A Real Deal for Geelong

Community Listening Report for Climate Transition

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Sydney Policy
Lab

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Sydney Policy Lab acknowledges the generations upon generations of Traditional Custodians that have held responsibilities for Country, "custodian-ing" it from one generation to the next. We acknowledge the cultural protocols of protecting and holding knowledges that have sustained culture and Country for over 60,000 years.

We acknowledge that the work discussed in this Community Report has taken place on Wadawurrung Country, the lands, waters and skies of the Wadawurrung People, and it is these interconnections that are our greatest teacher.

For those in our team that work in the offices of the Sydney Policy Lab, we acknowledge the Gadigal Elders, past and present, and the beautiful Gadi Country where we work. We extend this acknowledgement to the Country, Elders and Ancient Ones of many other First Nations communities across Australia. We honour and respect the sovereignty of the many Nations where we live and work.

We are committed to working respectfully with First Nations communities across these beautiful lands, seas and skies.

Sovereignty was never ceded. Always was, always will be, Aboriginal Land.

About the Sydney Policy Lab

The Sydney Policy Lab was created by the University of Sydney to be a multi-disciplinary, non-partisan space where the academy and the community can come together to investigate and solve complex policy issues that face our world, build community and make progress. It represents a powerful contribution by the university to the common good.

The Lab's prime focus is on and with community. It was created by people searching for practical answers to the question of how we can best arrange our life together. Its work reflects this, building relationships with and between people from diverse backgrounds to encourage greater empathy and understanding, and supporting them to create community-led policies. In particular, we want to work with those who have been excluded from power.
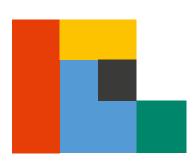
About the Real Deal

Inspired by the global Green New Deal, a Real Deal seeks to build a new community-led relationship between market, state and civil society that works for people and the environment. It includes but goes beyond public expenditure, by transforming the institutions that shape our relationships with one another and with the environment that supports us all.

A Real Deal starts from an acknowledgement that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are the Traditional Custodians of Country. Any Real Deal must support the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as declared by the United Nations.[1]

An initiative of the Sydney Policy Lab, the Real Deal project gives Australian communities a real say in the changes and transitions that climate change demands, by deploying participatory research, community organising and other relationship-based research strategies. It brings together a diverse and unusual alliance of faith, climate, union and community groups across Australia, supported by researchers from the University of Sydney's Policy Lab.

The national Real Deal coalition formed in 2019. In 2020, the coalition set out its Research Action Agenda.[2] Alongside the national coalition, the Real Deal has worked directly with place-based projects in Geelong, Gladstone and Western Sydney. Partner organisations across the national and place-based coalitions include the Australian Conservation Foundation, Climate Justice Union, Jesuit Social Services, GetUp, Queensland Community Alliance, NSW Conservation Council, Sydney Alliance, Sweltering Cities, Tomorrow Movement, United Workers Union and Victoria Trades Hall.

The strength of the Real Deal project lies in its commitment not to fast policy but to collaborative relationships spanning the full breadth and depth of Australian society. It prioritises relationships as the necessary foundation for policy that will buoy Australia through the political and economic transformations attendant to climate crisis. The multiscale structure of the Real Deal project also reflects the large variation in the political, economic and social consequences of climate transition for Australia's many cities and towns, aiming to develop policy settings at every scale.

Our Community Reports

This is the first Community Report of the Real Deal for Australia. Our Community Reports share findings from community-led research conducted with, by and for a community. This research was conducted and this report was written with, by and for the Geelong community. Researchers from the Sydney Policy Lab played an active supporting role throughout the process. Community members were co-researchers at all stages of the research, from the project initiation, through to collecting and analysing the data, interpreting the findings, and writing this Community Report.

Acknowledgements

Authors

In this Community Report the term "co-author" refers to people who assisted with research analysis and writing. The term "co-researcher" refers to people who assisted with designing, gathering and recording listening data. As a community-led project we place Wadawurrung Country as lead co-author to recognise that listening to Country is core to our work. In our listening and analysis, we seek to privilege the distinct knowledges that exist between people and recognise that these forms of knowledge have always been there.

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Summary

60 Second Summary

Inspired by the global Green New Deal, the Real Deal project is an unusual and diverse alliance of faith, climate, union and community groups across Australia, supported by a network of researchers convened by the University of Sydney's Policy Lab. It comprises a national coalition and place-based projects in Geelong, Gladstone and Western Sydney that are united by common commitment to a community-led relationship between market, state and civil society that works for people and the environment: a Real Deal.

This Community Report presents the findings of a six-month "Listening Campaign" on Wadawurrung Country in Geelong, which brought hundreds of people together to learn from past economic transitions and to discuss the potential and pitfalls of Geelong's climate transition. Three essential pillars of a Real Deal for Geelong were revealed: secure housing, meaningful work and affordable living, and care and connection. There is widespread understanding that existing shortcomings in all three areas are, and will continue to be, exacerbated by the climate crisis.

Listening to Geelong's communities revealed that the climate transition is not only about job creation, but also about the ability to find and keep a good home, afford a decent quality of life, and access care and connection through healthcare systems and community networks. The three pillars of a Real Deal for Geelong–housing, work, and care–show a way forward for Australia as it enters a period of climate transition.

> "The only way forward is through connected community practice. The Real Deal has provided hope and an outlet that I felt was bigger than I could achieve. More of us need to come together."
>
> Participant from a community group

Table Talk participants at a community organisation Listening Campaign event, February 2023

Executive Summary

Inspired by the global Green New Deal, the Real Deal coalition formed in 2019.

It is a diverse and unusual collaboration of a broad alliance of faith, climate, union and community groups across Australia, supported by a network of Australian researchers convened by the University of Sydney's Policy Lab. Alongside the national coalition, place-based projects are growing within communities in Geelong, Gladstone and Western Sydney, and relationships have been built with pre-existing groups in the Hunter Valley and Collie. In every place, the projects seek to learn from and with Country, and these national and place-based coalitions are united by common commitment to forging a new community-led relationship between market, state and civil society that works for people and the environment: a Real Deal.

With the philanthropic support of Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, researchers from the Sydney Policy Lab, community organisers and leaders in Geelong's communities have spent the past two years building a place-based coalition committed to harnessing the potential of Geelong's climate transition. The Real Deal coalitions, nationally and locally, are coordinating a process to deliver an agenda for climate transition from the ground up.

This Community Report documents the first step in that process, which took place on unceded Wadawurrung Country in Geelong. Over the past six months, the place-based coalition staged one of the nation's largest local "Listening Campaigns" on building a Real Deal for Geelong. Hundreds of people in community groups, religious organisations, schools and unions gathered around tables in Geelong's community spaces for semi-structured conversations. In these "Table Talks," they shared their insights on the challenges they face, their fears and hopes for change, and what they imagine for a community-led climate transition in Geelong. This Community Report presents the findings of the Listening Campaign.

