



Monday, 22 June 2020

## AFL restarts with the edge over NRL for TV viewers

**The latest data from Roy Morgan shows over 7.4 million Australians aged 14+ (36%) watch AFL matches on TV including AFL pre-season games, AFL Home & Away games, AFL Finals, the AFL Women's competition or the show-piece AFL Grand Final.**

The good news for the AFL, as it restarts its 2020 season, is that significantly more Australians (7.4 million) watch the AFL on TV than watch Sydney-based rival the NRL (6 million), although both have declined in recent years.

A year ago over 7.5 million Australians said they watched the AFL on TV and this number has dropped by over 100,000 for the latest research conducted in the 12 months to March 2020.

The AFL is more popular with both genders than the NRL. There are more than 4.2 million men that watch the AFL on TV compared to 3.6 million that watch the NRL and over 3.2 million women that watch the AFL on TV compared to almost 2.4 million that watch the NRL.

TV viewership of the AFL is strongest amongst older Australians. Over 40% of Australians aged 50+ watch the AFL on TV including 1.97 million aged 50-64 and 1.71 million aged 65+.

In contrast around a third of people aged 35-49 (1.77 million) watch the AFL on TV as do just over a quarter of people aged either 25-34 (1 million) or under 25 (975,000).

### **TV viewership of the AFL Women's competition increases while others decline**

TV viewership of the AFL Women's competition has increased over the past year while there have been declines for pre-season games, Home & Away games, AFL Finals and the AFL Grand Final.

Now 2.78 million people watch the AFL Women's on TV, up from 2.42 million a year ago – an increase of 360,000. There have been increases for both genders and across all age groups.

Interestingly more men (1.64 million) than women (1.14 million) now watch the AFL Women's on TV – the competition is most popular for people aged 50-64 – watched by over 750,000.

The largest increase in TV viewership of AFL Women's from a year ago is for those aged 35-49, up by over 170,000 (+32%) to 726,000.

This new data comes from Roy Morgan Single Source survey, Australia's most comprehensive consumer survey, derived from in-depth interviews with over 50,000 Australians each year.

The rise in TV viewership of the AFL Women's is perhaps not surprising given the significant expansion of the competition in recent years with six clubs entering the competition in 2019 and 2020. These clubs include the last two Premiers in the AFL Men's competition Richmond and West Coast as well as Geelong, Gold Coast, North Melbourne, and St. Kilda.

### **Industry Communications Director Julian McCrann says the resumption of the AFL season in recent weeks has provided 7.4 million Australians with some live sport to enjoy:**

*"The AFL's return to competition in early June has provided a degree of normality for Australians amidst the COVID-19 pandemic after the season was suspended for 12 weeks.*

*"Over a third of Australians (36%) watch the AFL in some form on TV giving the competition the edge over its great rival the NRL watched by 29% of Australians. The most popular AFL viewing experience is the AFL Grand Final watched by over 6.2 million (30%) and this is closely followed by the AFL Home & Away games watched by 5.8 million (28%).*

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“Unfortunately, the AFL Women’s competition will not be returning in 2020 with the season ending prematurely prior to the Preliminary Finals as the COVID-19 pandemic struck in mid-March. The AFL Women’s competition is watched by 2.78 million Australians and is the only form of AFL competition to increase its TV viewership compared to a year ago.

“In a time when every investment decision is closely analysed to determine where scarce dollars should be directed the success of AFL Women’s in growing TV viewership over the last year should not be under-estimated. Other AFL competitions, as well as [rival sporting codes such as the NRL](#), have experienced declines in TV viewership compared to a year ago and the outperformance by the AFL Women’s competition suggests there is further growth to come for the league formed less than four years ago.”

