

Thursday, 16 August 2018

AFL Premierships boost support for Tigers, Dogs & Hawks

The Sydney Swans have again topped the annual Roy Morgan AFL supporter ladder – although down 30,000 supporters (-2.5%) from a year ago and now with 1.174 million supporters according to the 2018 annual Roy Morgan AFL club supporters survey.

Several clubs increased their support base over the last year including the three most recent AFL Premiership winners the Western Bulldogs, Richmond and Hawthorn.

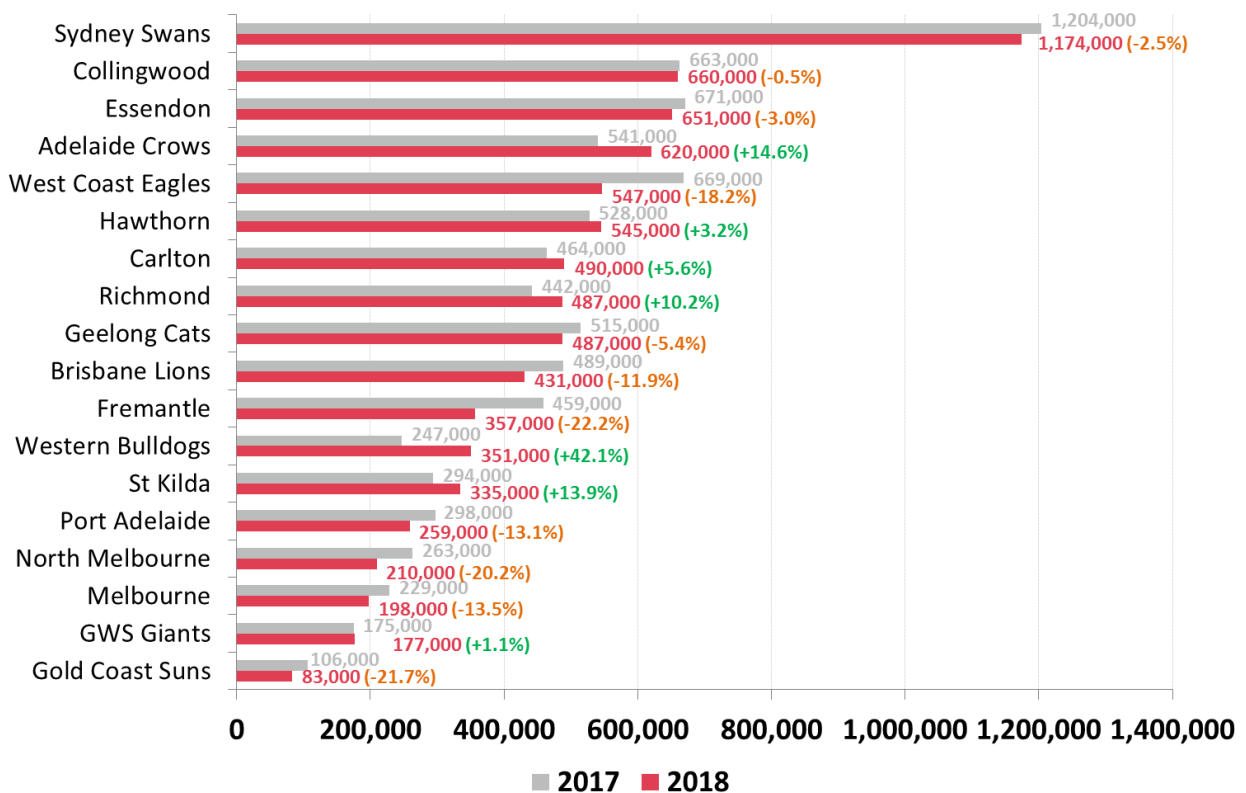
The Western Bulldogs had the biggest increase lifting their support base by a huge 104,000 (+42.1%) to 351,000 after their drought-breaking 2016 Premiership. This was the first annual Roy Morgan AFL club supporter survey conducted entirely after the Bulldogs Premiership victory.

Reigning AFL Premiers Richmond also saw a significant jump in support up by 45,000 (+10.2%) to an enlarged supporter base of 487,000 while neighbouring club Hawthorn, three-time Premiers between 2013-2015, saw support increase by 17,000 (+3.2%) to 545,000 to become the third most supported Victorian club.

After briefly surrendering their most supported Victorian club mantle last year Collingwood is again the most widely supported Victorian club with 660,000 supporters now just ahead of Essendon with 651,000 supporters. Despite holding the two top supporter slots, both these 'Big 4' power clubs saw a slight decline in support over the last year.

Other clubs to increase their support included defeated 2017 Grand Finalists Adelaide now with 620,000 supporters up by 79,000 (+14.6%), newcomers the GWS Giants up by 2,000 (+1.1%) to 177,000 and Carlton up by 26,000 (+5.6%) to 490,000 despite a disappointing 2018 season.

