

Tuesday, 28 September 2021

## Melbourne Storm are the most widely supported NRL (or AFL) club in 2021 ahead of the Brisbane Broncos and Parramatta Eels

The latest data from Roy Morgan shows the total NRL supporter base has grown by over 1 million from a year ago, up a massive 19% to over 6.3 million Australians aged 14+ (29.9%) in 2021 despite the sport dealing with two COVID-interrupted seasons throughout 2020-21.

The NRL was forced to relocate all 16 clubs to Queensland in July this year after outbreaks of COVID-19 in the key market of New South Wales as well as in Victoria and the ACT, but despite these upheavals support for the clubs has boomed with 11 of the 16 clubs experiencing an increase in support from 2020.

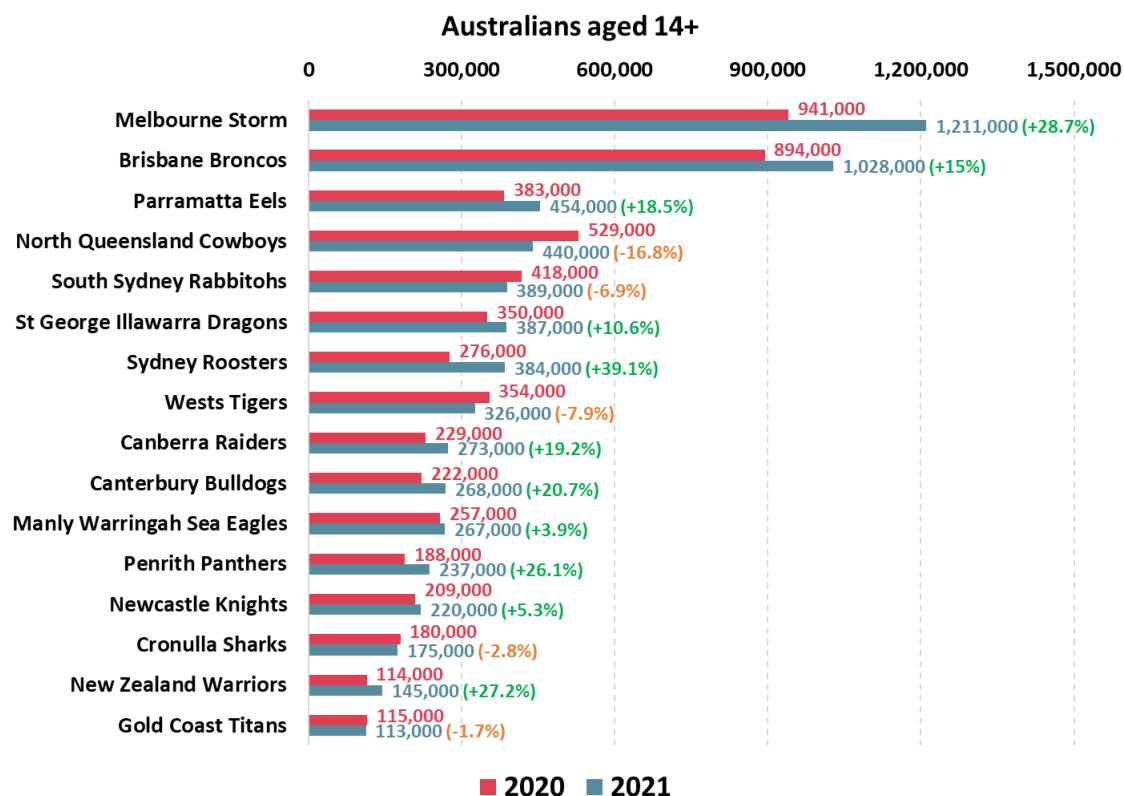
The relocation of the competition mid-season has meant most fans have had to enjoy the sport on TV rather than at the ground this year, and for large parts of the 2020 season as well and over 5.9 million (28.2%) of Australians watch the NRL on TV, up 2.8% on a year ago.

The **Melbourne Storm** have topped the ladder as the most widely supported NRL club in 2021 with 1,211,000 supporters, an increase of 28.7% on a year ago following the club's fourth Premiership in 2020. Unfortunately for the **Storm** there will be no repeat this year following their loss in the Preliminary Final.

In second is the **Brisbane Broncos**, the only other club with over 1 million supporters on 1,028,000, an increase of 15% on a year ago despite the club's first Wooden Spoon in 2020 since joining the competition in 1988.

The most widely supported Sydney-based club is the **Parramatta Eels** with 454,000 supporters, an increase of 18.5% on a year ago. The **Eels** have the longest drought of any NRL club with the team not winning a Premiership for nearly forty years since 1986. The **South Sydney Rabbitohs** have the edge over Grand Final opponents the **Penrith Panthers** with the **Rabbitohs** followed by 389,000 supporters compared to 237,000 that follow the **Panthers**.

### NRL Club Supporter Ladder 2021



**Source:** Roy Morgan Single Source Australia, July 2019-June 2020, n=54,279 & July 2020-June 2021, n=64,973.  
**Base:** Australians 14+. \*New Zealand Warriors support only includes Australian-based supporters.

The biggest jump in support over the last year was the **Sydney Roosters** with a stunning increase in support of 39.1% to 384,000 to be just behind the **St. George Illawarra Dragons** up 10.6% to 387,000

Other clubs to increase their support include the **Canberra Raiders**, up 19.2% to 273,000, the **Canterbury Bulldogs**, up 20.7% to 268,000, the **Manly-Warringah Sea Eagles**, up 3.9% to 267,000, the **Newcastle Knights**, up 5.3% to 220,000 and the **New Zealand Warriors**, up 27.2% to 145,000.

Overall, eleven NRL clubs increased their support in the year to June 2021 including six 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 the Melbourne Storm has topped the annual Roy Morgan NRL Club Support Ladder in 2021 and is the most widely supported NRL or AFL club in Australia for the first time:**

*"For the second year in a row the COVID-19 pandemic has played havoc with the NRL season with the entire competition relocated to Queensland in July following outbreaks in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra that continue to this day.*

*"However, the challenges of COVID-19 have not prevented the NRL from growing overall club support substantially over the last year with an increase of over 1 million new supporters (+19%) compared to a year ago for a total of over 6.3 million club supporters in 2021.*

*"The biggest winners over the past year were the **Melbourne Storm** which not only won the Premiership in 2020 but also had a massive increase in support, up 28.7% to over 1.2 million supporters to claim top spot ahead of the **Brisbane Broncos**.*

*"The **Melbourne Storm** have been clearly the most successful club of the last two decades making the NRL Finals for 11 years straight (2011-2021), winning three Premierships in the last decade in 2012, 2017 and 2020, and featuring in 9/15 Grand Finals and winning five of them.*

*"In fact, the last time the **Storm** missed the finals after playing a full season without a points deduction (as in 2010) was in 2002 – nearly twenty years ago. The **Storm's** success has been such that they are now the most widely supported NRL or AFL club for the first time.*

*"The **Brisbane Broncos** are the only other team with over 1 million supporters despite the club's first ever Wooden Spoon year after finishing last in 2020 for the first time. The **Broncos** have been atop NRL club supporter ladder for most of the last two decades however they are set to face a new challenge in the next few years with a second Brisbane-based club likely to enter the NRL competition in the next few years which may divide their supporter base.*

*"In the competitive Sydney market the most widely supported club is also the club with the longest Premiership drought – the **Parramatta Eels** with 454,000 supporters, up an impressive 18.5% on a year ago. Despite their lack of Premiership success since winning in 1986 the **Eels** have played finals in the last three years, so they have been in contention recently.*

*"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:**

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