



Western Sydney Airport: Benchmarking community research – December 2015

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 has engaged GfK Australia to conduct a research programme to provide both a benchmark and long-term tracking of the activities.

A third round of this research was conducted in December 2015, with the findings summarised below. Previous surveys include a benchmark conducted in November 2014, and first tracking survey conducted in July 2015.

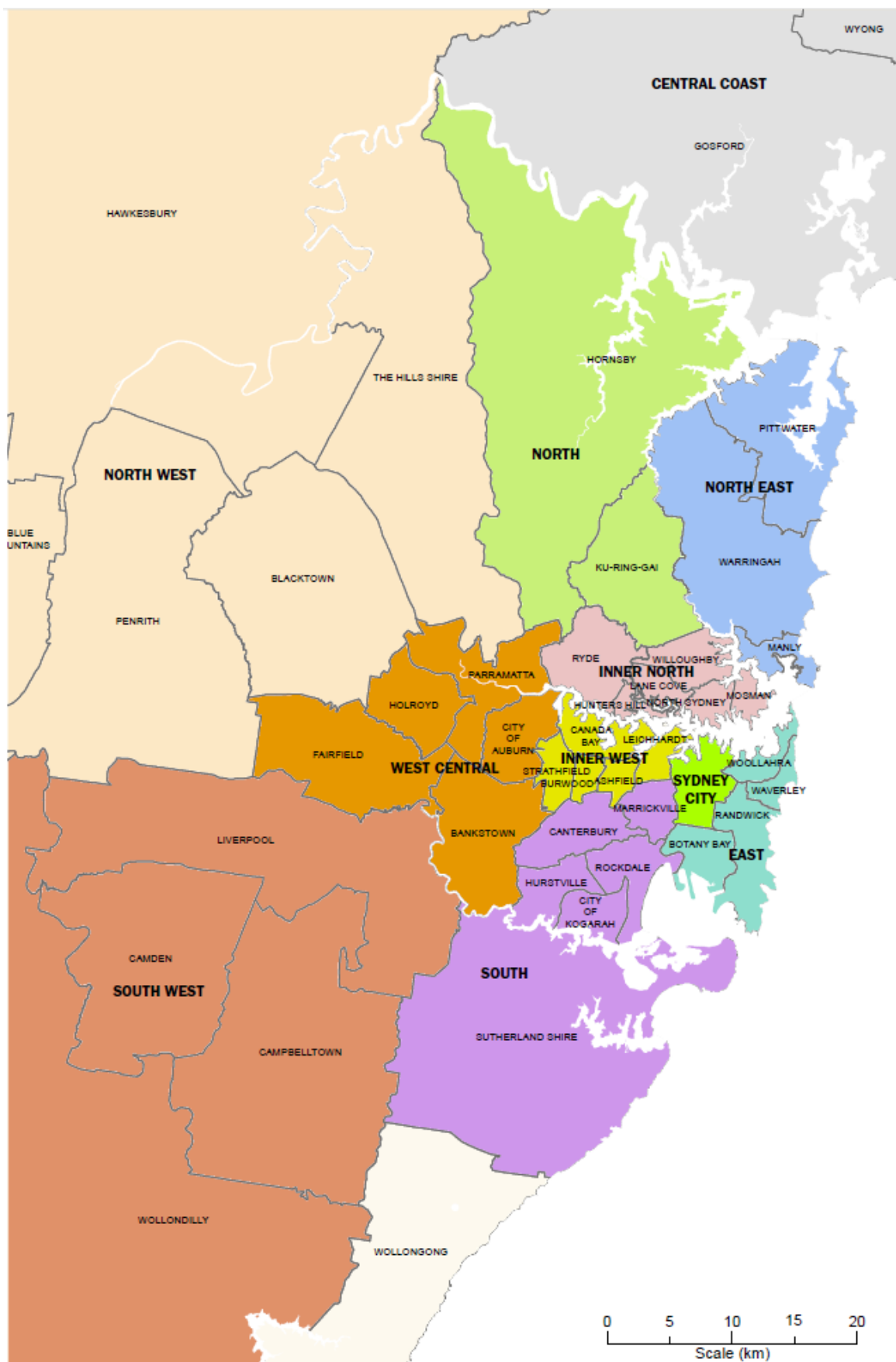
Research methodology

This round of quantitative research included an online survey with 502 Western Sydney residents (defined as South West, Inner West, North West, West Central, illustrated by Map 1). Fieldwork was conducted between 2 and 9 December 2015, the second last week of the public exhibition period of the Western Sydney Airport draft Airport Plan and draft Environmental Impact Statement.

