



## Western Sydney airport

### Formative community and stakeholder research – September 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.

Formative community research was undertaken in September 2014 to inform the development of the strategy. This research and its findings are summarised below.

##### Research methodology

Research took the form of 11 focus groups with community members from Western Sydney and an online survey with 2041 residents from both Western Sydney and the greater Sydney region.

##### Findings summary

Despite Western Sydney residents having some concerns about the practical implementation of an airport, there is good support for it.

Overall, respondents (77%) agree that the benefits of a Western Sydney airport would outweigh the challenges. The key reason for supporting a Western Sydney airport is the benefit it will bring to the economy of Western Sydney, including creation of local jobs.

Respondents recognise the limitations of Sydney (Kingsford Smith) Airport and the opportunity for a Western Sydney airport. While Western Sydney residents have some practical concerns about airport implementation, there is a belief that benefits including economic growth for Western Sydney outweigh such concerns.

The five key findings of the research are as follows.

1. There is solid support for the idea of a Western Sydney airport
  - 77% of respondents agreed that the benefits of an airport at Badgerys Creek would outweigh any challenges (of which 28% strongly agreed)
  - 65% of respondents are excited about the proposed airport (of which 23% are very excited)
2. There is limited awareness of the announcement of the airport site and associated infrastructure plan
  - 21% of respondents indicated that they do not know about a proposed airport in Western Sydney
  - 64% understood that if there is an airport, Badgerys Creek would be the site
3. It is an airport for Western Sydney with associated local benefits, rather than a second Sydney airport
  - Research indicates that the proposed airport would meet the needs of local community and would be a coming of age for Western Sydney.
  - Benefits that resonate with the community include:
    - a. increased local employment opportunities;
    - b. local road upgrades; and
    - c. offering a key piece of infrastructure which would provide for the future.
4. There are challenges that need to be addressed
  - Main community concerns include:
    - a. potential noise pollution, particularly in association with 24-hour airport operation;
    - b. increased traffic congestion; and
    - c. fair treatment of residents that may be affected by the proposed airport.



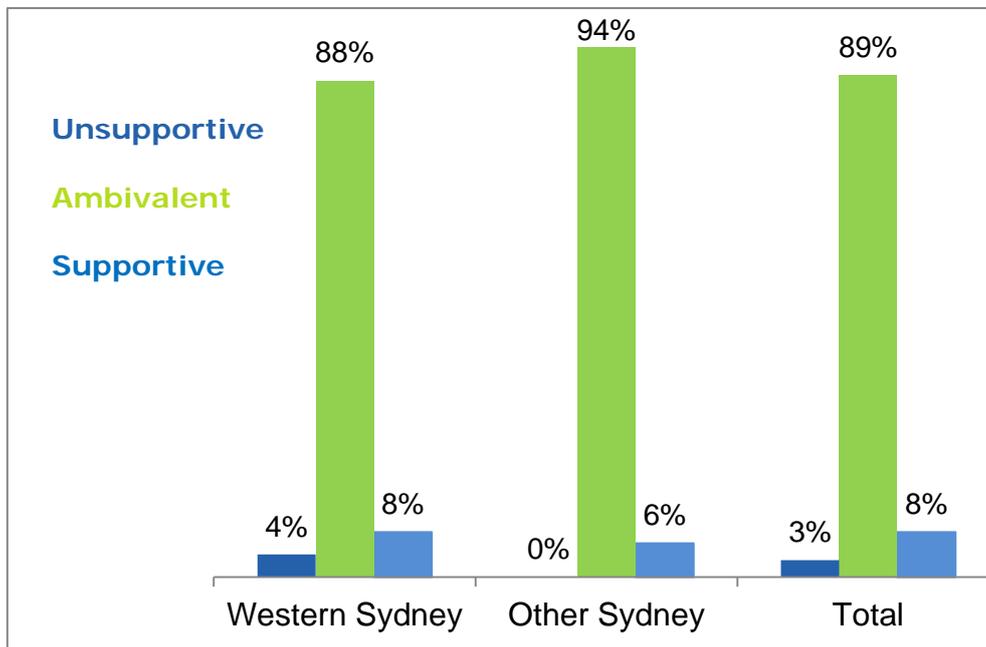
5. Even with awareness of the site announcement, there is scepticism about whether the project will proceed
  - 42% of respondents believe the project will progress
  - Following the previous indecision about the project over a number of years, there is a level of disengagement with the airport and disbelief that the project will go ahead



### Key findings – excerpt

Despite Western Sydney residents having some concerns about the practical implementation of an airport, there is good support for it.

Figure 1: Support for a Western Sydney airport



Increased employment opportunities are by far seen as the key benefit of an airport for Western Sydney. Potential negative impacts cited by respondents included increases in noise and traffic congestion, along with the potential broader impact on the environment.

