

Social licence for hydrogen

Community perceptions in regional Victoria

Hycel's hydrogen social licence perceptions research surveyed communities in Warrnambool and Portland, in Victoria's south-west, to understand their attitudes to hydrogen and effective community messaging.

Research indicated that the development and use of hydrogen currently has community support in Warrnambool and Portland. These attitudes, however, are not strongly entrenched and may be malleable to change with new information.

- 76% were in support of hydrogen
- 54% had little to no knowledge of hydrogen
- 56% are excited about hydrogen because of environmental attributes
- 20% raised safety concerns

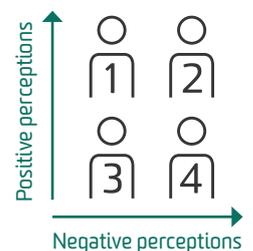


While supportive and generally favourable about hydrogen, community attitudes were not entrenched, and their knowledge of hydrogen energy was low.

Complex community perceptions

Community members indicated that hydrogen was better described as exciting, environmental, innovative, safe, and useful rather than dangerous, confusing, expensive, or unnecessary. While this indicates positive perceptions of hydrogen, there was no correlation between the positive and negative perceptions, which means that many community members hold complex views of hydrogen.

- 27.9% **1 - The Supporters:** More politically progressive with high support for development and use of hydrogen in their community.
- 35.8% **2 - The Reserved:** Younger and less concerned about environmental benefits with reserved positive perceptions who may need to be convinced about the potential benefits.
- 19.6% **3 - The Apathetic:** Older with little knowledge or familiarity about hydrogen technologies who were the least likely to perceive the 'pioneering' benefits as being important.
- 16.8% **4 - The Trust But Verify:** Higher knowledge and familiarity about hydrogen and despite holding some negative perceptions had high support for the development of hydrogen technologies.



Why is community supportive of hydrogen?

- Environmental potential for 'clean energy'
- Region as energy pioneers
- Job creation

Support for hydrogen usage was equally high across residential heating and cooking, personal or industrial transport, and backup power.

Given the importance of clean energy perceptions and environmental benefits embedded in the social licence for developing hydrogen, expectations should be carefully managed around the greenness of the current technologies as they are being developed.

Is community concerned?

When asked what, if anything, is concerning about hydrogen, respondents said:

- Safety or volatility (20%)
- Cost (13%)
- Environmental impacts (12%)
- Availability of the fuel (5%)

People who hold more negative views around the safety, usefulness, and cost of hydrogen energy tend to care about its role in job-creation rather than the ideals behind the technology.

Those with greater knowledge and familiarity have more concerns around the potential drawbacks.

How to talk with community about hydrogen?

1. Promote future environmental benefits while managing present expectations; in so doing, frame hydrogen as a needed, necessary steppingstone and an integral part of the energy landscape of the future;
2. Promote the practical benefits of developing hydrogen technologies such as job-creation to foster a positive perception among those who are currently less supportive;
3. Manage safety concerns by adopting a 'business as usual' approach to how hydrogen energy will impact day-to-day lives of consumers.

