

Tuesday, 22 September 2020

Brisbane Broncos again on top but 2019 NRL Grand Finalists Sydney Roosters and Canberra Raiders have big increases

The latest data from Roy Morgan shows the total NRL supporter base has grown by 1.2% to over 5.4 million (25.9%) Australians in 2020 as the sport has dealt with the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the last few months.

Throughout the 2020 NRL Season crowds at matches have been limited and two teams, the New Zealand Warriors and the Melbourne Storm, have spent most of the season on the road due to border restrictions and viral outbreaks preventing travel to and from their home bases.

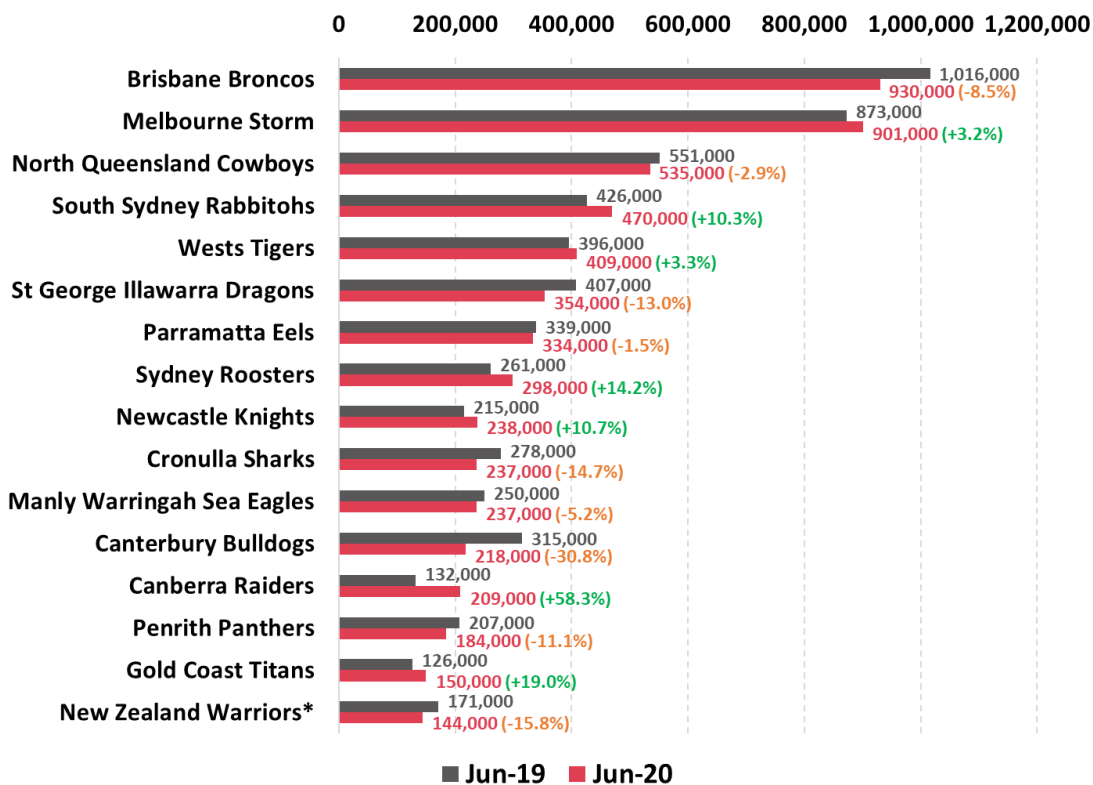
The COVID-19 restrictions on crowd attendances have meant the NRL has been primarily a TV Sport during Season 2020 and the news is good on that front with nearly 6.3 million (29.8%) Australians watching the NRL on TV, up almost 1% on a year ago.

Despite being in last place, and on track for their first Wooden Spoon since joining the competition in 1988, the **Brisbane Broncos** have again topped the annual Roy Morgan NRL club supporter ladder with 930,000 supporters representing a drop of 8.5 per cent on a year ago.