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.



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.



Findings summary

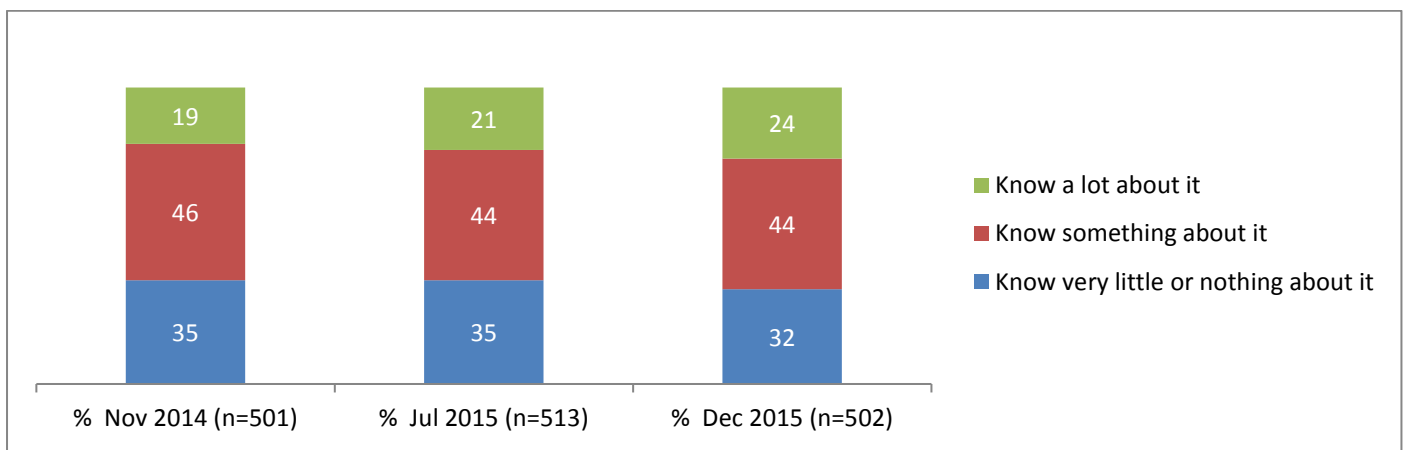
There has been a statistically significant increase in overall support for the proposed airport (61 per cent) in Western Sydney compared to the benchmark (54 per cent), outweighing dissent or questioning. Only a minority (11 per cent) feels that the negative impacts would outweigh the benefits.

