



Port Hedland International Airport Community Perceptions Research

August 2015



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Perceptions
Research*

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Scope of Engagement

Background and Objectives

Background

The Town of Port Hedland is currently considering a plan to lease the Port Hedland International Airport to a private operator. The lease agreement will proceed only if the deal results in a better financial position for the Town.

Given that community support is critical to the agreement taking place, a quantitative research survey was commissioned to understand the community's level of knowledge of the plan, support and concerns. Findings from the survey will be used to design targeted communications and community consultation strategies.

The research objectives of this engagement were to quantify:

1.

Awareness and perceptions of the airport leasing plan.

2.

Perceived benefits and concerns regarding the plan.

3.

Satisfaction with the information provided to date, and the appetite for further information.

Methodology and Sample Structure

Methodology

Five minute telephone surveys were conducted with n=200 residents from the Town of Port Hedland

Interviews were conducted by Metrix’s ISO accredited fieldwork partner, Thinkfield, between August 7 and 9, 2015.

Data was post-weighted by age and gender to reflect 2011 ABS Census population statistics.

A breakdown of final sample structure is as follows:

*n= number of interviews
% = weighted to population*

	Total	Male	Female
Total	n=200 100%	77 59%	123 41%
Aged under 45	115 66%	42 38%	73 29%
Aged 45 +	85 34%	35 21%	50 13%

Key Findings

Key Findings

Awareness

71% of residents are aware of general airport development plans, 53% are aware of the leasing plan, and 21% are aware of the \$150 million benefit to the Town.

Sentiment

30% of residents are positive towards the lease based on their current level of knowledge, 29% are negative, and the remainder have no opinion.

Alternatives

Amongst those with a view, there is a 5:1 preference to lease the airport when presented with other alternatives.

Opinions

Residents can clearly articulate some of the benefits of the plan but they also nominate some concerns.

Proceeds

The majority of residents have an opinion on how funds should be invested into the community.

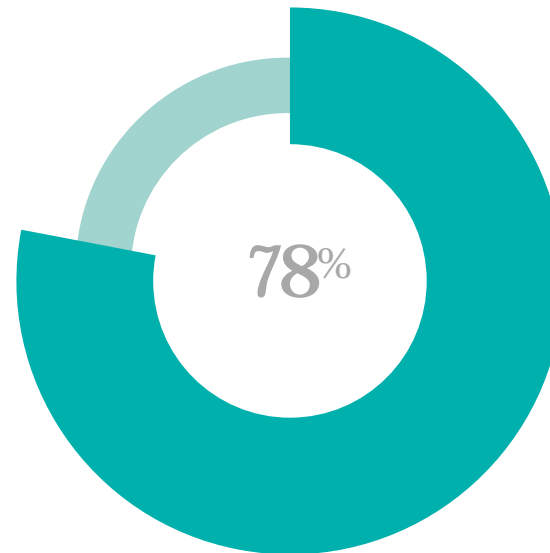
Awareness and Perceptions

78% of residents say the International Airport is in need of improvement to meet current and future needs of users

The belief that the International Airport needs upgrading is prominent within the community.

Results are similar for younger and older residents: Under 45 year olds (77%); 45+ (79%).

