



## Western Sydney airport

### Benchmarking community research – November 2014

#### Research overview

##### Introduction

The Australian Government announced in April 2014 that Badgerys Creek would be the site of an airport for Western Sydney. The Western Sydney Unit has been established within the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (the Department) to implement this decision. An airport is a major, complex and long-term project, with detailed planning towards an operational airport by the mid-2020s underway. Community engagement and consultation is a vital component of any large infrastructure project and to facilitate consultation with stakeholders and the community, a communications and stakeholder engagement strategy (the Strategy) has been developed.

To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Strategy's implementation and performance against its objectives the Department has engaged GfK Australia to conduct a research programme to provide both a benchmark and long-term tracking of the activities and to evaluate the Strategy.

An initial benchmark survey was conducted in November 2014, with the findings summarised below.

##### Research methodology

The benchmark quantitative research included an online survey with 501 Western Sydney residents (defined as South West, Inner West, North West, West Central). Fieldwork was conducted between 11 and 17 November 2014. Quotas were set (for age, gender and location) during screening to ensure a representative sample was surveyed. The sample was sourced from online research only panellists.

##### Findings summary

Overall, there is more support for the proposed airport in Western Sydney than there is dissent or questioning and most feel that the benefits would outweigh any negative impacts. Western Sydney residents are receptive to change and most support investment in new infrastructure. Most also feel that 'we need to be forward thinking and continually developing' and that 'it is important to build new infrastructure to prosper and be competitive'. Residents do, however, question the likelihood of developments being delivered on time and as promised.

Research found that most Western Sydney residents are aware an airport has been proposed and a site selected. However, they don't believe they know much about the development of the proposed airport. There are significant knowledge gaps in relation to the details of the project (right of first refusal, environmental assessments and opportunity for public consultation). There is however some knowledge about how it might impact residents and the associated infrastructure (residents will need to relocate, road upgrades).

These views are similar to the formative research outcomes (September 2014), with some indication of higher likelihood of embracing change and less negativity to the development and its impacts.

Residents believe that the proposed airport would result in economic benefits, in particular benefits associated with improved infrastructure such as road upgrades, and growth for the local and national economy. There are however concerns (when prompted) about the impact both during construction and operation of an airport, such as environmental impact, and increased noise and traffic. There was also concern (but to a lesser extent) about the need for residents or businesses to vacate or relocate.

There is a demand for more information about the development. Ideal channels to communicate information about the proposed airport include media and news (traditional and digital), a dedicated website and state government websites, as well as advertising and through the local council.



## Key findings – excerpt

### 1. Awareness

Most Western Sydney residents are aware that an airport has been proposed and a site decided on.

The majority (59%) had heard that a new airport had been proposed and a site had been selected. Only 7% had not heard anything about the airport.

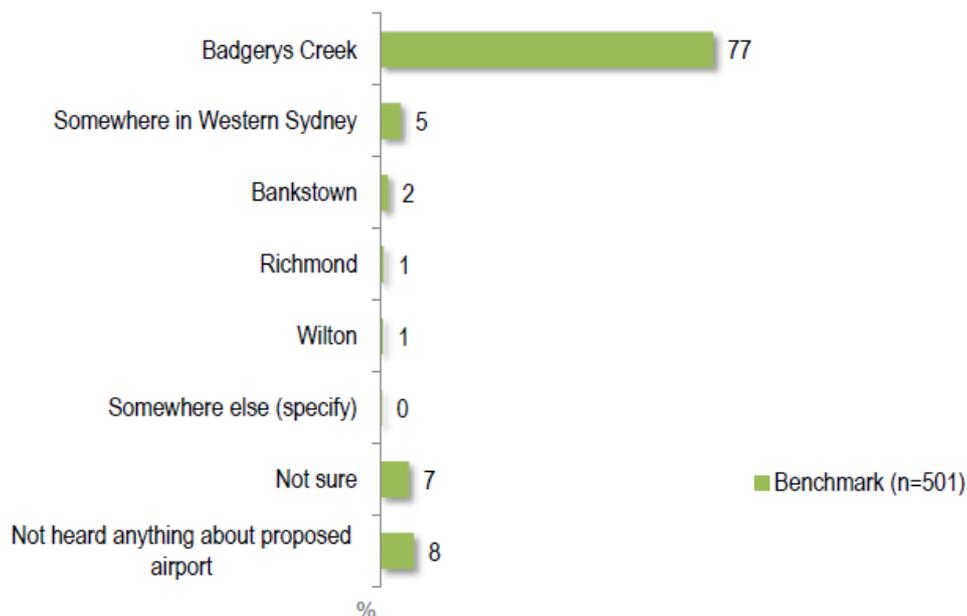
Figure 1: Knowledge about the proposed airport



It is also well known that Badgerys Creek will be the site of the proposed airport.

