



Western Sydney Airport: Evaluative community research – April 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 fourth round of this research was conducted in April 2016. Previous surveys include a benchmark conducted in November 2014, with tracking surveys conducted in July and December 2015.

Research methodology

This round of quantitative research included an online survey with 499 Western Sydney residents (defined as South West, Inner West, North West, West Central, illustrated by Map 1). Fieldwork was conducted between 1 and 13 April 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.

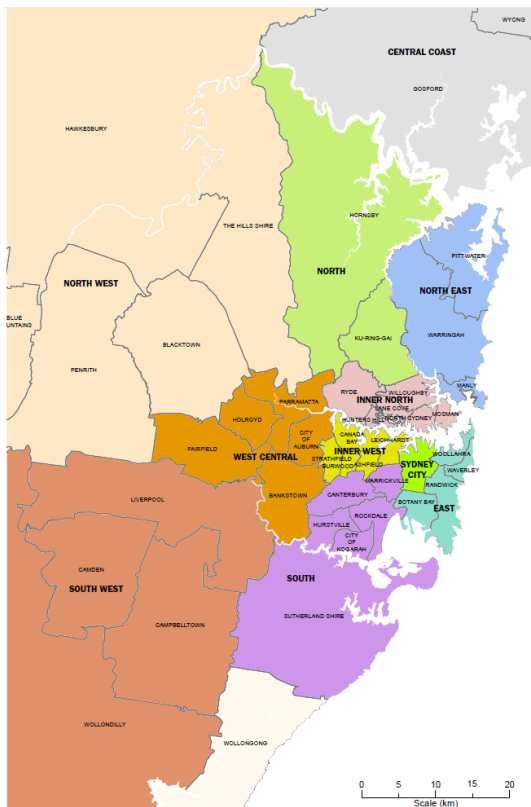


Findings summary

Stability in attitudes is a key theme in this latest survey in comparison with previous surveys. In the latest survey, the majority of Western Sydney residents (57 per cent) continue to be in favour of the proposed Western Sydney Airport, a small increase compared with the benchmark survey in November 2014 (54 per cent). Interestingly, the area which continues to be most in favour is the North West region – including the Blue Mountains, Penrith and Blacktown – with 61 per cent of residents in favour of the proposed airport.

The community's demand for information about the project has also remained consistent. The majority of residents (60 per cent) consider being informed about the progress of the proposed 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.