Residents who believe airport improvements are needed

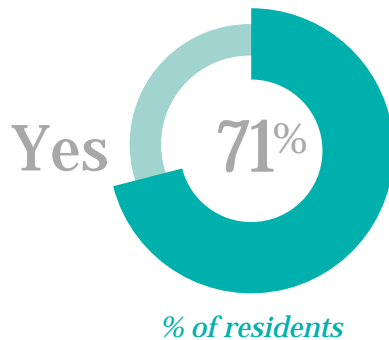


% of residents

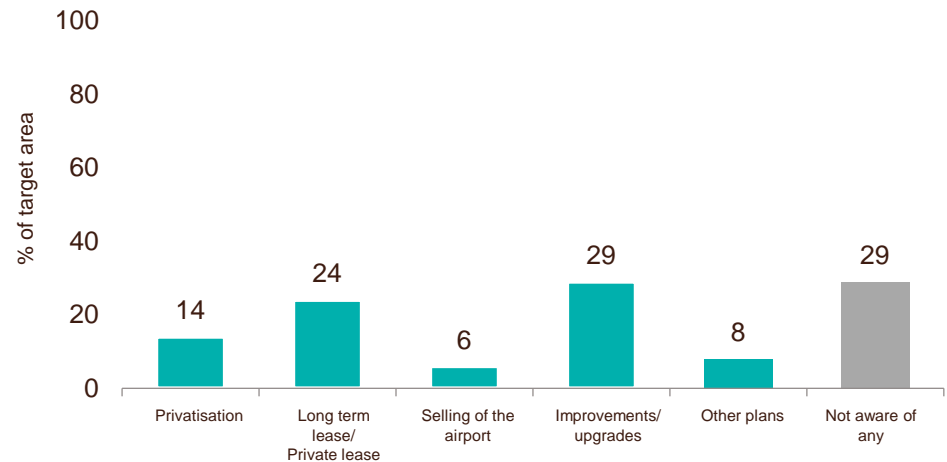
71% of local residents are aware of plans for the Airport

There is widespread awareness of development plans for the International Airport. 44% specifically mention some form of leasing or privatisation.

Are you aware of any plans being considered for the Port Hedland International Airport?



Specific mentions of airport development

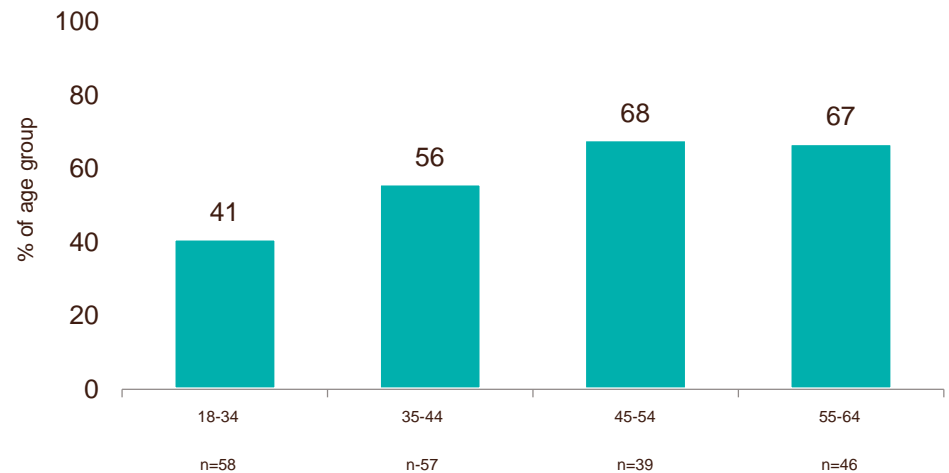


n=200

When prompted, 53% of residents are aware of the specific plan to lease the Airport to a private operator

Awareness of the lease is substantially lower among 18 to 34 year olds.

Prompted awareness of the plan



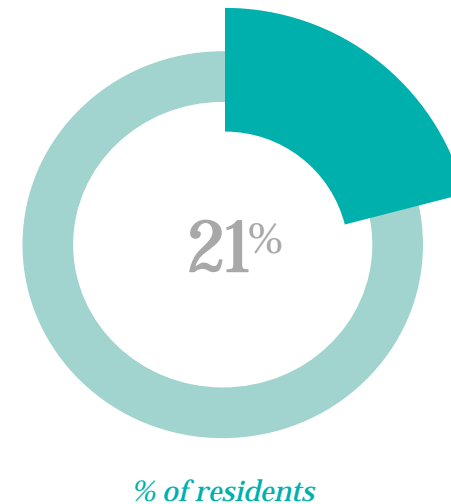
n=200

Only 21% of residents are aware of the prospect of the \$150 million premium for the lease agreement

The majority of the community is unaware of the financial benefit the leasing will bring to the Town of Port Hedland.