AFL Club Supporter Ladder 2018



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source Australia, July 2016 – June 2017, n=14,544 and July 2017 – June 2018 n=14,836. **Base:** Australians 14+.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Melbourne, Port Adelaide & Richmond best at converting members to supporters

Although it is no surprise to see the traditionally well-supported clubs such as the Sydney Swans, Collingwood, Essendon, Adelaide and West Coast at the top of the overall AFL club supporter ladder, a key metric for AFL clubs is their ability to convert their latent support into financial members that directly benefit the clubs.

The AFL recently announced that for the first time over [1 million Australians had taken out memberships of AFL clubs](#) equal to over 1-in-25 Australians of all ages. The table below ranks clubs based on how effective they are at converting their supporters into financial members based on dividing the (official AFL club memberships divided by Roy Morgan supporter numbers) x 100.

On this important metric the long-suffering supporters of the Melbourne Football Club, who now have the longest Premiership drought of all current clubs, come out on top. The Melbourne Football Club converts a league-high 22.4% of supporters to members just ahead of 2004 AFL Premiers Port Adelaide with a conversion rate of 21%.

Richmond's staggering 2018 membership of over 100,000 – the first time any AFL club has signed up a six-figure membership – means the reigning Premiers now have the league's third best supporter to membership conversion rate of 20.7% well ahead of the other traditional 'Big 4' clubs.

	<u>% of supporters who are members</u>	<u>Roy Morgan Supporter Numbers</u>	<u>Official 2018 AFL Club Memberships*</u>
Melbourne Demons	22.4%	198,000	44,275
Port Adelaide Power	21.0%	259,000	54,386
Richmond Tigers	20.7%	487,000	100,726
North Melbourne Kangaroos	19.4%	210,000	40,789
Fremantle Dockers	15.6%	357,000	55,639
Hawthorn Hawks	14.7%	545,000	80,302
West Coast Eagles	14.7%	547,000	80,290
Gold Coast Suns	14.6%	83,000	12,108
GWS Giants	14.3%	177,000	25,243
St. Kilda Saints	13.8%	335,000	46,301
Geelong Cats	13.1%	487,000	63,818
Western Bulldogs	12.3%	351,000	43,246
Essendon Bombers	12.2%	651,000	79,319
Collingwood Magpies	11.4%	660,000	75,507
Carlton Blues	11.4%	490,000	56,005
Adelaide Crows	10.4%	620,000	64,739
Brisbane Lions	5.8%	431,000	24,867
Sydney Swans	5.2%	1,174,000	60,934
BY STATE#			
Victoria	20.1%	3,139,000	630,288
South Australia	15.0%	792,000	119,125
Western Australia	13.5%	1,004,000	135,929
New South Wales & ACT	5.2%	1,657,000	86,177
Queensland	4.8%	770,000	36,975
Tasmania & NT	Nt tn/a	259,000	n/a
TOTAL	13.2%	7,621,000	1,008,494

#State membership numbers are split by club's location (home state). *Full AFL Membership Figures available at <http://www.afl.com.au/news/2018-08-02/thanks-a-million-new-membership-benchmark>.

Michele Levine, CEO, Roy Morgan, says the recent success of the Western Bulldogs, Richmond and Hawthorn shows the key to growing a supporter base is success:

“The Sydney Swans are again Australia’s most widely supported AFL club for the 14th straight year now with 1.17 million supporters, over half-a-million supporters ahead of the two leading Victorian clubs Collingwood with 660,000 supporters and Essendon with 651,000 supporters.

“However it is the recent success of the Western Bulldogs, Richmond and Hawthorn that highlights the importance of on-field performance to growing the supporter base in the stands.

“The Western Bulldogs drought-breaking Premiership in 2016 has resulted in a surge of support for the club now at 351,000 and up a stunning 42.1% from a year ago while reigning Premiers Richmond increased their support by 10.2% to 487,000.

“The most successful club of the last decade, Hawthorn, which has won four Premierships in the last ten AFL seasons – 2008, 2013, 2014 & 2015, also increased their support this year up by 3.2% to 545,000 and are the now the third most support Victorian AFL club.

“The standout clubs for increasing support outside Victoria were last year’s defeated Grand Finalists the Adelaide Crows who increased support by 14.6% to 620,000 and last year’s defeated Preliminary Finalists the GWS Giants up by 1.1% to 177,000 supporters.

“In terms of passion – Victoria remains the beating heart of the AFL with over 3 million supporters buying around 630,000 AFL club memberships in 2018 – a conversion rate of 20.1% of supporters to members ahead of South Australia (15% of supporters become members) and Western Australia (13.5%).

“The high conversion rates of supporters to members underpin the AFL’s strong attendances. In 2018 there are 7,621,000 supporters of an AFL club around Australia and with two rounds of the home & away season to go AFL attendance so far sits at a total of 6,270,730.

“These aggregate attendance figures suggest the AFL is well on track to break the all-time home & away attendance record set last year of 6,734,062.”

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

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Related research findings

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Compiled with data from Roy Morgan’s Single Source survey (the largest of its kind in the world, with 50,000 respondents p.a), these ready-made profiles provide a broad understanding of the target audience, in terms of demographics, attitudes, activities and media usage in Australia.

About Roy Morgan

Roy Morgan is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state of Australia, as well as in the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan 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%
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2