

Monday, 31 October 2016

5.6 million will watch 2016 Melbourne Cup

Tuesday's Melbourne Cup will be one of the most-watched sporting events of the year, with 5.6 million Australians 14+ (29%) expected to tune in to watch the race on TV, new research from Roy Morgan shows—but the audience has flipped over the past decade from being mostly under 50 to mostly over 50.

The Melbourne Cup's audience has declined by almost a million Australians over the last decade from 6.5 million (39%) in 2006. However the horse race on the first Tuesday every November remains among the most-watched sporting events in the country: just behind the AFL Grand Final (6.4 million) and State of Origin matches (6.0 million)—and ahead of the NRL Grand Final (5.3 million).

The majority of Melbourne Cup TV viewers (55%) are now aged 50-plus, with a minority 45% aged 14-49. A decade ago, it was the opposite: the over-50s made up 46% of the TV audience in 2006—outnumbered by 14-49 year-olds (54%).

The inversion of the Cup's audience isn't just due to our ageing population. In 2006, 3.6 million Australians aged 14-49 (34% of the group) would watch the event on TV. Now just 2.6 million (22%) say they are regular or even just occasional viewers.

The decline in viewership has been less sharp among the over-50s. Almost one in four Australians aged 50-plus (39%) may watch the race on Tuesday, down from almost half (48%) in 2006. However the waning interest has more than kept pace with the growing 50-plus population: their total number of Melbourne Cup TV viewers has actually gone *up* by almost 100,000 over the period.

Michele Levine, CEO – Roy Morgan Research, says:

"In line with declining viewership for the Melbourne Cup, horse race betting has also fallen over the past ten years. Last year, around one in six Australian adults (17%) placed bets on horse racing over the Spring Racing Carnival period, including the Melbourne Cup. This is down from one in four (25%) a decade ago.

"The internet has also risen fast to rival TAB venues as the method of choice for horse race punters. In 2006, around 75% of all horse race punting was done at a TAB, including its shopfronts and counters in hotels, clubs and pubs, and much of the rest was via on-course totes and bookmakers. The internet was barely on the radar, accounting for just 5% of horse race betting.

"But in the latest 12 months to September 2016, over 30% of horse racing bettors used a website or app, and only around half visited a TAB. Recent trending suggests sports betting websites and apps (including Tabcorp's own online offerings) could overtake in-person horse race betting at the TAB within the coming year, to be the most popular method come next year's Spring Carnival."

To learn more about Roy Morgan's gambling data call (+61) (3) 9224 5309 or email askroymorgan@roymorgan.com

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Roy Morgan Research is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices throughout Australia, as well as in Indonesia, the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan Research has over 70 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%
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
7,500	±1.1	±1.0	±0.7	±0.5
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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