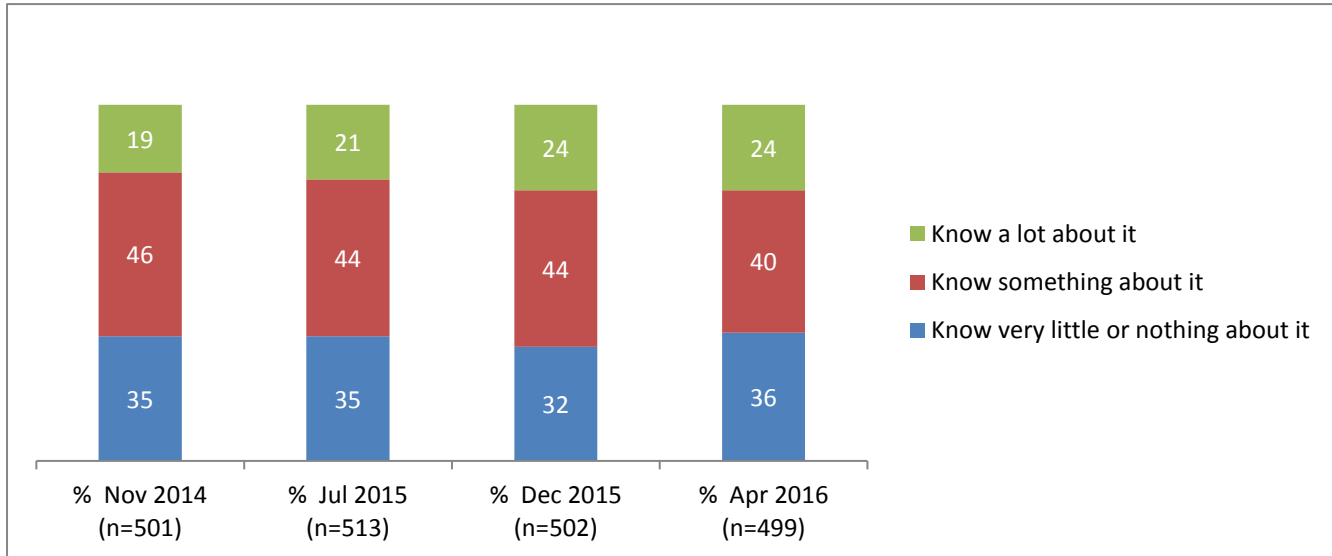


Key findings – excerpt

1. Awareness

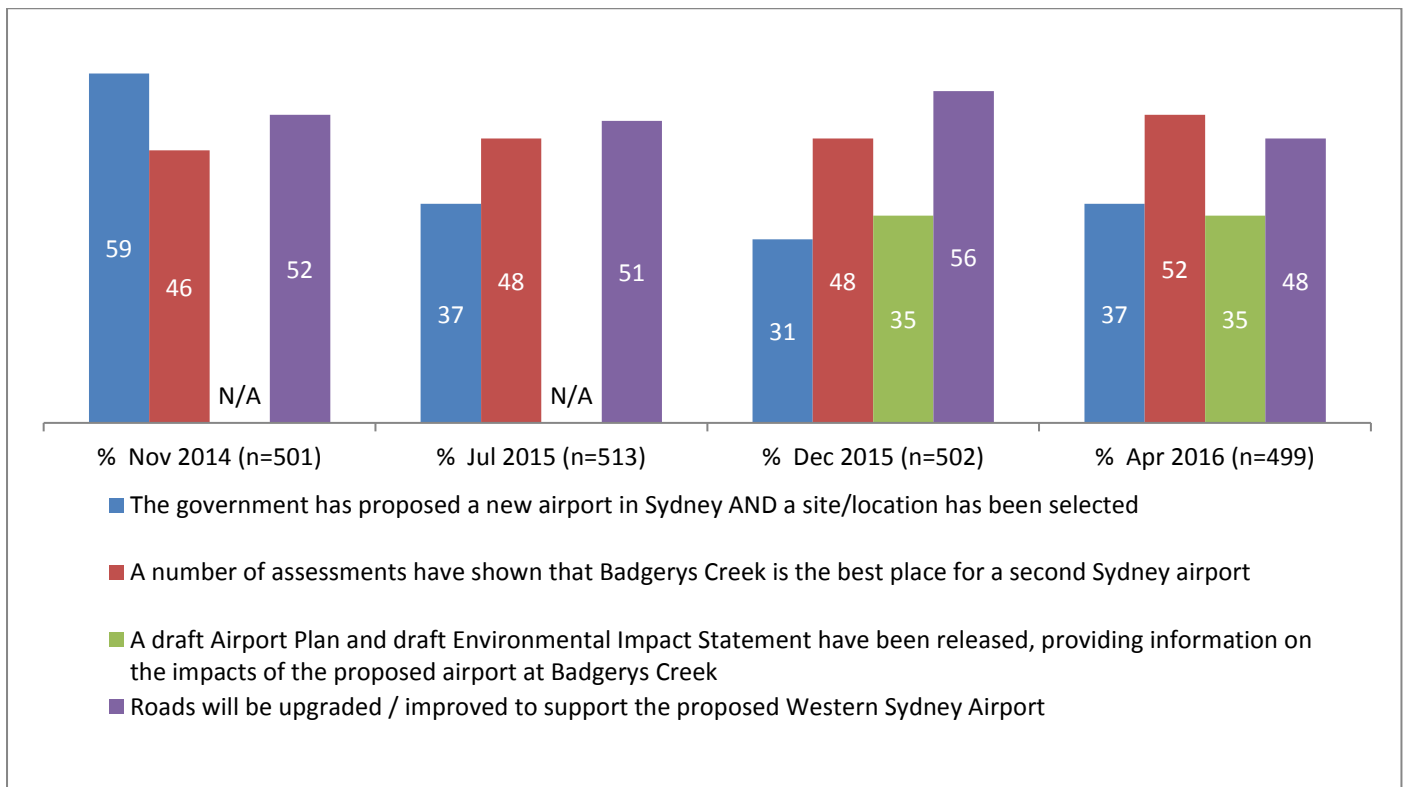
Most Western Sydney residents feel they are very knowledgeable (24 per cent) or know something (40 per cent) about the proposed airport and feel up to date with the latest information.

