

Friday, 26 March 2021

## Over 2.6 million Australians watch AFLW on TV

On the eve of 2021 AFLW Finals the latest data from Roy Morgan shows over 2.6 million Australians aged 14+ (12.4%) watched AFLW matches on TV in the year to December 2020. This represented a small increase of 4,000 (+0.2%) on a year earlier but was down on the record high viewership reached during 2020.

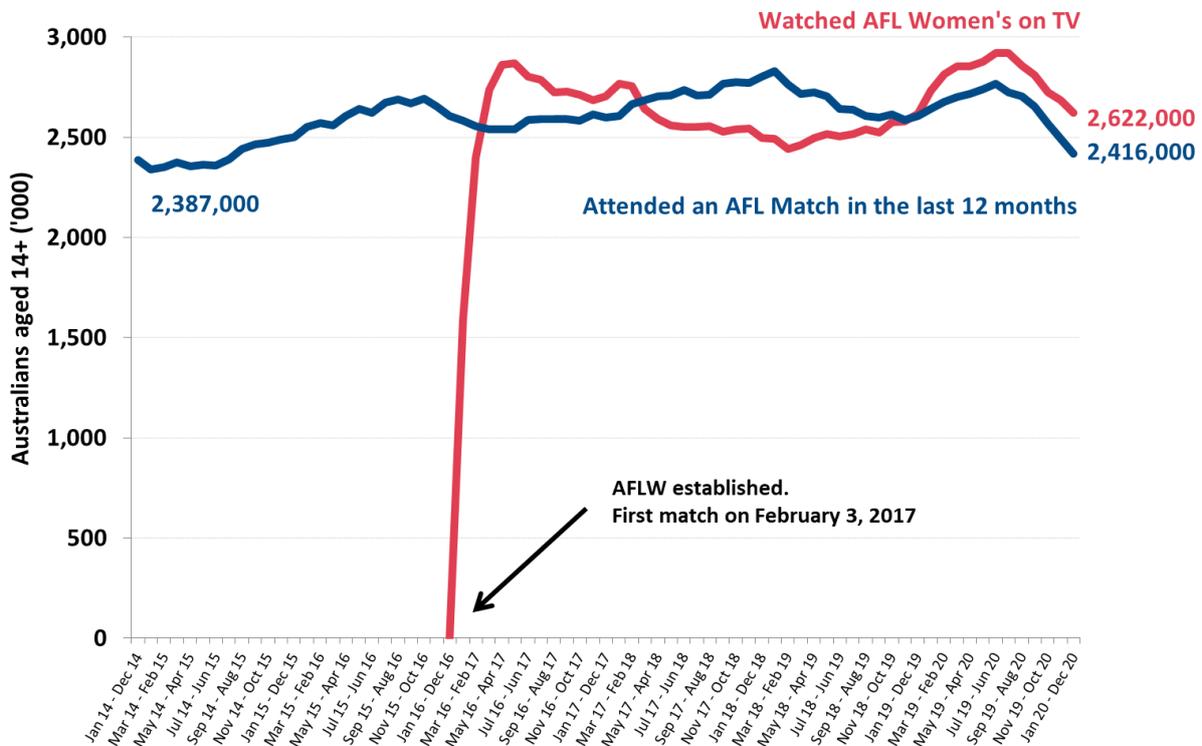
Viewership of AFLW has held relatively steady over the last few years since the competition first began in February 2017 and closely tracks the number of Australians who have attended at least one AFL match in the last 12 months.

For interviewing conducted in the 12 months to December 2020 an estimated 2.4 million Australians said they had attended an AFL match in the last year. Because this period includes interviewing that began in January 2020 the prior 12 months includes the 2019 AFL Season for many of those interviewed.

Even so, the COVID-19 restrictions that were progressively introduced from mid-March 2020 and which meant no spectators were allowed to attend matches at Victorian grounds at all during season 2020, have had a direct impact on overall attendances which decreased sharply during 2020 AFL Season.