Key findings – excerpt

1. Awareness

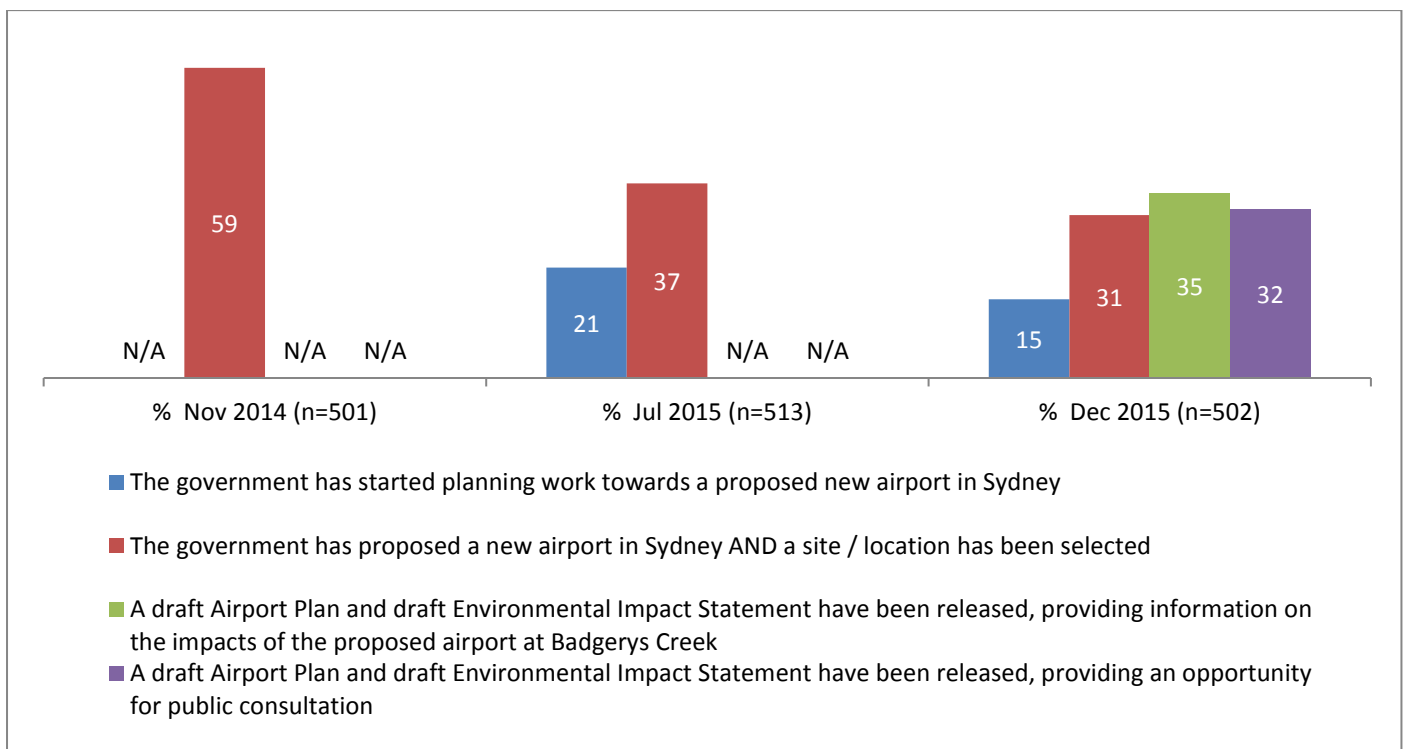
Most Western Sydney residents feel they are very knowledgeable (24 per cent) or know something (44 per cent) about the proposed airport and feel up to date with the latest information. This is an increase from the benchmark, along with a general trend which indicates fewer people know very little or nothing about the proposed airport.

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



A third were aware the draft Airport Plan and draft Environmental Impact Statement had been released. Only 10 per cent had not heard anything about progress of the airport.

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

Most Western Sydney residents surveyed are in favour of (61 per cent) or neutral (25 per cent) towards the proposed airport.

There is higher advocacy among males for the project (68 per cent in favour of), 55 year olds and older (69 per cent in favour of) and those in the North West (69 per cent in favour of). Females and 18-34 year olds were more likely to be neutral (31 per cent and 38 per cent respectively).

