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The 19<sup>th</sup> century German statesman, Otto von Bismarck, is reported to have said, 'Laws are like sausages. It is best not to see them being made'. There were certainly elements of this in the Coal Commission's work. Trade-offs had to be made and the members of the Commission and the Commission's recommendations were the subject of intense negotiations. Regardless, the Commission's plan was a major achievement in helping meet Germany's climate targets, building consensus and achieving satisfactory support for regions and workers. This highlighted the advantages that multi-stakeholder groups can provide. Diverse participants can provide a better solution than one provided by a limited group and because stakeholders have meaningfully participated in the process they develop a commitment to the outcome.

Events since the Commission reported highlighted the trade-offs, particularly those involved in setting forward a plan when the future changes. Nevertheless, the Commission's work has acted as a circuit breaker. It changed the conversation in Germany from being about *if* coal power will end to *when* it will end. In doing so it has put Germany in a better place to deal with future challenges.

Given the lack of a clear plan for Australia to exit from coal power, the Coal Commission's approach has merit. However, it is not a cure-all. Much depends on how the trade-offs involved in such an approach are navigated.