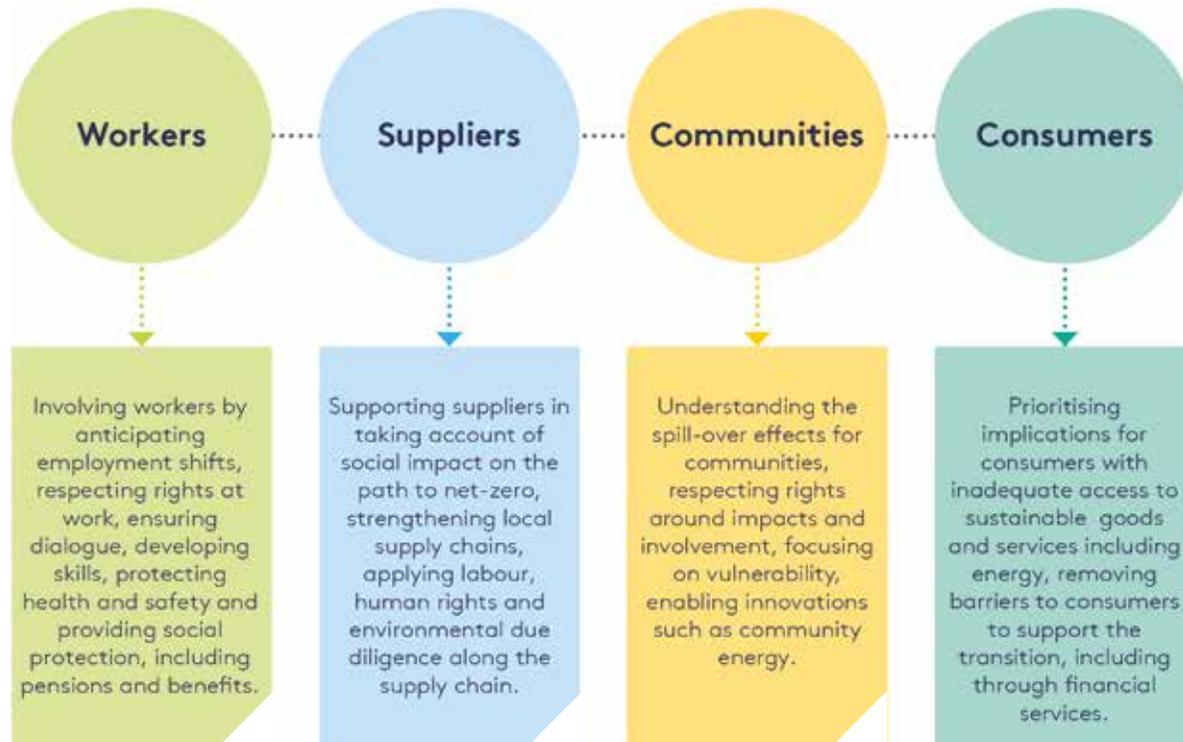
The figure and table on the following page give an overview of the human dimensions of the Just Transition as well as information on policies to support affected workers. Figure 1 highlights the importance of understanding how different groups will be affected and the need to create frameworks for citizen engagement (Muller, et al., 2021). Table 1 shows policy options to support workers in the short to long term. Supporting local businesses and diversifying the local economy (particularly in mono-industry towns) is essential. Social assistance programmes and labour policies should be planned and implemented before layoffs begin.

## People and Communities (continued)

Workers and their communities are local experts and hold important knowledge about regional priorities, strengths, and weaknesses which are vital to transition strategies (Popp & Heilmann, 2020). Within these groups, people will have different needs and preferences, especially the workers themselves. Those in the early stages of their careers may need jobs counselling and skills development programmes, while others will be more concerned with retirement options. Providing these services should involve collaboration between workers, business, and local and regional public officials (Stanley, et al., 2018).

Figure 1

Figure by Muller, et al., 2021



**Including the voices of workers and their communities in Just Transition processes is essential to deliver positive social impact, support measures and manage risks**

(Muller & Robins, 2021;  
Popp & Heilmann, 2020).



Table 1

Active Labour Market Policy	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
<b>Employment Services</b>			
> Labour exchanges	✓	✓	
> Vocational counselling			
> Mobility assistance			
<b>Education and Training</b>			
> Institutional training		✓	✓
> On-the-job training			
> Comprehensive programmes			
<b>Small business support and subsidised employment</b>			
> Small business support			✓
> Wage subsidies			
> Community employment programmes			

This table has been adapted from Figure 7 in the World Bank report on coal mine closure (Stanley, et al., 2018).

## Land and Environmental Remediation

Mining has a significant environmental footprint, and action must be taken to restore the land after the mine has closed. According to the World Coal Association (cited in Stanley, et al., 2018), environmental remediation should:

- > Prevent negative impacts to soil, water, and air resources in and near mined areas;
- > Restore the quality of soils to their pre-mining level;
- > Maintain or improve landscape and functional quality.

Restoring land and in some cases, infrastructure, to pre-mining levels allows future use by local communities, and the land can become an economic asset in regeneration initiatives (ibid.). It is essential that land and environmental remediation is planned from the outset, as insufficient funding is the biggest barrier to physical mine closure and land remediation taking place in a satisfactory manner (ibid.). This further highlights the importance of the finance sector taking a Just Transition approach to Net Zero strategies.

## Finance

As well as the three pillars outlined by the World Bank, finance has an essential role to play. The Just Transition away from coal brings the double challenge of accelerating investments in clean energy while minimising the risk of unnecessary stranding of coal assets as far as possible, without undermining emissions reductions targets (Popp & Heilmann, 2020; IEA, 2022). Mine closure is costly and requires significant government spending on support packages for workers, social service delivery, labour programmes and environmental remediation (Stanley, et al., 2018). Investment in renewable capacity must also increase in tandem with coal phase out (IEA, 2022).

Action by the finance sector on the Just Transition now needs to be scaled up and deepened to produce real world outcomes. Robins & Muller (2021) recommend making the Just Transition a key part of Net Zero plans and developing common approaches across financial institutions to incorporate the Just Transition into strategies and decision-making:

- > **Investment appraisal** Financial institutions need to integrate social factors into the assessment of the companies they own and lend to, so that they respect social standards and mitigate social as well as financial risks.
- > **Shareholder engagement** Investors are increasingly including the Just Transition in their engagement with the companies they own.
- > **Capital allocation** The Just Transition will need to be incorporated into capital allocation within all asset classes for financial institutions to minimise social risks and realise social opportunities of net-zero.
- > **Policy and stakeholder dialogue** Investors have been including the Just Transition in their advocacy with policymakers.

## Who are the key stakeholders in the Just Transition away from coal?

Figure 2 shows the key stakeholders in the Just Transition. As well as stakeholders who need to lead and enable the transition (governments, investors), it also highlights groups that need to be included, such as unions and communities. The stakeholders are surrounded by a box called 'Nature' to reflect that society and the economy exist in a symbiotic relationship with nature.

Figure 2



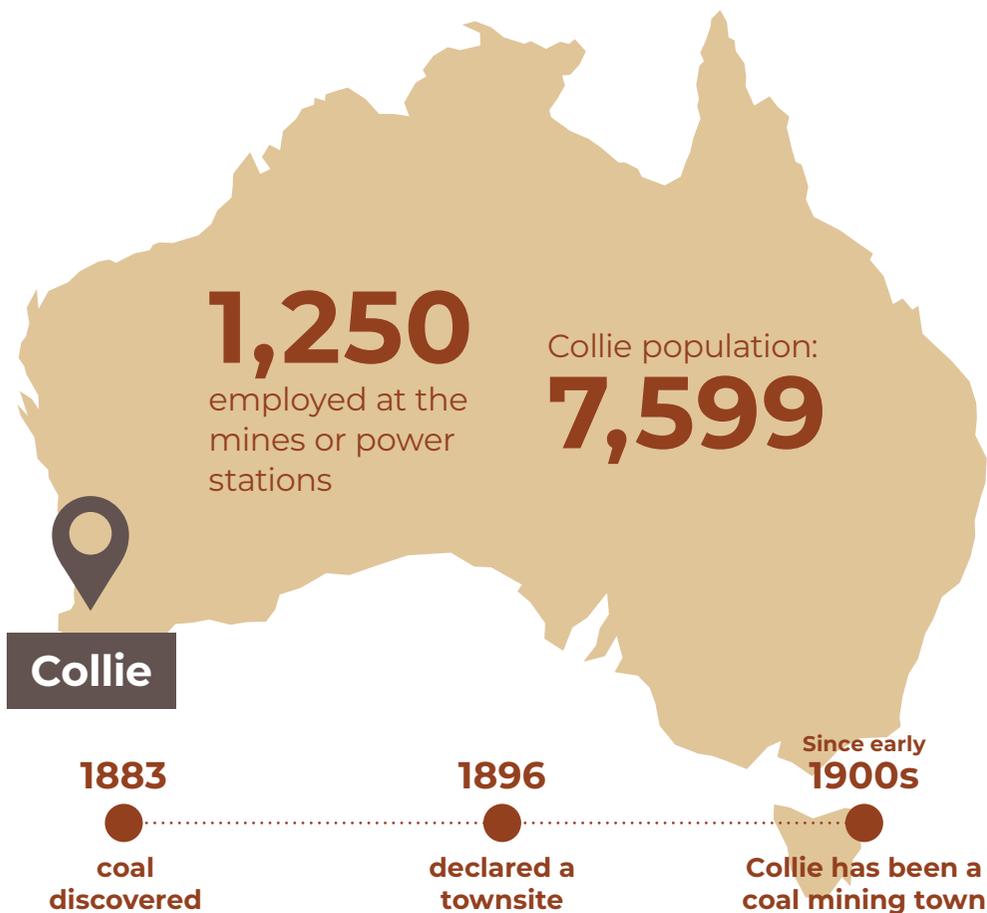
## Accounting for Nature

*The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review* was commissioned by the UK Government and published in 2021. The review argues that economic development can only be judged as sustainable if economics includes nature as an 'asset'. Humanity must begin to understand the full extent to which we rely on nature as the foundation for our society and the economy.