The Listening Campaign involved 38 Table Talks engaging a total of 238 people from Geelong: 26 Table Talks run by community organisations (141 people), five by unions (34 people) and seven by faith organisations (63 people). Taken together, the Table Talks revealed three central concerns common to all of Geelong's communities as they enter a period of climate transition: secure housing, meaningful work and affordable living, and care and connection.

Participants expressed awareness that as Geelong enters a period of climate transition, the economic, political, social and natural environment will be subject to shocks and transformation generated by the climate crisis.

Pillar 1: Secure housing

The most important factor cited for ensuring Geelong's resilience to these shocks and transformations was improvements in housing. Housing stress was raised in almost all Table Talks, with key concerns including affordability, insufficient tenants' rights and the poor quality of housing stock.

Pillar 2: Meaningful Work and Affordable Living

The cost of living was also at the forefront of participants' minds, as many reflected on their struggle to find quality work that paid the bills.

Pillar 3: Care and Connection for All

Finally, participants shared their difficulties accessing formal care and the feelings of dislocation and loneliness that pervade the community.

In expressing all three of these difficulties, participants explicitly or indirectly linked their experience to the climate crisis. For example, existing deficiencies in housing stock are exacerbated by increasingly frequent extreme weather events. On a broader level, many participants felt that addressing the increasing cost of living, insecurity of housing and work, and shortcomings in care and connection are all inextricable from addressing the climate crisis.

Participants also identified a range of potential policy changes across the three pillars that would increase Geelong's climate resilience. For example, the need for more robust housing stock and the development of more and better care services present opportunities for quality job creation. The upcoming 2026 Commonwealth Games in Geelong could provide the impetus for investment in better housing. The policy possibilities participants envisioned interlock to create a virtuous circle, in which improvements in housing, work and care can be mutually reinforcing.

Geelong's economy has experienced many sharp transitions, with a long history in the automotive, manufacturing and energy industries. The collapse of the Pyramid Building Society in 1990, the closure of Ford automotive factory and Alcoa aluminium smelter in the 2010s, and the relocation of large government organisations to Geelong's CBD have brought about significant changes in the community. It therefore serves as an instructive source of both inspiration and vigilance as Australia enters a period of climate transition. Listening to Geelong's communities revealed that the next and biggest transition yet, the climate transition, is not only about job creation, but also about the ability to find and keep a good home, afford a decent quality of life, and access care and connection through healthcare systems and community networks. It is about overcoming the shortfalls of previous transitions and ensuring existing inequalities are not perpetuated.

Seeing the society-wide dimensions of climate transition in Geelong also offered an expansive vision of the opportunities that it presents. Future policy to ensure a sound economic and energy transition can and must strengthen Geelong's housing stock, workforce and the health and wellbeing of its communities across many interconnected policy domains. The three pillars of a Real Deal for Geelong–housing, work, and care–show a way forward for Australia as it enters a period of climate transition. Policy must involve deeper connections with First Nations and other marginalised communities.

"The issues go back through generations and can be hard to change. How do you address one issue when it is linked to dozens of other issues? People have more than one issue, for example, getting a house won't solve all the problems they are facing."

First Nations participant from a community organisation

"It is a process of transformation, as distinct from transition. Transformation means you really have to change the way you think. Rather than transfer from one occupation to another you really have to transform what you do, and we need to do that as a city."

Participant from a faith organisation

"All the solutions exist to transform our economy and our society into the next phase. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity, an amazing time to be alive."

Participant from a community organisation

Listening Campaign training in Geelong, September 2022

Introducing
a Real Deal

Introducing a Real Deal

Inspired by the global Green New Deal, the Real Deal coalition formed in 2019. It is a diverse and unusual collaboration of a broad alliance of faith, climate, union and community groups across Australia, supported by a network of Australian researchers convened by the University of Sydney's Policy Lab. Alongside the national coalition, place-based projects are growing within communities in Geelong, Gladstone and Western Sydney, and relationships have been built with pre-existing groups in the Hunter Valley and Collie.

The national and place-based coalitions are united by common commitment to forging a new community-led relationship between market, state and civil society that works for people and the environment: a Real Deal.

Geelong joined the Real Deal in November 2020, nominated by a local union to be a flagship place-based project. Real Deal for Geelong works alongside community teams in Gladstone and Western Sydney.[3] The Real Deal coalition scales the impact of the work being done in Geelong in two ways. First, it connects multiple place-based projects with one another and with some of Australia's leading researchers to advance technically rigorous climate solutions that address needs specific to local contexts. Second, it scales local solutions by bringing them to State and Federal Governments with the backing of the coordinated strength of our place-based projects and national coalition. The national Real Deal coalition involves some of Australia's largest climate groups, unions and community groups. These include the United Workers Union, GetUp, Australian Conservation Foundation, Jesuit Social Services, Climate Justice Union, Queensland Community Alliance, Sydney Alliance, Victoria Trades Hall, Tomorrow Movement, NSW Conservation Council and Sweltering Cities.

Why Geelong?

> "For me, there are a lot of underlying issues in the community which is why this Real Deal is really important."
>
> Participant from a faith organisation

Geelong is no stranger to transition, with a long history in the automotive, manufacturing and energy industries. The collapse of the Pyramid Building Society in 1990, the closure of the Ford automotive factory and Alcoa aluminium smelter in the 2010s, and the relocation of large government organisations to Geelong's CBD have brought about significant changes in the community. For many, the process of transition has not always been for the better. With climate change and rising economic uncertainty, a new transition is on the horizon. Geelong's community members want the next transition to learn from the past and ensure that no one is left behind. This is where the Real Deal comes in.

For over sixty thousand years Korayn and Jillong have been cared for by the Wadawurrung People, sustaining people and place through change and transition.[4] Since the 1830s when colonisers began to develop Geelong, transition and change have been marked by violence and difficulty.

Today Geelong is a regional city on the shores of Corio Bay, approximately 70 kilometres southwest of Melbourne in Victoria, Australia, with a population of 250,000 people. Initially cultivated for sheep pastures and wool production, Geelong became a major transportation hub and then manufacturing economy. The Ford Plant and the Alcoa aluminium smelter operated from 1925 and 1963 respectively. They employed thousands of people until Ford closed in 2016 and Alcoa closed in 2014.

The city has recently become a centre for government services, such as the Transport Accident Commission, WorkSafe, the National Disability Insurance Agency, Deakin University at Waurn Ponds and the former waterfront wool stores. The Shell oil refinery at Corio Bay was established in the 1950s and is one of two remaining oil refineries in Australia, now owned by Viva Energy.