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 proposed airport has changed, reflecting progress in the project. Consistent with the last survey in December 2015, a third 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 proposed airport has remained largely stable across the four surveys. The majority continue to be in favour of (57 per cent) or neutral towards (25 per cent) the proposed airport. The percentage in favour has varied from 54 per cent at the benchmark survey in November 2014 to a peak of 61 per cent in December 2015. The percentage opposed to the development (12 per cent) has also remained relatively stable across all four 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”)

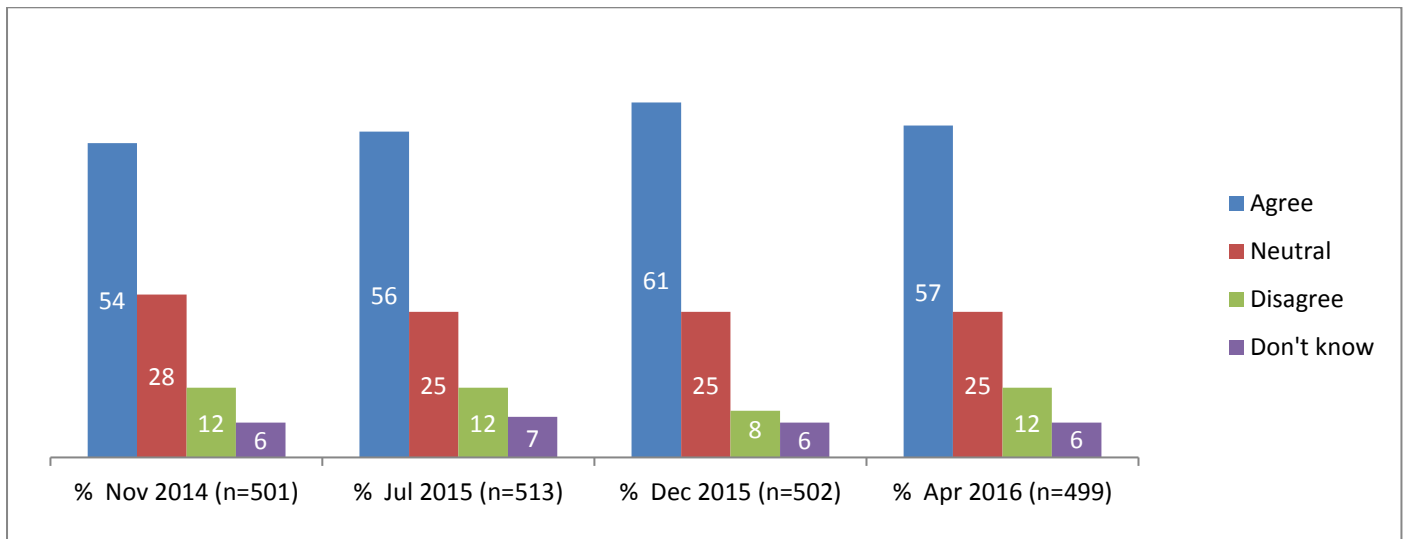


Table 1 notes 61 per cent of the North West region encompassing the local government areas (LGAs) of the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Penrith and Blacktown are in favour of the proposed airport – the strongest support out of all Western Sydney regions.

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

Sentiment towards the airport Column %	Demographic segmentation									
	Total Wave 3	By gender		By age group			By region			
	Wave 3 – April 2016 (n=499)	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)	12	12	13	10	12	15	17+	10	13	6-
Neutral (4-6)	25	23	27	34+	24	16-	25	31	19-	29
Agree (7-10)	57	63+	50-	49-	57	64+	54	50	61	58
Don't know	6	3-	10+	7	7	5	4	8	7	7



Around half of the residents continue to believe that the positive benefits of the proposed airport outweigh the negatives (49 per cent), while 32 per cent are neutral and only 11 per cent do not believe the proposed airport's benefits would outweigh negative impacts. The proportion of residents who agree has remained consistent since November 2014 (49 per cent).