# 4. Our Research

## Our Case Study: Collie, Western Australia

Collie is located in the Southwest region of Western Australia (WA). In 2020, WA's emissions were 82.1 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>-e\* (DISER, 2020). Of these emissions, industrial processes produced 4.540 Mt co<sub>2</sub>-e, while energy accounted for the majority of WA's footprint, producing 80.011 Mtco<sub>2</sub>-e (ibid.). Land and forestry sequestered 14.121 Mtco<sub>2</sub>-e (ibid.). WA's carbon footprint is the same as the state of Victoria, despite having only a third of the population (ABS, 2022).



### Collie's Infrastructure

Type	Infrastructure	Owner	Closure Date
Coal Mines	Premier Coal Mine	Yancoal (China)	
	Griffin Coal Mine	Griffin Coal Mining, a subsidiary of Lanco Infratech (India)	
Power Stations	Muja Power Station	Synergy, WA government owned company	Phased from 2024 – 2029
	Collie Power Station	Synergy, WA government owned company	2027
	Bluewaters Power Station	Sumitomo Group, Kansai Electric (Japan)	
Heavy Industry	Worsley Alumina Refinery	South32 (Australia)	

Collie was declared a townsite in 1896 following the discovery of coal in 1883 and since the early 1900s, Collie has been a coal mining town. The first coal-fired power station opened in 1931 (Pancia, 2021). The town is located on the land of the Wilman tribe of the Noongar people, and Collie and its surrounds are part of the Gnaala Karla Booja region. Mining and industry are an integral part of the town's identity, with 1,250 workers and contractors employed at the mines or power stations (Beyond Zero Emissions, 2019).

Although Collie is a town of just 7,599, it is home to three power stations and is responsible for 17% of Australia's total GHG emissions (Godden, et al., 2022). The energy mix in Collie has been changing rapidly. In 2014, the power stations produced 70% of the state's coal-fired electricity (Taylor, 2014). By 2019, natural gas accounted for more than half of electricity consumed in WA, and around 36% of households now have rooftop solar PV systems (Synergy, 2023).

Collie is also home to much of WA's heavy industry, including South 32's bauxite and alumina operation, Worsley Alumina. Worsley Alumina's carbon footprint in 2022 was 3.7 Mtco<sub>2</sub>-e (South32, 2022), making it responsible for the majority of WA's reported industrial emissions (DISER, 2020).

\*Mt CO<sub>2</sub>-e is the abbreviation of Million Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

WA's coal basin is experiencing an ongoing financial crisis. In September 2022, Griffin Coal fell into receivership after a decade of operating issues and mounting losses and debt (Mercer, 2022). By the end of 2022, Griffin Coal owed \$1.4 billion to creditors, while it was suggested the size of its recoverable assets (\$200 million) were likely 'grossly overvalued' (Mercer, 2022a). At the same time, Premier Coal faces declining reserves and had its operations interrupted by a safety incident. These difficulties have forced state-owned energy provider Synergy and South32 (amongst others) to import coal from interstate and abroad, at a high cost (Mercer, 2022). As intense heatwaves have become more common during the Australian summer, there were concerns that the state could experience blackouts due to increased power demand and declining reserves.



In 2019, Premier of Western Australia, Mark McGowan, announced the staged retirement of two of the state-owned coal-fired power plants in Collie. This was followed up in 2022 with the announcement that the remaining coal-fired plants would close by 2029.

So far, 662 million Australian dollars have been committed to supporting Collie's Just Transition by the Western Australian government (WA Government, 2022). The government has an Energy Transformation Plan in place for Western Australia and will spend \$3.5 billion over the next 10 years building renewable energy capacity (Mercer, et al., 2022).

## Methods

### Research Design and Aims

This research project was a qualitative study, using interviews, observation, and document analysis for data collection.

The methodology was selected as the one most appropriate for our research questions. Although this study could invite an in-depth power network analysis, the length of the research trip and the desired outcomes (practical lessons for other countries and contexts committed to Just Transition) excluded this type of analysis.

A key aim of this research was to make actionable recommendations to policymakers and investors. This methodology allowed us to answer our research questions with the breadth and depth we required, and to extract the key lessons from our case study, Collie WA.

### Data Collection

#### Document Analysis

Prior to the fieldwork trip, key documents from the Collie Just Transition Working Group, Western Australia government, Investor Group on Climate Change and the Australia Energy Transition Initiative were analysed to gain a better understanding of the local context.

## Interviews

Interviews were conducted during February-March 2023. The interviews took place online and in person, with a research trip to Western Australia from 1 – 14 March. Prior to the research trip, preparatory interviews were undertaken to better understand the WA context and to secure in-person interviews. By contacting the Collie Just Transition Working Group, it was possible to interview key stakeholders from the state government, trade unions and private sector. After the fieldwork trip, follow up interviews were arranged to discuss themes that had emerged during analysis.

Semi-structured interviews were used to allow themes and issues that had not been addressed in the literature review read in preparation for fieldwork to emerge, and to gain a deeper understanding of each interviewees' experiences and opinions. The interviews lasted from 30 to 90 minutes and took place at the time and place suggested by the interviewee, or on Microsoft Teams.

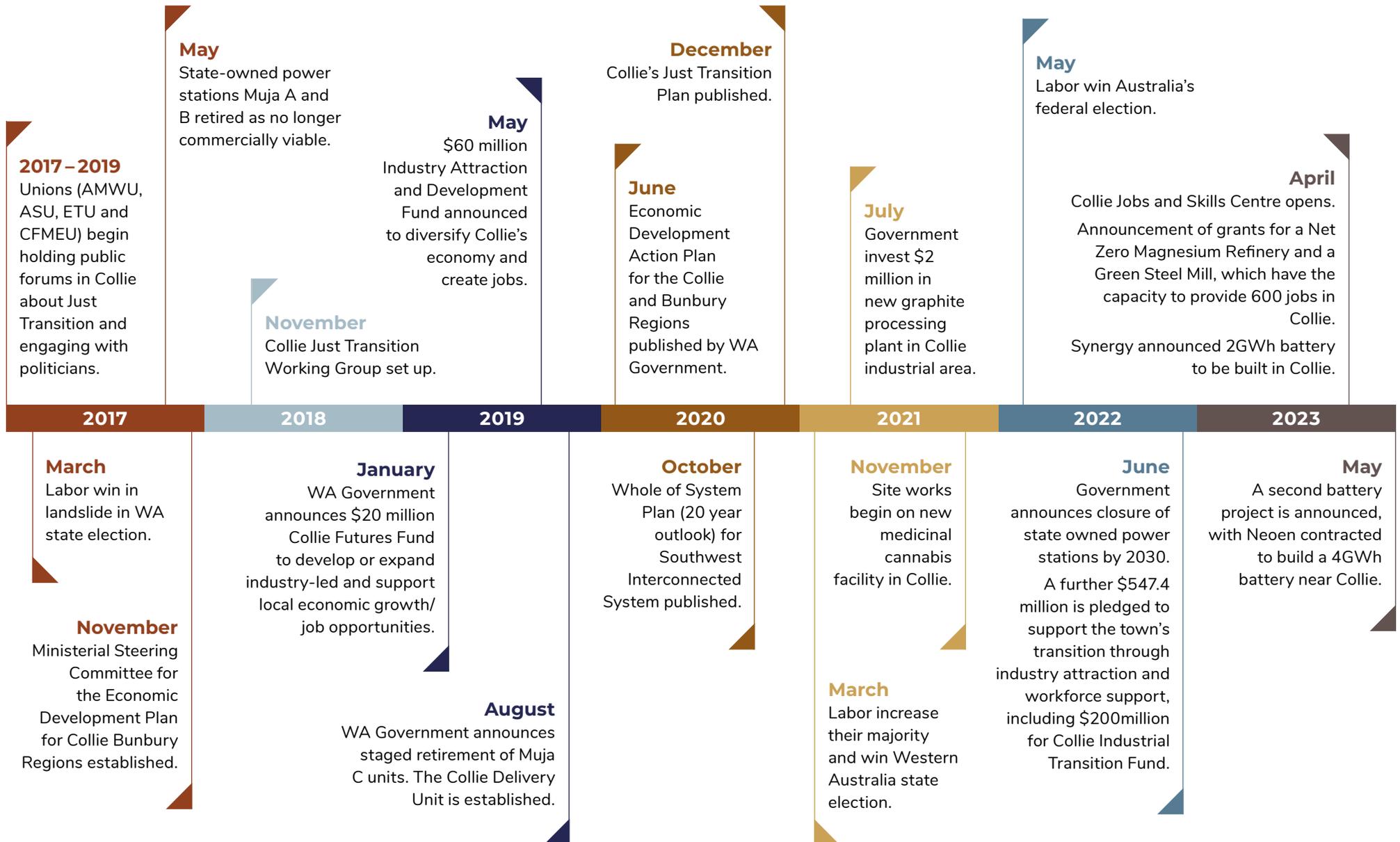
### Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed verbatim before coding line by line, through the 'open-coding' process, then sections were sorted into themes or 'simple codes' (Crang, 2005). Documents also formed part of the coding process. This form of analysis allowed common themes to emerge which could form the basis of report recommendations.

### Limitations

This study is intended to be illustrative as opposed to representative. The length of the research trip limited the number of in-person interviews. As interviews were only held with members of the working group and individuals in other professional roles and not members of the community, there may be a certain degree of bias in the data.