Under 45 year olds have a much lower awareness (12%) than 45+ year olds (37%).

Residents who are aware of the \$150 million premium

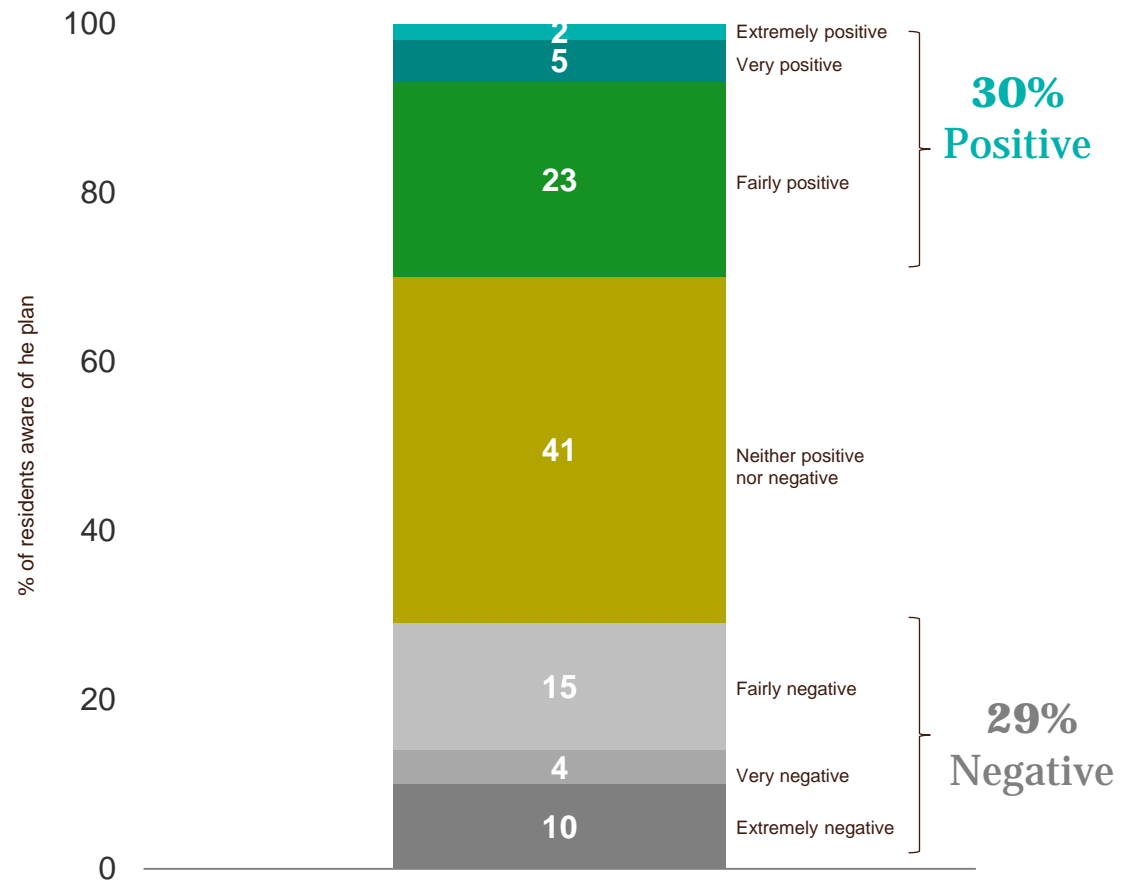


Community Support and Concerns

30% of all residents are positive towards the lease; 29% are negative

Despite 45+ year olds being *more aware* of the \$150 million benefit, they are also *more negative* (45% are negative) towards the lease than 18-44 year olds.

Positivity / Sentiment



n=200

The community does see benefits in a private lease...

