

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

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- 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

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- 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.