# Timeline

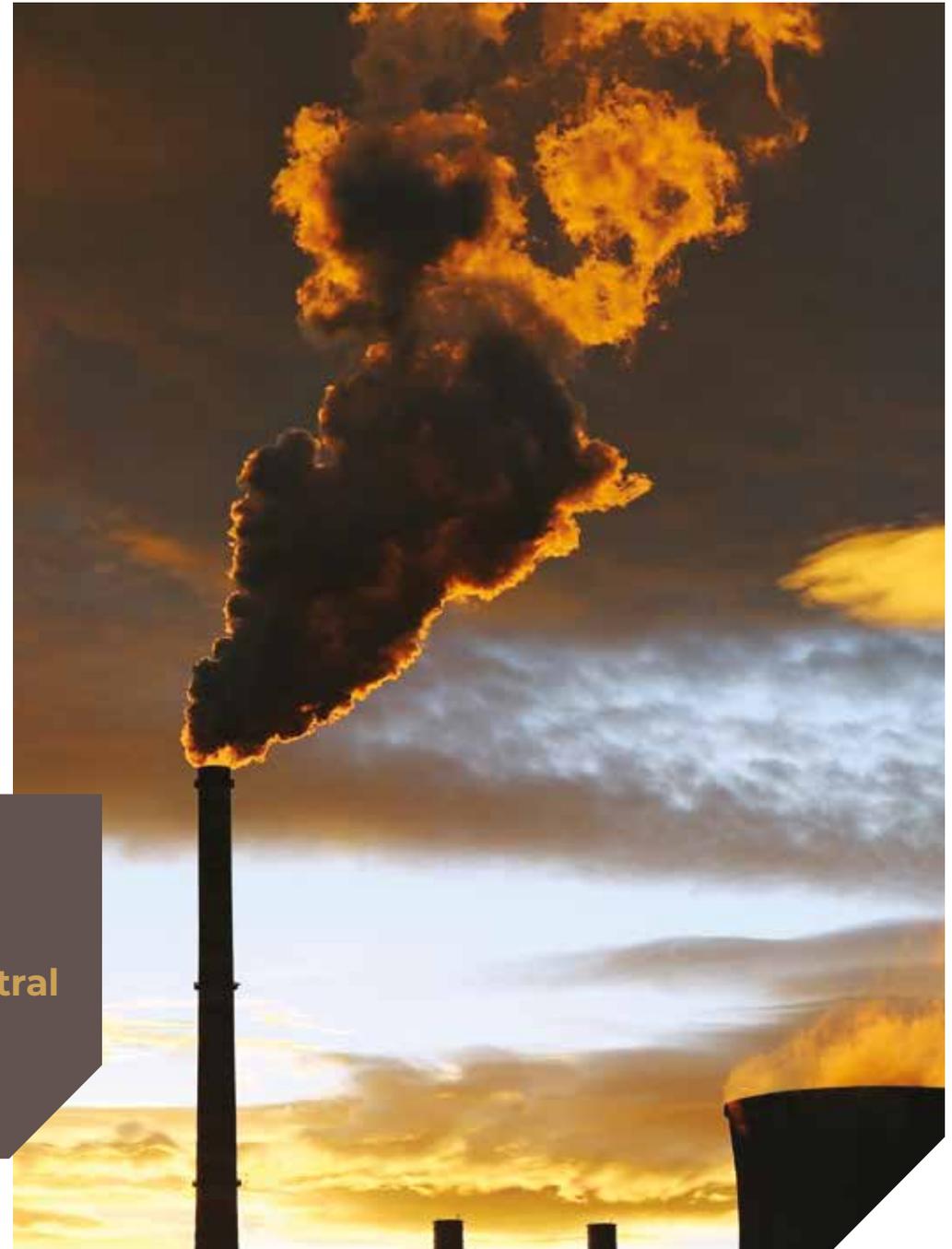


# 5. Findings and Analysis

These findings were the basis for our Just Transition Implementation Framework. An overview of the four themes is provided and the next section will cover the findings and analysis in more detail.

- > Our research has shown the importance of the subnational government taking ownership of the Just Transition and creating a clear policy direction. This provides certainty for workers and the community, but also an enabling environment for companies and investors to take climate action.
- > The Just Transition should be delivered through existing mechanisms, creating a Delivery Unit that can coordinate across government and planning economic diversification around the community's existing skillsets, resources, and infrastructure.
- > At the local level, social and economic concerns are more relevant to the community than messages about climate change. That's why it's essential to have a vision of what a successful community will look like in the future and build the capacity to deliver it.

**Working in coal (mining or power stations) is a source of pride in the town, and honouring this work is central to the Just Transition Plan.**



## Four Themes



# Finding 1: Shared Vision and Leadership

## A Shared Vision

A shared vision can be grounded in 'common needs and goals, a sense of the common good, shared lives, culture and views of the world, and collective action' (Silk, 1999). It can imbue a community with capacity, endurance, commonality and mutually agreed goals (Miller, 2012).

The Collie Just Transition Working Group evolved out of the WA government taking early steps 'to bring together industry, community, unions and government to commence a dialogue on a Just Transition' in Collie. The group devised 8 Guiding Principles for the Just Transition and worked together to develop the town's Just Transition Plan, published in December 2020. The working group comprises of a diverse set of stakeholders, and when asked how these stakeholders work together effectively, a common theme that emerged in interviews was the need for a shared vision.

Interviewees acknowledged that working group members came to the table with their own perspectives and from varied backgrounds. However, what unified them was that they are all 'absolutely committed to the community being a thriving place to live and work'. This has created 'a common language' and 'a real passion to make it work'.

However, it is important to note that there was a period of disagreement and negotiation in the working group in choosing the term 'Just Transition' or 'Good Transition' and establishing the 8 guiding principles. This period lasted roughly a year, and now everyone is 'singing from the same song sheet'.

## Analysis

Disagreement is not necessarily negative. In having hard conversations early on, the Working Group have produced a vision and principles that act as a unifying force for their ongoing work in Collie.

It is important to have the space and time to build that collaborative relationship. Devoting a year to working through differences and building consensus creates a strong foundation for moving forward. Interviewees made it clear that this strong foundation of good working relationships and a shared vision means that if there are disagreements now, they are resolved by the group's ability to work collaboratively. As one interviewee put it,

**'without working together, you just expend a bunch of energy in the wrong places, and nothing gets done. It's very counterproductive. So, getting to a space where you're able to work collaboratively is important'.**

## Just Transition Working Group

- > Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- > Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation
- > Department of Training and Workforce Development
- > South Regional TAFE
- > Energy Policy WA
- > South West Development Commission
- > CFMEU Mining and Energy Division WA
- > Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union
- > Electrical Trade Union WA
- > Australian Services Union
- > Shire of Collie
- > Collie Futures Economic Advisory Group
- > Collie Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- > Bluewaters
- > Premier Coal
- > Griffin Coal
- > Synergy
- > South32 Worsley Alumina
- > Worley

## Government Leadership

The current Labor Government has a strong political mandate. Mark McGowan, who resigned in May 2023, was Premier for six years and enjoyed consistently high approval ratings. Under his leadership, Labor increased their majority in the 2021 state election, following a landslide victory in 2017. Labor now controls the Upper and Lower Houses in the state parliament in WA.

The Liberal government had begun work on 'Reimagining Collie' prior to the 2017 state election, however it is the Labor government that have catalysed the Just Transition process in Collie. The Labor government convened the Just Transition Working Group and has provided the funding and coordination to deliver the transition. However, early conversations around the Just Transition in Collie were held by WA unions, who held public forums from 2017 to 2019 to raise awareness about the need for a Just Transition, and to apply pressure on the government to action their 2017 election promise on supporting the town's transition.

An important point that arose in interviews was that as time has gone on, the government has taken more control of the Just Transition process and devoted more resources to it, but this has been at the expense of taking a more collaborative approach to decision-making. It was the government that decided the membership of the Working Group, and as the Just Transition has moved forward, there has been a sense of decisions being made outside this group. It was acknowledged this is a hard balance to strike, 'in the end, there's a great momentum...but you can't lose that collaborative work'.

### WA Labor Party

In the 2017 state election, Mark McGowan led the Labor party to its most comprehensive victory at either state or territory level since federation.

Premier McGowan's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic raised his popularity to record heights (91% in September 2020) and he subsequently led Labor to another landslide victory in 2021.

The Labor party's policies have a strong focus on job creation, regional investment, health and education and climate action investment.

In 2021-22, the state government had an operating surplus of \$6 billion, and a surplus of \$5.7 billion in 2022-23 (WA Gov, 2022).

### Analysis

Governments hold the policy levers for Just Transition, and it is essential they take a leadership role in implementing the transition. As the IGCC explains, 'by establishing clear policy signals and targets, governments will minimise risks' (2021). The WA Government have sent a clear message on the direction of travel for Collie and the wider state, towards a green, low carbon future, communicating this is a managed process to investors, industry, and communities.

The political mandate the WA Government enjoys is somewhat unique. It should be noted that some interviewees expressed that the government could be even more ambitious because of this, particularly around investing in renewables manufacturing in the state.

Strong government leadership is important but shouldn't come at the expense of collaboration. Just Transition literature (ILO, 2023; Lee & Baumgartner, 2022; IPCC, 2022) stresses the need for inclusivity and social dialogue, however it is hard to balance the scale and speed of action needed for a Just Transition with consultative processes. Collie's transition is still in its early stages, and we would suggest returning to this case study in future years to further explore the interplay between maintaining momentum and collaborative decision-making.

## Key Findings

- > **There will always be disagreement when bringing together diverse stakeholders. It is important to allow stakeholders time to reach consensus and build positive relationships.**
- > **A shared vision has acted as a strong foundation for future decision-making and conflict resolution in the Collie Just Transition Working Group.**
- > **By convening the Just Transition Working Group, the government has set a clear direction of travel that provides certainty for workers, the community, industry, and investors.**
- > **Strong government leadership and pace of change should not come at the expense of a collaborative approach.**

# Finding 2: Targets and Timelines

## Clear Targets

Collie's Muja power station was commissioned in 1966. It has four stages (A, B, C and D) comprised of eight steam turbines or units. There have been ongoing problems with the oldest units since 2007, with an explosion in 2012 and the collapse of a wall around one of the water-cooling towers in 2014.

Retiring the oldest units has been a decision delayed by successive governments, however in 2017, the decision was taken to close stages A and B as they were no longer commercially viable. In August 2019, the government announced the staged retirement of Muja stage C units. This followed announcements earlier in the year for a \$20 million Collie Futures Fund and a \$60 million Industry Attraction and Development Fund.

In June 2022, the government announced all state-owned power stations would be retired by 2030. Collie power station is set to close in 2027 and Muja D units to close by late 2029. This announcement was also accompanied by news of a significant funding uplift of \$547.4 million for the transition in Collie.

