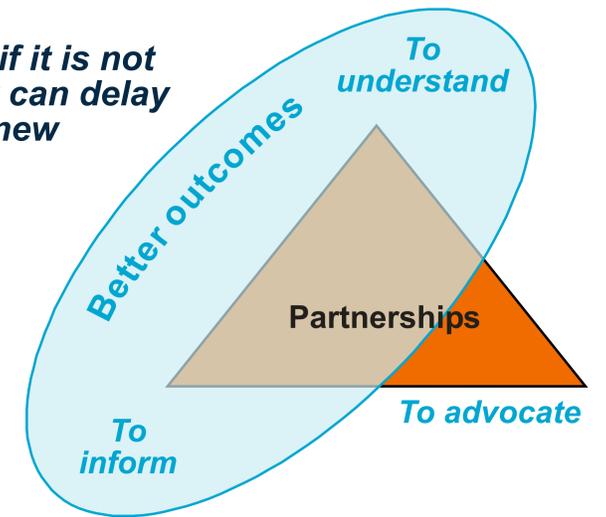




Societal attitudes to energy technologies: an exercise in knitting fog

The best technology is useless if it is not taken up by society. Social risk can delay or halt the implementation of a new technological process.



What is the value of social research and outreach?

Society can have a major impact on the future of energy. There is a major risk to technology adoption if there is no engagement with stakeholders during the development process. A successful engagement programme can:

- increase the awareness of new technology development;
- enhance technology outcomes through a better knowledge of the end user environment, and
- increase the acceptability of the final product to society.

Social attitudes to Energy Research Objectives: 2003 - 2006

2003-2004 – Low Emissions Coal Power: Social Impact Study

- Insight into public opinion and attitudes on carbon capture and storage within the context of the broader debate about energy production.
- Strategies to engage with both the general public and specific interest groups.
- Knowledge to assist in developing future energy scenarios.
- Positioning of CSIRO in relation to carbon capture and storage
- Expertise in dialogue and community engagement.

2004-2005 – Scoping the value of social research

- *who* is important to the Centre of Low Emission Technology (cLET);
- *how* you could engage with them;
- *what* value there is in engagement;
- *who* is doing similar work;
- *what* outcomes could be achieved; and
- *what* is important for a successful Social and Economic Integration (SEI)

2005-2006 - Stakeholder perspectives to low emissions technologies

- Develop a baseline of attitudes to low emission technologies.
- Understand the issues and concerns associated with low emission technologies in more depth.
- Facilitate the processes by which society can help to inform decisions about technology development
- Engage with environmental organisations and influential stakeholders.

How can information from social research and outreach be used?

Information from this research can be used to:

- enable social shaping of technology;
- integrate into a predictive modelling framework; and
- inform investment and policy decisions.

How can we partner with society?

Partnerships with society can be formed by:

- understanding attitudes
- providing information
- respecting perceptions
- engaging in dialogue
- enabling participation

In Australia, a range of initiatives have been undertaken to enable the energy debate to be informed by society at large. CSIRO have an Energy Transformed Flagship, which includes a deliberative process to develop and assess scenarios for meeting Australia's future energy needs.

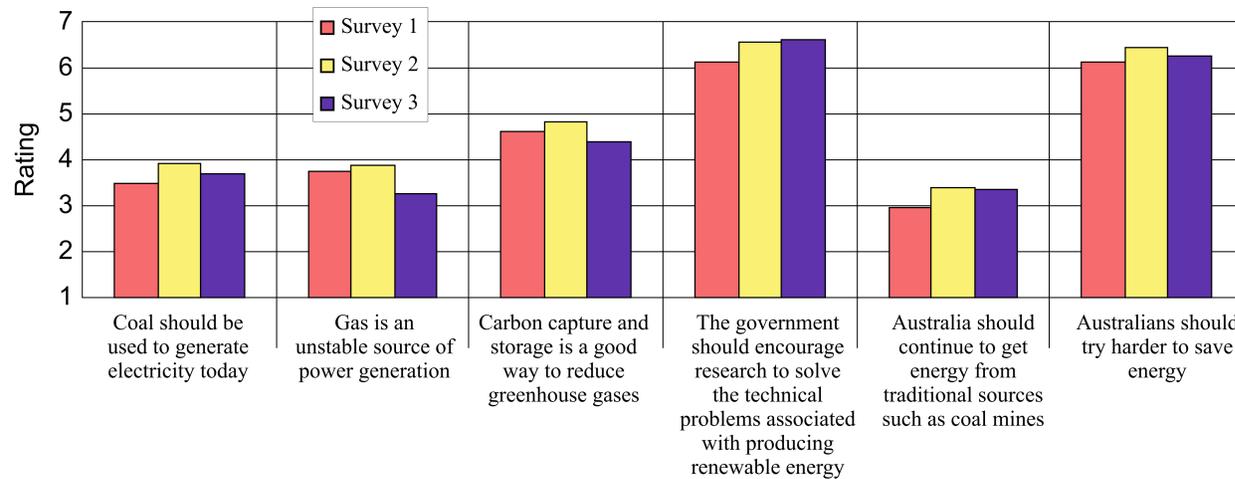
Part of this research has looked at public attitudes to carbon capture and storage and has been extended to include an intensive study looking at responses to different aspects of the energy debate and how attitudes change over time and in response to specific outreach activities.