More than three quarters of all Western Sydney residents (77%) have now heard about the proposed airport site being Badgerys Creek (84% of those who had heard about the airport to begin with).

Figure 2: Site for the proposed airport



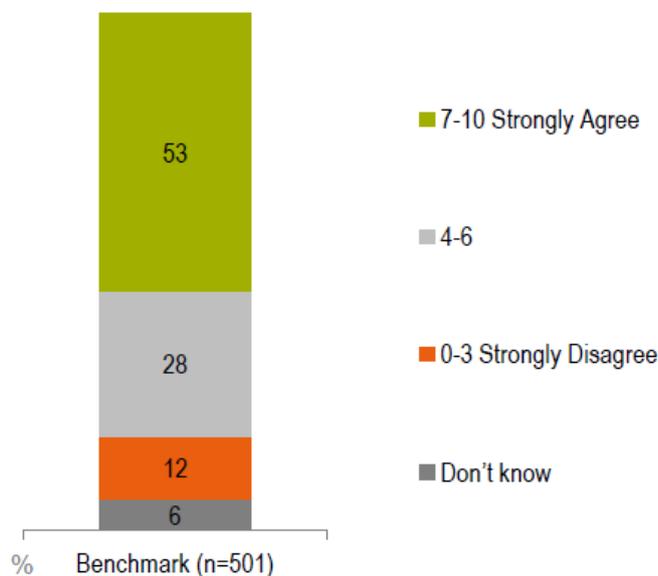


## 2. Attitudes

Western Sydney residents are mostly in favour or neutral towards the proposed airport.

Over half of residents were in favour of the proposed airport (53% say they agree/strongly agree that they are in favour of and 28% had neutral views). Only a minority (12%) were opposed to the development.

Figure 3: Overall attitude (in favour/opposition) to the proposed airport



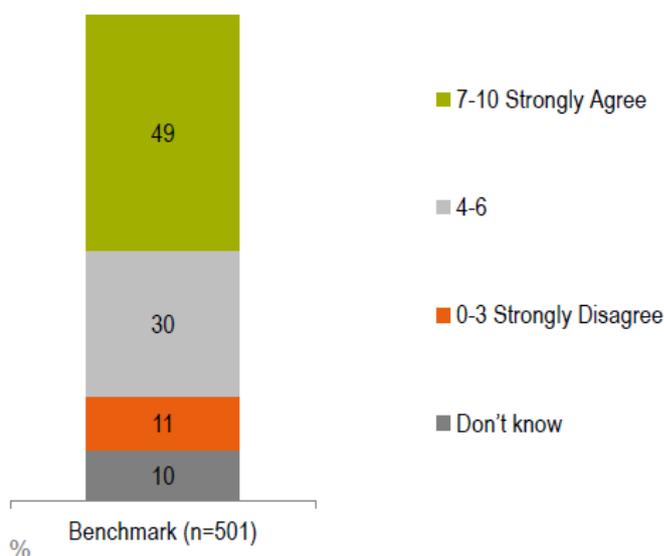
Overall perception of the proposed airport (positive benefits outweighing negative)

It is a minority view that the negative impacts of the proposed airport would outweigh the benefits.

Half (49%) believe that overall, the positive benefits of an airport at Badgerys Creek would outweigh any negative impacts with only 11% disagreeing on this point. Around 40% were not sure or felt neutral on the issue.

Over half believed the proposed airport would create thousands of new jobs (64%), support the local economy (56%) and improve travel in the area (56%). Many also believed it would add to global competitiveness (63%) and business and tourism (61%). Western Sydney residents were less convinced when it came to the (minimum) number of residents being affected by noise (39% agreed).

Figure 12: Overall perception of the proposed airport (positive benefits outweighing negative)





### 3. Demand for information

There is a demand for more information about the development.

Overall, Western Sydney residents said it is important they are informed about the progress of the proposed airport at Badgerys Creek (58% rated this very important) with only 9% saying it was not important. A third (33%) are ambivalent about receiving information.

Figure 15: Demand for information