## Analysis

The news that all state-owned power stations would be retired by 2030 is momentous from an environmental perspective, but also a social perspective. Collie is a 'coal town' and a theme emerged in interviews that there are still sections of the community that think there will never be an end to coal. Providing clear targets for power station closure makes coal phase-out a reality but can also be a cause for concern. The Just Transition Working Group told the WA government there had to be at least three years notice for power station closure.

Retirement announcements have been carefully timed, either in tandem with significant funding allocation, or afterwards. The final dates for power station retirement were announced 18 months after the publication of Collie's Just Transition Plan, and two and half years after the initial funding for Collie's transition was allocated. Clear targets and long timelines indicate that this is a controlled and managed process, while the funding shows the government's commitment to the town and its transition.

## Looking out over Collie's Premier Coal Mine



## Long Timelines

The need for long-term, strategic thinking and long timelines around the transition was emphasised by several interviewees. The Just Transition Plan confirms that Collie's transition will be a 10-15 year process, while one interviewee said it was necessary to look 50 years into the future and think about how the community should look, and plan from there.

As well as allowing for planning and preparation, it also seemed that long timelines were important to communicate to the community that this was a managed process. By communicating a clear timeline, this will, as one interviewee said, give 'the community the confidence to carry on' – preventing people from pre-emptively leaving jobs or moving away from Collie.



### Analysis

Bartecka (cited in Nowakowska, et al., 2021) states, 'the Just Transition should be planned for at least 10 years...it takes time to build economic alternatives, retrain workers, and make an orderly, gradual transition to a new model of regional development'.

### **A Just Transition cannot be planned or implemented rapidly as there are a multitude of social and economic factors to consider that are often context specific.**

Two key elements of the Collie's Just Transition are diversifying the local economy and developing a new identity for the town that isn't based on coal. This process needs to be intentional rather than reactive, and that requires long lead times. Developing a new town identity and engaging the community will be discussed in more detail in the 'Place and Identity' section.

Clear targets and long timelines also send signals to investors and industry on the policy direction. This creates an enabling environment for planning their own transitions and future investments.

## Key Messages

- > **Clear targets and long timelines convey to the community that the transition is a managed process, crucial to building confidence around the town's transition.**
- > **They also support a clear policy direction necessary for industry and investors to plan their own transitions.**
- > **Long timelines are necessary to diversify Collie's economy, retrain workers and implement other social measures, but also to allow time for the town's identity to evolve.**

# Finding 3: Coordination and Delivery

## Control

Western Australia's electricity grid is the Southwest Interconnected System, or 'SWIS'. It is not connected to the other Australian electricity grids and is owned by the WA Government. In 2020, WA's Minister for Energy released the first Whole of System Plan, which explores four different scenarios for energy provision in the state. The uptake of rooftop solar PV and ongoing issues with the state's coal supply has significantly disrupted the energy landscape, and the scenarios will be used to inform investment into 'lower cost, lower emissions electricity'.

In 2006, Western Power Corporation was broken up and today there are three state-owned corporations that generate, distribute, and sell energy in WA: Synergy, Western Power, and Horizon Power. Synergy own and operate Muja and Collie power stations in Collie. Synergy has taken a 'collaborative, people-first approach to industry transition since 2019'. It is a key employer in Collie, and all employees affected by the planned closure of the Muja power station C stage have transition plans in place under their Workforce Transition Programme.

Figure 3

Budget committed so far to the transition in Collie and in Western Australia



## Iron Ore Royalties in WA

Under the Mining Act of 1978, royalties are payable on all minerals. The three-tiered royalty system was introduced in WA in 1981. It applies one of three royalty rates depending on the form in which the mineral is sold.

In the last two years, the WA government has collected record high royalties from the iron ore mining sector, helping to lift the state budget to billions in surplus.

Type	Infrastructure	Owner	Closure Date
Coal Mines	Premier Coal Mine	Yancoal (China)	
	Griffin Coal Mine	Griffin Coal Mining, a subsidiary of Lanco Infratech (India)	
Power Stations	Muja Power Station	Synergy, WA government owned company	Phased from 2024 – 2029
	Collie Power Station	Synergy, WA government owned company	2027
	Bluewaters Power Station	Sumitomo Group, Kansai Electric (Japan)	
Heavy Industry	Worsley Alumina Refinery	South32 (Australia)	

### Analysis

The WA government own a large proportion of the state’s energy network, from generation to distribution and retail. This means they have the decision-making power and oversight to set comprehensive deadlines for power station retirement and targets for renewable generation and energy storage through their Whole of System Plan (WA Government, 2020). A key part of the energy transition is building up renewable capacity while scaling back on fossil fuels (IEA, 2022). Collie’s Just Transition sits within a wider energy transition happening in the state.

**Having a well-resourced, government-funded unit to coordinate on the ground is a valuable idea that could be replicated effectively in other areas going through transition.**

→

## Government Coordination – Collie Delivery Unit

Collie Delivery Unit ‘coordinates, oversees and promotes activities and initiatives that support the future prosperity of Collie’ (WA Gov, 2023), while also being a point of information on the Just Transition for locals and businesses. The Unit is located in Collie, has seven staff and is based in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

There are multiple ongoing projects for Collie’s transition, including support and retraining for workers and diversifying the town’s economy by attracting and developing new industries. These projects are time sensitive and require input from different government departments and commissions. To deliver at pace, the Unit was set up to coordinate and streamline project delivery.

The local MP, Jodie Hanns, was made Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier in recognition of the work she was doing on behalf of the Premier, in particular attending meetings with the Collie Delivery Unit. The Delivery Unit is charged with ensuring the local member is fully engaged in the transition process. These meetings are used to ensure projects are on track, and to highlight if there are problems that need to be discussed with other Ministers.

### Analysis

Having a well-resourced, government-funded unit to coordinate on the ground is a valuable idea that could be replicated effectively in other areas going through transition.

## Just Transition policy sits across multiple departments and requires a collaborative approach in order to deliver at pace.

By situating the Unit in the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Collie’s transition is supported by the department’s ‘whole of government’ approach to policy delivery and provides another direct line to the Premier and Ministers. This line of communication was further strengthened by MP Jodie Hanns becoming Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier. Improving the links between national government and towns or regions in transition is essential for effective policy delivery.

Instead of specialist climate change units or departments located in the capital city, a local unit that takes on a coordinating role can embed climate action and Just Transition across government, while remaining responsive to local issues. This could help overcome government siloes and render policy implementation more efficient.

## Sending clear market signals

To support the economic diversification of Collie, there are two government funds. The Collie Futures Fund provides grants of up to \$100,000 for new and existing businesses in Collie. Applications are assessed by the Southwest Development Commission and the final decision is made by the Collie Futures Economic Advisory Group, chaired by MP Jodie Hanns and made up of seven other community members.

The Collie Industrial Transition Fund provides match funding for large scale industrial projects, prioritising green manufacturing and clean energy. The other conditions are that the project must have a clear economic benefit to Collie and leverage the town's existing workforce. So far, Collie has attracted a new graphite processing plant and a cannaponics facility. The Collie Resource Recovery Centre has recently been built and will showcase waste management technology that converts household waste into biochar and bio-oil. Most recently, the WA government has announced funding for a 500 MW battery storage system in Collie, which will be operational by the end of 2025.

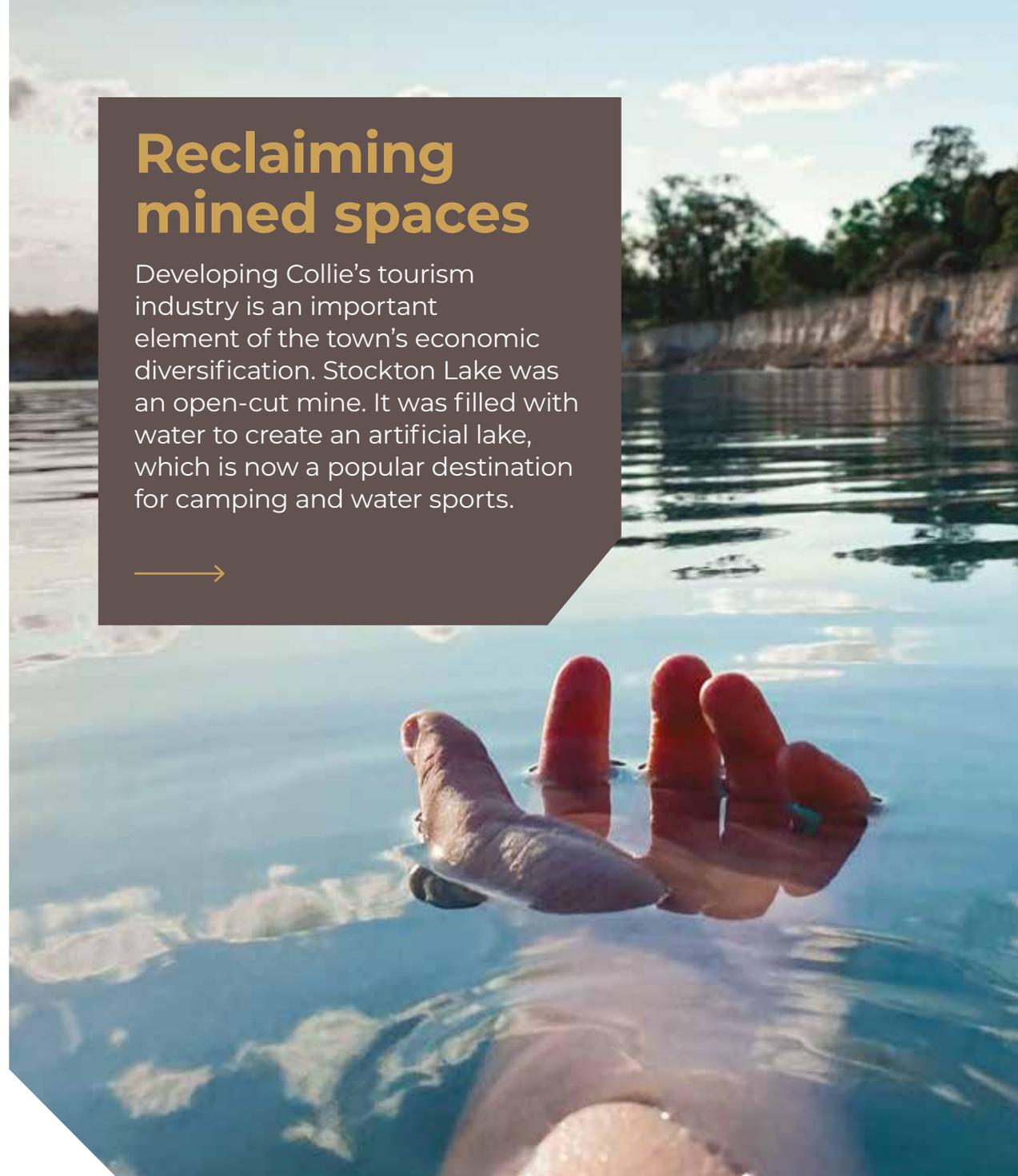
### Analysis

These funds recognise the importance of investing in the local economy by supporting small businesses and attracting new industries. The Collie Futures Fund is kickstarting the diversification of small businesses the town. At the same time, devolving grant decision-making to the local level is empowering and recognises that community members are best placed to make these decisions.

