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Tuesday, 24 November 2015

More girls now playing soccer than netball

Over the last 12 months, soccer has overtaken swimming as the most popular sporting activity among Australian kids, with one in two children aged 6-13 now playing the Beautiful Game. Furthermore, the latest findings from the Roy Morgan Research Young Australians Survey reveal that, for the first time, more girls are now playing soccer than netball.

Back in June 2014, 50% of Aussie kids (or 1,213,000 children) reported going swimming, ahead of 47% (1,136,000) who said they played soccer. Since then, soccer has gained an extra 108,000 young players, to hit a 50% participation rate (1,244,000); while swimming participation has fallen by 32,000 kids and now sits at 48%.

While more Aussie kids are also taking part in athletics, cricket, netball and Australian Rules football than they were 12 months ago, the increases for these sports are negligible when compared with the boom in soccer participation.

Ten most popular sports among Australian children 6-13

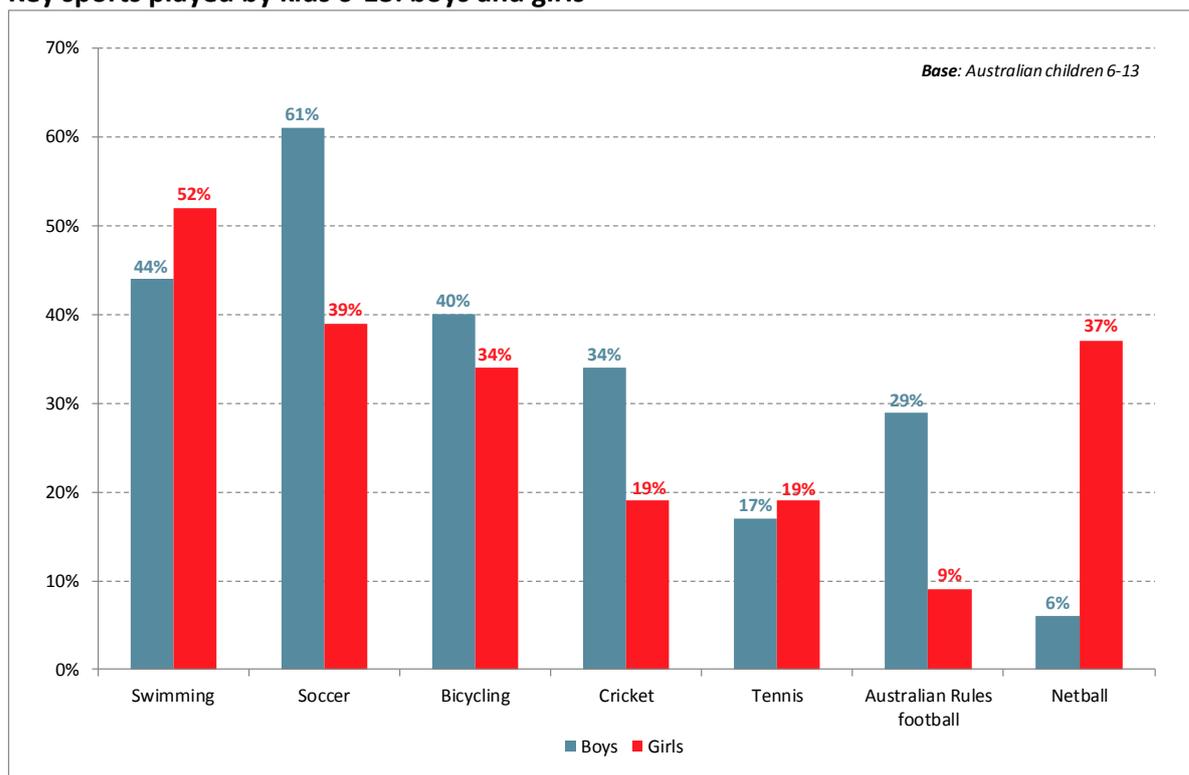
Kids 6-13		
	%	('000)
Soccer	50%	1244
Swimming	48%	1181
Bicycling	37%	916
Athletics/Track	32%	797
Basketball	31%	760
Dancing	30%	736
Cricket	26%	651
Netball	21%	514
Australian Rules Football	19%	474
Gymnastics	18%	444

Source: Roy Morgan Young Australians Survey, July 2014 – June 2015 (n=2,622). **Base:** Australian children aged 6-13

But soccer's rise is not simply the result of more boys playing it: it is becoming increasingly popular with girls as well. So much so, in fact, that a higher proportion of Australian girls (39%) now play soccer than netball (37%), a sport traditionally associated with girls.

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Key sports played by kids 6-13: boys and girls



Source: Roy Morgan Young Australians Survey, July 2014 – June 2015 (n=2,622). **Base:** Australian children aged 6-13

Hugh Amoyal, Deputy CEO, Roy Morgan Research, says:

“Despite the fact that the average time spent by Australian children playing sport each week has declined as they spend more time on the internet, it is encouraging to see that soccer participation has increased so substantially year on year for boys and girls.

“Roy Morgan Research data shows that team sports have a positive effect on the mental health of adults who play them, so it makes sense that children would experience the same benefits. The social bonding that comes from being part of a team and the endorphin rush arising from such a physical sport are not limited to any particular age, after all.

“The rise in participation among Australian girls is particularly interesting, with more girls now playing soccer than the traditionally female-oriented sport of netball. Whether this is due to the ‘Matildas effect’, changing Physical Education programs in Australian schools, or a mixture of both is yet to be determined, but it is a step towards a more gender-balanced approach to sport.

“For sporting organisations and educators seeking further insights into the sporting habits of Aussie kids, the Young Australians Survey from Roy Morgan Research is an ideal starting point, containing comprehensive data on the leisure activities of children aged 6-13, and how they are evolving.”

For comments or more information about Roy Morgan Research’s sports and Young Australians data, please contact:

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Related research findings

Roy Morgan's Young Australians Survey is the largest continuous survey of this important market, with children recruited from households of existing Roy Morgan [Single Source](#) respondents. [Read more about this survey.](#)

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 Indonesia, 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.

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

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