Economic Benefits

- Additional jobs
- Additional flights/business
- Money fed back into the community
- Increased tourism
- Support competition resulting in cheaper flights and services

“More competition will encourage cheap carriers to come up here which will mean cheaper flights for us.”

Operational Benefits

- Run like a business, with more emphasis on efficiency
- Expertise of private operator
- Increased competition - a better level of service will be offered
- More accountability

“A more fluid system. The processes of checking in, getting through security and flight times may be improved and the service may pick up a bit.”

Facility Benefits

- Investment of money back into the Airport
- Possible expansion of facilities

“More money spent on the airport will give it better facilities and maybe more business opportunities.”

But there are concerns...

Jobs, Costs, Benefits to ToPH

- Current workers losing their jobs
- Increase the cost of flights and services (parking)
- Won't run to benefit the town, only themselves

“A private operator will be looking to maximise their profits and will therefore be looking to increase the prices passengers to have to pay”

Safety, Service, Staff, ‘FIFO-only’

- Fewer resources at the airport mean services will suffer
- Only service the FIFO workers, not the town
- Slipping safety standards and cost cutting

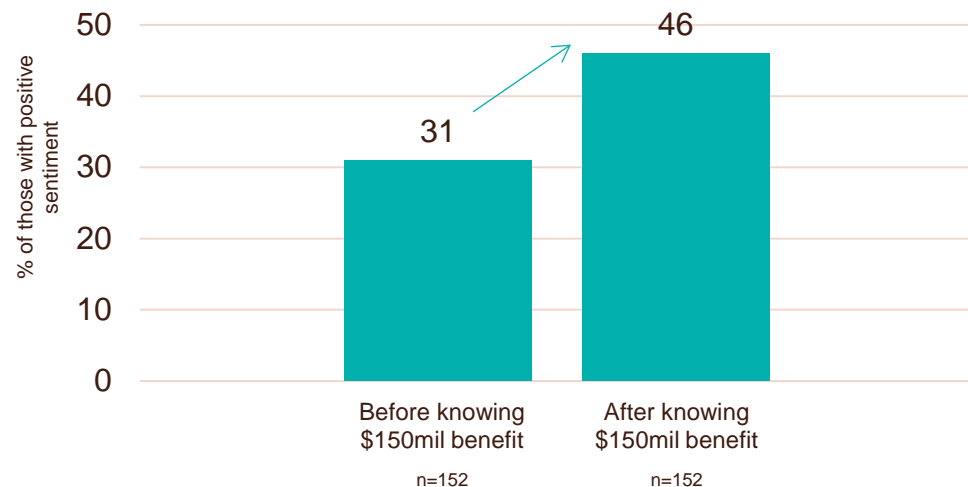
“Will safety be maintained? And what about customer service?”

Once informed of the \$150 million financial benefit, support improves

Among residents not initially aware of the \$150 million benefit to the Town of Port Hedland, support improves by 15 points from 31% to 46% after the benefit is divulged.

While this is a step in the right direction, the level of support indicates that more consultation and information is necessary to change attitudes towards the plan.

% Positive sentiment among residents who were initially not aware of the \$150 million benefit