Alongside the targets for power station closure, the Industrial Transition Fund sends a clear signal to markets about the kind of investment Collie wants to attract. Investors want certainty, and the explicit commitment to green manufacturing and clean energy projects provides this. As well as providing clarity for investors and corporates, the fund puts workers and the community at the heart of future diversification. Although Collie is moving away from an identity based around coal, it will remain a hub for industry and energy. The Industrial Transition Fund leverages the highly skilled workforce, and projects like the battery storage system utilise the town's energy infrastructure. This is a valuable example of a policy action that considers the social aspect of transition and the importance of harnessing existing capabilities and infrastructure.

## Reclaiming mined spaces

Developing Collie's tourism industry is an important element of the town's economic diversification. Stockton Lake was an open-cut mine. It was filled with water to create an artificial lake, which is now a popular destination for camping and water sports.



## Cross-government collaboration

A final issue to consider is the need for collaboration across different levels of government. Just Transitions require long timelines, with Collie's being mapped out over 10-15 years. This covers around three state government cycles and at least two federal government cycles. When the Labor government came to power, it took a year to build up momentum around the Just Transition in Collie. One interviewee expressed concern about what would happen if the state government changed hands in a future election and suggested a need for a cross-party commitment to Just Transition in Collie.

Likewise, now Labor is in power in the federal government (following a 2022 election victory), previous barriers around investment have been unlocked, and the state government has received the additional support it needed. In May 2023, the federal government announced a new legislated National Net Zero Authority (Prime Minister, 2023) that will support workers, coordinate programmes and policies across government to support regions and communities and help investors and companies engage with Net Zero opportunities.

### Analysis

Through the Just Transition Working Group, the government has successfully created the high-level decision-making body incorporating sector agencies, industry and union representatives and spanning national to local government, as recommended by Stanley, et al., 2018; Abraham, 2017; Popp & Heilmann, 2020. However, the question of multi-partisan commitment to Collie's Just Transition and the need for the alignment of state and federal governments are important issues.

To implement a successful transition, all levels of government need to be at the table. As the previous situation in Collie suggests, this becomes more challenging when opposing parties are in power in the state and federal spaces. Moreover, calls for cross party commitments on climate action are not new, but Just Transition timelines make a further case for multi-partisan action and commitments at all levels of government.

## Australia's Climate Wars

Climate change and climate action in Australia have been subject to political hyper-partisanship and disinformation, which intensified during the Turnbull and Morrison administrations. However, following the 'Black Summer' (2019-20), during which bushfires burned 24 million hectares of land and destroyed thousands of homes, the public discourse on climate change shifted.

In 2022, a Labor government was elected in the federal 'Climate Election'. The new government is promising to cut emissions by 43% by 2030.

In March 2023, the federal government passed the most significant emissions reductions legislation in more than a decade. The legislation includes a requirement that Australia's major polluting facilities (including mines, refineries, and smelters) must cut their emissions intensity by 5% each year.

## Key Findings

- > **Funding needs to be targeted and comprehensive to support scale of action needed in Collie.**
- > **State ownership of the WA energy network allows the government to set comprehensive deadlines for fossil fuel infrastructure retirement and increasing renewable generation.**
- > **The Collie Delivery Unit, which is locally based and well-resourced, has been essential to overcome government siloes and catalyse action.**
- > **Funding to support economic diversification should consider existing capabilities and resources of the workers and community, while also sending clear market signals on the kind of investment and industry the town wishes to attract.**
- > **A Just Transition needs multi-partisan commitment and cross government collaboration to deliver across long timelines.**

# Finding 4: Place and Identity

## Celebrating Collie

Until recently in Australia, coal was normalised as positive in popular social, cultural, and economic discourse (Bear, 2016). Collie is an example of a generational coal mining community, where coal mining has played a central role in the economic, cultural, social and physical development of a township or region over many generations (Della Bosca & Gillespie, 2018).

It was emphasised by interviewees that recognising Collie’s history was an essential part of the Just Transition Plan and process. As one participant put it, ‘really, really, I could say really 100 times before I could stress how important that understanding of the heritage is’. Another interviewee pointed out the government’s recognition of the contributions Collie has made to the state for over 100 years, and that it was time to ‘pay that back’. The Transition Plan notes that Collie’s contribution to ‘the economic and energy landscape of the state’ as ‘unique and significant’.

### A Grieving Process

Although the Just Transition away from coal is generally understood to be a positive phenomenon, it is important to acknowledge that for the workers, many of whom are generational miners or power station workers, there is a grieving process that goes alongside the transition. The transition was described as being ‘a very emotional and personal thing’ as people were seeing their life’s work ‘destroyed in front of them’. Celebrating the town’s past allows the community to feel positive about their past and optimistic about the future.

Figure 4

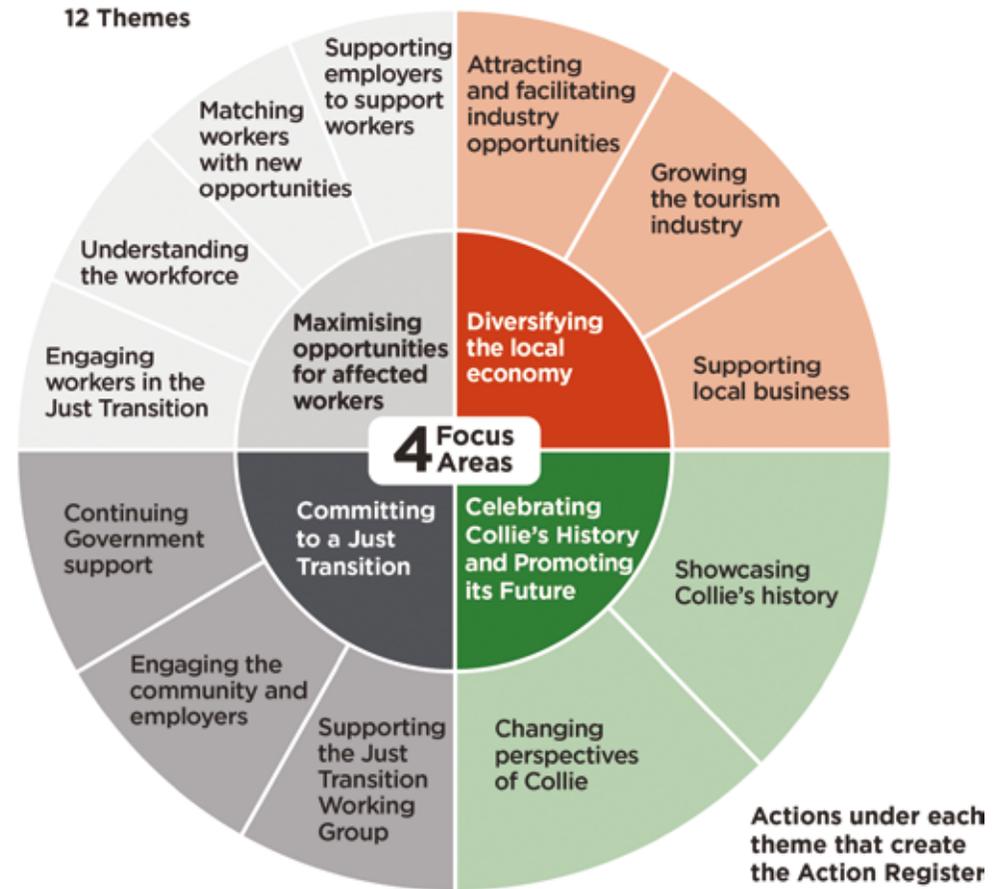


Figure 4 shows Collie’s 12 themes that sit under the four strategic focus areas. The focus areas ‘define the work being undertaken as part of the Just Transition effort, link directly to the outcomes being sought, and are supported by actions under each theme’ (Collie’s Just Transition Plan, December 2020).

There is understandable trepidation about the power station closure as prosperity and coal are closely linked in the town. It is therefore notable that in the Just Transition Plan, 'climate change' and 'emissions' are each mentioned once. The majority of the document is devoted to outlining and explaining focus areas for the transition. These focus areas are broadly social and economic as opposed to environmental. The language of the four focus areas: 'maximising', 'diversifying', 'celebrating' and 'committing' emphasises this will be a positive direction for the town.

It is important to note that this is a transition first and foremost focused on affected workers and their families, as identified in the four focus areas: 'maximising opportunities for affected workers'. The rationale for Collie's transition being worker focused is that the Just Transition definition taken as their starting point is from the Paris Agreement: 'a Just Transition for the workforce'.

#### Analysis

The closure of the power stations and the transition away from coal fundamentally disrupts the identity Collie has had for 100 years. Understanding the positive perception of coal in the town, celebrating this history, and acknowledging the contribution Collie has made to WA shows a real engagement with Collie the place.

