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## True commitment or fair-weather fandom: which AFL teams have the most engaged supporters?

With the 2017 AFL season due to kick off this Thursday, the latest findings from Roy Morgan Research reveal which team's supporters tend to tune into match broadcasts on TV, which are most likely to attend an AFL match in person, and which display less commitment to viewing and/or watching their team in action.

In 2016, just over 6.2 million Australians aged 14+ (or 31.5% of the population) reported that they 'almost always or occasionally watch' **regular season** AFL on TV. Among AFL supporters this figure is obviously much higher, peaking with fans of North Melbourne Kangaroos (77.5%) and Port Adelaide Power (77.1%). Least likely to watch regular-season matches are supporters of the Brisbane Lions (46.9%) and Sydney Swans (52.9%).

Of course, the **Grand Final** attracts more TV viewers than any other AFL broadcast, with 6.7 million Aussies (33.8% of the population) tuning in. This puts it ahead of One Day International Cricket (32.6%), the Australian Open Tennis (31.9%), Test match cricket (31.8%) and the NRL State of Origin (30.4%). (Only the less frequent Olympics (45.6%) and the Commonwealth Games (36.1%) are more popular.)

**Overall**, Port Adelaide Power supporters are the *most* likely to watch AFL broadcasts of any kind, with nearly nine in every 10 of them watching matches almost always or occasionally throughout the year (more than double the population average of 39.2%).

### Watching AFL on TV: the league's five most—and five least—engaged supporters by team

Teams with HIGHEST % of supporters who watch AFL on TV	Teams with LOWEST % of supporters who watch AFL on TV
Port Adelaide Power: 87.7%	Richmond Tigers: 73.1%
North Melbourne Kangaroos: 87.1%	Western Bulldogs: 71.9%
West Coast Eagles: 82.8%	Sydney Swans: 68.7%
Adelaide Crows: 82.0%	Gold Coast Suns: 68.1%
Essendon Bombers: 81.8%	Brisbane Lions: 60.8%

**Source:** Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia), January-December 2016 (n=14,330). Base: Australians 14+

Brisbane Lions supporters are *least* likely to view any AFL TV broadcasts (60.8%): in fact, more of them (70.6%) watch NRL on TV than AFL.

### *Women's AFL*

While it's too early to say whether any team's supporters are especially dedicated to tuning in for the new Women's AFL, Roy Morgan data for February 2017 indicates that 11.5% of Australians—or 2.3 million people—have been watching the women's league on TV—rising to 28.7% of AFL supporters.

### *Match attendance*

A somewhat different pattern emerges among actual match attendees, with supporters of the Melbourne Demons (48.7%) being far more likely than other teams' fans to go to a match. Meanwhile, just as they do for TV, Brisbane Lions supporters (20.5%) bring up the rear!

#### **Attending AFL matches: the league's five most—and five least—engaged supporters by team**

<b>Teams with HIGHEST % of supporters who attend AFL matches</b>	<b>Teams with LOWEST % of supporters who attend AFL matches</b>
Melbourne Demons: 48.7%	Carlton Blues: 29.1%
Richmond Tigers: 38.7%	Collingwood Magpies: 27.8%
GWS Giants: 37.6%	Essendon Bombers: 26.6%
North Melbourne Kangaroos: 37.0%	Sydney Swans: 26.6%
Port Adelaide Power: 36.0%	Brisbane Lions: 20.5%

**Source:** Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia), January-December 2016 (n=14,330). Base: Australians 14+

Curiously, despite their team winning the Grand Final in 2013, 2014 and 2015, Hawthorn Hawks supporters don't rank among those most inclined to attend matches—in fact, their attendance has declined year on year. (Could they simply have got bored of incessant victory?)

As for fans of last year's winners, the Western Bulldogs, their match attendance rate for 2016 put them seventh out of 18 teams' supporters. It will be interesting to see whether their team's recent triumph impacts on future match attendance.

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

*“With the 2017 AFL season almost upon us, it's interesting to compare how engaged different teams' supporters are when it comes to watching the footy on TV and attending matches. Port Adelaide and North Melbourne fans set a high standard: not*

*only are they more likely than other teams' supporters to watch AFL broadcasts, but they are also in the top five for match attendance.*

*"Naturally, AFL supporters outstrip the population average for watching and attending matches, but even then, levels of engagement vary dramatically. For example, three of the five teams with the highest proportion of supporters who attend matches are Victorian, which makes sense, considering that far more matches are held in Victoria than any other state. Conversely, three of the five teams whose supporters are most likely to tune in to TV broadcasts are from states other than Victoria.*

*"Supporters of the two Queensland AFL teams are noteworthy for the fact that more of them watch the NRL on TV than the AFL, as do GWS Giants fans—confirming that the NRL still reigns supreme in these relatively recent AFL states. Sydney Swans supporters are the exception, being fractionally more likely to watch AFL broadcasts than NRL.*

*"Knowing which team's supporters are most likely to watch AFL—whether it's the pre-season series, regular season, finals series or Grand Final—on TV is a useful starting point for brands considering advertising during broadcasts as it provides an initial understanding of their potential audience. From there, Roy Morgan's in-depth consumer data can give them more detailed insights into viewers, which will allow them to tailor and schedule their advertisements for maximum impact."*

**For comments or more information about Roy Morgan Research's sport and TV data, please contact:**

**Roy Morgan Research -- Enquiries**  
Office: +61 (3) 9224 5309  
[askroymorgan.@roymorgan.com](mailto:askroymorgan.@roymorgan.com)

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#### **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.

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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