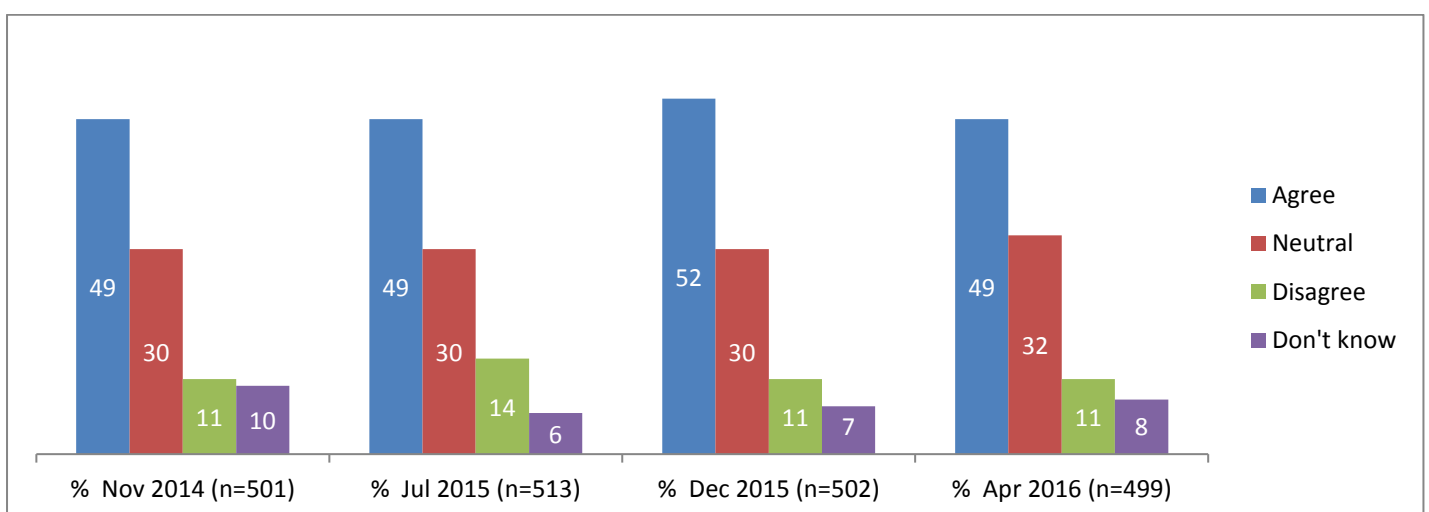
Fifty-two per cent of residents in the North West region also believe that the positives of the proposed airport outweigh the negatives, with the West Central region (including the Fairfield LGA) lowest at 44 per cent.

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 3	By gender		By age group			By region			
	Wave 3 – April 2016 (n=499)	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)	11	10	12	10	10	12	14	11	10	7
Neutral (4-6)	32	27-	37+	35	34	26	30	30	30	39
Agree (7-10)	49	59+	40-	45	47	56+	49	50	52	44
Don't know	8	4-	12+	10	9	6	6	9	8	10

