

BIOENERGY IN THE NSW NORTHERN RIVERS:

PROSPECTS FOR SOCIAL LICENCE

WHAT WE WANTED TO KNOW

- Does the Northern Rivers community support bioenergy generally?
- What level of social licence might communities grant for specific forms of bioenergy?
- Does the level of social licence differ in different locations?
- What are the most significant factors influencing social licence for bioenergy?



WHAT IS A SOCIAL LICENCE?

'Social licence' refers to the degree of ongoing approval from the local community and other stakeholders for an organisation or project.

The level of social licence depends on people's perceptions of something relative to their expectations. It can change over time.

WHAT WE DID



We talked to around 300 people via on line and face-to-face- surveys and interviews.

61 people came along to workshops held in Nimbin, Lismore, Murwillumbah and Casino.

WHAT WE FOUND

- 1 Bioenergy in general enjoys high support across the region.
- 2 Among possible conversion technologies, participants were most supportive of anaerobic digestion, followed by pyrolysis
- 3 Among possible energy sources (feedstocks), participants were most supportive of municipal waste and agricultural wastes.
- 4 Bioenergy projects will need to satisfy five conditions for maximising social licence (see critical conditions below).



ACCEPTABILITY	Most Likely ←————→ Least Likely		
TECHNOLOGIES	ANAEROBIC DIGESTION	PYROLYSIS	COMBUSTION
FEEDSTOCKS	MUNICIPAL WASTE	FORESTRY RESIDUES	
	AGRICULTURAL WASTES	ENERGY CROPS	

CRITICAL CONDITIONS FOR MAXIMISING SOCIAL LICENCE FOR BIOENERGY

- a. Land and feedstocks are used in ways that minimise 'waste'.
- b. Perceived benefits outweigh perceived costs.
- c. There is ongoing engagement and education on the impacts of projects.
- d. Transport of feedstocks must be minimised.
- e. Governance and regulation enable community involvement.

WHAT'S NEXT?

These general findings apply at a regional level. Support for individual projects will depend on local concerns, aspirations, values, and expectations. The Northern Rivers BioHubs Consortium encourages proponents to assess social licence specifically for their projects, as part of ongoing community engagement practices. This will enable them to demonstrate how much support they have in their communities.

Supported by the



This project has been supported by the NSW Government as part of the Office of Environment and Heritage Growing Community Energy Program – visit www.environment.nsw.gov.au/communities

