

Software Engineering



Salary & Insights Report 2025-2026

#BuildingTrust

TDP TECH
& DATA
PEOPLE
part of SEARCH4

Who are Tech & Data People?

Tech & Data People (TDP) is a specialist provider of Technology and Data Analytics recruitment services in Australia.

With a dedicated team of experienced recruiters and an industry-leading network of professionals, we pride ourselves on connecting top talent with leading organisations across Australia.

Leveraging a combined 100+ years in Technology and Data recruitment, our compassion and understanding for candidates and employers show in our unrivalled network.

We connect progressive businesses with exceptional contract and permanent talent across the full spectrum of technology roles:



**Data
Analytics & BI**



**Software
Development**



**Cyber
Security**



**Cloud &
Infrastructure**



**Project
Services**



**Digital &
Marketing**



About This Guide

This guide provides a comprehensive overview of the current landscape within the Software Engineering sector, with detailed insights into remuneration and recruitment trends across Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, and Perth.

Drawing on the expertise of our specialist recruiters and advanced data tools, we've compiled key information on salary benchmarks, contract rates, tenure patterns and gender distribution. These insights are designed to help employers make informed hiring decisions and to support professionals in understanding their market value.

All figures represent benchmark **base** salaries, **excluding** superannuation, and **candidate day rates**. Data has been sourced through a combination of expert knowledge, historical placement records, industry participation and online data collection, and reflects averages across a range of business sizes and industries.



Informed. Strategic. Data-driven.
Your recruitment intelligence starts here.



2025-26 Market Overview



STUART GARLAND
Director

Hiring has moved from “expansion at all costs” to “build smart, ship fast, prove value.” Budgets are tighter than the boom years, but engineering remains the engine room for growth — particularly where product teams can point to faster release cycles, lower unit costs and measurable customer impact. Leaders are consolidating tech stacks, doubling down on core platforms, and prioritising delivery teams that make every sprint count.

The shape of roles is also shifting. Classic full-stack is giving way to T-shaped engineers with a core specialty (backend, frontend, data-adjacent, mobile) and enough breadth to collaborate across APIs, CI/CD, cloud infra and security. Platform engineering has matured from a “nice to have” to a strategic investment: golden paths, paved roads and internal developer portals are now the levers for velocity, reliability, and cost control. Developer experience (DevEx) is a boardroom topic because it links directly to time-to-value.

AI is changing the “how,” not replacing the “who.” Teams are embedding AI pair-programming, code search and test generation to reduce toil and lift quality. The result: fewer fire drills, more time for product thinking and higher expectations of code review standards. Security continues to shift left, with SAST/DAST, SBOMs and dependency hygiene embedded in pipelines. Cloud cost optimisation (FinOps) sits alongside reliability engineering — right-sizing, autoscaling and architectural simplification are back in fashion.



Locally, Australia's demand is steady for senior engineers who can design, ship and influence. Contracting remains strong for delivery spikes, migrations and modernisation, while permanent hires concentrate in product-critical squads.

Hybrid remains the norm, with flexibility a key attractor — especially for parents and carers. Candidates are weighing impact, stability and team quality as heavily as base salary; clear roadmaps, mentoring and sane on-call rotations win offers.

Industry nuances are sharpening demand:

- **Financial Services:** Engineers with experience in secure, high-volume systems, payments integration and regulatory compliance (CPS 230, ISO 27001) are in hot demand. Platform engineers and SREs are critical as banks modernise legacy cores while keeping uptime guarantees.
- **Healthcare:** Digital health initiatives and electronic health records are fuelling demand for engineers with interoperability (FHIR, HL7) and data privacy expertise. Mobile developers are key to patient-facing applications.
- **Government & Public Sector:** Cloud migration, cyber uplift and digital citizen services are driving large-scale contract opportunities. Security clearance remains a premium.
- **SaaS & Scale-ups:** Product-focused engineers with strong API design, event-driven architecture and performance optimisation experience are essential as companies chase ARR growth. Cost efficiency in the cloud is a board-level priority here.
- **Energy & Sustainability:** Engineering teams are building platforms to manage renewables, smart grids and real-time IoT data. Demand for edge computing and data-streaming engineers is growing quickly.

Bottom line: the best teams are ruthlessly pragmatic — small, high-trust squads, crisp roadmaps, tight feedback loops and tooling that removes friction. If it doesn't improve speed, reliability, security, or cost, it's noise.



