



Western Sydney Airport: Evaluative community research – December 2016

Research overview

Introduction

Community engagement and consultation is a vital component of the Western Sydney Airport project. Consultation with stakeholders and the community is key in achieving the best outcomes for the project.

To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the communications and stakeholder engagement strategy, the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development has engaged GfK Australia to conduct a research programme to provide both a benchmark and long-term tracking of the activities.

A sixth round of this research was conducted in November-December 2016. Previous surveys include a benchmark conducted in November 2014, with tracking surveys conducted in July 2015, December 2015, April 2016, and August 2016.

Research methodology

This round of quantitative research included an online survey with 503 Western Sydney residents (defined as South West, Inner West, North West, West Central, illustrated by Map 1). Fieldwork was conducted between 28 November and 5 December 2016.

Quotas were set (for age, gender and location) during screening to ensure a representative sample was surveyed. An even spread of males and females across age groups were recruited for each survey. Quotas have been used to achieve a similar proportion of residents from the broad regions, to ensure comparability between samples.

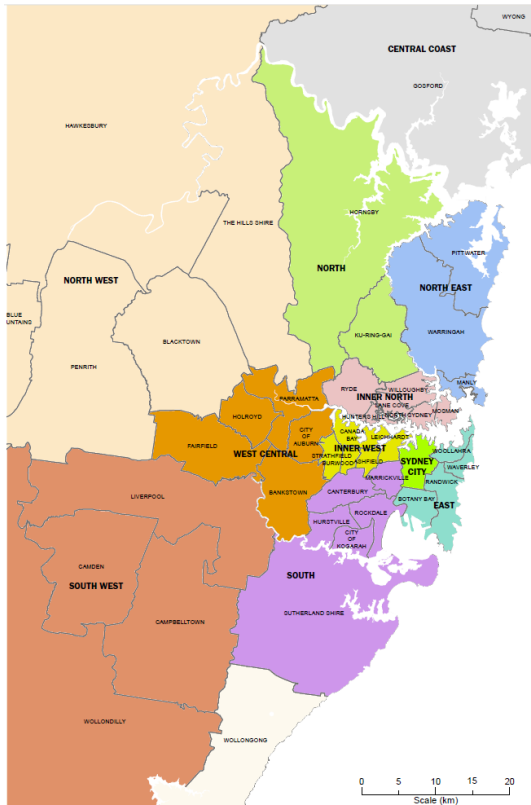


Findings summary

The findings of the December 2016 survey have remained stable in comparison to previous surveys. In the latest survey, nearly 3 in 5 Western Sydney residents (56 per cent) continue to be in favour of the Western Sydney Airport. The area which continues to be most in favour is the North West region – including the Blue Mountains, Penrith and Blacktown – with 59 per cent of residents in favour of the airport.

The community's demand for information about the project has also remained consistent. The majority of residents (62 per cent) consider being informed about the progress of the airport very important.

Map 1: Research area. Participants were from the South West, Inner West, North West and West Central areas defined on the map below.