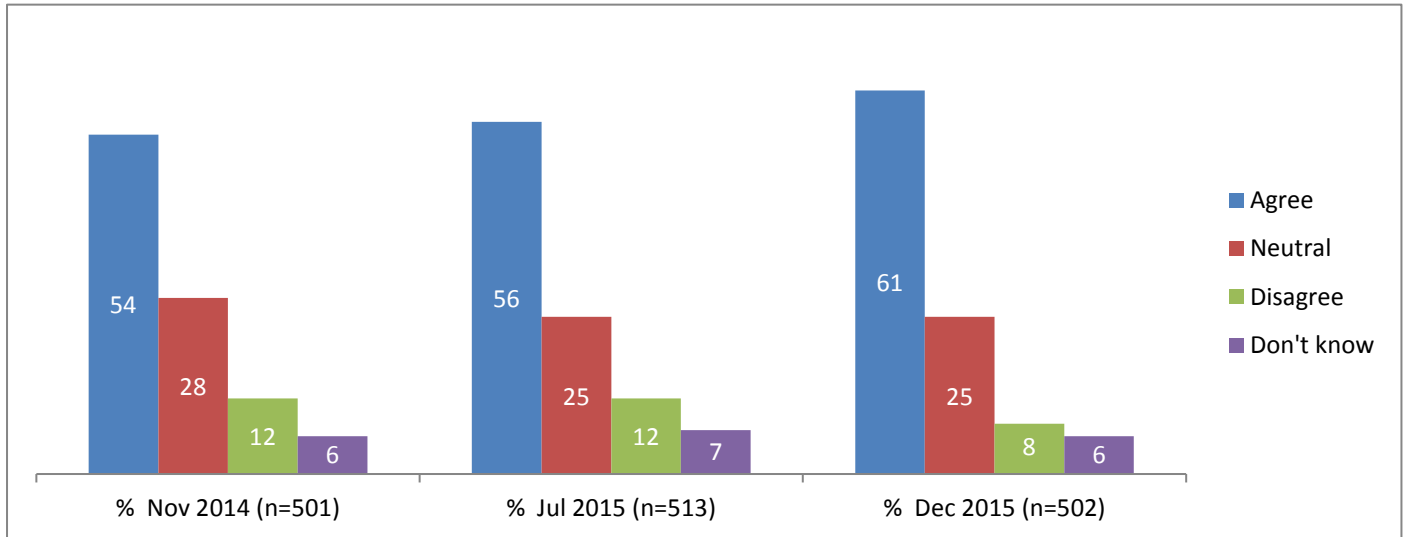
Table 1: Sentiment by population group

Sentiment towards the airport Column %	Wave 2 Dec 2015 (n=502)	Male (n=238)	Female (n=264)	18-34 (n=166)	35-54 (n=182)	55+ (n=154)	South West (n=143)	Inner West (n=77)	North West (n=158)	West Central (n=124)
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)	8	8	8	4-	9	11	11	4	11	5
Neutral (4-6)	25	19-	31+	38+	22	15-	23	34+	15-	35+
Agree (7-10)	61	68+	53-	52-	61	69+	61	53	69+	56
Don't know	6	4	8	6	7	4	6	9	5	5
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?										
<i>Overall, the positive benefits of an airport at Badgerys Creek would outweigh any negative impacts</i>										
Disagree (0-3)	11	9	13	10	12	12	11	4-	16+	11
Neutral (4-6)	30	26-	35+	41+	28	22-	32	36	22-	35
Agree (7-10)	52	60+	43-	44-	49	62+	49	49	55	52
Don't know	7	5-	9+	5	12+	4	7	11	7	3



