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AFL support increases for 2019 Premiers Richmond as well as 2019 finalists Collingwood, Brisbane Lions and Geelong

The Sydney Swans have again topped the annual Roy Morgan AFL supporter ladder – although down 48,000 supporters (-4.4%) from a year ago and now with 1.052 million supporters according to the 2020 annual Roy Morgan AFL club supporters survey.

Several clubs increased their support over the last year led by 2019 Premiers **Richmond**, 2019 Preliminary Finalists **Collingwood** and **Geelong**, and the big improver in 2019 the **Brisbane Lions**.

Surprise packet the **Brisbane Lions**, who are now contending for this year's Premiership to be contested at their home ground the Gabba, had the largest increase over the last year for their support base by a massive 143,000 (+27.8%) to 658,000 – and are now the fourth most widely supported club.

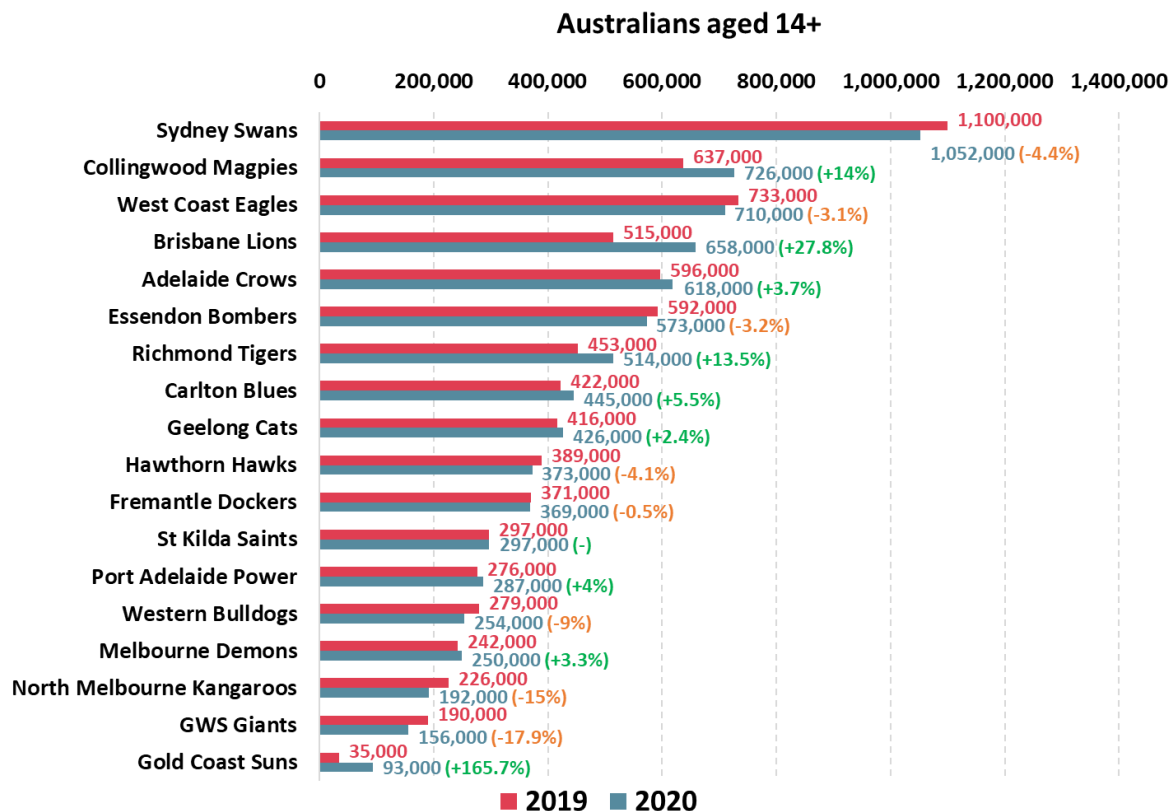
Collingwood is again Victoria's most widely supported club, and in second place overall, with a supporter base of 726,000, up 89,000 (+14%) on a year ago following their agonising Preliminary Final loss in 2019 – the Pies lost out on a place in the Grand Final after a 4pt loss to the GWS Giants.

Overall support and TV viewership of the AFL increases to above 7.7 million in 2020

In a tough year, with the COVID-19 pandemic forcing the AFL to conduct the majority of its season away from the football heartland of Victoria and the lack of crowds causing a huge revenue hole for the league and clubs, there is good news – overall support for the league has grown on a year ago.

Now 7,703,000 Australians expressed support for an AFL club, up 262,000 (+3.5%) on a year ago with a slightly larger number, 7,754,000, up 300,000 (+4%) on a year ago watched an AFL match on TV.

AFL Club Supporter Ladder 2020



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source, July 2018-June 2019, n=14,383 and July 2019-June 2020 n=15,004.
Base: Australians 14+.

Reigning AFL Premiers **Richmond** increased their support base by 61,000 (+13.5%) to 514,000 following their second Premiership in three years while their vanquished Preliminary Final opponents **Geelong** added 10,000 supporters (+2.4%) to 426,000 supporters.

Other widely supported clubs include 2018 Premiers the **West Coast Eagles** with 710,000 supporters in third place overall, the **Adelaide Crows** with 618,000 supporters in fifth overall and **Essendon** with 573,000 supporters and the second most widely supported Victorian club.

There were four other clubs that managed to increase their support over the last year despite failing to make the finals in 2019 led by 2020 ladder leader **Port Adelaide** with 287,000 supporters, up 11,000 (+4%) on a year ago. Also increasing their support in 2020 were **Carlton** up 23,000 (+5.5%) to 445,000 supporters, **Melbourne** up 8,000 (+3.3%) to 250,000 supporters and the **Gold Coast Suns** up 58,000 (+165.7%) to 93,000 supporters.

The **Gold Coast Suns** have benefited over the last few months as the AFL largely relocated to Queensland to stage games due to the second wave of COVID-19 which has struck Victoria. Just over half of all games contested during the 2020 AFL Season will be staged in Queensland – including the 2020 AFL Grand Final at the Brisbane Cricket Ground – The Gabba – in late October.

Hawthorn, North Melbourne, GWS Giants and Richmond are best at converting supporters

On this important metric it is the supporters of **Hawthorn** who have proven their loyalty in season 2020 with over 20% of their supporters becoming members, closely followed by **North Melbourne**. The two clubs have had divergent fortunes over the last decade with the **Hawks** being the most successful club of the 2010s winning three Premierships (2013-15) while the **Kangaroos** only made the finals four times.

Despite many members not being able to attend matches during 2020 – including all Victorian-based members – [AFL club memberships have remained remarkably strong in 2020 with over 990,000](#) Australians taking out memberships. 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.

	<u>% of supporters who are members</u>	<u>Roy Morgan Supporter Numbers</u>	<u>Official 2020 AFL Club Memberships*</u>
Hawthorn Hawks	20.5%	373,000	76,343
North Melbourne Kangaroos	20.1%	192,000	38,667
GWS Giants	19.7%	156,000	30,841
Richmond Tigers	19.5%	514,000	100,420
Gold Coast Suns	17.6%	93,000	16,236
St. Kilda Saints	16.3%	297,000	48,588
Port Adelaide Power	16.3%	287,000	46,820
Melbourne Demons	16.2%	250,000	40,571
Western Bulldogs	15.3%	254,000	38,876
Carlton Blues	15.1%	445,000	67,035
West Coast Eagles	14.2%	710,000	100,776
Geelong Cats	14.1%	426,000	60,066
Fremantle Dockers	14.0%	369,000	51,577
Essendon Bombers	11.6%	573,000	66,686
Collingwood Magpies	10.6%	726,000	76,862
Adelaide Crows	8.9%	618,000	54,891
Sydney Swans	4.6%	1,052,000	48,322
Brisbane Lions	4.4%	658,000	29,277
TOTAL	12.9%	7,703,000	992,854

*Full AFL Membership Figures available at:

<https://www.afl.com.au/news/2019-08-06/thanks-a-million-afl-club-memberships-hit-alltime-record>

Last year's Grand Final opponents also feature highly with the **GWS Giants** converting 19.7% of their supporters just ahead of 2019 Premiers **Richmond** (19.5%) while the league's second newest club the **Gold Coast Suns** is doing a good job with its small supporter base converting 17.6% into members.

Julian McCrann, Industry Communications Director, Roy Morgan, says 2020 has been a year like no other for the AFL with the Grand Final set to be played outside Victoria for the first time but the good news is that support for the AFL has increased despite the challenges:

"Over 7.7 million Australians now support an AFL club and 7.75 million watched an AFL match on TV in the last year – equivalent to 37% of all Australians aged 14+.

"The increases in support and TV viewers for the AFL are an impressive achievement in a year that has been disrupted and led to the Grand Final being shifted to 'The Gabba' in Brisbane, game lengths being shortened and clubs relocated around the country – but mainly to Queensland – to enable the season to go on.

*"The biggest winners in terms of increasing their support are clubs that had successful seasons in 2019 including reigning Premiers **Richmond** who increased their support by 61,000 to 514,000 and are the third most widely supported club in Victoria. The **Tigers** are well placed to repeat their heroics from a year ago and sit comfortably near the top of the ladder again approaching finals.*

*"Also building on a successful challenge in 2019 were Preliminary Finalists **Collingwood** with 726,000 supporters – up 89,000 on a year ago, and **Geelong** with 426,000 supporters (up 10,000). **Geelong** is one of the favourites to win this year's Flag which would be its first for nearly a decade since 2011.*

*"Perhaps the most important trend seen over the last year is the increasing support for the two Queensland clubs. The **Brisbane Lions** have lifted their support by a massive 143,000 on a year ago to 658,000 following a second-place ladder finish in 2019 and the improving **Gold Coast Suns** have more than doubled their supporter base to 93,000.*

"The rise in support for the Queensland AFL clubs follows improving performances on the field for both teams and coincides with an unprecedented relocation of the competition to the State. Over 80 AFL games will be played in Queensland this year which has given the code a level of exposure in the State its never had before.

"The AFL will be hoping the more than 50 extra games played in Queensland this year – including the AFL Grand Final – will provide a long-lasting boost to the sport in a State often regarded as a developing market for the sport. On that score only time will tell."

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

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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 75 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