Source: NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

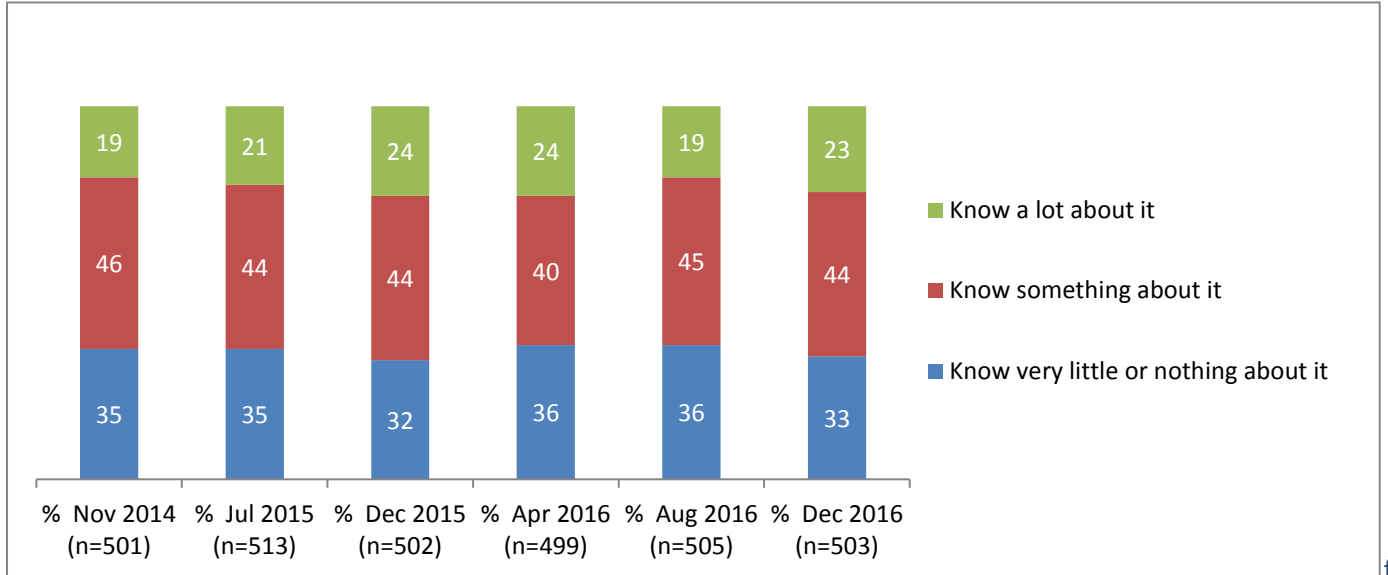


Key findings – excerpt

1. Awareness

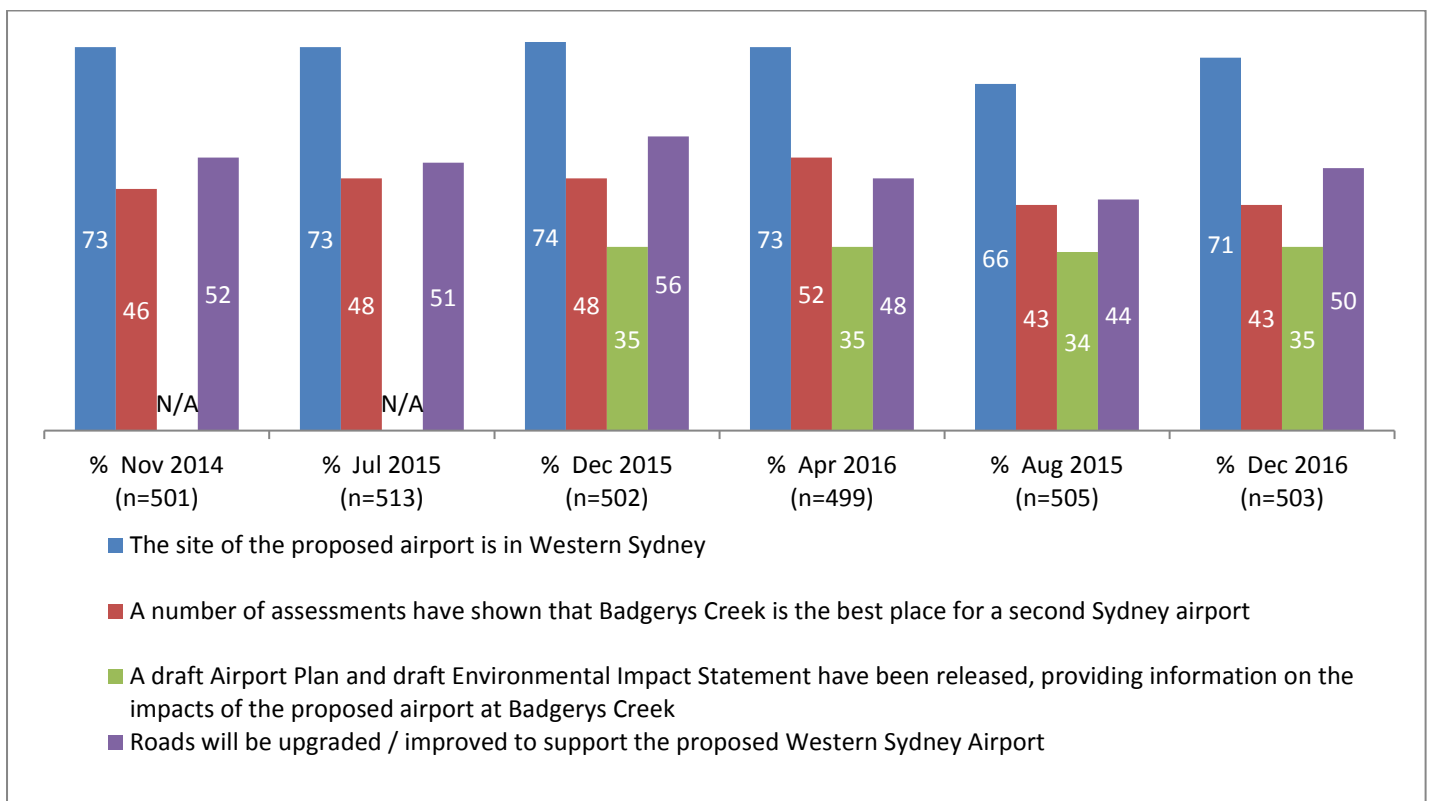
The proportion of residents feeling very knowledgeable about the airport has increased in December 2016; 23 per cent of residents feel they are very knowledgeable about the airport or know something (44 per cent) about the airport and feel up to date with the latest information. Fifty per cent of residents are knowledgeable of the road upgrades around the airport site.