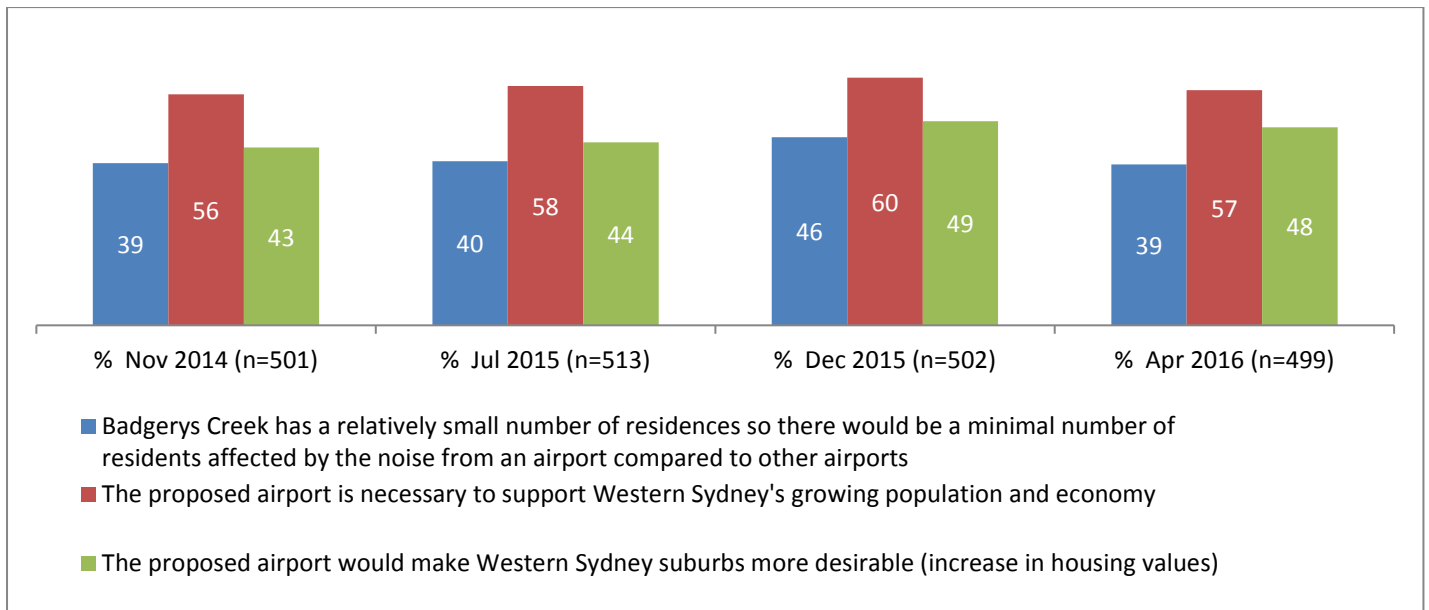
Figure 4: Overall attitude to the proposed airport (agree to the statement, on a scale of 0 to 10: "Overall, the positive benefits of an airport at Badgerys Creek would outweigh any negative impacts")





The percentage of residents who agree that only a small number of residents around Badgerys Creek will be affected by aircraft noise has remained stable across the four surveys, with 39 per cent agreeing with this statement in both April 2016 and November 2014. The majority of residents continue to believe that the proposed airport is necessary to support Western Sydney’s growing population and economy (57 per cent). Almost half (48 per cent) of Western Sydney residents believe the proposed airport would be a drawcard for development and would signal an increase in property values, with more residents in agreement since November 2014 (43 per cent).

Figure 5: Agreement with the statements about noise, economic potential and desirability of living in Western Sydney, on a scale of 0 to 10 (figure shows the proportion of respondents who answered between 7 and 10, indicating agreement/strong agreement)



Attitudes towards curfew-free operations at the proposed airport have remained relatively stable. While 56 per cent of residents are concerned about noise at night and early in the morning as a result of 24-hour operations (Figure 6), 45 per cent believe that it is important the proposed airport be curfew-free (Figure 7).

Figure 6: Level of concern about noise at night and early in the morning if an airport was operating 24 hours a day