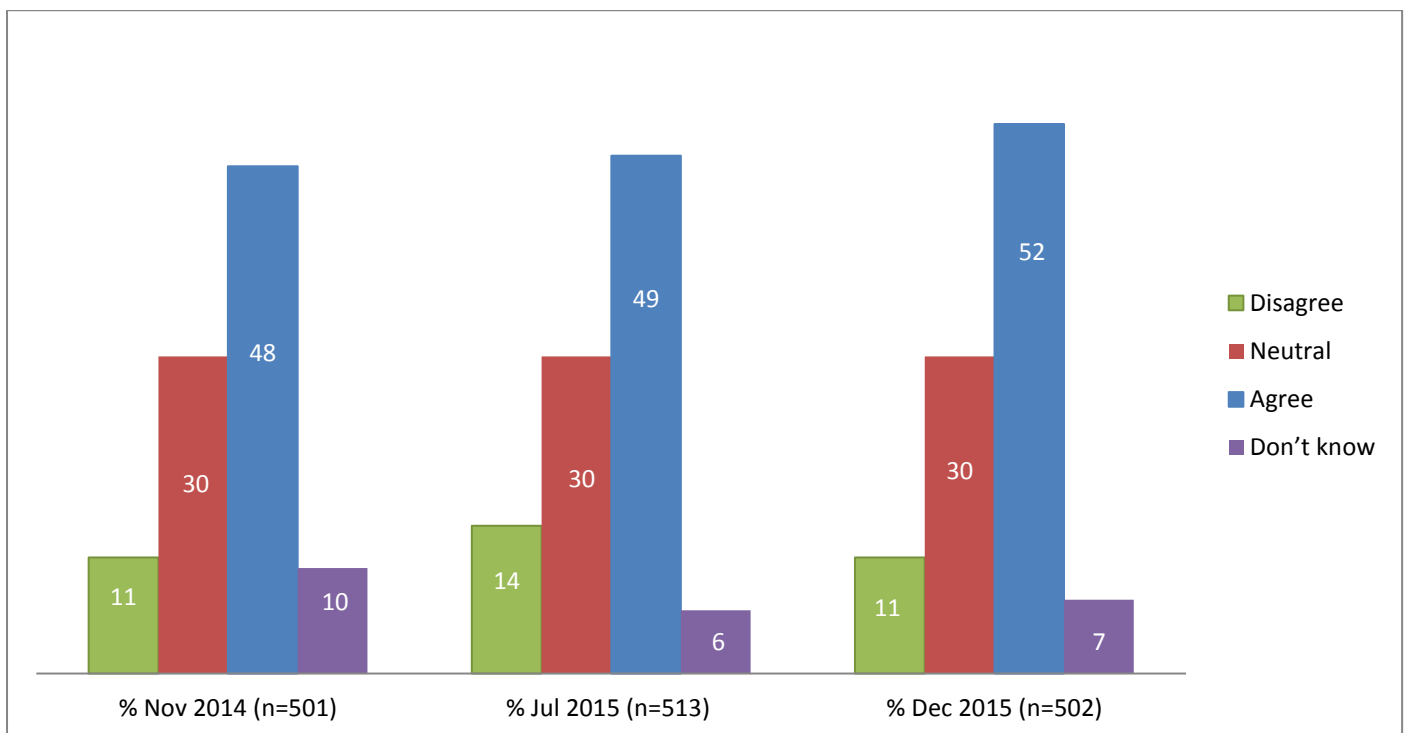
In comparison to the previous round of research, there has been a statistically significant increase in community members in favour of the proposed airport (61 per cent say they agree/strongly agree that they are in favour and 25 per cent had neutral views). The number opposed to the development has also declined (8 per cent in December, as opposed to 12 per cent previously).

Figure 3: Overall attitude to the proposed airport (agree to the statement, on a scale of 1-10: “I am in favour of the proposed Western Sydney Airport at Badgerys Creek”)