Figure 1: Level of knowledge about the proposed airport: “How much do you know about the proposed airport?”



Over time, knowledge of the stages of the airport has changed, reflecting progress in the project. Consistent with the last survey in December 2015, a third of respondents are aware the draft Airport Plan and draft EIS have been released.

Figure 2: Facts known about the proposed airport. Respondents were asked: “Before today, what (if anything) have you seen/heard/read about the development of a new or second airport in Sydney?”





2. Attitudes

The percentage of Western Sydney residents in favour of the airport has remained largely stable across the six surveys. Majority are mostly positive or neutral, with nearly 3 in 5 (56 per cent) residents continuing to be in favour of or neutral (25 per cent) towards the airport. The percentage opposed to the development (11 per cent) has also remained relatively stable across all six surveys.

Figure 3: Overall attitude to the proposed airport (agree to the statement, on a scale of 0 to 10: “I am in favour of the proposed Western Sydney Airport at Badgerys Creek”)

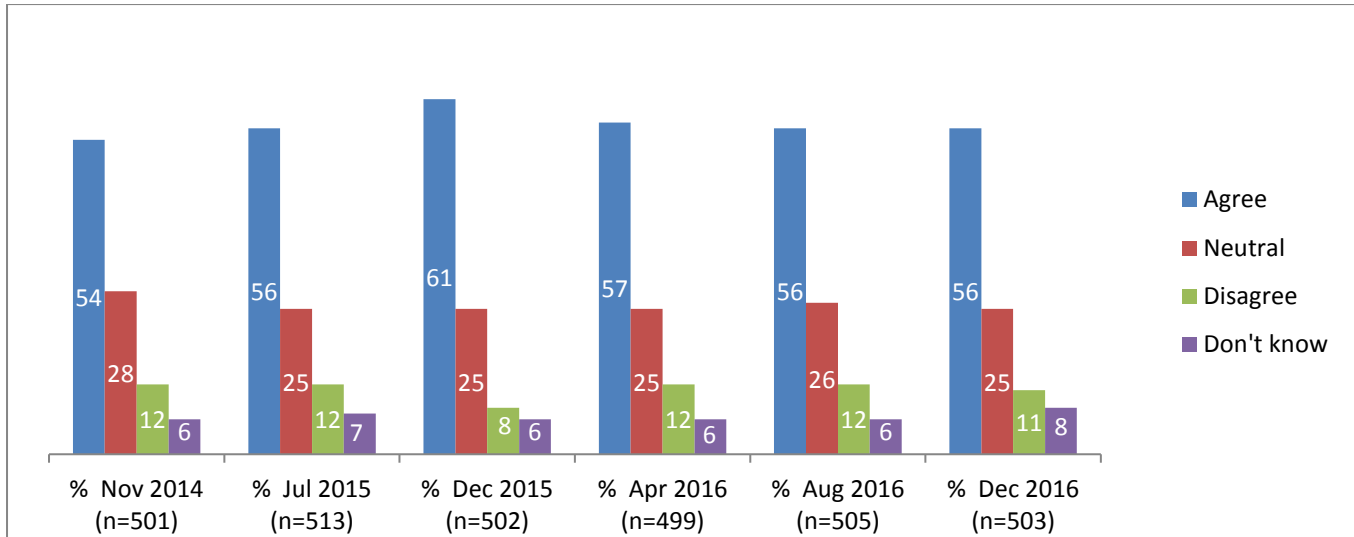


Table 1 notes that 59 per cent of the North West region encompassing the local government areas (LGAs) of the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Penrith and Blacktown are in favour of the proposed airport – the strongest support out of all Western Sydney regions.

Table 1: Sentiment by population group – in favour of proposed airport

Sentiment towards the airport Column %	Demographic segmentation									
	Total Wave 5	By gender		By age group			By region			
	Wave 5 – December, 2016 (n=503)	Male (n=229)	Female (n=270)	18-34 (n=156)	35-54 (n=188)	55+ (n=155)	South West (n=139)	Inner West (n=96)	North West (n=137)	West Central (n=127)
Q 11. In this question we would like to know in more detail how you feel about this proposed airport in Western Sydney. Using a 0 to 10 scale, where 0 means Strongly Disagree and 10 means Strongly Agree, please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.										
<i>I am in favour of the proposed Western Sydney Airport at Badgerys Creek</i>										
Disagree (0-3)	11	9	14	10	10	15	12	5-	12	14
Neutral (4-6)	25	23	26	30+	25	18-	26	23	22	27
Agree (7-10)	56	63+	50-	49-	57	64+	55	58	59	53
Don't know	8	6	10	11+	8	4-	7	14+	6	6

Around half of the residents continue to believe that the positive benefits of the airport outweigh the negatives (49 per cent), while around 3 in 10 (31 per cent) are neutral and 12 per cent do not believe the airport’s benefits would



outweigh negative impacts. The proportion of residents who agree has remained consistent since November 2014 (49 per cent).

