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Friday, 18 September 2015

Marks for marques: new car intention at AFL clubs

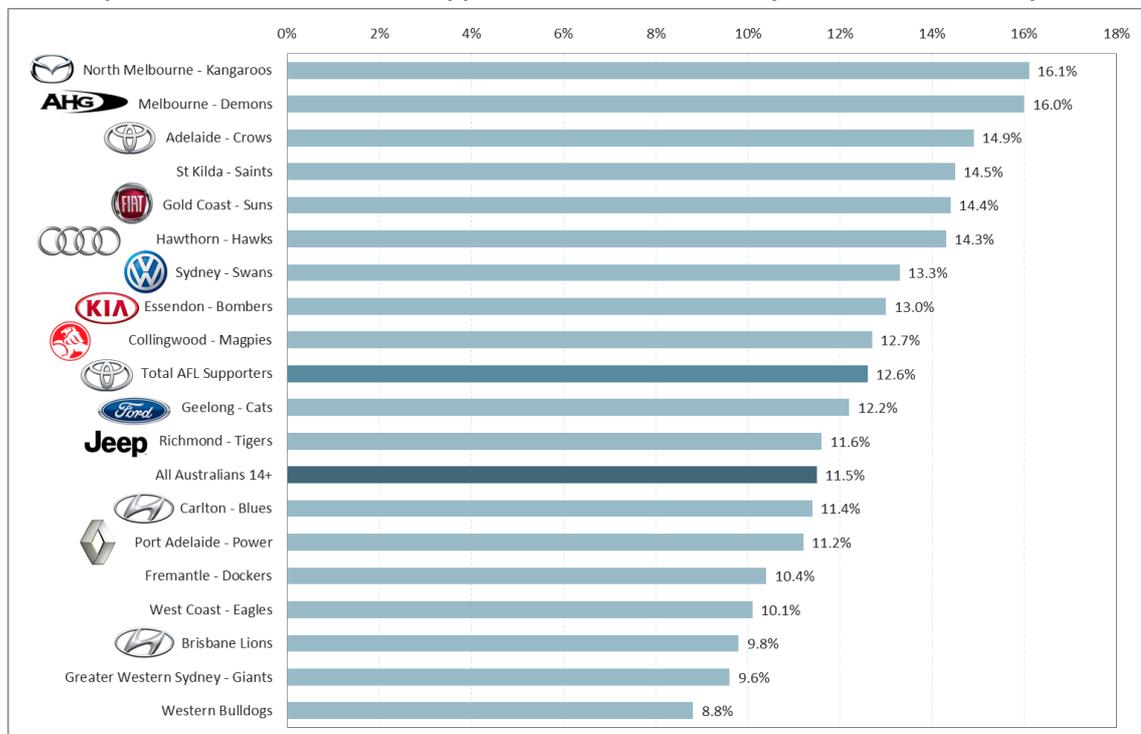
With Hawthorn’s million-dollar-a-year deal with Audi inked, only five AFL teams now don’t have a car sponsor—including the two that topped the ladder and another whose supporters are among the most likely to intend to buy a new car, Roy Morgan Research shows.

Whether the deal includes signage at matches, logos on jerseys and shorts, or cashbacks, extended warranties and bonus accessories on new cars for club members, auto brands have long seen the value in sponsoring an AFL club—and for good reason. Almost 7.7 million Australians 14+ support an AFL team, and supporters are around 10% more likely than the average to intend to buy a new car in the next four years, consumer research conducted by Roy Morgan in the year to June 2015 shows. Around 1 in 8 of all AFL team supporters (12.6%) intend to buy a new car some time before 2019, compared with 11.5% of all Australians 14+.

This year, Mazda has cause to be doubly pleased: after a hard fought win over the Tigers, the North Melbourne Kangaroos are in the semi-finals this weekend, and their fans are the most likely to be in the market for a new car. Almost 1 in 6 Kangaroos supporters (16.1%) intend to buy a new car in the next four years, a rate 40% above the norm.

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Proportion of each AFL team supporters who intend to buy a new car in next 4 years



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia), July 2014 - June 2015, n = 51,371 Australians 14+

Playing North Melbourne in the semi-finals this week are the Volkswagen sponsored Sydney Swans. And with 13.3% of Swans massive supporter base in the market for a new car in the next four years—that's 160,000 potential buyers, almost twice as many as any other club.

As well as sponsoring the AFL Premiership season overall, Toyota has also been long term sponsor of semi-finalists the Adelaide Crows; whose supporters are also among the most likely to intend to buy a new car in the next four years (14.9%). They'll be up against Hawthorn Hawks, which announced a three-year deal with Audi in June worth \$1 million per annum. In the 12 months until the deal was announced, 14.3% of Hawks supporters said they are in the market for a new car – around 25% above the national average.

Against the odds, neither of the teams that topped the regular season (and subsequently won their qualifying final) is currently sponsored by a national auto brand, although Fremantle is sponsored at a state level by DVG Hyundai in Perth.

Both are near the bottom of the ladder when it comes to the car-buying intention of their supporters, with around 1 in 10 supporters of Fremantle (10.4%) or West Coast (10.1%) currently in the market for a new car. This lower car buying intention makes some sense, with the majority of these supporters to be found in WA. At a state level, overall car buying intentions in WA have softened over the last few years – potentially as a result of the end of the mining boom.

However, despite this lower rate of purchase intention, there is enough support for both these clubs that the volume of potential buyers exceeds those of the Gold Coast Suns, Richmond Tigers or Port Adelaide Power—sponsored by Fiat, Jeep and Renault respectively.

But it's perhaps the St Kilda Saints who are crying out loudest for a car sponsor now that Hawthorn has Audi (and if you include the Melbourne Demons' sponsorship by auto retailer AHG), St Kilda is the only club without a car sponsor that can offer up supporters who are more likely than average to be in the market for a new car (14.5%).

Jordan Pakes, Industry Director — Automotive, Roy Morgan Research, says:

“With more than 45 brands competing for their piece of the 1.1 million new cars sold each year, Australians have literally 100s of models to choose from when it comes to buying a new car. In such a competitive market, brands are forced to look for ways to ensure they stay top of mind with potential buyers and importantly, make sure they are seen where the competition is as well.”

“Sponsorship of an AFL club is an effective way for auto makers to raise or maintain brand awareness amongst the 7.6+ million Australians who support an AFL team. With around 75% of these supporters either always or occasionally watching AFL on TV, the AFL and its various clubs are able to command big dollars from sponsors.”

“For auto brands assessing existing sponsorships or looking to sponsor one of the few remaining clubs, understanding the supporter base and their car buying preferences is crucial. Roy Morgan's ongoing Single Source research means we can readily pinpoint which collaborations are (or could be) the best fit, and monitor the effects of the sponsorship on fans' purchase intentions, consideration sets and opinions over time.”

“Neither of the two most successful AFL teams in 2015 have a national car sponsor on board. Despite marginally lower car buying intention incidence, the Dockers and Eagles still boast 48,000 and the 67,000 supporters respectively who are currently in the market for the

new car. Our data shows that supporters of either club are more inclined to be looking to buy a Nissan, which currently sponsors SuperCoach but is not directly involved with an individual AFL team.”

To learn more about Roy Morgan’s automotive purchase intention or sports data, contact:

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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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