

Monday, 13 January 2020

## Emirates still top brand associated with Melbourne Cup

**Emirates is still the top brand associated with the Melbourne Cup, two years after the Dubai-based airline ended its naming rights sponsorship of Australia's most watched horse race.**

Nearly 3.9 million Australians (19%) associate Emirates with the Melbourne Cup, down from a high of 5.3 million (27%) in 2016. Emirates is still heavily associated with the four-day Melbourne Cup Carnival through its sponsorship of the Emirates Marquee in the Birdcage and naming rights sponsorship of Emirates Stakes Day on the final day of the Carnival. Emirates held naming rights sponsorship for the Cup for 14 years, from 2004-2017.

New naming rights sponsor Lexus is associated with the Cup by nearly 830,000 Australians (4%). However recognition rises to 10% among Australians who watch the Cup on TV and to 15% among Australians who bet on horse racing in an average week. Lexus signed a five-year naming rights sponsorship agreement for the Melbourne Cup, covering the years 2018-2022 and has ground to make up on previous sponsor Emirates which had a sponsorship association of 9% in its first year.

Other sponsors Australians associate with the Melbourne Cup include Myer, Foster's, AAMI and Sky Channel. Sponsorship recall is higher for all key brands among those who bet on horse racing, ahead of those who watch the race on TV.

Long-term analysis of the impact of naming rights sponsorship of the Melbourne Cup shows that despite Emirates becoming naming rights sponsor in 2004, it wasn't until 2007 that more than 20% of Australians associated the airline with the Cup, and it took until 2015 for recall to exceed 25%. At its peak in 2016 a record high 27% of Australians associated Emirates with the Melbourne Cup – higher even than Foster's achieved at the height of its sponsorship in 2002.

Roy Morgan CEO Michele Levine says in a highly competitive sports market, companies need high profile events to really stand out from the crowd: *"Roy Morgan measures sponsorship of the 15 major sporting events including The Australian Open, Basketball (NBL), Test Cricket, One Day Cricket, Big Bash League (BBL), Australian Rules Football (AFL), Rugby League (NRL), Rugby Union, A-League Soccer, The Melbourne Cup, The Spring Carnival, The Australian Formula 1 Grand Prix, Motor Racing (V8 Supercars), Golf and Olympic Games, and over 70 brands of companies that sponsor them.*

*"The Melbourne Cup is one of the premier sporting sponsorships in the Australian marketplace. With around [5 million Australians](#) watching the race on TV each year, the naming rights sponsor is guaranteed to reach a wide audience.*

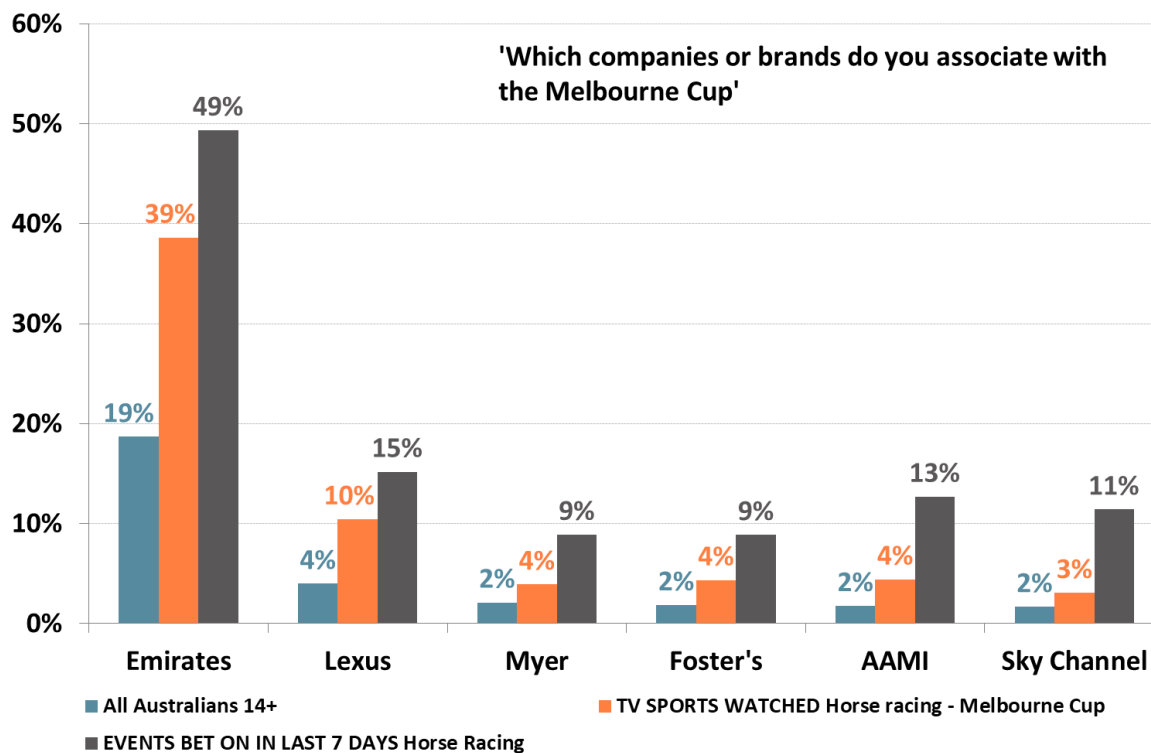
*"But our research shows that it does take time to build name recognition. It took more than a decade after former lead partner Emirates began its naming rights sponsorship in 2004 for rates of recognition of the association to exceed a quarter of the population.*