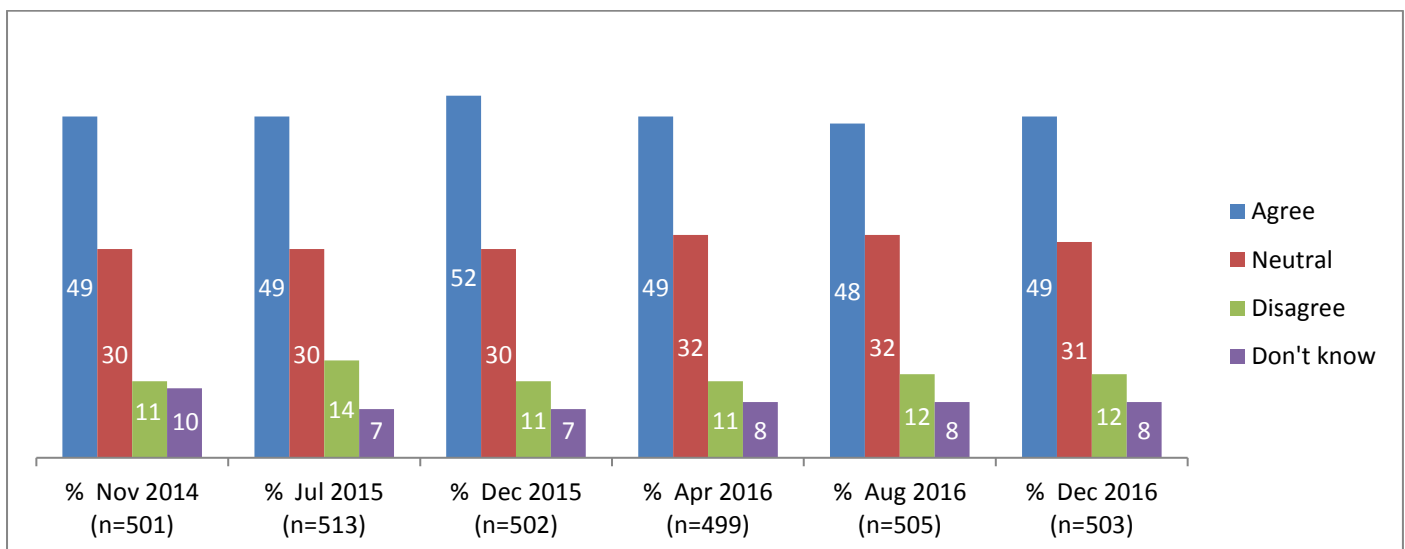
Fifty-four per cent of residents in the North West region also believe that the positives of the airport outweigh the negatives, with the South West region lowest at 44 per cent.

These percentages are highlighted in Table 2, with a comparison across all four surveys in Figure 4.

Table 2: Sentiment by population group – Benefits outweighing negative impacts

Sentiment towards the airport Column %	Demographic segmentation									
	Total Wave 5	By gender		By age group			By region			
	Wave 5 – December, 2016 (n=503)	Male (n=229)	Female (n=270)	18-34 (n=156)	35-54 (n=188)	55+ (n=155)	South West (n=139)	Inner West (n=96)	North West (n=137)	West Central (n=127)
Q 10. Using a 0 to 10 scale, where 0 means Strongly Disagree and 10 means Strongly Agree, to what extent do you agree with the following statement? Overall, the positive benefits of an airport at Badgerys Creek would outweigh any negative impacts										
Disagree (0-3)	12	10	15	12	10	16	12	9	14	13
Neutral (4-6)	31	30	31	42+	30	20-	35	28	27	34
Agree (7-10)	49	56+	42-	35-	51	61+	44	52	54	45
Don't know	8	3-	12+	11	9	3-	9	11	4	8

Figure 4: Overall attitude to the proposed airport (agree to the statement, on a scale of 0 to 10: “Overall, the positive benefits of an airport at Badgerys Creek would outweigh any negative impacts”)