Geelong's transitions left lasting impacts on the city's socio-economic landscape. In particular, the shift away from the automotive and manufacturing industries led to multigenerational unemployment and entrenched inequalities for those unable to transition to employment in other industries. Consequently, there is a significant economic divide in Geelong, with cheaper housing located in the northern suburbs of Corio and Norlane and in Whittington to the east. Gentrification and an influx of people from Melbourne since the COVID-19 pandemic place further pressures on Geelong's housing stock. The Real Deal for Geelong focuses on the next and extremely challenging transition that Geelong faces: replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources and ensuring that no one is left behind in the process.

Our Method

> "This is where I can see that a Real Deal is really powerful. This is how you make change. It starts with breaking down barriers, saying 'Hi, I'm your neighbour.'"
>
> Participant from a community organisation

> "This coalition that's being forged between unions and civil society here, I think it will help bring things together. We have to make sure all voices are heard."
>
> Participant from a union

The strength of the Real Deal lies in its commitment to a distinctive research method developed by the Sydney Policy Lab: the Relational Method. The Relational Method brings together aspects of community organising, co-design and participatory action research to generate policy solutions grounded in the lived experience of communities that stand to gain or lose most from the policies in question. It is based on the contention that the best knowledge is produced when researchers and communities work together. Through concepts, analytical models and practical tools such as "Relational Meetings" and the "Organising Cycle," the Relational Method aims to synthesise the expertise and experience of practitioners, policymakers, community groups and the broader public alike.[5]

Instead of fast policy, the Real Deal national and place-based projects therefore prioritise policy solutions that arise from relationships built across diverse coalitions of faith, climate, union and community groups across Australia. A Real Deal begins with people's experiences, relationships and challenges. A relational starting point is especially important in discussions of climate change because "climate" can be laden with political connotations and longstanding community divisions that foreclose creativity and collaboration. Critically, the Real Deal coalition also recognises that the political, economic and social dimensions of climate transition will vary across Australia's many cities and towns. Its dynamic and multiscale structure aims to facilitate the development of policy settings that operate locally and at scale.

This Community Report results from the operationalisation of the first step of the "Organising Cycle," a community organising framework that is adapted to academic research in the Relational Method. The Organising Cycle proceeds from listening to communities to identify policy themes, to planning and researching those policies, to acting together to implement solutions, and finally to evaluating the process and outcomes. The Real Deal project engaged a local community organiser to lead this process in Geelong. From April 2022, Sally Fisher began one-to-one meetings with organisations across the community, building a sponsoring committee that works towards the goal of standing for the whole of Geelong. The Geelong "Listening Campaign" began in September 2022 and ended in March 2023. Members of the sponsoring committee and other Geelong community members became known as "community co-researchers," with whom Sydney Policy Lab researchers would collaborate to facilitate a rigorous research process. The Community Forum on 10 May 2023 marks the next step in the Organising Cycle: identifying policy priorities.

Figure 1. The Organising Cycle[6]

The Listening Campaign was designed to surface issues and opportunities related to climate transition that could be addressed through discussion and joint action across Geelong's communities. It was conducted through a series of "Table Talks" held by organisations in the place-based coalition, including churches, unions and community groups. The members of these organisations mobilised their members to coordinate, lead and attend semi-structured conversations in small groups gathered around tables in churches, Geelong Trades Hall, community centres and even a local pub! These Table Talks provided opportunities for individuals representing diversity in generation, identity, racial background, gender, organisational affiliation, socio-economic backgrounds and interests to build relationships with one another by sharing stories about their everyday lives in Geelong, the challenges they face living there, their worries for the future, and their hopes for change. We held 38 table talks engaging a total of 238 people from Geelong.

Each Table Talk addressed, at minimum, the following three questions in sixty minutes:

1. Do you have a story about how the changes and transitions of Geelong's past have impacted yourself, your family and the broader community?

2. What are the pressures on your family today?

3. What are your reactions to the transition ahead? Please share your hopes and fears for the future.

Beyond the Table Talks, 24 people completed online questionnaires, made available in recognition of the barriers many community members may have faced in attending Table Talks, such as transport difficulties or lack of time.

Listening and relationship building takes time. Beyond this step of the Organising Cycle, the Real Deal coalitions are committed to a programme of privileging deeper listening and acting in solidarity with First Nations communities. Stronger relationships with First Nations-led organisations in Geelong are imperative, including ongoing partnerships with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners' Aboriginal Corporation and Wathaurong Co-operative. A First Nations-led project has been developed to guide a deeper listening process with First Nations Peoples and communities and to create ongoing opportunities to prioritise these voices. The coalition welcomes and is committed to expanding the involvement of First Nations Peoples in all aspects of the Real Deal.

After the Table Talks, Geelong community co-researchers worked with Sydney Policy Lab researchers to analyse and interpret the data. Two datasets for statistical analysis were developed:

— Member data: the percentage of individual stories shared on a key issue, identified according to whether participants were affiliated with union, community or faith organisations.

— Group data: the percentage of Table Talk conversations that discussed an issue, indicating a shared concern by multiple people.

Table Talks at Geelong Trades Hall in February 2023

The Listening Campaign: Facts and Figures

- 141 Community members
- 34 Union members
- 63 Faith members

Participant Affiliation

Figure 2. Pie chart showing breakdown of "member data": the percentage of participants in Table Talks affiliated with community, union and faith organisations.

- 26 Community organisations
- 5 Unions
- 7 Faith groups

Table Talk Organisers

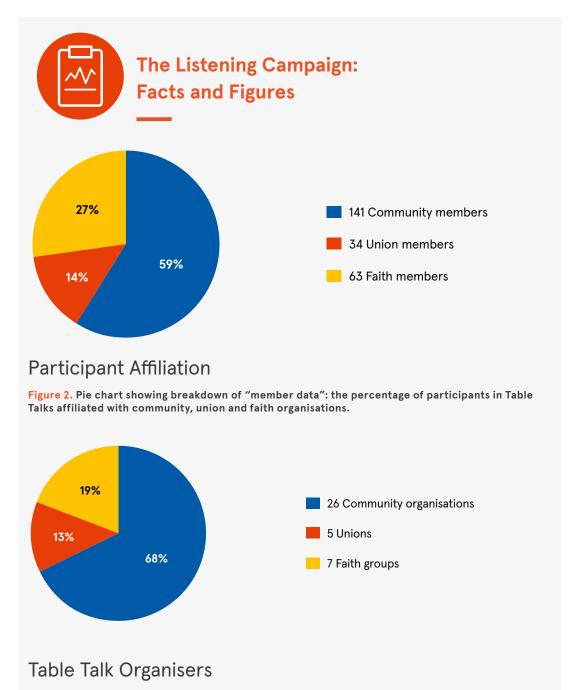**Figure 3.** Pie chart showing breakdown of "group data": the percentage of Table Talks run by community, union and faith organisations.
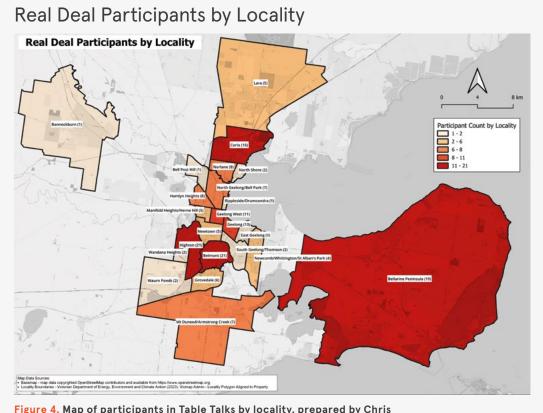
Real Deal Participants by Locality

Figure 4. Map of participants in Table Talks by locality, prepared by Chris Medlin. See Appendix for further breakdown of participant demographics.