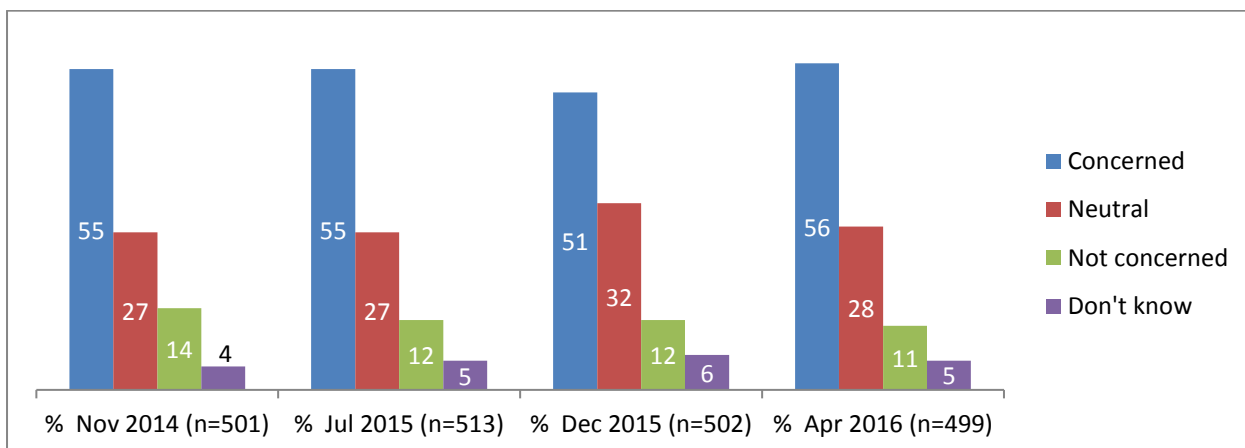
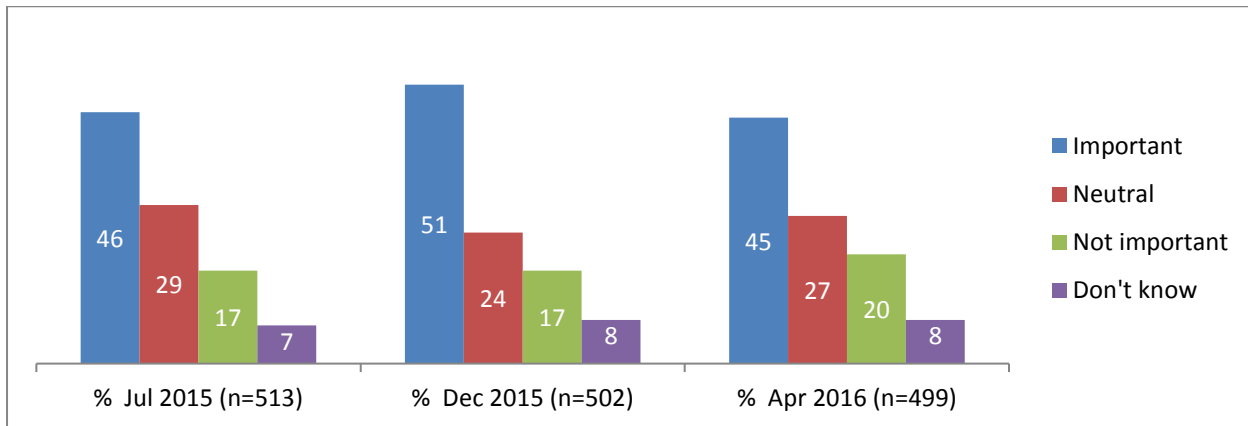


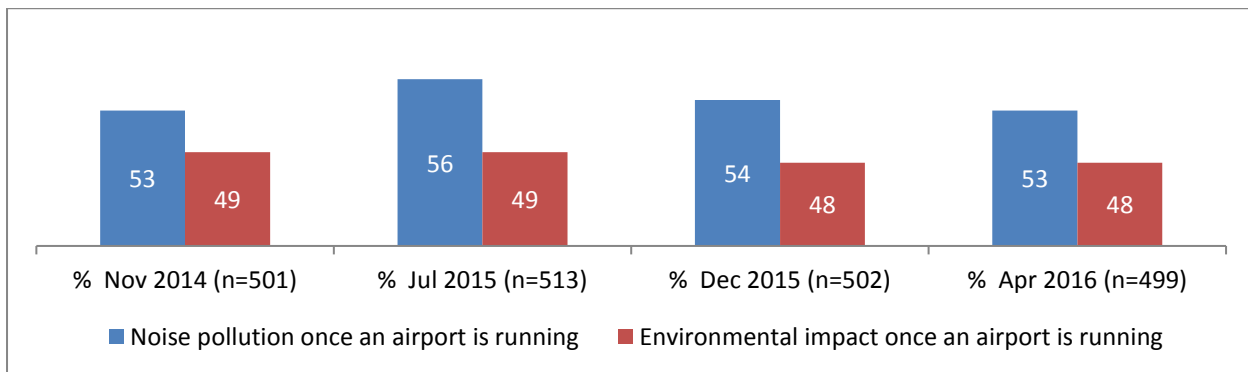


Figure 7: Level of agreement to the statement “It is important the proposed Western Sydney Airport be open for business and operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week” (question first asked in July 2015)



When asked how concerned people were about noise pollution once an airport is running, 53 per cent identified this as a concern – the same percentage as the November 2014 benchmark. This is similar to the concern about environmental impact once an airport is running, which has remained stable at around half.

Figure 8: Level of concern about noise pollution and environmental impact once an airport is running (figure shows the proportion of respondents who answered between 7 and 10, indicating concern/strong concern)





3. Rail transport to the proposed airport

The proportion of residents who believe there should be a rail link to the proposed airport as soon as it opens has decreased by nine per cent since December 2015. Conversely, the proportion of residents who think a rail service is only required when there is sufficient passenger demand increased from 11 per cent in December 2015 to 18 per cent in April 2016.

