

Friday, 13 September 2018

Brisbane Broncos on top but 2018 NRL Premiers Sydney Roosters jump up NRL supporter ladder

The latest data from Roy Morgan shows that the total NRL supporter base now consisting of over 5.3 million (25.9%) Australians is down 5% on a year ago but those actually attending NRL matches are up 6.4% to nearly 1.4 million in 2019.

In addition the NRL's reputation as a 'TV Sport' is reinforced when one considers that almost 6.2 million Australians watched an NRL match on TV in the last year which clearly includes many people who don't even support an NRL team.

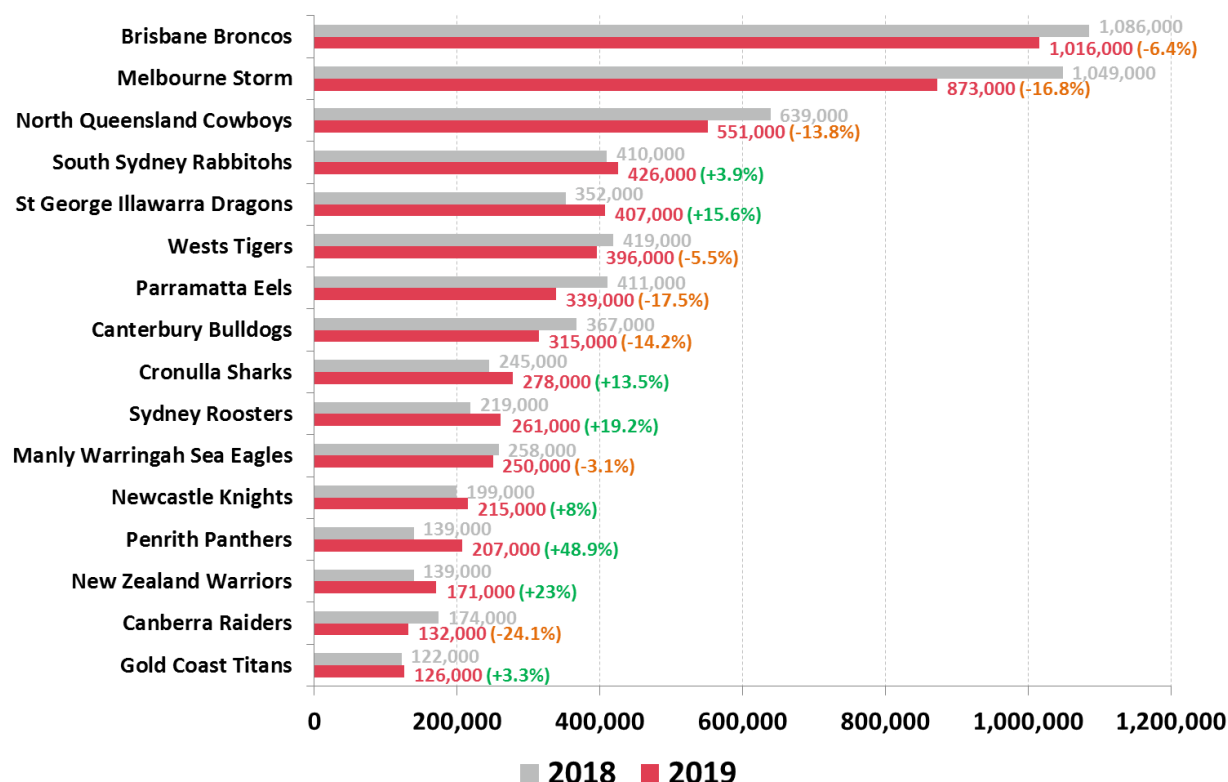
When it comes to club support the **Brisbane Broncos** have again topped the annual Roy Morgan NRL supporter ladder with 1.02 million supporters despite a drop of 6.4 per cent on a year ago.

In second place are southern rivals the **Melbourne Storm** on 873,000, a drop of 16.8%, ahead of the **North Queensland Cowboys** in third on 551,000, down 13.8%. Both clubs farewelled supporter favourites in 2018 with Billy Slater of the **Melbourne Storm** and Jonathan Thurston of the **North Queensland Cowboys** both retiring after successful careers.

2018 NRL Premiers the **Sydney Roosters** was one of the big winners over the last year with their support increasing 19.2% to 261,000 while the most well supported club in the Sydney heartland of Rugby League is the **South Sydney Rabbitohs** who increased their support by 3.9% to 426,000.

Other clubs to increase their support substantially included 2018 finalists the **St. George Illawarra Dragons** up by 15.6% to 407,000, the **Cronulla Sharks** up by 13.5% to 278,000, the **Penrith Panthers** up by a stunning 48.9% to 207,000 and the **New Zealand Warriors** who grew their Australian-based support by 23% to 171,000.

NRL Club Supporter Ladder 2019



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source Australia, July 2017 – June 2018, n=14,836 and July 2018 – June 2019, n=14,383. **Base:** Australians 14+. *New Zealand Warriors support only includes Australian-based supporters.