Three Pillars of a Real Deal for Geelong

Three Pillars of a Real Deal for Geelong

Participants in the Listening Campaign expressed an overwhelming sense that they are under pressure. Across the Table Talks, participants shared a strong anxiety about housing, the cost of living, the nature of work and the capacity to care for and connect with others. For some, the climate transition created anxiety. For others, particularly from marginalised communities, the pressures they ordinarily experience have become greater. Some members of marginalised communities have never had equitable access to fundamental human necessities such as safe housing and work. Geelong's communities are alert to the impact of climate change and extreme weather events, but individuals often expressed uncertainty about what they can do to make a difference.

When climate was understood as a separate pressure that adds to and compounds other issues that Geelong's communities are facing, participants expressed a sense of being overwhelmed and paralysed. But when the climate transition was connected to the other pressures people face in their daily lives, participants felt more certain of their agency and more convinced that transformative change is urgent.

Pillar 1: Secure Housing

Figure 5. Word cloud of answers to the question: "What are the pressures on your family today?"[7]

Forced displacement and disconnection are not new, and we acknowledge the original dispossession of the Wadawurrung people from Country, community and housing. Housing is the most critical and urgent pressure that people of Geelong are facing, discussed in 35 of 38 (92%) of Table Talks and felt widely across community organisations, faith groups and unions.

Stories relating specifically to housing affordability and accessibility were raised by 79 participants from across the Geelong community, including participants from community organisations (51 participants), unions (15 participants) and faith organisations (13 participants). Some participants focused on housing affordability, while others focused on the lack of tenants' rights. Many participants described the poor quality of housing stock in Geelong.

In Geelong, the housing crisis is three-pronged, defined by challenges of housing affordability and availability, insecurity of housing tenure, and poor-quality housing stock. These issues

are interconnected. The lack of affordability forces people to accept unsuitable and unsafe housing. The lack of supply leaves people threatened with eviction or so fearful of finding new homes that they take on financially stressful rent increases. The three dimensions of housing stress affect people's mental and emotional health, and many participants described housing as the most stressful issue in their life.

Housing affordability and availability

As people continue to move to Geelong from Melbourne, participants reported that the cost of rent and housing is increasing.[8] Buying a house is simply not an option for many who have been priced out of the market. Even rental rates feel out of reach for many participants, and they shared many stories of the consequences of the affordability crisis.

> "Many people can't get a rental because there is such a shortage. Even if they have the money to rent a place, they can't find one on the rental market, so they end up living in their car and they have to use us [Orange Sky, which is a laundry service for people who are unhoused] to wash their clothes and themselves. We had a couple use the service who earned $1,000 per week between them and worked 12-hour days but couldn't get a house. One car had the animals, the other car they lived in. They were exhausted, trying to sleep and work. They said that they would turn up to a rental inspection, but there were 50 other couples competing for it. They would offer more money to get a place but still could not get the place."
>
> Participant from a community organisation

> "We see women living in cars in Belmont. We can do better than that as a community!"
>
> Participant from a faith organisation

> "My age pensioner friend is being evicted by her landlord because he wants to renovate. We went around caravan parks. One caravan park had mouldy looking caravans with annexes and hardly any facilities. The number of older people living permanently in caravan parks was shocking."
>
> Participant from a community organisation

Security of housing tenure

Participants explained that once people secure housing, especially if they rent, they remain fearful of losing their home. More than 28,500 families rent in Geelong.[9] Many fear that they do not have the rental rights or the financial capacity to keep their home if their landlord terminates their rental agreement or increases their rent to a level they can no longer afford.

> "He's always rented, and he had to move a bunch of times. Each time it costs money to move, and the rent goes up. In November last year, his landlord gave him notice to vacate. My friend requested a reference. The landlord refused. A week before he had to vacate, he still had not found a house, and the landlord approached him and said he could stay until August, but the rent would go up from \$300 to \$400 per week. My friend said he couldn't afford that, and they negotiated, settling on \$360 per week. We think the whole thing was a ploy to force my friend to cop a huge rent hike. So now he has the anxiety of knowing he has to vacate by August and maybe the same thing will happen. He'll have no reference and be forced to accept a big increase in his rent."
>
> Participant from a union

> "We're renting in the only house that we could get our hands on a few years ago, and we're saying yes to price increases every year, because it's much less daunting than being one of 30 or more applicants for each new rental that goes up in our area."
>
> Participant from a community organisation

Poor quality of rental properties

Participants reported that far too many rental properties in Geelong are in a state of disrepair, rendering them effectively unliveable. Stories relating to quality and liveability of housing were widespread, shared by 32 community organisation members (18%), nine union members (25%) and four faith organisation members (6%). The issue of housing mould alone was brought up in 20% of Table Talks. Several participants told stories of roofs collapsing during storms, houses being either too hot or cold, and plumbing being overwhelmed by stormwater.

Participants believed the crux of the problem is that renters do not know how to demand that landlords fix their homes in a timely manner, despite the 2018 rental reforms.[10] Some tenants do not know their rights, while others reported being actively misled by unresponsive real estate agents. Some reported being threatened with eviction if they complained. Taken together, participants' reflections indicated that the "right" to repair is not being upheld.

The quality of housing stock is directly affected by climate change. This has most recently manifested in the frequency of storms and heavy rainfall.

> "Recently I had to get a plumber and he said…'all I know about climate change is I have a whole lot more customers because of the torrential downpours that we have had in Geelong.' Many of the old houses have not had their storm water drains connected, so their houses were flooding, and he was getting jobs day and night. We are no doubt affected by climate change."
>
> Participant from a faith organisation

> "In our organisation we have reports of substandard rental properties that experiencing leaks during extreme weather events and sewerage coming up through plumbing as storm water systems fail in older areas. This affects a broad cross-section of our community. Even my brother's house [in Hamlyn Heights] has flooded twice in the last six months, with the landlord failing to act between these events to rectify the problem."
>
> Participant from a community organisation

Protest sign that reads: "Housing is a human right"

Even if renters can enforce repairs, there are frequently major delays. Participants reported that the delays force tenants to live in stressful and unsafe conditions for extended periods.