These latest findings are drawn from the Roy Morgan Single Source survey, Australia's leading market research survey, compiled by in-depth interviews with over 50,000 Australians each year.

### TV Viewership of the AFLW vs. Attendance at the AFL: 2014-2020



**Source:** Roy Morgan Single Source, January 2016 – December 2020. Rolling 12 month figures, average annual interviews, n=51,315. **Base:** Australians 14+.

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**AFL Women’s TV viewing is very evenly spread across age groups. However attendees at AFL matches are more likely to be younger**

Although TV viewers of AFL Women’s and those who attend AFL matches constitute similar sized markets of around 2.5 million Australians they are not identical supporter bases.

Interestingly, just over three-fifths of those watching AFL Women’s on TV are men (1,602,000) compared to 1,020,000 women. A similar gender split is also the case when it comes to attending AFL matches in person with 1,497,000 men compared to 919,000 women attending an AFL match.

TV viewers of AFL Women’s are spread fairly evenly between four age groups – although more likely to be aged 35+ than under 35.

The most likely age groups to watch AFL Women’s on TV are people aged 50-64 (692,000) or 65+ (665,000). There are 660,000 people aged 35-49 who watch AFL Women’s on TV compared to only 605,000 of those aged under 35 – the largest age cohort constituting just over a third of all Australians aged 14+.

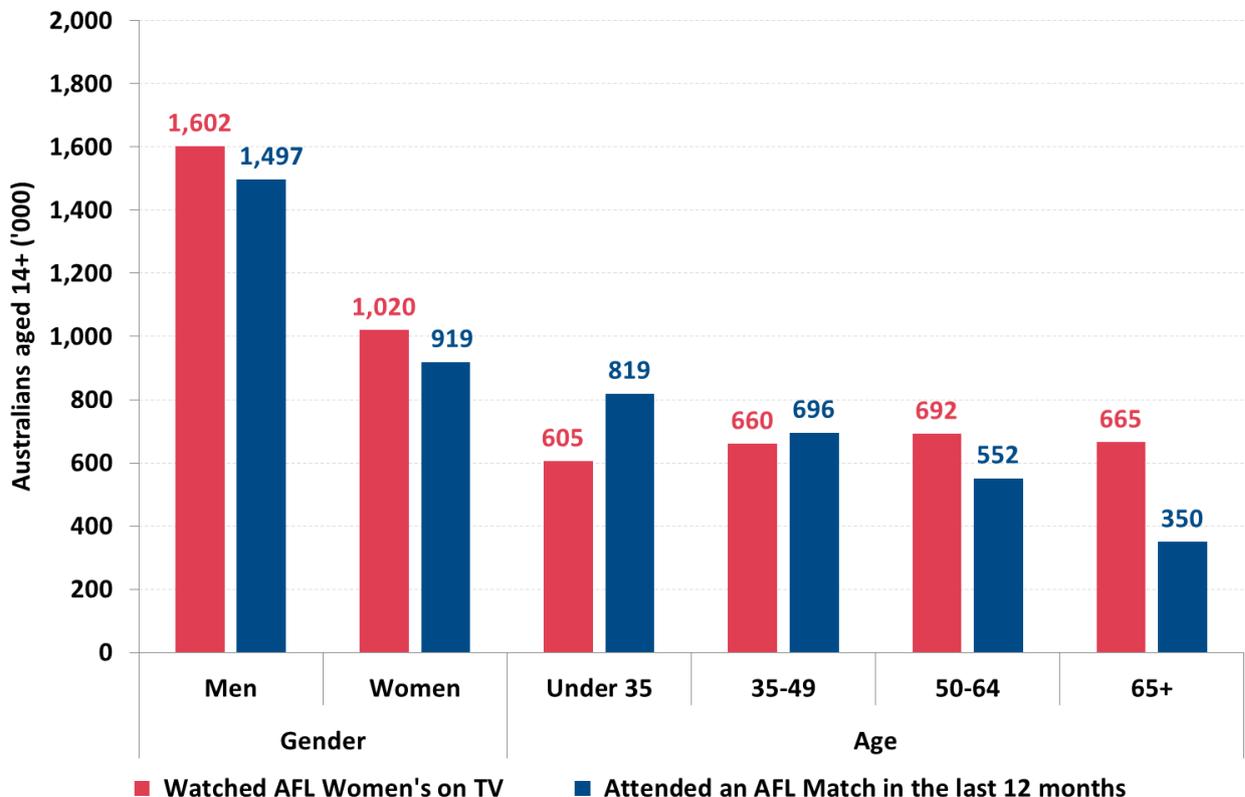
In comparison, attendance at AFL matches is closely correlated to age. The largest group of supporters who attend AFL matches are those aged under 35 (819,000) – just over a third of all attendees.