Key Trends & Predictions



EMERGING TRENDS

- **Platform Engineering & IDPs:** Internal developer portals, golden paths, and reusable templates standardise delivery and boost throughput.
- **DevEx as a KPI:** Lead time, change failure rate and cognitive load become management metrics, not just DORA dashboards.
- **AI-Assisted Delivery:** Copilots for code, tests and docs reduce toil; guardrails (policy, privacy, licensing) mature alongside usage.
- **Secure-by-Default Pipelines:** Supply-chain security, SBOMs, provenance (SLSA) and continuous dependency risk scanning are baseline.
- **Cost-Aware Architectures:** Monolith-to-modular and “fewer moving parts” trends counter microservice sprawl; serverless and containers used selectively.
- **Event-Driven & Streaming:** Real-time data flows push engineers closer to data platforms; backends evolve around messaging patterns



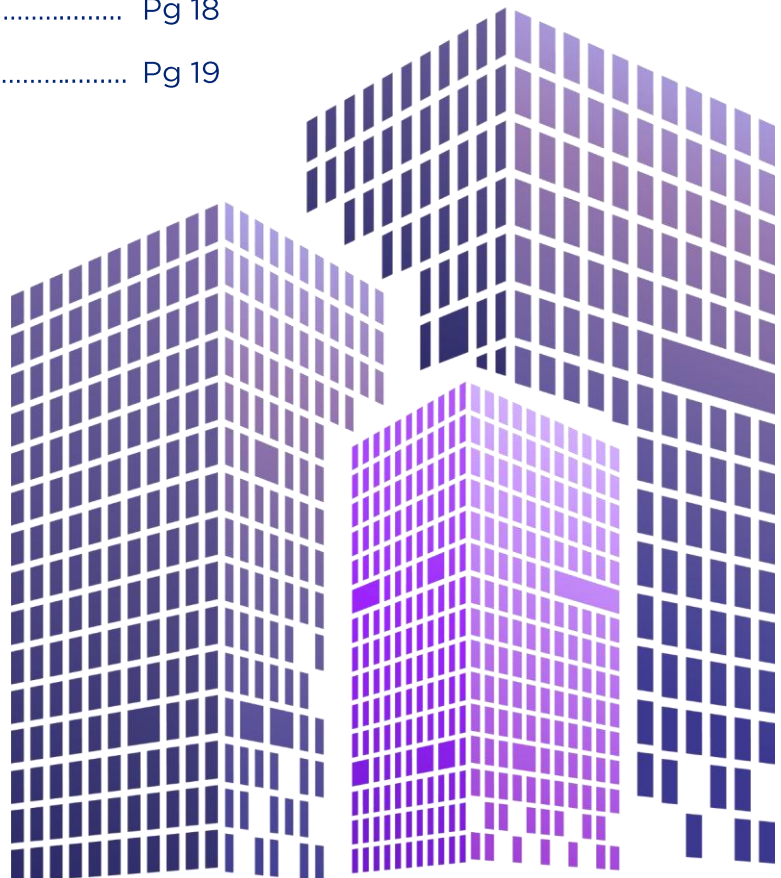
PREDICTIONS

- **Productivity Gap Widens:** Teams that operationalise AI + platform tooling outpace peers on lead time and defect rates.
- **Platform Teams Scale:** More organisations formalise platform charters with SLOs; adoption becomes a measured product, not a side project.
- **“T-Shaped” Wins Hiring:** Specialists with collaboration breadth (infra, security, data) command the strongest demand and premiums.
- **Compliance by Pipeline:** Continuous compliance (privacy, data residency, secure coding policy) is enforced in CI/CD, not post-hoc.
- **Microservices Right-Sizing:** Targeted consolidation reduces latency and costs; service boundaries align to real domain seams.
- **Talent Market Stays Rational:** Salaries stabilise, but top talent still moves for impact, flexibility, and technical leadership—not just cash.



Role Index

Mobile Developer	Pg 8
Software Engineer – Junior	Pg 9
Software Engineer – Mid	Pg 10
Software Engineer – Senior	Pg 11
Staff Engineer	Pg 12
Technical Lead	Pg 13
Engineering Manager	Pg 14
Head of Engineering	Pg 15
Manual Test Analyst	Pg 16
Automation Tester	Pg 17
Automation Manager	Pg 18
Test/QA Manager	Pg 19



Mobile Developer

Mobile development continues to be a key area of investment as businesses compete to deliver seamless digital customer experiences. Demand is steady across financial services, health, retail and utilities, with employers increasingly looking for developers who can work across both iOS and Android environments using cross-platform frameworks like Flutter and React Native.