> **"The roof collapsed during storms, and for three months she waited for the landlord to consider repairs to the roof. She experienced water pouring into buckets in the lounge room, along with increased bills to keep the house warm and dry. She worried about becoming ill from the mould."**
>
> Participant from a community organisation

Not only do renters struggle to manage the most immediate effects of climate change on their homes, but there is also limited scope for renters to make their home more energy efficient or resilient to climate change.

> **"In our rental, two of the three bedrooms are uninhabitable during the peak of summer, the lack of ventilation means there is mould in the bathroom, and still the prices go up. We would love to transition away from gas, put solar on the roof and make some efficiency upgrades, but given that we don't own the house, that's simply not possible. So, we just have to deal with the freezing winters and increased electricity and gas bills when they come around."**
>
> Participant from a community organisation

Participants also described housing stress as a factor which exacerbates mental health challenges. Poor housing can cause personal crisis, while economic and other forms of inequality are compounded by housing stress.

> **"On a Friday, a friend was threatened that she would be kicked out of her house on the weekend. That means only three days' notice. She was going through personal stress and trauma."**
>
> Culturally and Linguistically Diverse participant from a community organisation

Geelong's housing crisis is inextricable from the climate transition. For some, particularly younger participants, the effects of climate change were most evident to them in relation to housing:

> "The majority of people my age [are] all in overpriced rentals which are freezing in winter and hot in summer. The pricing is high, there's mould, and the cost of everything is increasing. All this is intertwined with the climate crisis. Lots of our members are struggling and being pushed out of the areas they live in, travelling 60 to 90 minutes each way to get to low paid and under-appreciated jobs. They face extreme heat on the way to work and at their workplace. As a young person, I'm petrified about what my future looks like. I'm questioning whether I should have children due to the climate crisis."
>
> Participant from a union

Some housing issues, such as the poor quality of housing, are conspicuous. But in the context of the uncertainty that a changing climate brings, what Geelong's communities need to live and thrive through this transition is the security that comes from having an affordable, safe and secure home to weather the storm.

Pillar 2: Meaningful Work and Affordable Living

Figure 6. Word cloud of answers to the question: "Do you have a story about how the changes and transitions of Geelong's past have impacted yourself, your family and the broader community?"

As living costs rise and wages stagnate, participants reported that work pressures are increasing in Geelong. Difficulties with work and wages evoke Geelong's past transitions, which leave a legacy of ongoing inequalities. A transition in how we work includes providing jobs for people no longer working in fossil fuels, but participants' stories indicated that it is much more than job creation alone. Work is a source of identity, meaning and community, and these relational and social dimensions are essential to a successful transition.

Work as a legacy concern from past transitions

Participants recalled fondly the connection with community and housing which industry used to provide. It was a time where "workplaces were family and people's world," as a participant from a community organisation put it.

> "My whole family worked at Ford. I remember going to Christmas parties. My dad had an important job in manufacturing and pride in his work. It was built on a community, a lot of housing was built by industry, and the community was supported by industry."
>
> Participant from a community organisation

Further, participants articulated that the legacy of past transitions was not only an awareness of the difficulties of job cuts, but also memories of how transitions were (mis)handled. A participant from a union recalled the good payout he received following the termination of his employment at Ford after 12 years as an employee, when the factory closed. The payout was enough to live on for six months, but securing a new job remained challenging beyond that point. The participant recalled a lack of decent job opportunities, and he reflected on the personal difficulties that resulted from his identity and self-confidence being untethered from his work.

A participant who had been working at Centrelink when the Ford Plant and Alcoa smelter closed shared their observations:

> "I saw a lot of these people, mainly men. They had got a good payout, but for them that wasn't the issue. They were in their fifties; they had worked for those companies their entire lives. They didn't know other work. They were devastated, they didn't know what do to. They didn't want to retire. Their definition of themselves was so tied up with work and they were cut adrift. They would ask: 'What am I going to do?'"
>
> Participant from a union

The ongoing and intergenerational effects of past employment transitions

A participant from a community organisation recalled her work "with the second and third generations of those 'left behind' when industries closed. After retrenchment they remained in the area but suffered depression and mental health issues, which impacted on the culture of the family and 'in some cases [caused] the disintegration of the family."

Geelong's spatial inequality reflects the distribution of cost-of-living pressures. The northern suburbs are the most impoverished, and this is an ongoing effect of the unemployment that resulted from past transitions.

> "In terms of social outcomes it is so unbalanced now: the haves south of the river and the have-nots north of the river. It's just appalling. The vulnerable people are sleeping in cars. The economy basically sets us into this structure. We need a whole rethink."
>
> Participant from a faith organisation

Further, existing inequalities are compounded for some groups experiencing intersecting disadvantages. For example, participants observed that single older women, international students and people with disability were generally the community members facing the greatest economic and social barriers.

> "I see an increase in single older females who, due to divorce or life choices like bringing up children instead of working are now struggling to afford accommodation and food. These women have little to fall back on, the pensions are inadequate, and they are feeling degraded by having to rely on charity to survive. This is a demographic that is growing."
>
> Participant from a community organisation

> "Last week I was sick, so I didn't work. Now I am worried about my budget: fees, grocery, rent. We don't get support from anyone. International students have to pay thousands of dollars for study and placements. But domestic students have rights to do their placements part-time, so they can earn money or cite whatever reason they choose to do it part-time but international students don't."
>
> Culturally and Linguistically Diverse participant from a community organisation

> "I'm a social and community services worker and suddenly there was an influx of people with disabilities wanting our services...There are numerous positions vacant, but they're all shit jobs: mostly casual, part time, shit hours and pay."
>
> Participant from a union

Participants' stories also indicated unequal access to education, which they believed should serve the fundamental purpose of providing opportunities for people to lift themselves out of disadvantage. A participant from a community organisation observed: "there is so much inequality in university and TAFE Colleges, and a lot of poor smart kids can't afford to go to university."

Intergenerational inequalities linked to past transitions in Geelong are exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis.[11] Increases in the cost of living are exacerbated by extreme weather. For example, homes without insulation, solar panels, or energy efficient appliances will see their energy bills increase. These challenges can be alleviated or become further entrenched, depending on how we respond to the climate transition ahead.

Ford's factory in Geelong before shutting operations permanently in 2016

Precarious work and difficulties achieving work–life balance

Participants' stories indicated that work pressures in Geelong depend on how community members work, the level of control they have over their work, and the kinds of benefits they are entitled to. Fewer participants reported having the leave provisions that come from full-time work and many reported fears of the working conditions of the "gig economy." Participants noted that people in insecure work cannot readily access loans or housing.

> "There is the creeping disease where workers are not sure if they are employees or contract workers. I was advising an employer who was hiring recently, and I described how he needed to ensure that he offered appropriate training for anyone commencing with his business. He said 'No, they are just going to be like Uber drivers.'"
>
> **Participant from a faith organisation**

Participants also reported that, for many, wages have not kept up with expenses. Work also causes stress as it bleeds into other parts of life, leaving community members with little of their own time. In some cases, this resulted from one job demanding more and more hours and, in other cases, it arose from the need to work multiple jobs.