For further information

Contact Anna Littleboy
 Phone +61 7 3327 4180
 Email anna.littleboy@csiro.au
 Web www.em.csiro.au



What were public attitudes towards carbon capture and storage?

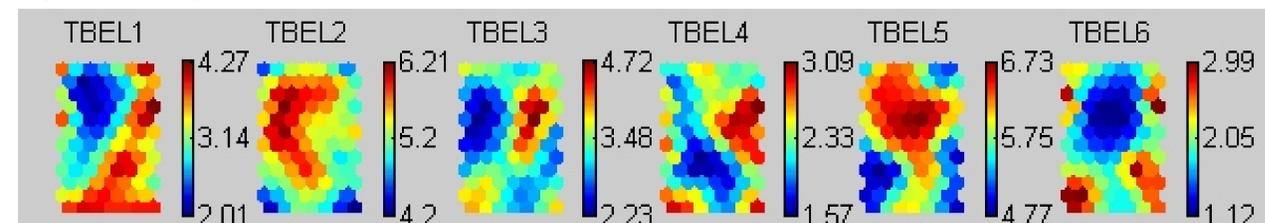


Note: Ratings made on a 7-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree; higher scores represent more agreement

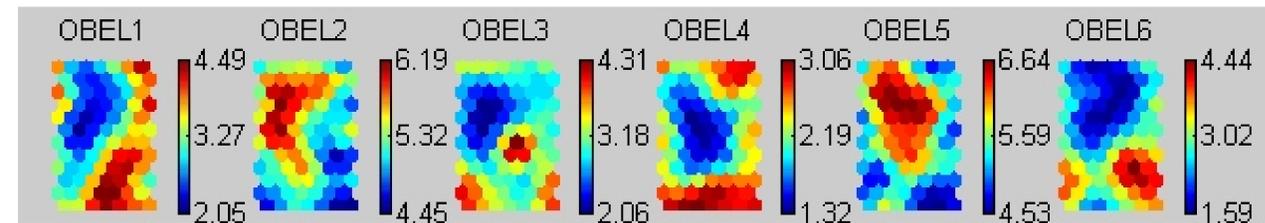
How flexible are these attitudes?

The diagrams below are patterns of the full range of attitudes expressed - one diagram for each issue. Matching the patterns before and after the workshop helps us to look at which attitudes are firmly held (essentially value driven), and which change on provision of more information (and so may be more about a belief than a value). Further work on this, particularly when applied to longitudinal data will help us to measure and model societal perspectives on energy initiatives.

Before workshop



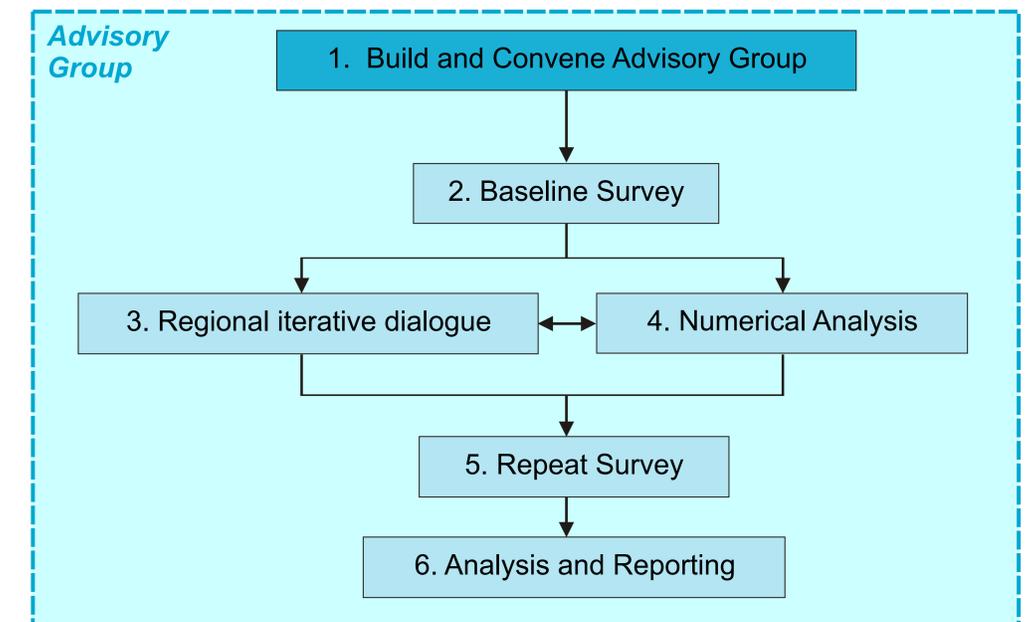
After workshop



A number of common themes emerged in relation to carbon capture and storage including:

- A concern that the science is unproven.
- That the increase in energy demands will not be adequately met by renewable energy in the near future.
- The need for a portfolio of approaches to find an energy solution.
- That if it is used, CO2 sequestration should only be seen as an interim strategy.
- That research into the technology of carbon capture and storage however should not be at the expense of renewable energy.
- The true costs involved in the process of sequestering CO2 will need to be considered.
- A sense that many in government are supporting the carbon capture and storage technology too early, without giving due process to precautionary principles.
- Important for the government not to "put all their eggs in one basket".

Where to now?



For further information

Contact Anna Littleboy
 Phone +61 7 3327 4180
 Email anna.littleboy@csiro.au
 Web www.em.csiro.au