**Although to many environmentalists it may seem antithetical to celebrate fossil fuels, there is a risk of alienating communities who have relied on mining or fossil fuel infrastructure for generations.**

In fact, some interviewees expressed the need to distance Collie's transition from environmental movements to avoid the association of coal as negative and the demonisation of mine and power station workers.

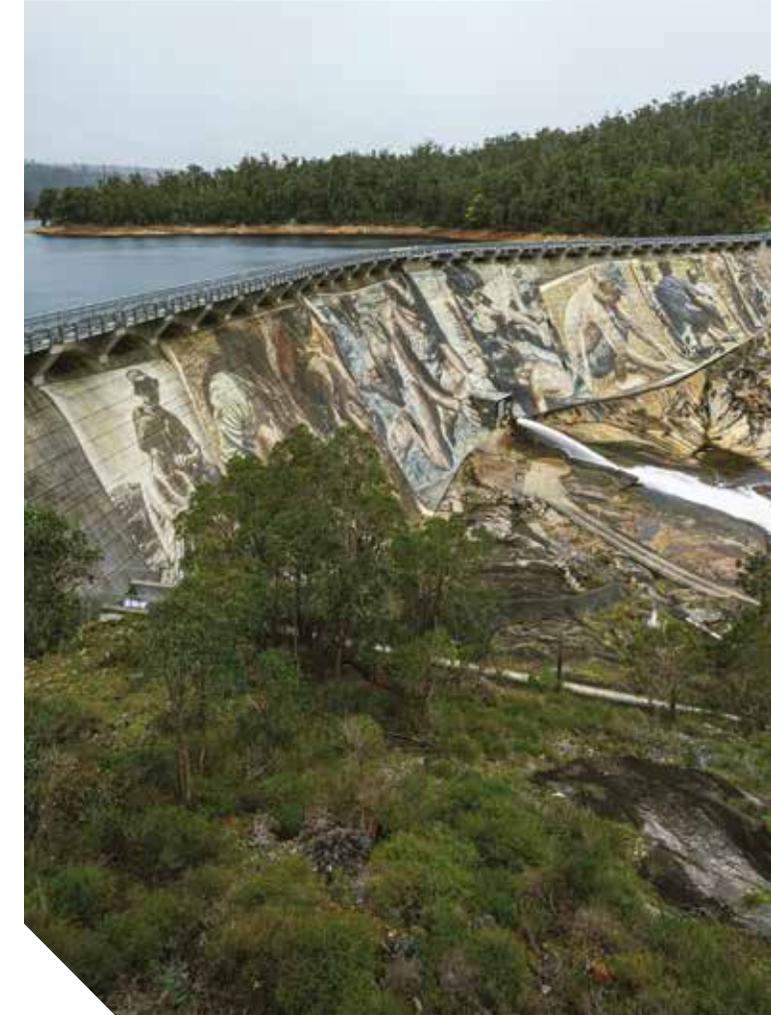
## Supporting identity evolution through tangible changes

One of the first projects that was undertaken as part of Collie's Just Transition was funding for a mural trail. The mural trail has 45 murals around Collie, commissioned from local artists and celebrating Collie's history (both pre-colonial and post-colonial) and natural environment. The trail is in addition to the \$10 million Collie Adventure Trails initiative, a multi-stakeholder project led by the government to diversify Collie's economy through tourism (WA Gov, 2019).

Likewise in 2021, Collie's Throssell Street revitalisation was complete – a \$1.1 million project to repair and upgrade the buildings on Collie's main street. Other actions to boost tourism in Collie include developing mountain biking trails and turning Lake Kepwari (a former mine, now reservoir) into a tourist destination. Tourist numbers have more than doubled compared to pre-pandemic levels (Edwards-Smith, 2021).

Collie's Jobs and Skills Centre opened in April 2023. The new Jobs and Skills Centre is linked to the South Regional TAFE campus, but the Centre is located in Collie to provide a one stop shop for advice and is part of a package of support to 'ensure there continues to be well-paid, local, blue-collar jobs in the Collie region' (Jobs & Skills WA, 2023). The Centre is located on the town's main street, described as being 'in the heart of the community'. The Centre's services are aimed at transitioning workers, but anyone can come to the Centre for free advice on careers, job applications, and training solutions. The Centre also aims to support people experiencing long-term unemployment and provides referrals to counselling and addiction services.

## Guido van Helten's mega mural on the Wellington Dam, inspired by local stories and photographs



## Analysis

The Just Transition Plan's 12 themes reference 'changing perspectives of Collie', 'diversifying the local economy' and 'celebrating Collie's history'. The extensive mural trail honours the history of the town, but also contributes to the development of tourist attractions in Collie.

### Developing the tourist industry has multiple benefits:

- > **Diversifying the economy away from being reliant on coal.**
- > **Entry level jobs (noted as lacking in Collie).**
- > **A more attractive place to live and visit.**
- > **Attractive to potential new industries as a place for their workers to live.**
- > **Tangible, positive changes early on in the transition process to get the community on board.**

It is unlikely that many mine or power station workers will transition to jobs in the tourist industry. The opening of the Jobs & Skills Centre is visible and accessible evidence of the ongoing support for workers but also other members of the community during Collie's transition. As one interviewee put it,

**'it's not just a Just Transition for anybody who happens to work in coal, it's a Just Transition for the whole town'.**

## Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

Early community engagement on the Just Transition in Collie was conducted by WA unions, who held public forums following the WA Government's commitment to a Just Transition in 2017. Since then, the transition process has been led by the state government, who have provided funding and set up the Just Transition Working Group. The Working Group was highlighted as being at the heart of stakeholder engagement and communication. Members of the Working Group are expected to communicate information about the Just Transition process to their networks and feedback comments or concerns.

Informing the community about what is happening has become a key consideration. Collie residents can sign up to a Just Transition eNewsletter, a print version is circulated around the town, and listen to the Just Transition podcast to hear updates on the transition process. The Collie Delivery Unit has also hosted community information sessions in the town. The importance of open and transparent communication was emphasised by interviewees, along with the importance of including all parts of the community and allowing everyone to play a role.

### Analysis

The question of stakeholder engagement highlights a key tension in defining and implementing a Just Transition – where to draw the boundary of the Just Transition between workers and community. Collie's transition is primarily focussed on workers and their families, and then the community. This is in line with the short definition from the Paris Agreement, and workers stand to be among those most affected by power station closure in Collie.



## Collie's Jobs & Skills Centre

Opened in April 2023

A key priority in Collie's transition is diversifying the local economy and providing support for workers; engagement of different sectors through the Working Group is therefore essential. However, by making the Working Group the vehicle for communication and feedback, the opportunities for engagement are skewed towards people within these networks – unions, government agencies, and the private sector. Literature, frameworks, and principles continue to develop our understanding of the Just Transition and often emphasise the need for social dialogue with the whole community and active inclusion of vulnerable groups. However, it is beyond the scope of this report to assess engagement and inclusion in Collie's Just Transition process.

## A note on social dialogue, inclusion, collaboration



The issue of stakeholder engagement in Collie raises questions of inclusion and scope around the Just Transition. It was emphasised by interviewees that Collie's transition is following the 2015 Paris Agreement preamble, which outlines the need for a Just Transition for the workforce, and therefore Collie's transition is primarily focused on the workforce and their families. A worker focused transition can deliver positive outcomes for other members of the community, particularly through initiatives to create more jobs in the area and tackle long term unemployment (as evidenced by the Collie Jobs & Skills Centre). Creating the boundary of workers and their families also creates a more specific area of focus – while a Just Transition that leaves no one behind and takes into account intergenerational justice concerns (IPCC, 2022) is inherently going to be a messier and more complex process.

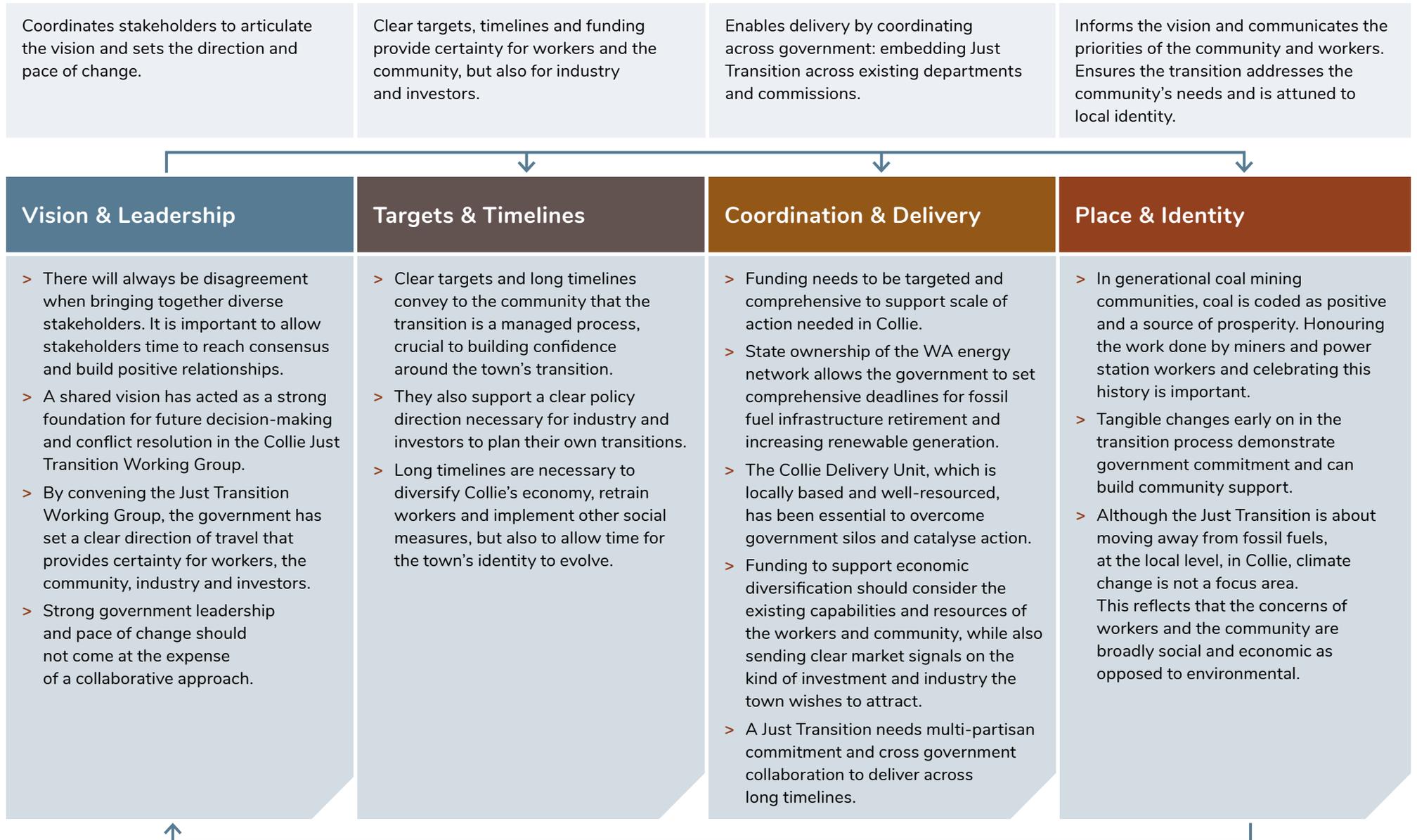
This issue of control is also reflected in conducting social dialogue and consultation. The ILO emphasise a 'fair and inclusive' greening of the economy (ILO, 2023), and the IPCC include a Just Transition principle on 'social dialogue and democratic consultation of social partners and stakeholders' (IPCC, 2022). The main forum for consultation and feedback in Collie's transition is the Working Group, a professional body of industry, government, and union stakeholders. Community consultation and participation in planning and implementation are lengthy processes. This will inevitably make the Just Transition a slower process, but one that is more likely to address the root causes of inequality and be attuned to the needs of different community groups, including those who are historically marginalised. However, the longer governments delay climate action and transition policies, the less time there will be for inclusive transitions that embrace the full meaning of justice.

## Key Messages

- > In generational coal mining communities, coal is coded as positive and a source of prosperity. Honouring the work done by miners and power station workers and celebrating this history is important.
- > Although broadly the Just Transition is about moving away from fossil fuels, at the local level, in Collie, climate change is not a focus area. This reflects that the concerns of workers and the community are broadly social and economic as opposed to environmental.
- > Tangible changes early on in the transition process demonstrate government commitment and can build community support.
- > Collie's Just Transition is government-led and focused on workers and their families. This has skewed active engagement towards certain sections of the community and risks excluding marginalised groups.

# Summary of Findings

The following table provides a summary of our research findings and provided the basis for our stakeholder recommendations.



# 6. Recommendations for Stakeholders

In order to develop the framework, we first took our four themes and considered how together they form the Just Transition process. Place and identity are the basis for a collective vision but are also reinforced by effective leadership. A collective vision and strong leadership means setting clear targets, incorporating long timelines and enabling policy coordination and delivery.

To develop the recommendations, we analysed who the key stakeholders have been in Collie's transition process. Although levels of influence of unions, industry and investors will vary in different contexts, what is clear is the essential role of government in leading the Just Transition. We then assessed the roles that different stakeholders could play in delivering the actions associated with each theme.

The different roles were grouped into the categories of:

- > **Responsible:** stakeholder is responsible and accountable for delivering this action.
- > **Support:** stakeholder should consider their areas of influence or capabilities that can actively support the delivery of the action.
- > **Engage:** indicates the need to engage with the stakeholders delivering this action and communicate needs and concerns. For policy to be effective and attuned to the needs of workers and the community, there must be social dialogue (IPCC, 2022).

Defining levels of Government	
<b>National/Federal Government</b>	<b>Example</b> The Australian/Commonwealth Government or UK Government.
<b>Subnational/State Government</b>	<b>Example</b> Western Australian Government or the devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
<b>Local Government</b>	<b>Example</b> The Shire of Collie or Councils in the UK.



# Just Transition Implementation Framework

Framework Findings		Recommendations		Government				Unions	Communities	Industry	Investors	
				National	Subnational	Local						
<p>Coordinates stakeholders to articulate the vision.</p> <p>Sets direction and pace of change.</p>	<h3>Vision and Leadership</h3> <p>Convene local stakeholders for a Just Transition Working Group.</p> <p>Allow time to build consensus and develop a collective vision.</p> <p>The national government then has the foundation to set the policy direction and create an enabling environment for other stakeholders to act.</p>	Identify key local stakeholders to form cross-sectoral working group.	☹️	✅	☹️	⊕	⊕	⊕			✅ Responsible	
		Allow time (< 1 year) to build relationships and develop a collective vision.	☹️	✅	✅	✅	⊕	✅				
		Use this collective vision as the foundation from which policy and delivery can be planned. This includes companies' own Just Transition Plans.	✅	✅	☹️	⊕	⊕	✅	☹️			☹️ Support
<p>Clear targets, timelines and funding provide certainty for workers and the community, but also for industry and investors.</p>	<h3>Targets and Timelines</h3> <p>Set clear targets for mine/power station closure.</p> <p>Power stations should not be closed with less than three years notice.</p> <p>Long timelines are necessary to diversify the local economy and retrain workers while winding down fossil fuel infrastructure.</p>	Allow enough time to set targets for power station/mine closure in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.	☹️	✅	☹️	☹️	⊕	☹️	⊕			
		Plan for a 10-15 year transition process.	☹️	✅	☹️	☹️	⊕	☹️	☹️			⊕ Engage
<p>Enables delivery by coordinating across government: embedding Just Transition across existing departments and Commissions.</p>	<h3>Coordination and Delivery</h3> <p>The Collie Delivery Unit, which is locally based and well-resourced, has been essential to overcome government silos and catalyse action.</p> <p>Funding needs to be targeted and comprehensive to support scale of action needed in Collie.</p> <p>A Just Transition needs multi-partisan commitment and cross government collaboration to deliver across long timelines.</p>	Create a locally based delivery unit that can coordinate across government departments to fast-track transition actions.	☹️	✅	☹️	☹️		☹️				
		Develop a comprehensive funding package that addresses worker/community support, economic diversification and environmental remediation.	☹️	✅	☹️	☹️		☹️	☹️			
		All levels of government commit to Just Transition and utilise their legislative powers to create an enabling policy environment.	✅	✅	✅							
<p>Input: Informs the vision and communicates priorities of the community and workers.</p> <p>Output: transition addresses community's needs and is attuned to local identity.</p>	<h3>Place and Identity</h3> <p>Honouring the work done by miners and power station workers and celebrating this history is important.</p> <p>Delivering climate action through social and economic policies: this addresses the concerns of the community.</p> <p>Tangible changes early on in the transition process demonstrate government commitment and can build community support.</p>	Engage with workers, unions, and the community on the local issues that matter to them.	☹️	✅	✅	☹️	⊕	☹️				
		Structure transition policy around social and economic issues/concerns to deliver effective and just outcomes.	☹️	✅	☹️	⊕		⊕	☹️			
		Plan to deliver positive, impactful changes early on to build community support for the transition.	☹️	✅	✅		⊕	☹️	☹️			

# Recommendations: Subnational Government

Subnational government is responsible for leading the Just Transition at the regional and town level. Setting a clear policy direction gives certainty to workers, communities, industry, and investors. Subnational government should work closely with national/federal and local governments to ensure policy coherence and effective delivery.

The importance of facilitating social dialogue should not be overlooked, and it's essential that unions are part of these conversations. Increasingly, the labour movement is aligning with the environmental movement, and in addition to representing workers, unions have valuable insight and knowledge that can inform Just Transition policy.

## Vision & Leadership

- > Identify key local stakeholders to form cross-sectoral working group.
- > Allow time (< 1 year) to build relationships and develop a collective vision.
- > Allow time for social dialogue with the transitioning community so they can provide input and feedback for the vision.
- > Use this collective vision as the foundation for planning policy and delivery.

## Targets & Timelines

- > Allow enough time to set targets for closing fossil fuel infrastructure in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.
- > This may involve dialogue with national government depending on devolved powers.
- > Plan for a 10–15-year transition process: time to wind down fossil fuel infrastructure, build up renewable capacity, diversify the local economy and retrain workers.

## Coordination & Delivery

- Develop a comprehensive funding package that addresses:
- > Retraining, employment advice and social support for workers and wider community.
  - > Economic diversification that capitalises on existing resources (natural and industrial) and workforce capabilities.
  - > Environmental remediation.
  - > Create a locally based and well-resourced delivery unit that can coordinate across government departments to fast-track transition actions.
  - > Work with other levels of government (national and local) to create a clear and coherent policy environment around Just Transition.

## Place & Identity

- > Engage with workers, unions, and the community on the local issues that matter to them. This is a continuous process throughout policy implementation.
- > Structure transition policy around social and economic issues/ concerns to deliver effective and just outcomes.
- > Celebrate the town/region's history and the contribution from fossil fuel workers.
- > Plan to deliver positive, impactful changes early on to build community support for the transition.

# Recommendations: National and Local Governments

ACSI and the IGCC have both noted the critical role of federal (national) government in setting overarching ambitions and standards around transition (ACSI, 2022) and minimising risk associated with transition by establishing adequate policy signals and targets (IGCC, 2021).

Collaboration across different levels of government was noted as being a key enabler to Just Transition processes in Collie. National government can help to unlock investment and create an enabling policy environment, while local government can facilitate delivery and provide an important communication channel between the community and other stakeholders.

Unions should also be included in discussions around developing national level Just Transition Policy. Most recently in Australia, unions were instrumental in advocating for a National Net Zero Authority that will be legislated to promote 'the orderly and positive economic transformation associated with achieving net zero emissions' (Australia Gov, 2023).

## Vision & Leadership

### National government

- > Support the development of the working group and vision by keeping up to date with developments and remaining in communication with subnational government.
- > Allow the vision to help inform national policy on Just Transition.

### Local government

- > Join cross-sectoral working group and act as communication channel between the group and community.
- > Incorporate vision into local government policy to support delivery.

