

# THE WESTERN LEDGER

FICTION FOR THE CLASSROOM • EVERY PERSON AND TOWN IN THIS STORY  
IS INVENTED

## The town that said yes — and the town that said no

Two WA towns. One question. Eight years later, neither is sure. • By our regional affairs desk

**MARLA CREEK** — Stand on the main street at 7am and you can hear the mine before you see it. School drop-off traffic. A bakery queue. Kylie Trenholm, who runs the newsagency, remembers when none of this was certain. “Ten years ago we had one teacher left and the footy team couldn’t field a side. Then the mine came.”

The numbers back her up. The mine employs about 300 people. The school has four teachers now. House prices doubled. The company — which locals like to remind you started as one prospector and her ute — pays for the pool and sponsors the junior footy.

But drive ten minutes north and Robbie Marsh will show you the creek he grew up swimming in. “It’s not dirty,” he says carefully. “It’s just... different. Lower. You never hear frogs like you used to.” The company’s water reports say the creek is within approved limits. Robbie’s family sold up

last spring. Three other families he knows did too. “The town’s bigger,” he says. “I’m not sure it’s ours.”

Four hundred kilometres away, **EDDINGTON** made the opposite call. When a mining company came knocking eight years ago, the town said no. The creek behind the show-grounds is glass-clear. It is quiet enough to hear a screen door bang two streets over.

It is also quiet in ways nobody wanted. The hardware store closed in March. The one café opens four days a week. “Every kid who finishes school leaves,” says shire councillor Dev Nair. “We kept the place exactly as it was. Sometimes I wonder if we kept it for anybody.”

Ask either town whether they got it right and you will get the same answer: a long pause. “Depends what you count,” says Kylie. “And who’s counting,” says Dev.

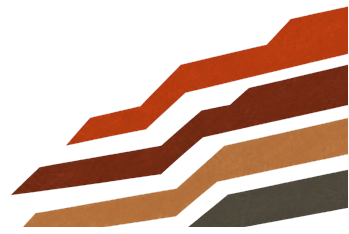
*“Depends what you count. And who’s counting.”*

### THE TWO TOWNS AT A GLANCE

**Marla Creek (said yes):** about 300 mine jobs • school grew to four teachers • the creek changed • some families left. **Eddington (said no):** creek glass-clear • quiet kept • shops closing • young people leaving for work.

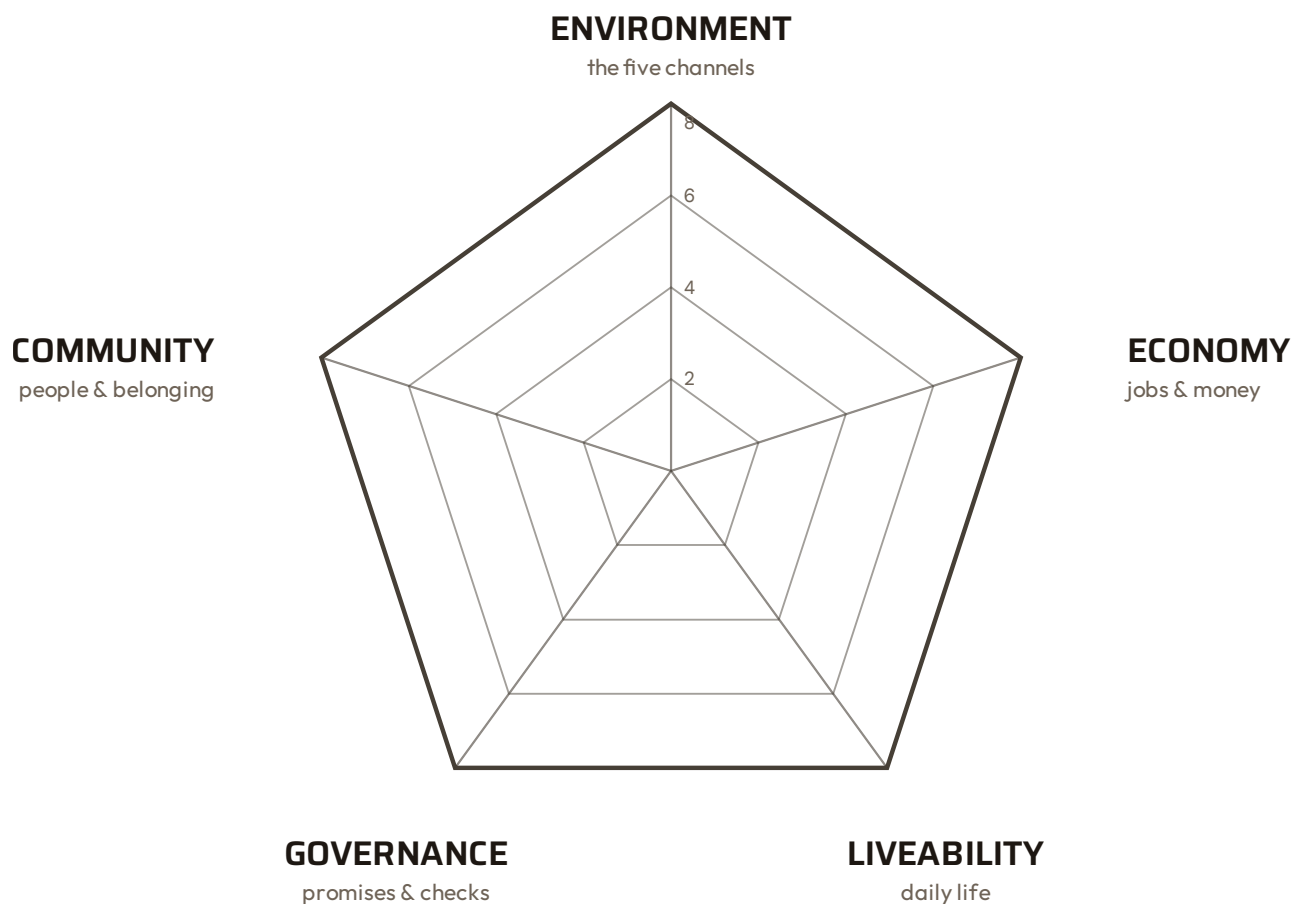
### YOUR THREE MARKS — DO THEM AS YOU READ

**UNDERLINE** every good outcome, in either town. **BOX** every cost, in either town. **CIRCLE** the one sentence that is hardest to judge.



## OUR TEAM'S RADAR — THE SHAPE OF WHAT WE VALUE

Spread **20 points** across the five criteria. Write each score on its axis (0 to 8). Mark each dot. Join the dots. The shape is your team's signature. No two teams should match.



Team name: \_\_\_\_\_ · Our points: ENV \_\_\_\_ + ECO \_\_\_\_ + COM \_\_\_\_ + GOV \_\_\_\_ + LIV \_\_\_\_ = 20

Our shape says we care most about \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

Look at another team's radar. One way our shape is different from theirs — and what that says about what each team values: