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How do AFL supporters really feel about Aboriginal culture?

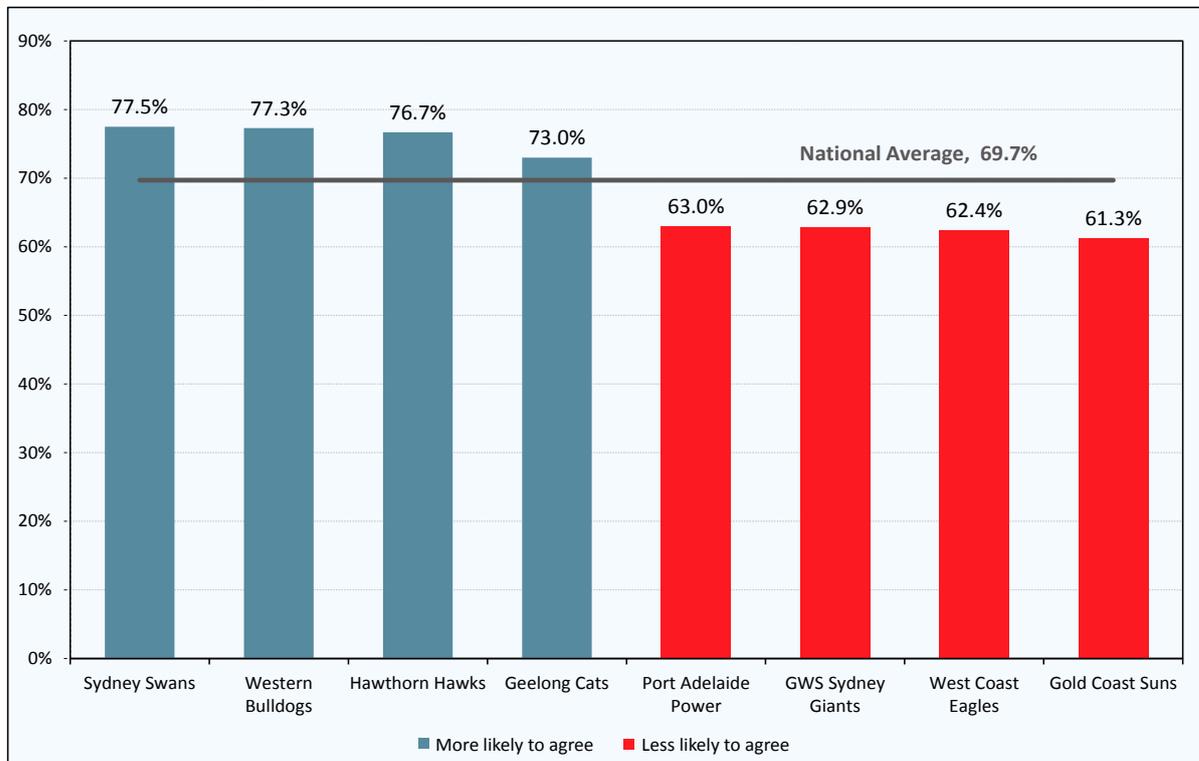
This week is National Reconciliation Week, a time to reflect on the relationship between the wider Australian community and the country's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. While the vast majority of the population 14+ believe that Aboriginal culture is an essential component of Australian society, recent (and by no means isolated) incidents in the AFL are an ugly reminder that racism towards indigenous Australians still exists. But are these incidents representative of how the typical AFL fan feels about Aboriginal culture?

The latest findings from Roy Morgan Research indicate that the answer to this question is a resounding no. In fact, 71.0% of Australia's 7,611,000 AFL supporters believe Aboriginal culture is important — slightly above the national average of 69.7%.

For most AFL teams, this tends to be the case, with around seven out of every 10 of their supporters being supportive of indigenous culture (and, one would assume, indigenous footballers). However, fans of certain teams stand out.

The AFL supporters most likely to agree with the statement 'Aboriginal culture is an essential component of Australian society' are those of the Sydney Swans (77.5%), Hawthorn Hawks (76.7%), Geelong Cats (73.0%) and — despite a fan's racist rant against Melbourne's Neville Jetta earlier this month — Western Bulldogs (77.3%).

AFL supporters most (and less) likely to agree 'Aboriginal culture is an essential component of Australian society'



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia), January 2013-December 2013, n=7,472. **Base:** Australians 14+ who support an AFL team

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Curiously, supporters of the newer teams, the Gold Coast Suns (61.3%) and the Greater Western Sydney Giants (62.9%), are slightly less likely than most other teams' supporters to agree with the statement. Supporters of Port Adelaide Power (63.0%) and West Coast Eagles (62.4%) also recorded marginally below-average agreement rates.

Even more baffling is the fact that paid-up members (as opposed to regular fans) of AFL teams are noticeably less likely to value Aboriginal culture. Indeed, Sydney Swans is the only team whose financial members are more likely than the average Aussie to agree with the statement; those of the other teams are consistently less likely. (Tellingly, the latest racist attack on Adam Goodes was reportedly made by a financial member of Essendon, who has since had his membership suspended).

Norman Morris, Industry Communications Director, Roy Morgan Research, says:

"Recent reports of racially-motivated insults directed at indigenous footballers Adam Goodes and Neville Jetta have once again put the AFL in the spotlight for all the wrong reasons. Fortunately, our data indicates that the majority of footy supporters believe Aboriginal culture is an essential part of our society and not something to be jeered at.

"Sydney Swans supporters are significantly more likely than the average Aussie (and other AFL fans) to consider Aboriginal culture essential, which is no surprise considering how essential indigenous players Adam Goodes, Buddy Franklin and Lewis Jetta are to their team!

"Of course, racist outbursts by rogue fans are not limited to the AFL (the Spanish Primera Liga springs to mind), but as long as they persist, Aussie Rules will be subject to public and media scrutiny. Measures to combat such behaviour and raise awareness, such as banning offending members from matches, encouraging public discussion about the issue and holding an annual Indigenous Round, are certainly steps in the right direction.

"Who knows? Perhaps when we run this data in a few years' time, an even higher proportion of supporters (and Australians in general) will have come to value our country's rich indigenous culture, and these incidents will be no more..."

For comments or more information please contact:

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Related research findings

View our extensive range of [AFL Supporter Profiles](#), as well as our [AFL Spectator Profile](#) and our report on [Government & Societal Attitudes: 'Aboriginal culture is an essential component of Australian society'](#). These profiles provide a broad understanding of the target audience, in terms of demographics, attitudes, activities and media usage in Australia.

About Roy Morgan Research

Roy Morgan Research is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state of Australia, as well as in New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan Research has over 70 years' experience in collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

In Australia, Roy Morgan Research is considered to be the authoritative source of information on financial behaviour, readership, voting intentions and consumer confidence. Roy Morgan Research is a specialist in recontact customised surveys which provide invaluable and effective qualitative and quantitative information regarding customers and target markets.

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%
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
7,500	±1.1	±1.0	±0.7	±0.5
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2