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FIFTY YEARS OF TELEVISION: **FIRST TV RATING SURVEY IN 1957 SHOWED HSV 7 TOP STATION**

By Gary Morgan and Colin Fraser original Program Manager HSV 7

Despite the folklore that Nine has always been The One, Seven in Melbourne was the true leader at the start of Melbourne TV, according to the first-ever Australian TV viewer survey conducted in Melbourne by Roy Morgan in March 1957 - five months after TV began, when both channels were well into stride.

The survey covered a cross-section of 289 men, women and children from 102 TV homes. Respondents were asked about their viewing over the last seven days plus their favourite stations, programs, plays, actors, actresses, commentators and commercials.

The results showed that 18 of the audiences 20 most-liked programs belonged to Seven, with extraordinary ratings including 73% of 'sets in use' tuned to I Love Lucy and 68% to the live hour-long Hit Parade down to 49% (Kraft Theatre). Channel 2's top program was Liberace, viewed by 29%.

Nine's two entries just made the most-liked list, with the 90-minute feature film show, Caltex Theatre at 52% and Bob Dyer's Pick-a-Box at 51%.

The number of Hit Parade viewers was well above the numbers Roy Morgan measured in home viewing. Famously, every Thursday night at nine o'clock, people yet to buy a set gathered on the footpaths outside shops where demonstration sets in the windows were tuned to Seven.

It was not until the mid 80s, 30 years later, that Roy Morgan Research and ACNielsen introduced 24 hour-a-day, 7 days-a-week, people meters into Australia!

The favourite TV channel in 1957 was HSV 7 (61%), followed by GTV 9 (21%) with ABC 2 third (8%) while 10% of viewers had no preference.

Favourite TV Channel	Total Melb (Sample 289) %	Men (113) %	Women (121) %	Children (54) %
HSV 7	61	66	66	60
GTV 9	21	22	19	20
ABC 2	8	11	7	6
No preference	10	11	8	14
	100	100	100	100

The favourite TV programs:

I love Lucy (10% HSV7), *Hit Parade* (10% HSV7), followed by *Father knows best* (6% HSV7)

The favourite plays:

Caltex Theatre (16% GTV9), *Father knows best* (6% HSV7), followed by *I love Lucy* (6% HSV7)

The favourite actors:

Ray Milland (15% GTV9), *Robert Young* (10% HSV7), followed by *Douglas Fairbanks* (4% HSV7)

The favourite actresses:

Lucille Ball (14% HSV7), *Eve Arden* (10% HSV7), followed by *Jane Wyman* (2%)

The favourite commentators:

Eric Pearce (42% HSV7), *Danny Webb* (16% HSV7), followed by *Geoff Corke* (6% GTV9)

The favourite commercials:

Brockhoffs (10% HSV7), *Vealls* (5% HSV7), *Caltex* (4% GTV9), *Koolmint* (4% GTV9), *Mobil Oil* (4% GTV9), followed by *Coca-Cola* (3% HSV7).

The following were the Roy Morgan March 10-16, 1957 TV ratings for the top 20 Melbourne programs: 73% I Love Lucy (7); 69% Mr Pastry, one-off UK comedy special (7); 68% The Hit Parade (7); 67% Victory at Sea; 64% Thursday Theatre (7); 63% Robin Hood (7); 61% Father Knows Best (7); 49-60% Mickey Mouse (5 nights); 56% Disneyland (7), Rin Tin Tin (7); 55% Annie Oakley (7), Big Town (7); 54% Whitehall Playhouse (7); 52% Great Gildersleeve (7), Caltex Theatre (9); 51% Texas Rangers (7), Pick-a-Box (9); 50% San Francisco Beat (7), Jungle Jim (7).

Michele Levine, CEO, Roy Morgan Research says:

“Much has changed in the TV world since 1957 when Roy Morgan conducted the first Australian TV rating survey.

“Recent Roy Morgan data shows one in five consumers claim they now watch TV less since the Internet was introduced.

“It is obvious the Internet’s impact in the future on TV will mean a very different industry – particularly once TV is no longer constrained to the ‘television set’ and comes to everyone through computer screens, via mobile phones, on bill boards, etc - the future opportunities for TV are exponential.

“The issues will then be around ‘currency’ – for buying and selling advertising ‘space’ for evaluating performance, and generally providing the financial logic around the \$s spent on advertising in the new TV media landscape.

“In March, 2006 Roy Morgan Research in conjunction with the Advertising Research Foundation of America (ARF) surveyed professionals in the industry: media, advertising, agencies, and major advertisers around the world, about the ‘channels’ to the consumer that would be more or less important in the next five years.

“Most felt TV would be less important. However, if we look more carefully at the top four media that were expected to be more important in the next five years – Internet, mobile/cell telephones, out-of-home, and sponsorship – TV will be part of all of them.”

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