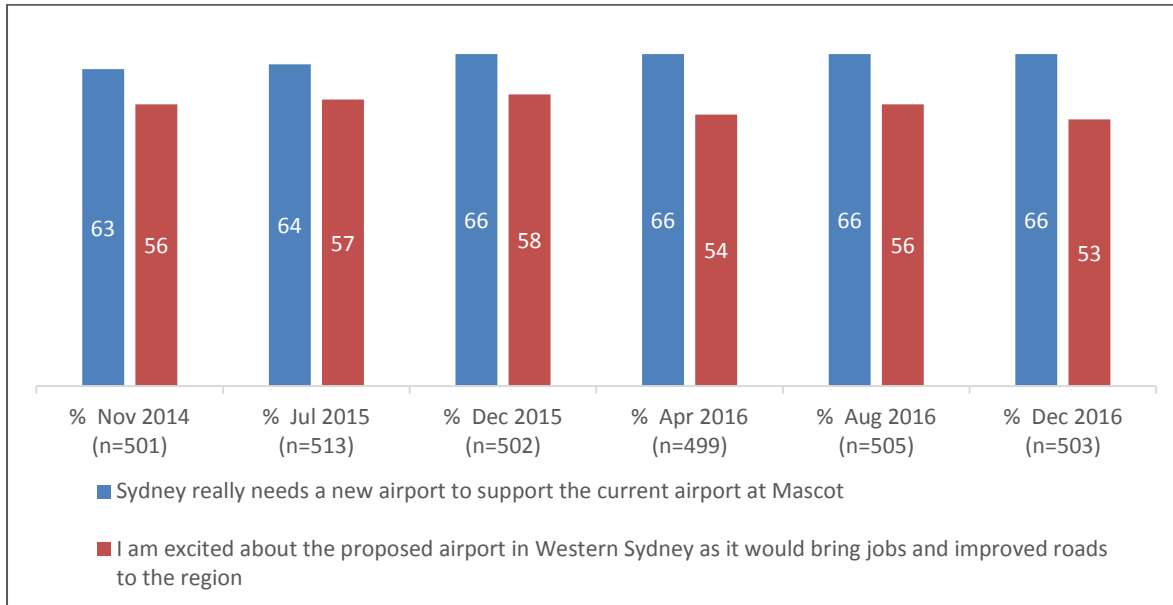


The majority of residents believe that a new airport is necessary and remain excited by the prospect. Figure 5 indicates that two in three residents (66 per cent) believe that a new airport is needed to support the current airport



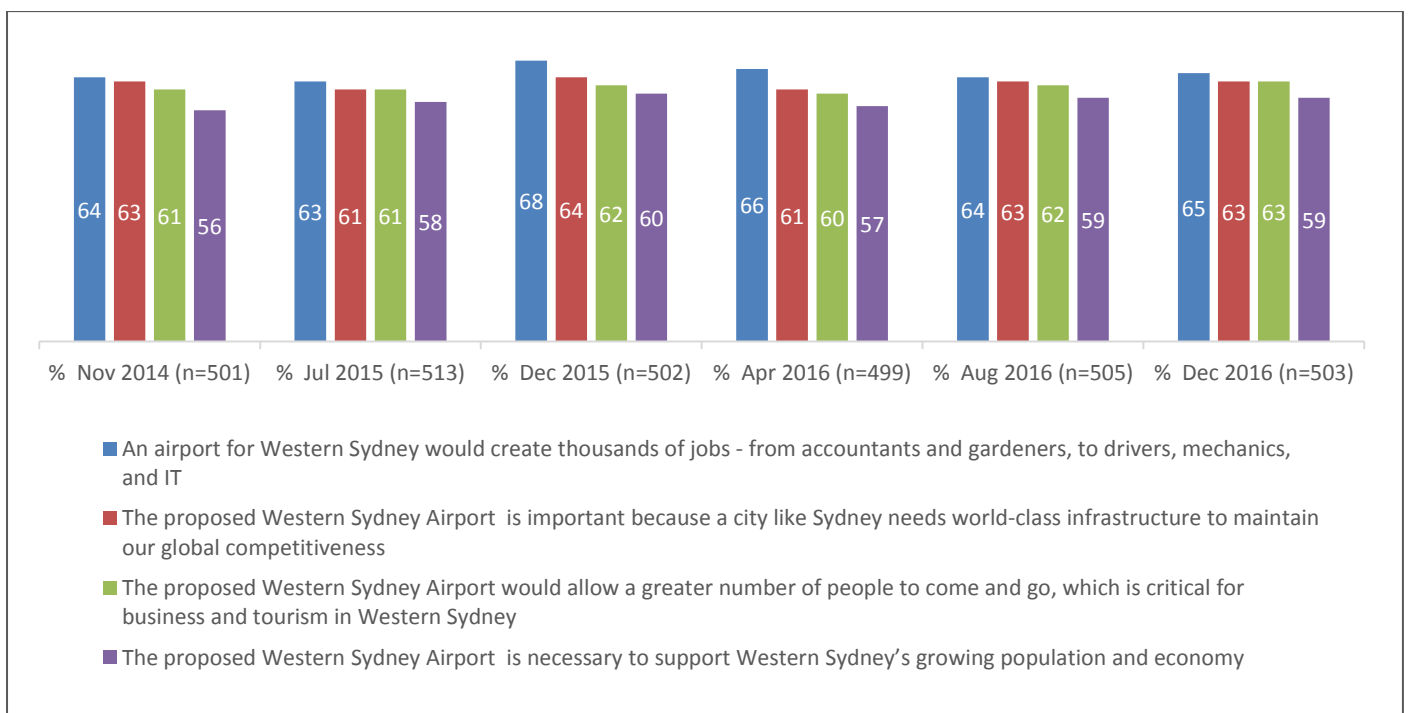
at Mascot, and more than half (53 per cent) say they are excited about the airport in Western Sydney as it would bring jobs and improved roads to the region.