Figure 9: Answers to the question: “When do you think the proposed airport should have a rail/train service?”

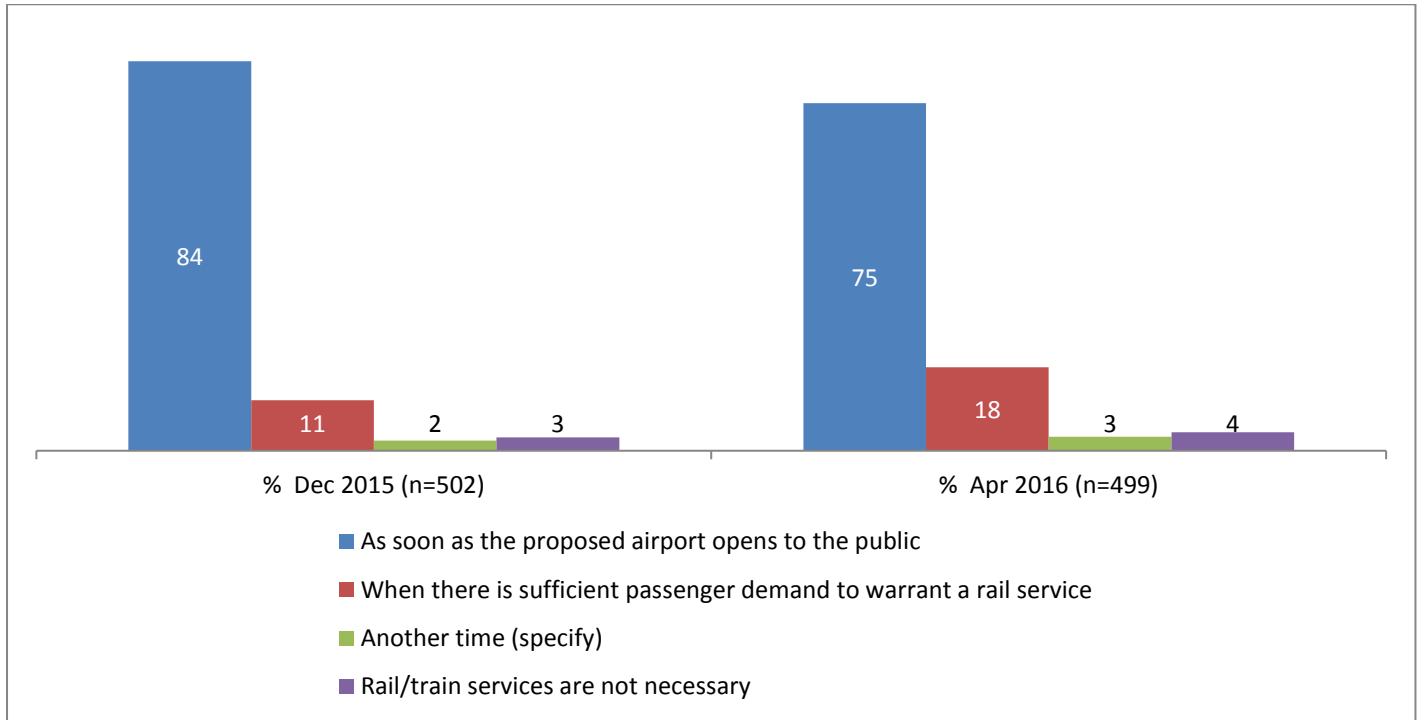


Figure 10: Agreement with the statement, on a scale of 0 to 10: “The proposed airport would **not** require a rail/train service from the day the first plane takes off”