Consistent with previous research, around half of community members believe the benefits of the proposed airport would outweigh the negative impacts. In total, 52 per cent agree with the statement, 30 per cent are neutral and only 11 per cent do not believe the proposed airport’s benefits would outweigh negative impacts.

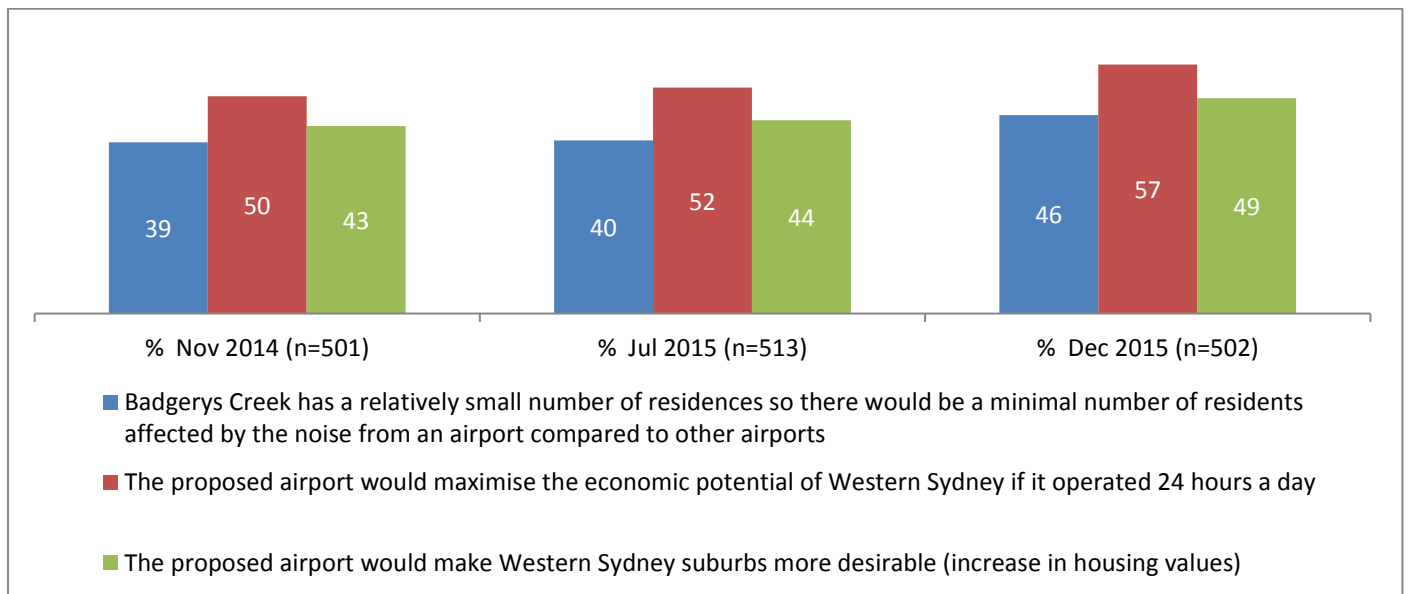
Figure 4: Overall attitude to the proposed airport (agree to the statement, on a scale of 1-10: “Overall, the positive benefits of an airport at Badgerys Creek would outweigh any negative impacts”)