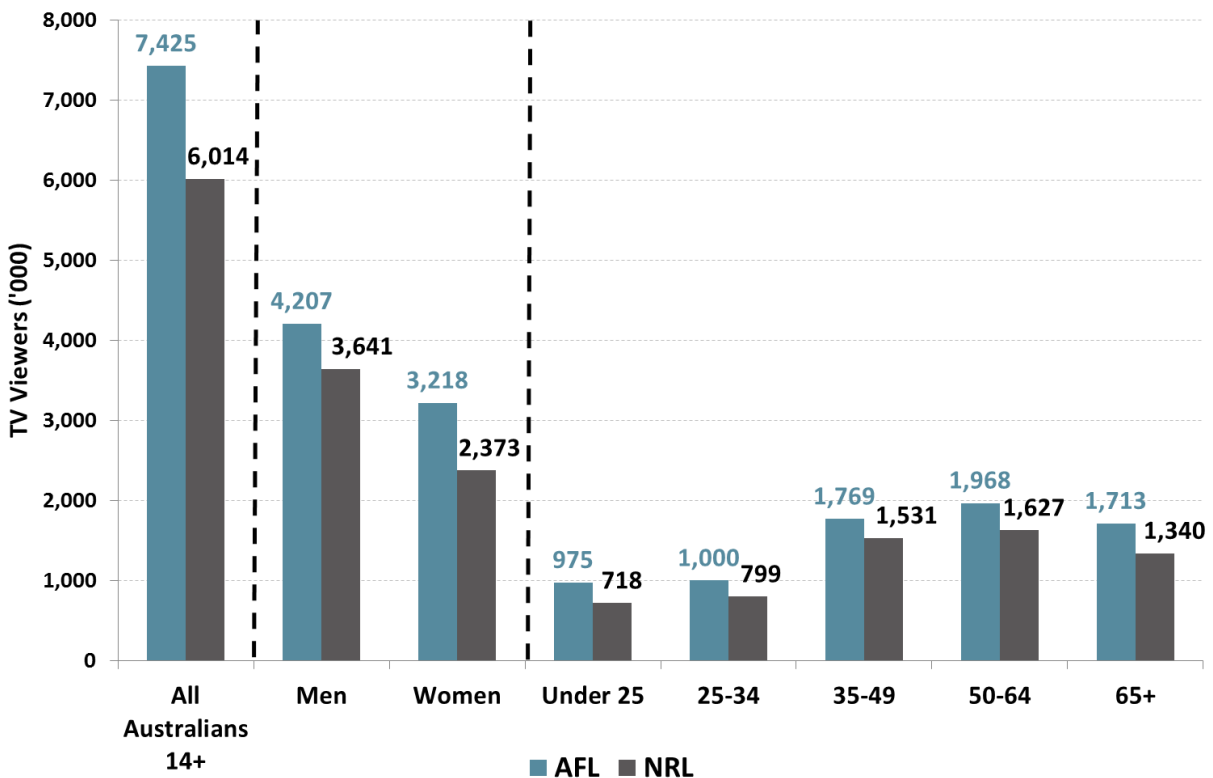
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**For comments or more information about Roy Morgan’s AFL Supporter profiles and other Sporting profiles data, please contact:**

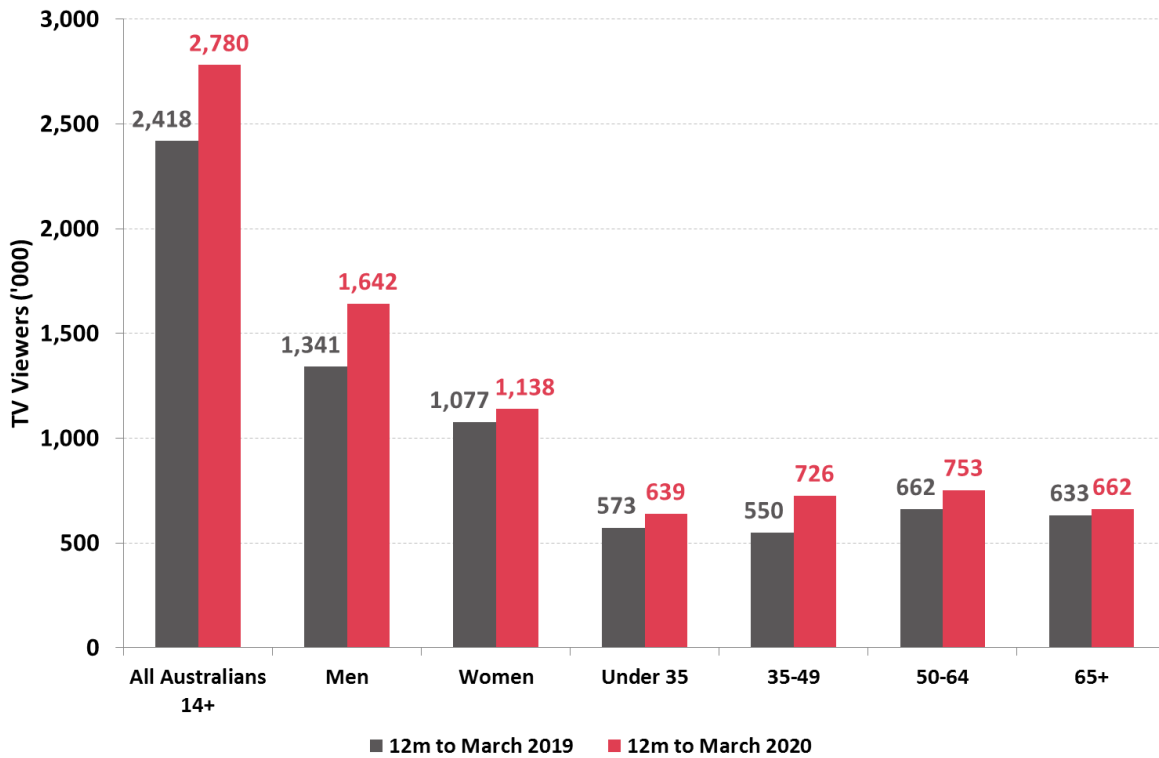
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**TV Viewership of the AFL vs. NRL: 2020**



**Source:** Roy Morgan Single Source, 12 months to March 2020, n=13,208. **Base:** Australians 14+.

**TV Viewership of AFL Women's: 2019 cf. 2020**



**Source:** Roy Morgan Single Source, 12 months to March 2019, n=14,722 and 12 months to March 2020, n=13,208.  
**Base:** Australians 14+.

**About Roy Morgan**

Roy Morgan is Australia's largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state, as well as in the U.S. and U.K. A full-service research organisation, Roy Morgan has over 75 years' experience collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

**Margin of Error**

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2