

Key Findings from a Public Dialogue
Activity looking at perceptions of the
relationship between industry and public
funding of research

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Qualitative Research

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- **Qualitative** research seeks to provide understanding by exploring opinions, attitudes, beliefs etc
- Typically employs small samples in order to gather depth rather than breadth
- Guided by phenomenological principles - *To the things themselves*
- Employs range of methods - Groups, depths, workshops etc.

The Ground of Understanding

The Ground of Understanding

- Science fundamental part of modern life
- Little detailed knowledge and technical understanding
- Met through frames grounded in people's lived worlds
- Evokes number of Hopes and Concerns:

Anticipated Outputs

Knowledge
Achievements
Progress
Technology
Innovation
Breakthroughs
New ways of thinking

Concerns

Wise employment of funds
Animal Welfare
Unanticipated consequences
Barriers to progress
Control vs liberation
Cost

Research Priorities and funding

Research priorities

Quality of Life

Medical advances

Healthy food

Healthy environment

Progress and Sustainability

Research funding

- Two core foci toward what and how research should be funded:
 - ENQUIRY
 - RESULTS
- Operate in dynamic tension when considering research in principle
- However, when considering specific research proposals significant shift toward RESULTS.

The relationship between public funding and industry

Public funding and industry

- Most support industry and academia working together
- But, no support for public funding of research that has benefits **only** for a commercial partner:

“You would need to make sure if you are going to invest from the public purse that something is going to come back that is of benefit to the country.”

Public funding and industry

- Little comment in this study regarding bias of the research agenda - however, we did not explicitly explore controversial issues (such as GM)
- The public are very clear about how and where joint funding is appropriate:

Support for context

High

Industry money



Public money

Relevance of
Perceived outcome

Low

High

Industry money

Industry money

Low

Discussion

Discussion

- Whilst there is support for speculative research in principle this is relatively weak
- When evaluating specific projects the majority seek demonstrable practical outcomes
- The issue of jointly funded research (i.e. public and industry finance/resources) is not about joint funding as such
- The public support joint funding if the context and specific outcomes both receive adequate support.

Discussion

- The challenge for researchers engaged in fundamental science is to find congruent and meaningful ways to frame their research such that the public can relate the research to their own lived world frames of reference.