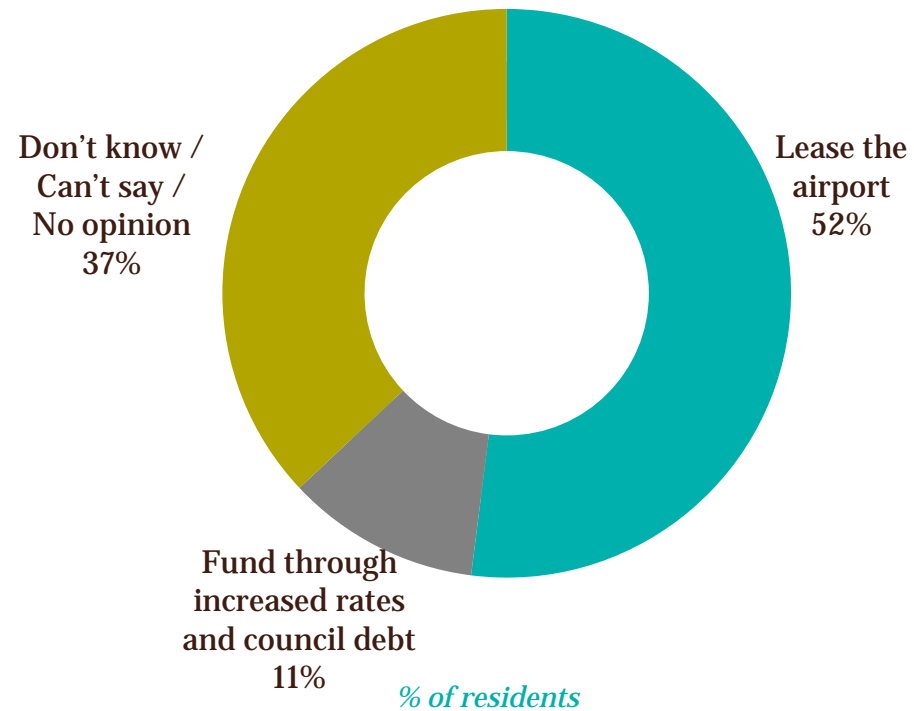
Q7a: Initial bids for the airport indicate that the Town of Port Hedland could receive a premium well in excess of \$150mil if it was leased. Were you aware of this?

Q3: How do you feel about the plan to lease the airport to a private operator? Would you say you are....

Q8: Now that you know the Town of Port Hedland may receive well in excess of 150mil from the airport lease proposal proceeds, which of these statements best describes how you now feel about the plan?

For those with an opinion, there is a 5:1 preference to lease the airport when presented with the alternative of increased council debt and residential rates

Preference to lease or retain when presented with the option of retaining through higher rates and council debt