Overall eight NRL clubs increased their support in the year to June 2019 including five 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 personal interviews in the homes of over 50,000 Australians each year as part of the Roy Morgan Single Source survey.

Broncos supporters are middle-aged blokes not concerned about the environment

The quintessential supporter of the most widely supported NRL club in the land is unsurprisingly a man hailing from Queensland – four-fifths of Broncos supporters live in the ‘Sunshine State’.

He’s most likely in Generation X and aged 35-49 years old with kids at high school and more likely than the average Australian to be in the lower socio-economic quintiles and more likely than the average Australian to agree he’s *‘very proud of his family’*. When it comes to the Roy Morgan Values Segments he’s most likely to be classified as [Traditional Family Life](#) or [Visible Achievement](#) – *‘The family is very important to this Segment and they place great emphasis on providing their families with a high quality environment – so there is no need to flaunt that success.’*

Our passionate Broncos supporter is more likely than the average Australian to agree *‘the Government is doing a good job running the country’* and *‘the Australian economy appears to be improving’* although he’s also more likely to agree that *‘crime is a growing problem in his community’*. He agrees *‘environmentally friendly products are over-priced’* and is more likely than others to agree *‘threats to the environment are exaggerated’*.

When it comes to entertaining he’s more likely than the average Australian to go to an RSL or Leagues club and play pokie machines, place bets and buy lottery/scratch tickets and also significantly more likely to be on the lookout for a new vehicle in the next four years. He’s far more likely to read music, movies, men’s sports and men’s lifestyle magazines and far more likely to be a heavy viewer of commercial TV (3+ hours per day) than the average Australian.

Dragons supporters are typically older men who may want to take better care of their health

Heading south we find the supporters of the semi-regional St. George Illawarra Dragons based in both Sydney and Wollongong. Dragons supporters are older and most likely to be aged 50-64 years old and over three-fifths are male – higher than for NRL supporters overall (59% men cf. 41% women).

Over a third of Dragons’ supporters are Baby Boomers and given their age they’re significantly less likely to have any children in the household than the average Australian. In regards to the Roy Morgan Values Segment he’s more likely to be classified as part of the [Conventional Family Life](#) (CFL) or especially the [Traditional Family Life](#) (TFL) – *‘With values centred around significant events in their personal and family lives the ‘TFL’ & ‘CFL’ Segments are motivated by similar values of security, reliability and providing better opportunities for their family’*.

The quintessential Dragons supporter has some more old-fashioned views on schooling and is more likely than the average Australian to agree that *‘most secondary schools today place too little emphasis on academic achievements’*, and that *‘Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn’*. In terms of his health he *‘would like to be able to lose weight’* although he’s also more likely to agree that *‘taste is more important than ingredients’* and *‘he tends to snack throughout the day’*.

He’s far more likely than average Australians to read metro newspapers during the week and also on the weekend and far more likely to read motoring, men’s lifestyle, computing, motorcycle, business, financial and airline magazines as well as newspaper inserts and far less likely to read women’s lifestyle, home & garden or music & movies magazines. He’s also more likely to be a heavy cinema goer (2+ visits in an average three months) and more likely to be a smoker than other Aussies.



Julian McCrann, Industry Communications Director, Roy Morgan, says the strong growth in support for the Sydney Roosters and other teams to play finals in 2018 highlights the importance of on field success in building a sustainable long-term supporter base:

*"NRL supporter numbers are highly impacted by the success, or lack of success, of teams on the park although there is one clear exception to this rule. The **Brisbane Broncos** are largely immune to these pressures and despite not winning a Premiership for well over a decade are once again the most widely supported NRL club with over 1 million supporters in 2019.*

*"The Broncos are [second only to AFL club the Sydney Swans](#) for overall support in Australia and well ahead of NRL competition heavyweights the **Melbourne Storm** (873,000 supporters) and intra-state rival the **North Queensland Cowboys** (551,000).*

*"Although all three clubs have now topped the Roy Morgan NRL supporter ladder for the past four years since 2016, all three lost supporters over the past year. In particular, the drop in support for the **Melbourne Storm** and **North Queensland Cowboys** followed the retirements of two of the most exciting players in the competition – club favourites Billy Slater from the **Storm** and Jonathon Thurston from the **Cowboys**.*

"The retirements of Slater and Thurston illustrate the key role that exciting players with wider name-recognition in society have in driving support to clubs in addition to the purely on-field performance of the teams. In the crowded Sydney heartland of the NRL, over which nine clubs are constantly vying for the attention of the media, the ability to stand out from the crowd with big name stars that drive on-field success as well as TV viewers and attendance at the gate is vital.

*"The **South Sydney Rabbitohs**, which have the three high-profile 'Burgess Brothers' including club captain Sam, Tom and George, have built on the on-field success of the 2014 NRL Premiership to grab top spot in the Sydney basin with 426,000 supporters. Behind the **Rabbitohs** are **St. George Illawarra Dragons** (407,000) and a trio of Western suburbs clubs the **Wests Tigers** (396,000), **Parramatta Eels** (339,000) and **Canterbury Bulldogs** (315,000).*

"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 face-to-face interviews conducted with over 50,000 Australians each year in their homes."

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.



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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