## Targets & Timelines

### National government

- > Facilitate dialogue with subnational government around closure of fossil fuel infrastructure to ensure a coherent and enabling policy environment for communities, investors, and companies.

### Local government

- > Support communication of targets and timelines to local community and workers in collaboration with unions.

## Coordination & Delivery

### National government

- > Create an enabling policy environment by setting a clear direction of travel around the Just Transition at a national level. This could include setting sector-based targets and creating a cross-cutting government authority on Just Transition.

### Local government

- > Work with delivery unit on policy implementation.

## Place & Identity

### National government

- > Recognise that local or regional transition must be based on place and identity.
- > Encourage transitioning towns and regions to embrace a context specific approach.

### Local government

- > Facilitate ongoing social dialogue around Just Transition with workers and community.
- > Provide a communication channel between the community and the working group and other levels of government.

# Recommendations: Unions

Unions have an essential role to play in the Just Transition, advocating on behalf of workers and raising awareness of the Just Transition in the community.

In Australia, unions are included in policy discussions and development and enjoy a degree of influence that is absent in other countries, notably the UK. The recent Our Power report by Platform and Friends of the Earth Scotland outlines comprehensive recommendations to put workers and unions at the heart of the transition (Harris, et al., 2023) and we would advise referring to this report to better understand why unions are key stakeholders in transition processes.

The following recommendations outline steps unions themselves can take to support the Just Transition policy development and delivery.

## Vision & Leadership

- > Take part in the Working Group to be a voice for workers in developing in the collective vision.
- > Raise awareness of Just Transition in workers and the community, e.g., through public forums or information campaigns.

## Targets & Timelines

- > Feed into targets and timelines decisions so workers are represented in this process.
- > Develop own plans for supporting transitioning workers over the 10-15 year timeline.

## Coordination & Delivery

- > Support delivery of Just Transition by continuing to actively participate in Working Group.
- > Coordinate with government to provide support for transitioning workers.

## Place & Identity

- > Support continuous social dialogue with workers around the Just Transition and its implementation.

# Recommendations: Investors and Industry

Investors and industry have a predominantly supporting role to play in the Just Transition. They can use their influence to advocate for comprehensive Just Transition policy from governments at the national and subnational level.

Once policy is in place, they can support delivery by implementing their own transition plans and allocating funding to diversify and green the economy. Industry should also take part in conversations on local transitions and be an active stakeholder where appropriate.

Finally, investors and industry should also be working closely with unions. Industry should engage with unions to develop effective worker transition plans. Trillium Asset Management have outlined the many benefits associated with investors supporting unions, including greater worker productivity and increased worker satisfaction, and that unions can provide important checks and balances to the power of company executives (Trillium, 2022).

## Vision & Leadership

### Investors

- > Advocate to government on the need for comprehensive Just Transition policy.

### Industry

- > Like investors, companies should advocate to government in favour of Just Transition policy.
- > Local industry should take an active role in the Just Transition Working Group.
- > Use the collective vision and Just Transition policy as the basis for company transition plans.

## Targets and Timelines

### Investors

- > Follow decision making processes around targets and timelines and input if necessary.

### Industry

- > Contribute to decisions about fossil fuel infrastructure closure.
- > Incorporate targets and timelines into own transition plans.

## Coordination & Delivery

### Investors

- > Support delivery of Just Transition policy by allocating investment to efforts to diversify and green the economy.

### Industry

- > Local industry should continue to play active role in the Working Group and support their transitioning workers.
- > Develop and implement own Just Transition plans.

## Place & Identity

### Industry

- > Support unions and workers to engage in ongoing social dialogue on the Just Transition.
- > Support impactful early changes in the community, either through sponsorship or CSR initiatives.

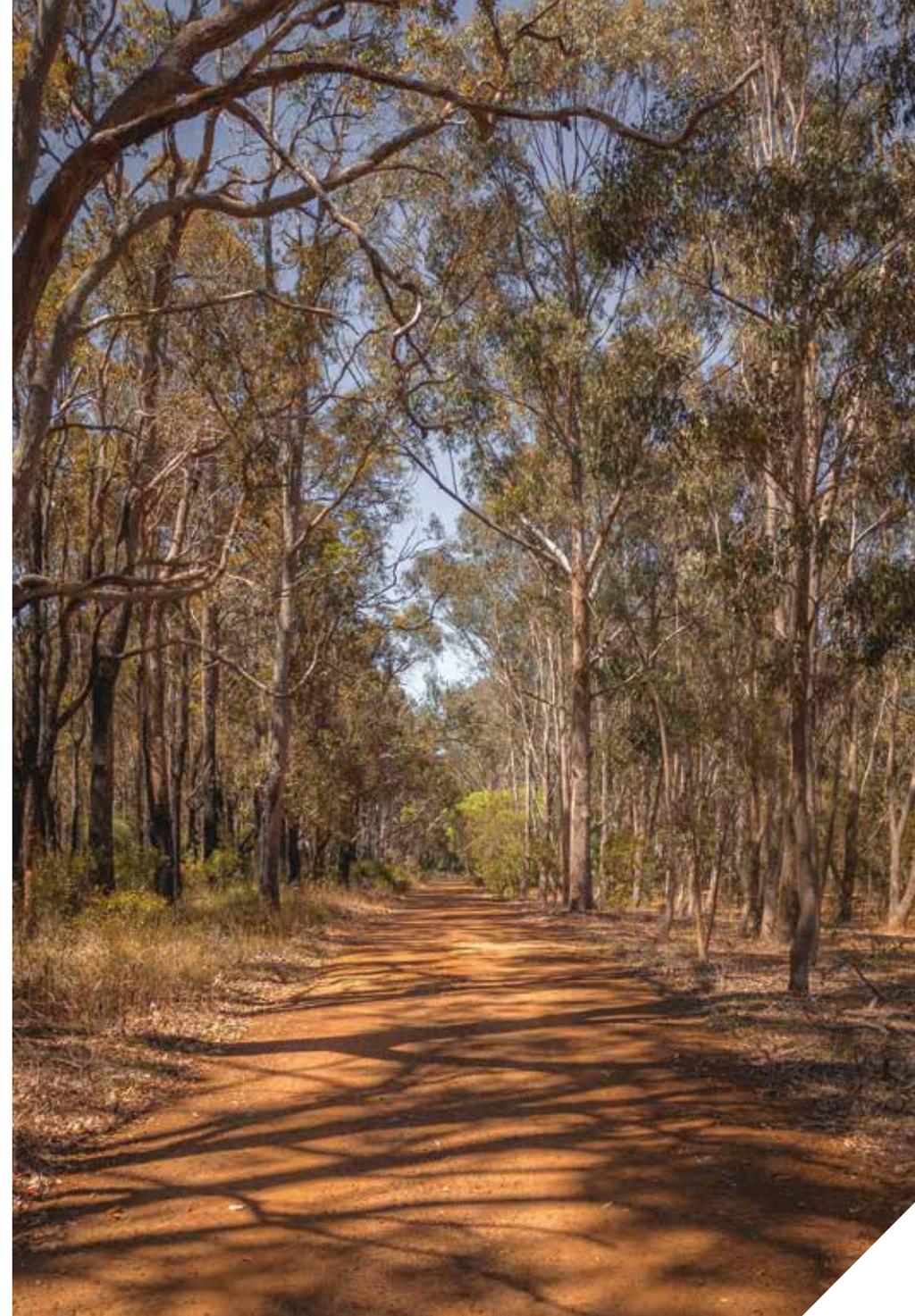
# 7. Conclusion

This report has provided the first framework for transition based on real world case study. Collie is a valuable example of how to translate Just Transition theory into action in a way that is grounded in local context and identity. Some findings and lessons are broadly applicable to other locations, while others address issues unique to Collie. This will be the case in other towns, regions, and nations around the world, and further cements the importance of place and identity when designing and delivering the Just Transition.

Taking the Just Transition from theory to action is challenging. Our framework breaks transition down into themes and actions for key stakeholders, providing an essential reference point for governments, unions, industry, and investors. At the heart of the framework is the need for collaboration and for each stakeholder to consider where their areas of influence and capabilities lie, and to use this as their foundation for action.

Collie is only a few years into its 10-15 year transition. Future research could revisit the town and other places committed to Just Transition to gain a better understanding of the barriers and opportunities that occur as towns, regions and countries move through this process.

**Governments, unions, industry, and investors must consider their areas of influence and capabilities in order to implement and enable the Just Transition. Working together collaboratively will then take us down the path towards a future worth living in.**





## Further Reading

**Collie's Just Transition Plan, Government of Western Australia, December 2020.**

[https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2020-12/Collies Just Transition\\_09 December 2020\\_web.pdf](https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2020-12/Collies%20Just%20Transition_09%20December%202020_web.pdf)

**Our Power: offshore workers demands for a Just Transition, Platform and Friends of the Earth Scotland.**

<https://foe.scot/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Our-Power-Report.pdf/>

**Empowering Communities: How investors can support an equitable transition to Net Zero, Investor Group on Climate Change, July 2021.**

[https://igcc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/IGCC-Investors-role-in-an-Equitable-Transition-to-net-zero-emissions\\_FINAL-150720211-copy.pdf](https://igcc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/IGCC-Investors-role-in-an-Equitable-Transition-to-net-zero-emissions_FINAL-150720211-copy.pdf)

**The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review, HM Treasury, UK Government, February 2021.**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/final-report-the-economics-of-biodiversity-the-dasgupta-review>

**The Investor Case for Supporting Worker Organizing Rights, Trillium Asset Management, July 2022.**

<https://www.trilliuminvest.com/whitepapers/the-investor-case-for-supporting-worker-organizing-rights>

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# A FUTURE WORTH LIVING IN

## *Collie is a Coal Town by Cheryl Rochester*

Collie's identity has been Coal and Power. The town has evolved because of these two industries for well over the past 100 years. Because of Coal, many major businesses and industries were able to flourish and develop within and around the town. This painting depicts Griffin Coal mine and Muja Power Station which have been the power centre of the west. As Collie starts the journey into the forthcoming future it is time to remember all of the miners and families who have carved out their own identities within this town.



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