Figure 5: Level of agreement (answers 7-10 “agree”) with the statements “Sydney really needs a new airport to support the current airport at Mascot” and “I am excited about the proposed airport in Western Sydney as it would bring jobs and improved roads to the region”



The perceived benefits of an airport remain steady at the levels seen in previous surveys. Employment and jobs remain the most compelling benefits. Almost two thirds of residents view the potential for more jobs (65 per cent of residents), world-class infrastructure for global competitiveness (63 per cent), improved travel and logistics for tourism and business (63 per cent) and support for the local economy (59 per cent) as positive for Western Sydney.

Figure 6: Level of agreement (answers 7-10 “agree”) with the statements on jobs, global competitiveness, travel and logistics, and the Western Sydney economy

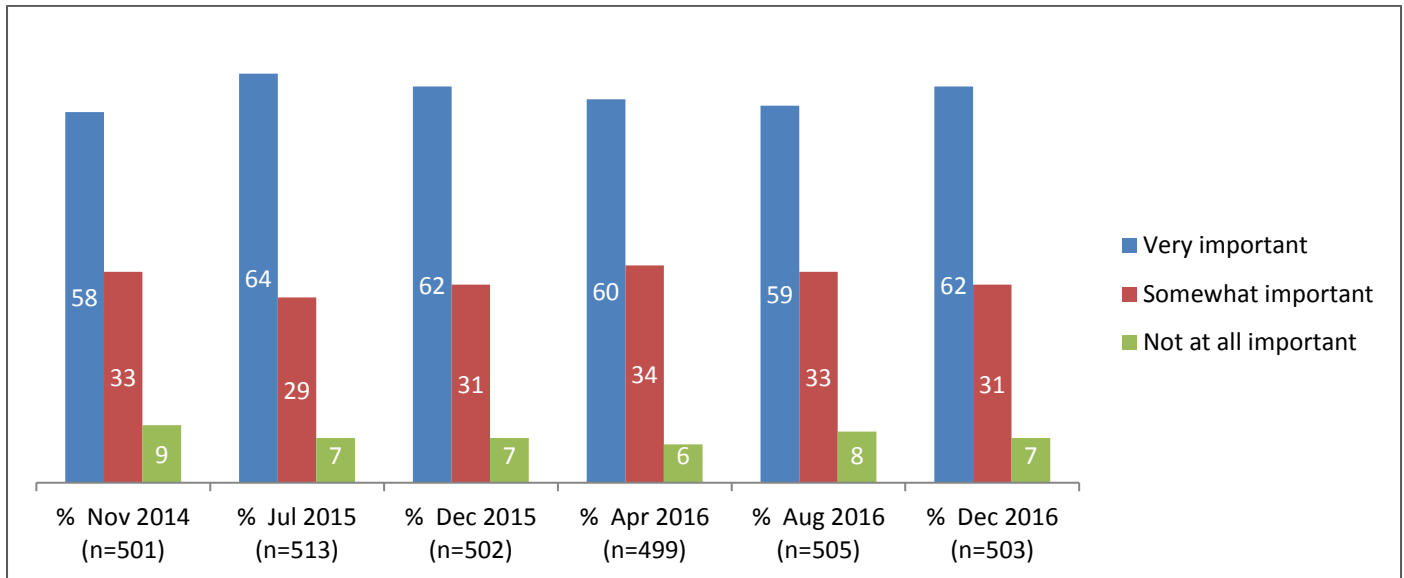




3. Demand for information