The next largest group of AFL attendees is people aged 35-49 (696,000) and this age group is the most likely to attend given they represent about a 25% share of the overall Australian population aged 14+.

The likelihood of attending AFL matches then declines for those aged 50-64 (552,000) and 65+ (350,000).

It’s worth noting that although attendances at AFL matches in 2020 were much reduced owing to the restrictions in place around Australia, and particularly in Victoria, the 2019 AFL season saw a record Home & Away attendance total of 6.95 million spread across 198 matches.

**AFL Women’s TV viewers and AFL match attendees analysed by Gender & Age**



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source, 12 months to December 2020, n=61,294. Base: Australians 14+.

**Industry Communications Director Julian McCrann says the upcoming AFLW Finals series will be the first since the competition added four teams last year and represents a strong comeback for the young league which is attracting combined TV audiences of over 2.6 million viewers:**

*“The AFL had a season like no other in 2020 and this was doubly so for the AFLW which was forced to cancel the last two weeks’ of the AFLW finals series as Australia went into a nationwide lockdown in late March 2020.*

*“There were four teams left standing when the season was abruptly halted – Carlton, Fremantle, Melbourne and North Melbourne. All four teams have fiercely contested the current 2021 AFL Women’s season with all remaining in finals contention until the last home and away round.*

*“In the 12 months to December 2020 2,622,000 Australians said they watched AFL Women’s on TV at least occasionally, a small increase of 4,000 from a year earlier. Contrary to what some might expect more men (1,602,000) than women (1,020,000) said they watched AFL Women’s on TV – an audience split of 61% men cf. 39% women.*

*“Since launching in early February 2017 overall TV viewership of the AFLW has averaged just above 2.5 million. There was an initial burst of excitement with the launch of the league and total TV viewers peaked above 2.85 million in April/May 2017 following the first AFLW Grand Final.*

*“TV viewership declined from that initial peak for the next two years but began to pick up again with the expansion of the competition in 2019 and 2020 when six new teams were added including Geelong, North Melbourne, St. Kilda, Richmond, West Coast and Gold Coast.*

*“The new teams led to record attendances above 200,000 for the league in both 2019 and the shortened 2020 seasons and a burst of new TV viewers with numbers peaking above 2.9 million in early 2020 before COVID-19 brought the game to a halt.*

*“The age profile of the AFL Women’s TV viewers presents an opportunity for the league with older age groups aged 50+ more likely to watch the league on TV than younger Australians. Although people aged under 35 represent over a third of Australians aged 14+ they comprise under a quarter of those who watch AFL Women’s on TV.*

*“An interesting comparison can be made between those who watch the AFL Women’s on TV and those who attend AFL matches in person with both numbers around 2.5 million and have tracked each other closely over the last four years since the launch of the AFLW.*

*“Attendance at AFL matches is heavily co-related to age with 819,000 people aged under 35 attending AFL matches comprising around a third of all attendees – easily the largest share. The attendance shares for older age groups are progressively smaller with only 350,000 people aged 65+ attending matches – about 15% of all attendees.”*

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**About Roy Morgan**

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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%
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2

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