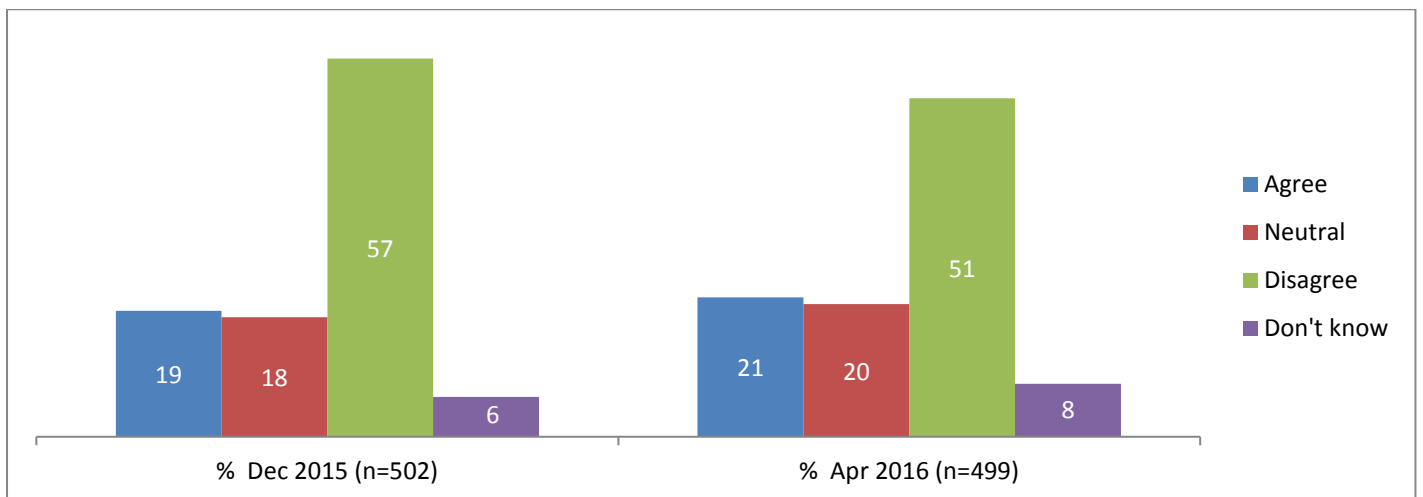
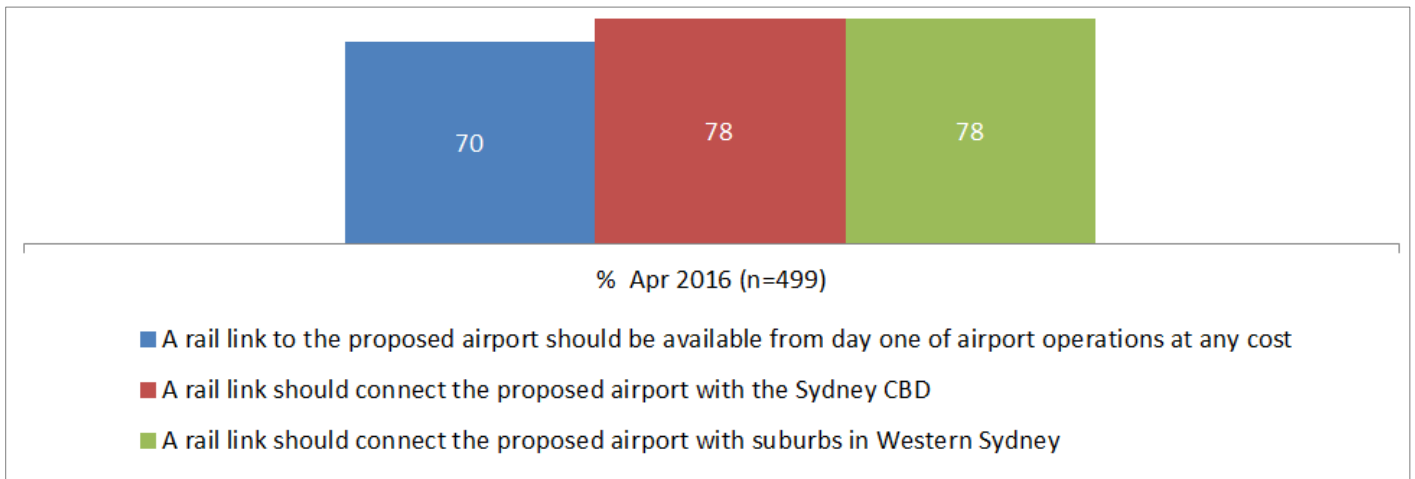




Figure 11: Agreement with the statements about a potential rail link, on a scale of 0 to 10 (figure shows the proportion of respondents who answered between 7 and 10, indicating agreement/strong agreement)



4. 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 proposed airport (60 per cent rated this very important), with only 6 per cent saying it was not important. A third (34 per cent) is ambivalent about receiving information.

Figure 12: 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?”

