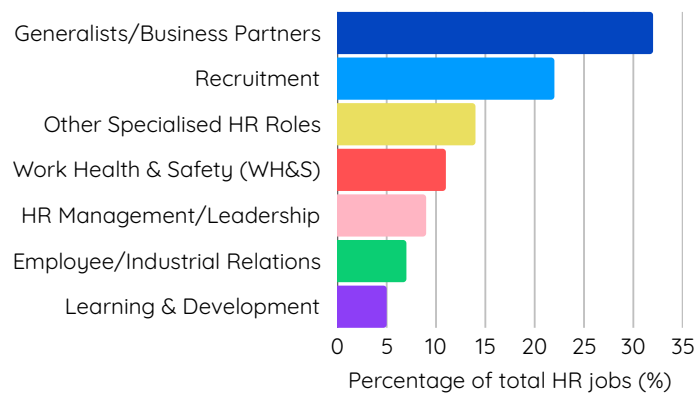


# Quarterly Insights Q4 2025

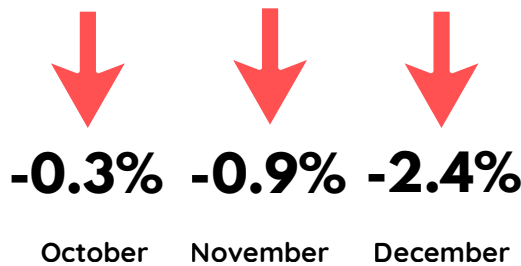
## December Quarter 2025

As Q4 concluded, Australia’s labour market remained resilient, with the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in December decreasing to 4.1%. Hiring activity slowed compared to earlier in 2025, with fewer new roles coming to market, while the number of people applying for jobs remained high. This resulted in an employer-led market, where organisations had greater choice, and this influenced longer decision-making timelines. Overall, Q4 was characterised by lower hiring volumes, sustained competition for roles, and a clear shift toward prioritising critical capability over headcount growth.

Percentage of total HR jobs advertised in Q4 2025



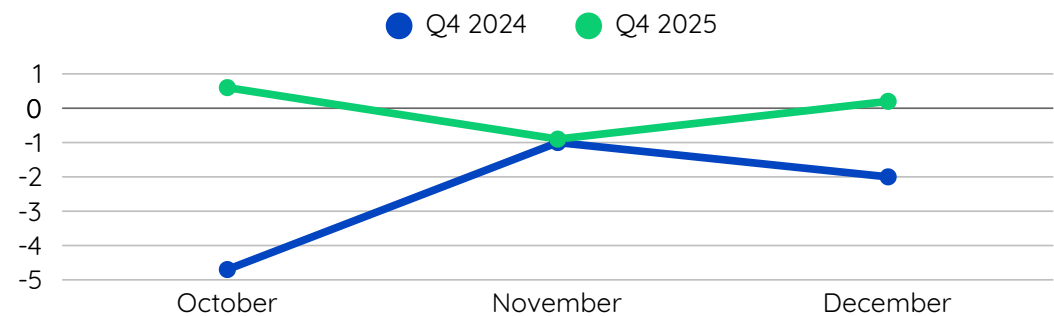
Monthly decreases in job ads in Q4 month-on-month



## P&C Market Update

People and Culture hiring slowed in Q4, with fewer new roles advertised compared to earlier in the year. Despite this, application volumes per role remained high, maintaining a high level of competition across the market. Organisations continued to hire; however, recruitment became increasingly selective, and the time to hire lengthened, particularly for roles requiring specialist or commercially grounded P&C capability. Hiring activity was concentrated in core P&C roles that directly support operational delivery and workforce stability, including business partnering, advisory and employee relations-focused roles. Internal mobility remained active, alongside a more practical, targeted use of AI to support policy, performance, and workforce planning, rather than broad transformation initiatives.

Monthly Fluctuation in HR Job Ads: Q4 2024 vs Q4 2025



This chart highlights stronger HR hiring momentum in Q4 2025 compared to Q4 2024. While Q4 2024 was characterised by volatility and declining job advertisements toward year-end, Q4 2025 showed greater stability and a stronger close to the quarter. This shift reflects steadier employer confidence, supported by interest rates decreasing throughout 2025, which helped lift business and consumer sentiment. Compared to 2024, organisations appeared more willing to progress hiring decisions, supporting more consistent workforce planning despite overall hiring volumes remaining controlled.

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics December 2025, Labour Force, Australia, June 2025, SEEK Employment Reports: October 2025, November 2025, December 2025, AHRI Work Outlook, December Quarter 2025, Reserve Bank of Australia - Cash Rate Target

## Employers

- **Strengthen TA foundations:** While the market remains employer-led, investing in TA capability and recruitment processes now positions organisations to move quickly as hiring activity and competition for talent lift.
- **Hire critical roles quickly, with clarity:** Roles that strengthen ER capability, support leaders and improve workforce effectiveness are expected to deliver the greatest impact in 2026, and hence are in strong demand.
- **Build in flexibility:** Internal mobility, interim support and fixed-term hires continue to provide effective solutions where permanent headcount growth is constrained. Accept this reality and mobilise a 'borrow' talent strategy.

## Job Seekers

- **Be selective and prepared:** Competition remains high, and hiring decisions are taking longer. Clear positioning, strong interview preparation and focused applications matter more than volume.
- **Demonstrate operational impact:** Employers are prioritising candidates who can step in quickly. Hands-on experience in ER, operational partnering, systems or workforce support remains highly valued.
- **Maintain momentum:** Hiring conversations are well and truly underway following the holiday period. Staying engaged with recruiters and keeping your network warm will position candidates well as activity lifts throughout the first half of 2026.

## What to Expect in Q1 2026

Hiring activity has lifted through January, with job advertising rebounding from the year-end slowdown as organisations re-engage and progress roles deferred in late 2025. While overall hiring remains selective, increased activity across Talent Acquisition signals growing organisational confidence, with businesses investing in TA capability to prepare for upcoming growth. Movement has also picked up at the senior end of the market, driven by leadership change, structural shifts and strategic hires. Throughout Q1, we expect to see increased opportunities driven by the movement of talent in the P&C market and organisations adding headcount back into org charts, in a strategic and cautious manner.

## Key Takeaways

- **Employer-led market:** Hiring slowed through Q4 while application volumes remained high, extending decision timelines and increasing employer choice.
- **Selective hiring focus:** Organisations prioritised critical capability and execution over headcount growth, particularly across business-critical roles.
- **Core P&C demand:** Business Partnering, advisory and employee relations roles remained the most consistent areas of hiring activity.
- **Momentum into Q1:** Hiring activity lifted in January, with increased TA investment and senior-level movement signalling preparation for further hiring through Q1 2026.

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