*"It is important to note that in the case of Emirates, and prior sponsor Foster's, Australians' association of their brand with the Cup declined over the last few years before their sponsorship officially ended. This is likely due to a reduced investment in the sponsorship towards the end of the deal and highlights that maintaining high brand recognition requires consistent investment in publicising the sponsorship.*

*"Clearly the most important factor for determining if a given consumer associates a brand with sponsorship of a specified sporting event is their level of engagement with the sport. Nearly 1 in 6 Australians (15%) who bet on horse racing are aware that Lexus is associated with the Melbourne Cup compared to 10% who watch the Cup on TV.*

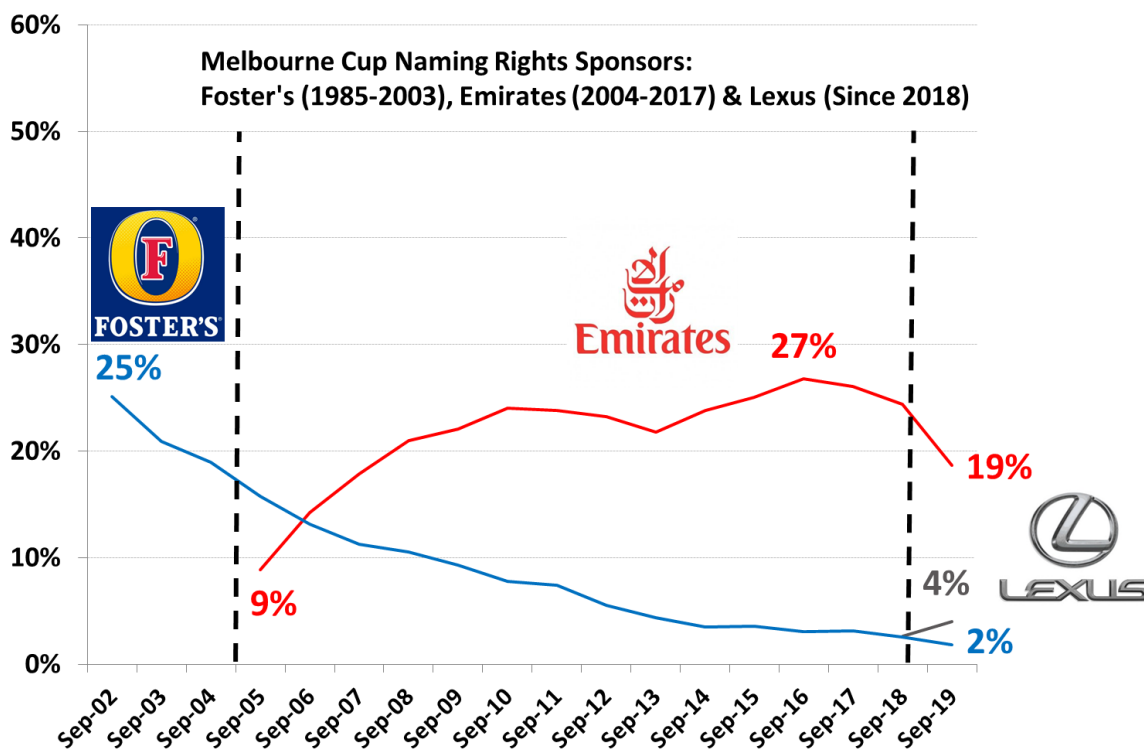
“The good news for sponsors of horse racing, and the Melbourne Cup in particular, is that in a world that seems to be increasingly commoditised high-spending premium consumers known as NEOs are significantly over-represented among Australians who watch horse racing, attend horse racing and bet on horse racing. As our research shows premium brands favoured by NEOs include Lexus and Emirates, financial services corporation American Express, liquor retailer Vintage Cellars and retailers such as Zara and Harris Farm Markets.”

**Melbourne Cup sponsor association for All Australians cf. Australians watching the Melbourne Cup on TV cf. Australians betting on horse racing**



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source, October 2018-September 2019. Base: Australians 14+. n=13,744.

**Melbourne Cup long-term sponsor association for naming rights sponsors 2001-19**



**Source:** Roy Morgan Single Source, October 2001-September 2019. **Base:** Australians 14+, average interviews per year, n=50,910.

### Related research findings

View our comprehensive range of [Sport profiles](#), including [Sports viewers](#) (such as [Horse racing viewers](#) and [Melbourne Cup viewers](#)), [Sports spectators](#) ([Horse racing spectators](#)) and [Sports participants](#).

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.

**For comments or more information about Roy Morgan's sports and sports sponsorship data, please contact:**

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### About Roy Morgan

Roy Morgan is Australia's largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state, as well as in the U.S. and U.K. A full-service research organisation, Roy Morgan has over 75 years' experience 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%
1,000	±3.0	±2.7	±1.9	±1.3
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
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

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