An increased proportion of the community believes only a small number of residents around Badgerys Creek will be affected by aircraft noise (46 per cent). Similarly, an increased majority of the community (57 per cent) now believes that the economic potential of Western Sydney would be maximised if the proposed airport operated on a 24-hour basis. There is also increased belief that the proposed airport would be a drawcard for development in the Western Sydney suburbs and would signal an increase in property values.

Figure 5: Agreement with the statements about noise, economic potential and desirability of living in Western Sydney, on a scale of 1-10 (figure shows the proportion of respondents who answered between 7 and 10, indicating agreement/strong agreement)



This survey included a new question about the development of rail services to the proposed airport. When asked *when* rail services will be needed the vast majority (84 per cent) believed they should be available as soon as the airport is open to the public.

Figure 7: Answers to the question: “When do you think the proposed airport should have a rail/train service?”

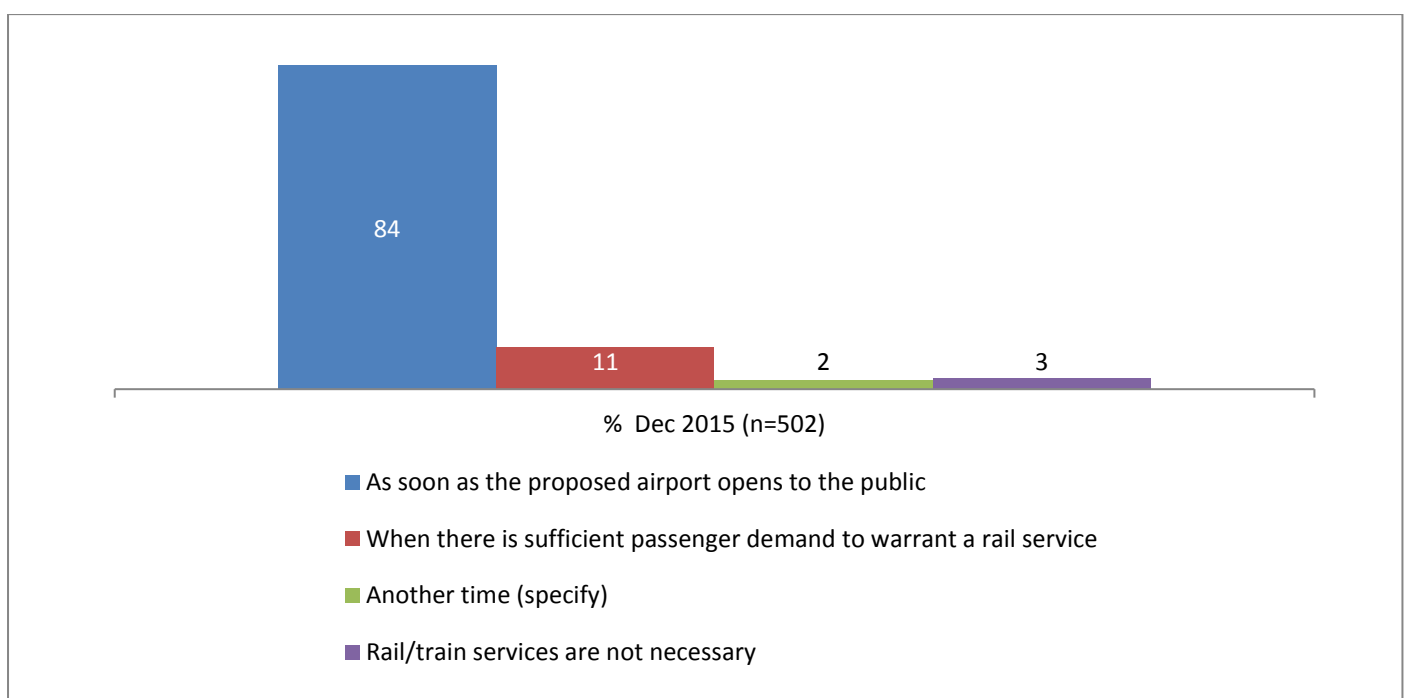
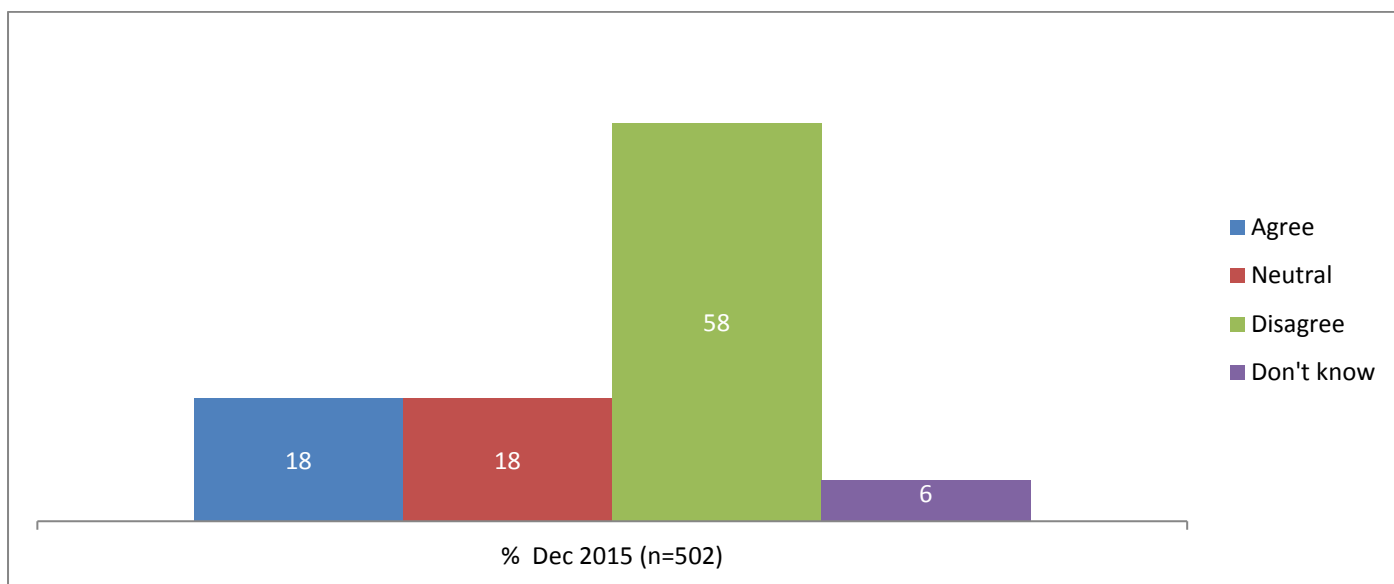




Figure 8: Agreement with the statement, on a scale of 1-10: “The proposed airport would **not** require a rail/train service from the day the first plane takes off”



3. Demand for information

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

Figure 9: Answers to question, on a scale of 1-10: “How important would it be that you’re informed about the progress of the proposed Western Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek?”