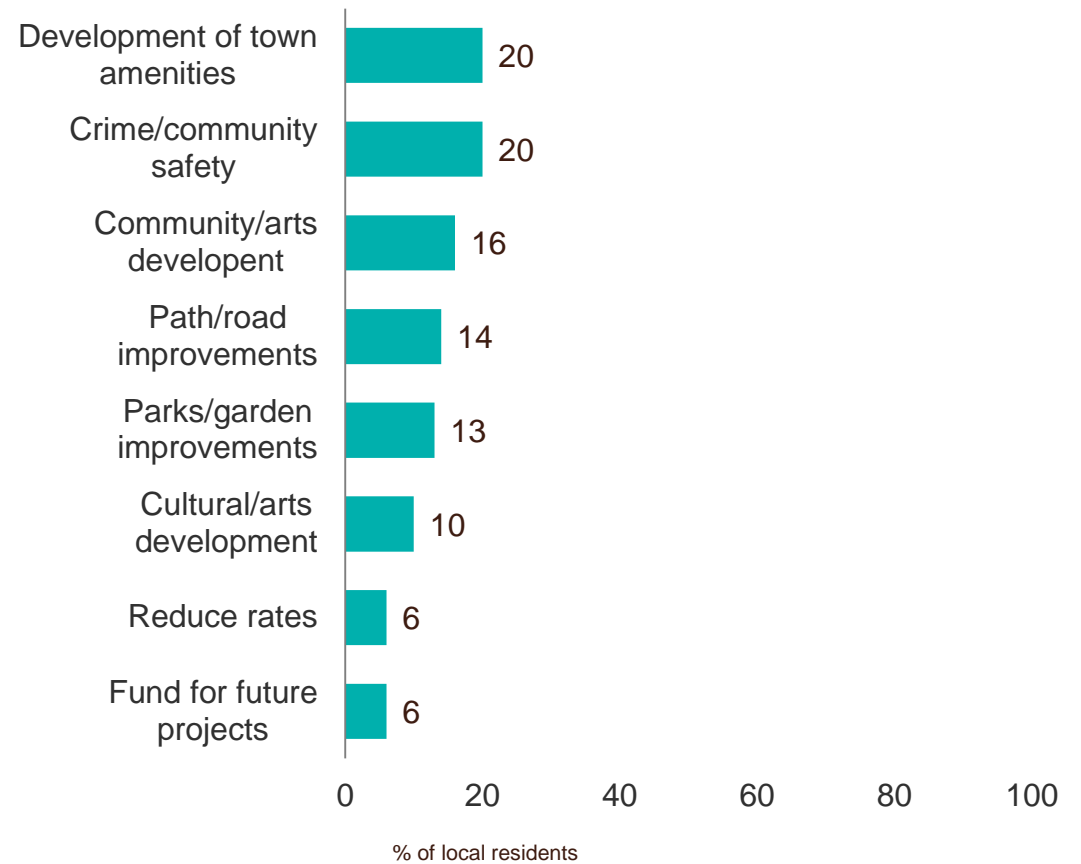


n=170

80% of residents have an opinion on how the \$150 million should be spent by the Town

Other responses not captured in the code-frame opposite include developing the marina, improving entertainment options and facilities, and reducing the costs for various public services.

Allocation of Funds

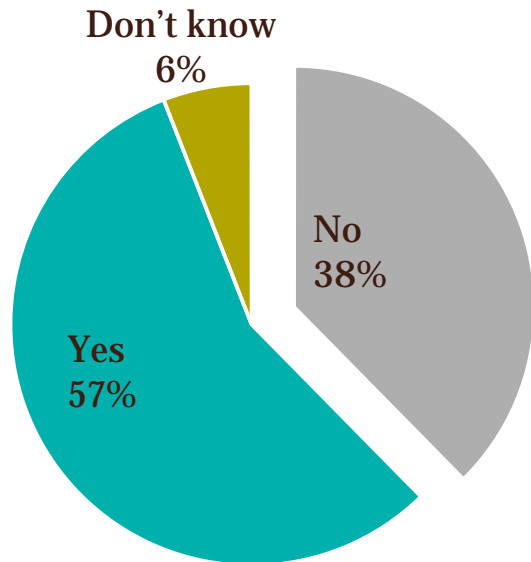


n=200

Communications

Residents *want* to be more informed

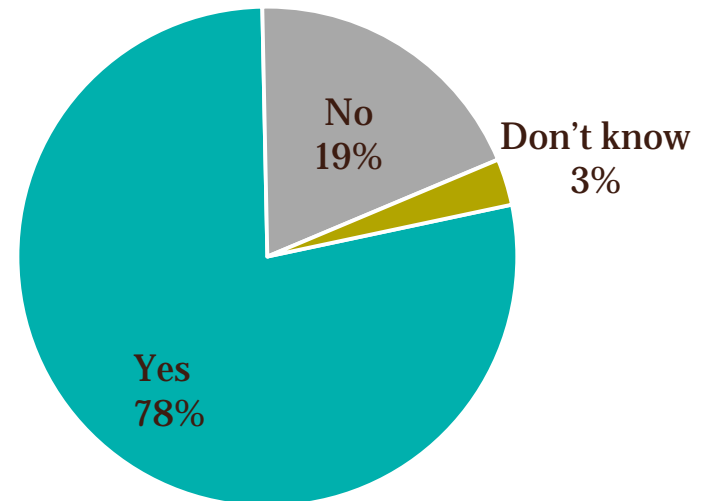
Do you think you have been adequately informed so far?



% of residents

n=200

(Among residents who say they have not been adequately informed)
Do you want to be more informed about the plans for the airport in the future?



% of local residents who say they have not been adequately informed

n=120

Appendix

Appendix

Data Tables: Attached as an Excel file separate to this report



Metrix

Perth | Melbourne

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