There is still demand for information about the development. Western Sydney residents continue to say it is important they are informed about the progress of the airport (62 per cent rated this very important), with only 7 per cent, saying it was not important. Almost a third (31 per cent) is ambivalent about receiving information.

Figure 7: Answers to question, on a scale of 0 to 10: “How important would it be that you’re informed about the progress of the proposed Western Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek?”



Overall communications recall has returned to pre-August 2016 levels (41 per cent in December 2016). Among those who can recall communications, recall of media coverage is the most significant (64 per cent).

Figure 8: Answers to question “In the last three months, have you heard, seen or read anything about this proposed airport?”

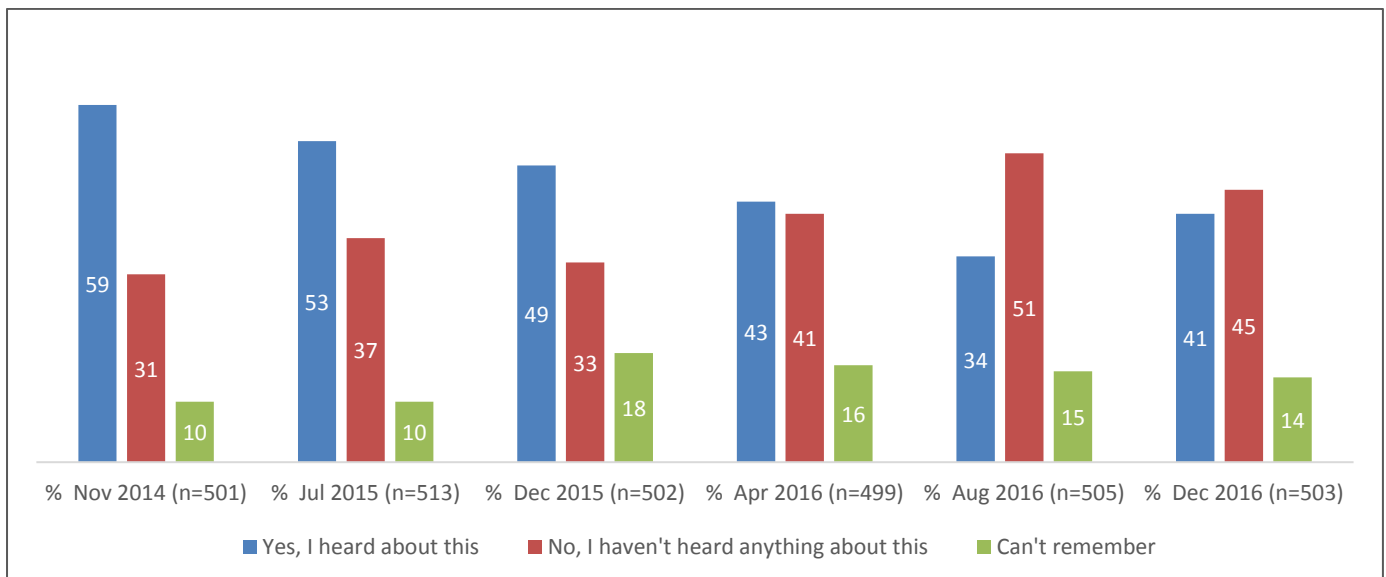




Figure 9: Answers to question “Where did you see, read or hear about the proposed airport?” among those who had heard, seen or read anything