> "I have a friend who is an apprentice, working long hours for low pay. He ended up living in his car as he could not make ends meet."
>
> **Participant from a union**

> "We're pushed these days to work lots of hours with high output, which leads us to neglect other aspects of life...It puts stress on us and leads us not to have much leftover for things like climate activism, hobbies, community, and so on."
>
> **Participant from a community organisation**

> "We are time poor. I am so busy with work. If only I had time to do things."
>
> **Participant from a community organisation**

Higher cost of living increases work pressures

Participants from all parts of Geelong reported struggling with the increasing cost of groceries and bills and how it affected their quality of life. The issue of increased cost of living was raised in 63% of our Table Talks.

> **"My utilities have nearly doubled, and my grocery bill has tripled."**
>
> First Nations participant from a community organisation

> **"We need to eat healthy food. We can't eat junk food. It's so expensive to eat healthy food, but junk food is very cheap even though it's not good for your health."**
>
> Participant from a community organisation

Difficulties with skyrocketing energy bills indicated clearly to participants how the rising cost of fossil fuels and inequitable access to renewable energy is affecting their cost of living.

One community organisation member tried to disconnect from the gas system as she electrified her household:

> **"The gas company want me to pay the $950 to remove the gas connection or keep paying for it while it was connected. They would replace a damaged connection, but they wouldn't remove one that wasn't being used."**
>
> Participant from a community organisation

Geelong Trades Hall Council poster

> "Energy bills in some places are higher in older homes. These appliances are expensive to run. Small, outdated hot water heaters cost between $200 and $300 a week in energy bills. That's absurd. I know one fellow who lives in a garage to avoid the energy bills."
>
> Participant from a community organisation

Increasing cost of living combines with housing stress and difficulties with care and connection to worsen household anxiety. Participants reported that increased living costs forced them to make painful sacrifices to make ends meet. The resulting stress of everyday life can be overwhelming.

> "I'm an age pensioner living in a rental property, so I feel every change to the cost of living. Although I have a chronic disease and used to have private health insurance, I can no longer afford that, so I dread the thought of expensive medical bills like dental work. I have cut out a meal a day and make a large pot of stew which usually lasts a week if I break it down with water. I no longer socialise. I pay my electricity account by 'smoothing' in stages from my fortnightly pension, and I use the most sustainable electricity provider. I also do the same with my gas but no longer use gas heating, opting for a blanket or electric heating."
>
> Participant from a community organisation

> "I want to care about the climate, but I have nothing left to give. By the end of a payday, all my wages are gone. With these competing pressures, sometimes we get overwhelmed and become inactive."
>
> Participant from a community organisation

Participants expressed clearly that climate transition necessitates a simultaneous transition in the nature of work. Work was at the heart of past transitions and is a continuing pressure point in people's lives. Pressures around work and cost of living prevent people in Geelong from actively participating in a community-led climate transition. A transition in work is not just about more jobs for Geelong's communities; it is about meaningful work that allows people to contribute to their communities in positive ways. It also requires wages that ensure people have safe and secure housing, healthy food, and clean energy.

Pillar 3: Care and Connection for All

Figure 7. Word cloud of answers to the question: "What are your reactions to the transition ahead? Please share your hopes and fears for the future."

The Listening Campaign revealed the difficulties Geelong's community members face in accessing care, both formal, such as government-provided healthcare, and informal, such as personal networks to combat loneliness and isolation.

Formal care services are broken

Participants reported that their ability to maintain their physical and mental health was impacted by the failure of formal care services, including social care and welfare support, disability support, medical services, aged care and early childhood education. The collapse of formal healthcare services was discussed in 40% of Table Talks.

> "All the small care issues add up to a big amount of time. In my family, it's all on me."
>
> Participant from a community organisation

> "One day a week I work at Geelong Food Bank. Our customers are experiencing the difficulties of unemployment and ill health. This is made worse by not being able to afford treatment, having to wait a long time for operations and not being able to sustain employment."
>
> Participant from a community organisation

For many participants, access to formal care services was an insurmountable hurdle, entailing long delays and exorbitant costs.

> "I took my mum to the doctor. We were waiting for more than three hours to see a GP. In November I got a referral from the GP for her to go to Geelong Hospital and we knew it was very urgent because my mum's health is declining...When I went to Geelong hospital with my mum to see the doctor, they said I needed another referral from the GP for her to get a CT scan and MRI. It was very frustrating. We wasted half a year for nothing!"
>
> Culturally and Linguistically Diverse participant from a community organisation

> "I recently had a miscarriage at nine weeks. But I was not able to get scans on the day of heavy bleeding. Only painkillers were given. My previous experience of visiting the emergency department was waiting six hours while I was in so much pain."
>
> Participant from a community organisation

> "My mother waited 16 hours in emergency. She was not granted any dignity. She soiled herself. She had sepsis, and her infection was critical."
>
> Participant from a community organisation

> "I am concerned by how people must be struggling to survive these days with all the pressures caused by the cost of living... Some people just can't afford to be sick."
>
> Participant from a faith organisation

Seeking care and connection

Many participants described feeling a deepening sense of loneliness and isolation. Some participants shared fears about getting older within failing care systems.

> "I'm an age pensioner, and my life is structured by my lack of money. I no longer use a gas heater because of cost. I buy the cheapest groceries I can, usually at Aldi. Apart from seeing one branch of the family weekly with a lovely granddaughter, I'm very lonely and am not enjoying life."
>
> Respondent to community questionnaire

Participants also drew connections between care, work, housing and cost of living in the context of an uncertain and changing climate. Compounding difficulties were sometimes described as patterns of systemic inequality inherited from previous generations.

> "The issues go back through generations and can be hard to change. How do you address one issue when it is linked to dozens of other issues? People have more than one issue, for example, getting a house won't solve all the problems they are facing."
>
> First Nations participant from a community organisation

Climate change as an opportunity for community-led transformation

Despite many challenges, many participants also felt a sense of hope that positive change in Geelong's communities was possible. A participant from a community organisation explained a "need to re-imagine what our culture can look like with less. We need more relationships."

> "It is a process of transformation, as distinct from transition. Transformation means you really have to change the way you think. Rather than transfer from one occupation to another you really have to transform what you do, and we need to do that as a city. I think that is what is going to happen and is already happening in a lot of the cities based around the coal industries. We have to start planning now, and for goodness' sake we need someone to help us plan this transformation so that we can survive as a community."
>
> Participant from a faith organisation

> "All the solutions exist to transform our economy and our society into the next phase. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity, an amazing time to be alive."
>
> Participant from a community organisation

Summary of Findings

Figure 8 summarises our findings, showing how strongly the three connected pillars–secure housing, meaningful work and affordable living, and care and connection–were felt across faith groups, community organisations and unions.