In second place are southern rivals the **Melbourne Storm** on 901,000, an increase of 3.2%, ahead of the **North Queensland Cowboys** in third on 535,000, down 2.9%. The **Broncos** are set to play their rivals the **Cowboys** this week in their last chance to avoid finishing last.

2019 NRL Premiers the **Sydney Roosters** was one of the big winners over the last year with their support increasing 14.2% to 298,000 while support for the runners-up the **Canberra Raiders** was up an even larger 58.3% to 209,000. However, the most widely supported club in the Sydney heartland of Rugby League is the **South Sydney Rabbitohs** who increased their support by 10.3% to 470,000.

NRL Club Supporter Ladder 2020



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source Australia, July 2018-June 2019, n=14,383 & July 2019-June 2020, n=15,007.
Base: Australians 14+. *New Zealand Warriors support only includes Australian-based supporters.

Other clubs to increase their support in 2020 included the **Wests Tigers** with support increasing 3.3% to 409,000, the **Newcastle Knights** up 10.7% to 238,000 and the **Gold Coast Titans** up 19% to 150,000.

Overall, seven NRL clubs increased their support in the year to June 2020 including three clubs based in the NRL heartland of suburban Sydney. Detailed in-depth profiles of [NRL Supporters](#), [Australians who watch NRL on TV](#), [Australians who play Rugby League](#) and [profiles of supporters of all 16 NRL clubs](#) are available on the Roy Morgan Online Store for those keen to learn more about the sport.

These key findings are derived from detailed in-depth interview with over 50,000 Australians each year as part of the Roy Morgan Single Source survey.

Julian McCrann, Industry Communications Director, Roy Morgan, says in a tough year for professional sports the growth in support and TV viewers for the NRL from a year ago indicates the intrinsic value of the sport to many millions of Australians:

“The NRL has confronted huge challenges during 2020 and this week announced 25% of staff would be cut from the organisation as the NRL seeks annual cost savings of \$50 million to the bottom line following the revenue losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The pandemic shortened the season, restricted crowds and led to a renegotiation of the NRL’s TV rights contract mid-season. The good news for the NRL is that despite these hurdles there are now almost 6.3 million Australians watching the NRL on TV, up 1% on a year ago.

“Support for NRL clubs has also increased from a year ago with more than 5.4 million Australians now supporting an NRL club, up 1.2% on a year ago with seven of the NRL’s 16 clubs increasing their support from a year ago.

*“NRL supporter numbers are highly impacted by success on the pitch and the four most successful teams from 2019 all increased their support this year led by 2019 Premiers the **Sydney Roosters** (up 14.2% to 298,000 supporters) and Runners-Up the **Canberra Raiders** who’s support soared 58.3% to 209,000 supporters following their first Grand Final appearance for 25 years since 1994.*

*“Also increasing their support were 2019 finalists the **Melbourne Storm**, up 3.2% to 901,000 supporters, and **South Sydney Rabbitohs** up 10.3% to 470,000 supporters. Both clubs have tasted success in recent years capturing Premierships in 2014 (**Rabbitohs**) and 2017 (**Storm**).*

*“However, despite their worst ever season since entering the competition in 1988, it is again the **Brisbane Broncos** with 930,000 supporters who are again the most widely supported NRL club in the land and second only to the [Sydney Swans in the AFL for Australian sporting clubs](#).*

“Contact Roy Morgan to learn more about what types of supporters each of the 16 NRL clubs are attracting both in the stands and on TV as well as what sets these fans apart from their peers in wider society by drawing on the qualitative and quantitative data gathered by in-depth personal interviews conducted with over 50,000 Australians each year.”

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

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Related research findings

View our extensive range of [Sport profiles and reports](#), including [NRL supporters](#), [AFL supporters](#) and supporters of various NRL clubs including [Brisbane Broncos](#), [Melbourne Storm](#), [North Queensland Cowboys](#), [Wests Tigers](#), [Parramatta Eels](#) and [South Sydney Rabbitohs](#).

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

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