Figure 3: Five most common reasons why a Western Sydney airport would be good for the region

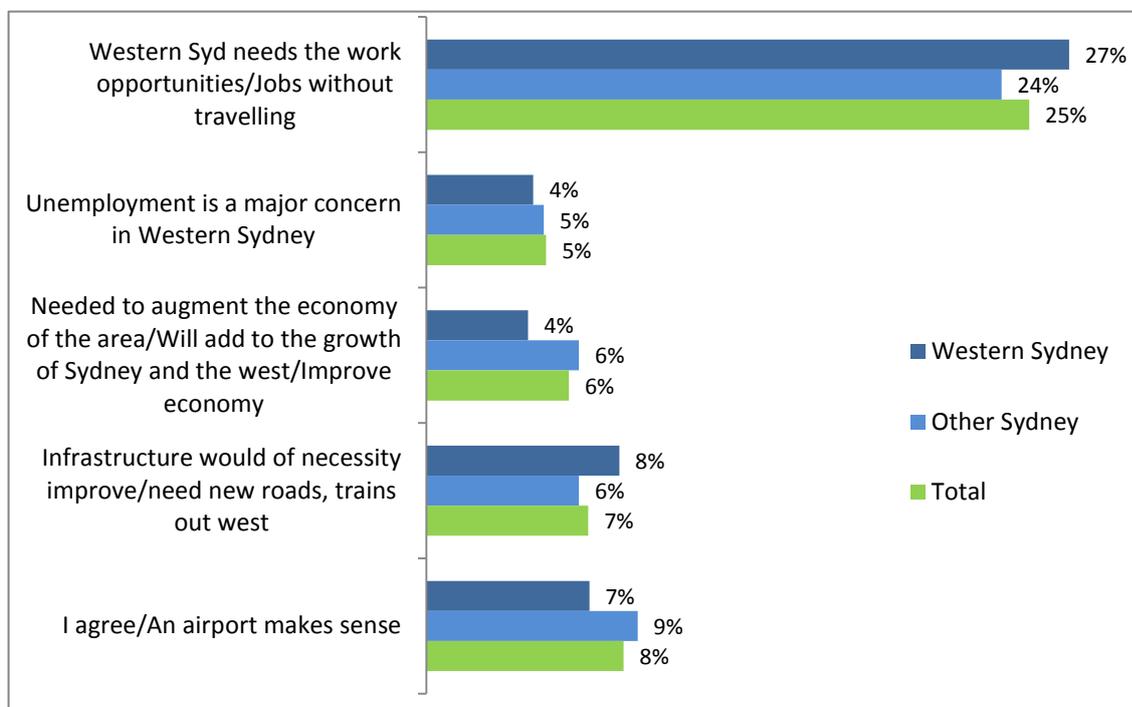
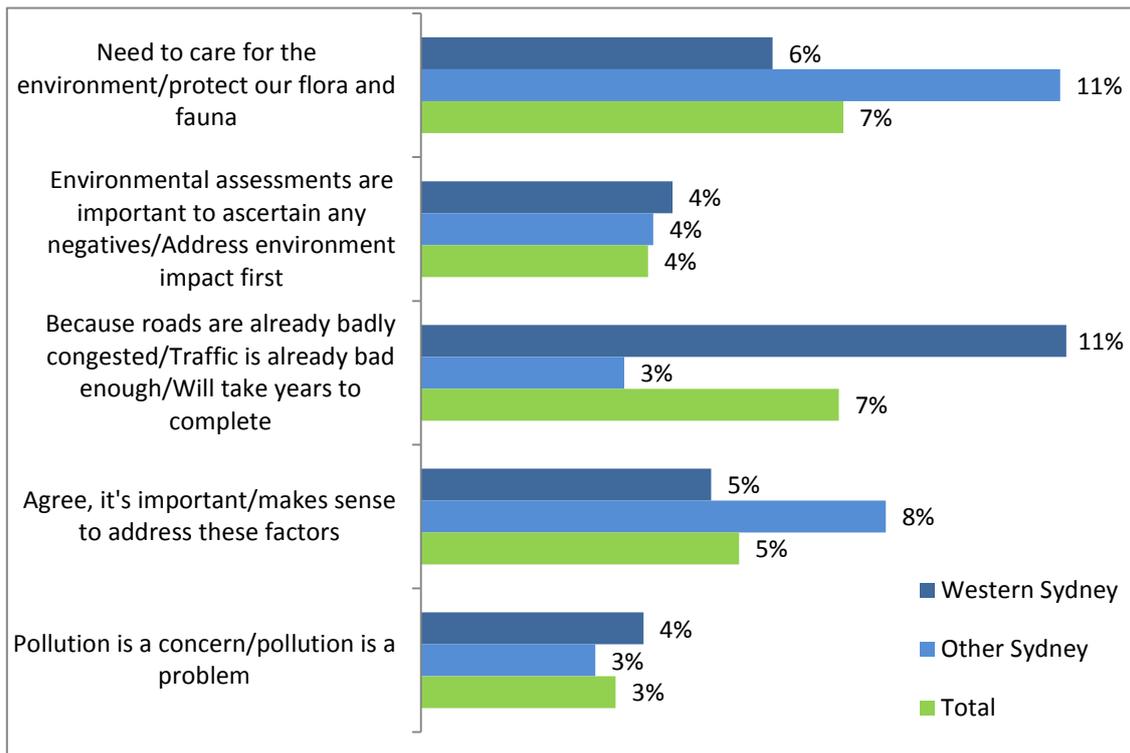




Figure 4: Five most common reasons respondents are concerned about an airport in Western Sydney



The majority of respondents agree that benefits associated with an airport development would outweigh potential negative impacts. Economic factors and a recognition that Sydney (Kingsford Smith) airport is at full capacity are the most salient reasons for rating that the benefits of a Western Sydney airport would outweigh any challenges.

Figure 2: Reasons why benefits of an airport at Badgerys Creek would outweigh the challenges