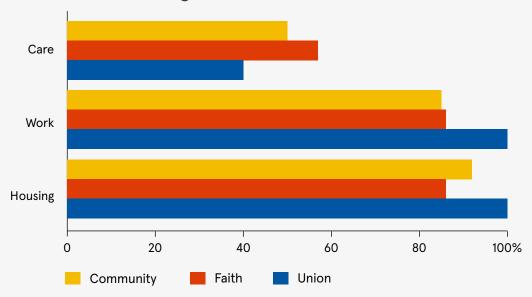## Issues felt across organisations

Figure 8. Table Talks that discussed housing, work and care.

Table 1 shows the different issues, the percentage of Table Talks in which each issue was discussed, and the breakdown by question.

	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
Housing	53%	92%	82%
Work	87%	92%	82%
People	79%	92%	89%
Cost of living	13%	63%	26%
Care	29%	39%	45%

Table 1. Percentage of Table Talks that discussed housing, work, people, cost of living and care.

Policy Ideas

Policy Ideas

> "Geelong is still transitioning, still finding our feet. We have so many opportunities. The prime one is the Commonwealth Games, and we're not ready. Where are we going to get the workers from, and where are they going to live given our housing shortage? Our population will double in the next 20 to 40 years. Will people in the northern suburbs benefit from those new [Commonwealth Games] jobs, will Aboriginal people, will women? Or is it all going to be construction jobs where the workers come in from Melbourne?"
>
> Participant from a union

Geelong's historical transitions felt like shocks, where changes were done to the community, rather than with the community. The findings of the Listening Campaign conducted by the place-based coalition highlighted that the climate transition must take three interdependent pillars of a Real Deal for Geelong into account: how its communities live, work, and access care and connection. A Real Deal for Geelong must put the people of Geelong first.

The next step in the Organising Cycle is to identify policy changes that will form the building blocks of Geelong's vision for community-led climate transition. The processes of making policy for climate transition will be multiple and non-linear. A Real Deal worth having must involve continued listening, broad engagement, and an openness to experimentation and making mistakes. Nonetheless, the Listening Campaign generated some early policy ideas informed by the expertise that comes from lived experience and the lessons of past transitions. Policy ideas focused on housing, renting and care, building on Geelong's strengths as a manufacturing hub and a connected regional community.

— As a participant from a union put it: "Geelong has a manufacturing past, and it should have a manufacturing future." This could take various forms, including, as a participant from a community organisation suggested, as a "hub for future food systems, including plant-based proteins." Some participants linked renewable energy sources to job creation.

> "I'd like to see lithium batteries made in Geelong. Windfarms, I'd like to see them being built in Geelong. You could even use the old factories where the cars were built, and it would provide a lot of those jobs that people lost. People could be re-employed and re-trained in something else that is towards climate change and renewable energy."
>
> Participant from a community organisation

— Participants also emphasised Geelong's identity as a connected regional community. While Geelong holds important links to technology and industry, participants described that they treasured the social and cultural opportunities in Geelong and the Country on which they live, work and play. Many drew strength from learning from the Wadawurrung community and other First Nations Peoples, particularly in relation to environmental stewardship and managing cultural change across Geelong's communities.

> "We are not separate from the environment. We need to learn from the First Nations people and stop thinking we are separate from it."
>
> Participant from a community organisation

In practice, as one First Nations leader shared, such a commitment demands "more Indigenous people having more of a say in what is happening in our communities, to be listened to and heard, more opportunity for work and education, and acknowledgement and recognition by the general public."

Policy Ideas for Better Housing

Geelong needs a real increase in housing supply.[12] The existing Social Housing Plan 2020–2041 needs to be implemented with significant targets met for new builds and renewal.[13] Geelong also needs thousands more affordable homes. Participants suggested that Geelong's communities could approach the Everybody's Home campaign to ask that some of the 25,000 new social and affordable homes the campaign demands per year across the country be built in Geelong.[14] Many participants also raised the 2026 Commonwealth Games as an important opportunity to improve housing. New infrastructure required for the Commonwealth Games, including an Athletes' Village, could lead to the creation of a Housing First program, where adequate social work support and community centres are created.[15] Community negotiations over major developments are called "community benefits agreements," and overseas groups similar to the Real Deal coalition have negotiated community benefits as part of Summer Olympic Games infrastructure. The Citizens UK "Living Wage" campaign during the 2012 London Olympic Games is a model to consider.[16]

Further questions that participants raised about housing policy included:

— What would it take to build more public and designated affordable private rental homes?

— How will the Commonwealth Games affect housing supply and affordability in Geelong? Could negotiations be held with the State Government, local councils and developers to ensure new housing meets standards for climate resilience and becomes permanent affordable and social housing after the Games end?

— Could funding be secured to build well-insulated but low-impact modular affordable homes or "micro-villages" using renewable energy on government or local council land?[17]

— Can existing houses be retrofitted with better insulation and solar energy, and can they be transitioned from gas to electricity? Could the demand for retrofitting be met through new training and employment opportunities for residents of Geelong?

Policy ideas for Better Renting

Participants reported that renters were among Geelong's worst-off residents, living in unsafe or inappropriate housing, subject to significant rent increases, and unable to negotiate or seek improved tenancy conditions despite legislation that protects tenant's rights. The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2018 promised to provide renters more rights, including getting rid of "no reason" notices to vacate, minimum property standards for health and safety, and allowing renters to make minor modifications.[18] But participants indicated that these laws are not protecting tenants in Geelong.

Beyond ensuring that existing housing stock is safe and liveable, participants understood that all three tiers of government have access to resources to seed and scale creative climate solutions in Geelong. The Australian Capital Territory has developed minimum energy efficiency standards for ceiling insulation in rental homes, aiming to increase thermal comfort and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.[19]

State Government incentives for solar panel installation already exist, and community campaigns could push real estate agents and landlords to install more solar panels on rental properties.[20] Geelong Sustainability's Climate Safe Rooms project can also be replicated. Aiming to protect those who are most vulnerable to climate change, the project delivered energy-efficient home upgrades to 16 Geelong residents to ensure that their homes can maintain a stable and safe temperature during heatwaves or cold and wet weather. [21]

Father and daughter pointing at solar panels on home

Further questions that participants raised about tenancy policy included:

— Mirroring an intervention under exploration in other states,[22] could rent increases be capped?

— Could some leases be made longer term? Could provision be made for minor adjustments to dwellings, with landlord permission, that make them more liveable and sustainable?

— How can the experience of renters be improved so they can enforce repairs, prevent rent bidding, and hold landlords and real estate agents to account? Are additional local enforcement mechanisms and improvements required?

— Could the climate resilience of rental properties be increased through further incentive payments or subsidies?

