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## 2. COMMUNICATIONS AND THE OTWAY PROJECT

### 2.1 Introduction

Communications have been very important to the success of the Otway Project. CO2CRC was acutely aware that, as the first geosequestration project in Australia and one of the few active projects in the world, public perceptions of CCS technology were likely to be greatly influenced by the outcomes of the Project. In addition, it was considered essential to win and retain the support of the local community. Any local community opposition would foster negative media coverage of the Project, as well as potentially affect Project approvals. To address these concerns, communication strategies have been in place throughout the life of the Project with the aims of enabling the Project to proceed, fostering good relations with the local community and landowners, and communicating the outcomes of the research to the wider community, in Australia and around the world.

CO2CRC undertook community consultation for the Otway Project following the principles that communication of risks and benefits should be open and transparent, should provide objective information based on good science, and should also provide channels for two way communications with the community and other stakeholders. Over time, the project has become CO2CRC's most important communications asset and has given the organisation invaluable opportunities for showing CCS in action, dispelling myths and communicating CCS technology to the local community, government, industry, researchers and the general public. It has also acquired significance at the national and international level over the past 6 years as the only accessible and public CCS storage project in Australia.

### 2.2 Strategic communications and the Otway Project

Developing a practical, adaptable and well-planned communication and consultation strategy is key to any successful major project. The Otway Project communication strategies have been adapted and revised over three main project stages.