— Is there a way to prevent pest- or mould-infested homes going on the rental market?

Policy Ideas for Better Care

Participants clearly indicated the importance of improving access to primary care in Geelong. A first step suggested was better promotion of the new Primary Priority Care Centre at the University Hospital in Geelong, which could help take the pressure off the Emergency Departments by offering free primary care.[23] Further advocacy could be developed for additional primary priority care centres in Geelong.

Participants also suggested greater advocacy for the expansion of the care workforce in Geelong, arguing that a well-paid and highly valued workforce in Geelong's future must include care workers. Readiness to experiment with a variety of business structures and cooperatives is required to reimagine how we care and work. Participants understood that transforming care systems would have a multiplier effect across the economy and society.

"In my industry [childcare], I want to help fix it, make it a better sector and see more people come into the sector. We need better conditions and pay. I don't want to see new childcare centres pop up everywhere, but then not open due to lack of trained staff because of stupid government policy [The participant referred to State Government policies increasing access to Early Childhood Education without supporting requisite staff increases]. There are flow-on effects for young families. For example, my centre receives a huge number of phone calls from parents seeking a place for their child, but our 0-2 years bracket is full, and our waiting list is a mile long. It's the same at every centre because of ratios."

Participant from a union[24]

Participants believed that addressing First Nations injustices must involve deeper connections with First Nations communities. The next step is to extend relationships and broaden connections to Country by enhancing engagements with First Nations organisations, including local Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, regional, state and national Aboriginal peak bodies, the First Nations Clean Energy Network, Yoorrook Justice Commission and the First Peoples Assembly of Victoria. These connections must also entail deeper understandings of the Treaty for Victoria and the Indigenous Voice to Parliament Referendum.

As the place-based coalition in Geelong proceeds through the Organising Cycle, policy ideas will continue to develop. The findings of the Listening Campaign indicated the importance of including a broad coalition of community voices and integrating the multiple dimensions of climate transition in policy changes for Geelong's climate transition. Policy solutions that improve housing, work and care in Geelong can have an outsized impact by addressing several pressures simultaneously.

Next Steps for Geelong

Next Steps for Geelong

The Real Deal is an invitation to think differently about the shape of Australia's economy and government. It insists that without community leadership we cannot succeed in creating a better public life as we confront the climate transition that is upon us. Australians have overcome crises in the past, from creating post-war nation-building infrastructure to establishing a universal healthcare system. In the face of climate crisis, the Real Deal project takes inspiration from a century of transformative policy reform led by Australia's communities and millennia of First Nations knowledge and practice that has proven resilient in the face of change and adversity.

The three pillars of climate transition which emerged from the Listening Campaign analysed in this Community Report–housing, work and care–point towards the next steps to secure a Real Deal for Geelong. Above all, Geelong's communities viewed the climate transition as an opportunity to create a better Geelong, guided by the needs and lived expertise of its inhabitants. As the Organising Cycle continues, the next step for the place-based coalition in Geelong is to research and plan how to solve the interlocking housing, employment, cost of living, care and climate challenges identified thus far. This Community Report will be succeeded by a Real Deal Agenda for Geelong, featuring specific and realistic policy proposals supported by evidence from climate transitions across Australia and the globe. This Agenda will form the basis of public action to negotiate policy solutions with decision makers.

The Community Forum on 10 May 2023 is a milestone moment as we seek to design a research action agenda that helps shape Geelong's climate transition. We welcome new relationships with organisations and individuals interested in partnering with us, funding our work, joining our research team, or sharing ideas.

> **To get involved, contact:**
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> **Visit our website to learn more:**
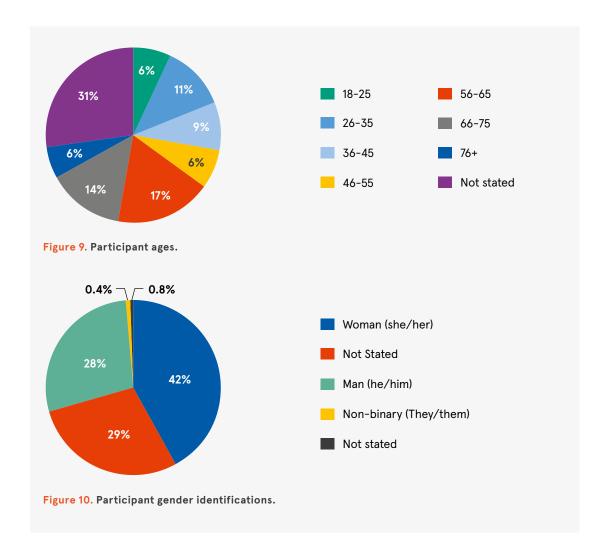> www.sydney.edu.au/sydney-policy-lab/our-research/real-deal

Appendix

Appendix

Participant locations and demographics

	Locality	Participant count
1	Bacchus Marsh	1
2	Bannockburn	1
3	Bell Park	1
4	Bell Post Hill	1
5	Belmont	21
6	Corio	16
7	East Geelong	1
8	East Melbourne	1
9	Geelong	10
10	Geelong West	11
11	Grovedale	6
12	Hamlyn Heights	8
13	Herne Hill	1
14	Highton	21
15	Lara	5
16	Manifold Heights/Herne Hill	5
17	Melbourne	1
19	Mt Duneed/Armstrong Creek	7
20	Newcomb/Whittington/St Alban's Park	4
21	Newtown	5
22	Norlane	8
23	North Geelong/Bell Park	7
24	North Shore	2
25	Not Stated	66
26	Other	2
27	Rippleside/Drumcondra	1
28	South Geelong/Thomson	2
29	Bellarine Peninsula	19
30	Wandana Heights	2
31	Waurn Ponds	2
		238

Table 2. Participant locations.

Figure 9. Participant ages.

Figure 10. Participant gender identifications.

Identification	COUNTA of Identification
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	4
Culturally or Linguistically Diverse	14
LGBTIQA+	9
Neurodivergent (Autistic, ADHD, Mental Illness, for example)	6
Person with a Disability	14
Single Parent	**11**
Grand Total	**58**

Table 3. Participant locations.

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6. The Organising Lifecycle is a tool adapted from the Industrial Areas Foundation's approach to community organising. See: Chambers, E. (2018). Roots for Radicals: Organising for Power, Action and Justice. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

7. This word cloud is generated from the stories participants shared in response to question two of Table Talks. It visually reflects that housing is our dominant shared pressure. As the cloud shows, this pressure is interconnected with the pressures people experience related to work, time and the cost of living.

8. More than 9,100 people left Melbourne and moved to Geelong in the 2019-2020 financial year and in the following year. After long lockdowns, the Geelong population grew 1.8%, adding 4,725 people. See: Ghin, P., Ainsworth, S. (2022). "The Great Migration: Leaving our Cities for the Regions." The University of Melbourne. apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2022-05/apo-nid317670

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