Performance optimisation, accessibility and secure API integration are essential skills, while knowledge of mobile-specific security practices is a differentiator. This talent pool is highly mobile in its own right — candidates often weigh project impact, user reach and opportunities to innovate in UI/UX as heavily as salary. Employers with clear product roadmaps and strong design-engineering collaboration are most successful in attracting and retaining this cohort.

Gender Distribution:



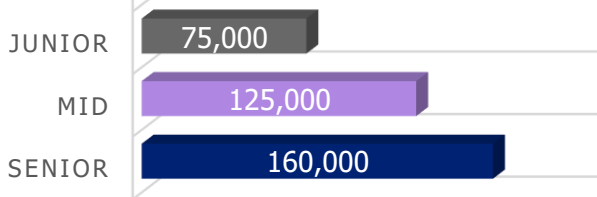
Average Tenure:

1.6 years

Demand:

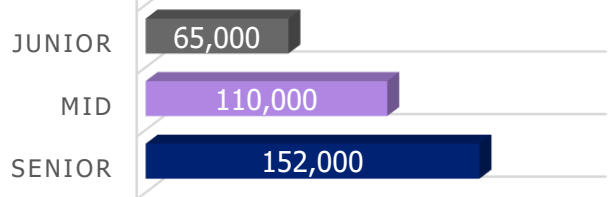
Very High

Melbourne



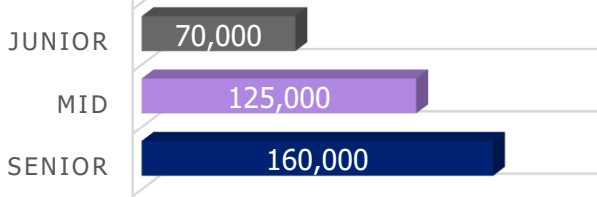
CONTRACT: \$700-\$950 Per Day

Brisbane



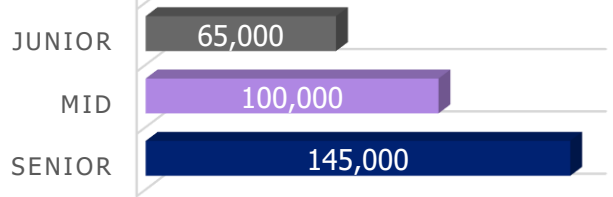
CONTRACT: \$650-\$855 Per Day

Sydney



CONTRACT: \$700-\$950 Per Day

Perth



CONTRACT: \$630-\$855 Per Day

Software Engineer - Junior

Junior engineers remain an important pipeline for the future, though hiring has become more deliberate and selective. Rather than hiring in bulk, employers are targeting graduates and early-career engineers who demonstrate strong fundamentals in modern frameworks (React, Node.js, Python, .NET Core) and an eagerness to learn cloud-native development.

Familiarity with DevOps practices, Git and automated testing can accelerate onboarding and make juniors more attractive. The cohort is particularly motivated by mentoring opportunities, career development pathways and exposure to modern delivery practices, meaning organisations with strong engineering cultures stand out. In a cautious hiring environment, juniors who show initiative, adaptability and communication skills are being favoured for permanent opportunities.

Gender Distribution:



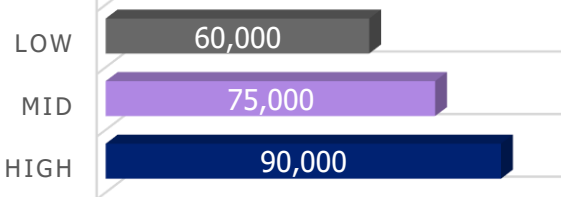
Average Tenure:

0.4 years

Demand:

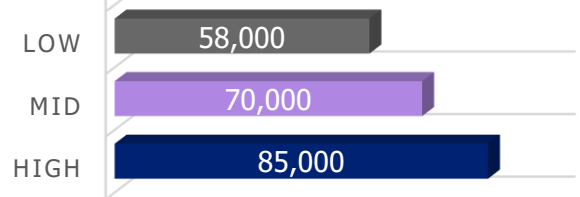
High

Melbourne



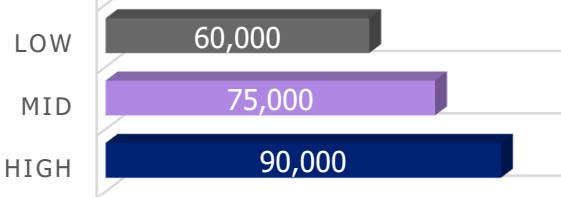
CONTRACT: \$550-\$650 Per Day

Brisbane



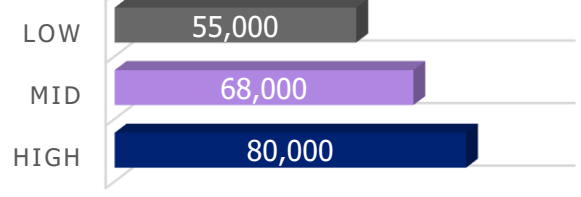
CONTRACT: \$530-\$620 Per Day

Sydney



CONTRACT: \$550-\$650 Per Day

Perth



CONTRACT: \$520-\$620 Per Day

Software Engineer - Mid

Mid-level engineers form the backbone of delivery teams, balancing hands-on coding with cross-functional problem-solving. Employers are looking for engineers who can comfortably switch between front-end, back-end and API development while working with cloud-native environments (AWS, Azure, GCP) and CI/CD pipelines. Demand is consistent across industries, with particular strength in SaaS, fintech and scale-up environments where versatility is key.

The ability to work closely with product managers and designers to translate requirements into scalable solutions is highly valued. Candidates at this level are increasingly selective, preferring roles where they can work with modern stacks, expand into architecture or leadership, and be part of high-trust teams delivering meaningful products.

Gender Distribution:



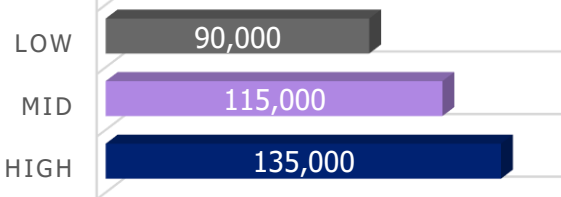
Average Tenure:

1.4 years

Demand:

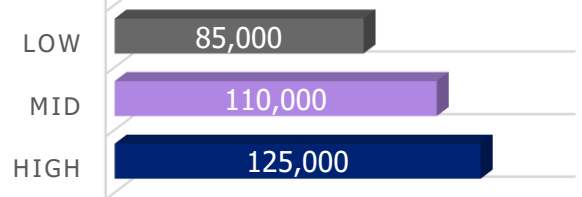
Very High

Melbourne



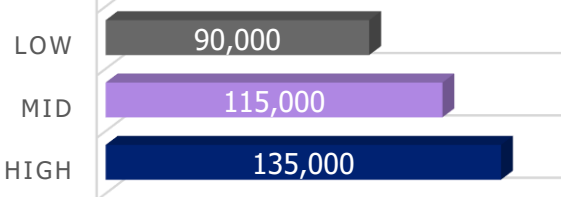
CONTRACT: \$750-\$900 Per Day

Brisbane



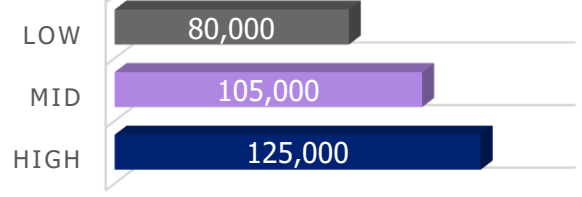
CONTRACT: \$710-\$855 Per Day

Sydney



CONTRACT: \$750-\$900 Per Day

Perth



CONTRACT: \$700-\$800 Per Day

Software Engineer - Senior

Senior engineers are the most consistently in-demand across the market, with employers seeking professionals who can lead by example in both coding standards and architectural decision-making. The focus is on engineers who can design robust systems, weigh trade-offs and guide teams through complex technical challenges.

Cloud-native experience, security-first development, and the ability to work with AI-assisted tooling are now considered baseline expectations. Senior engineers also play a crucial role in mentoring juniors and mids, meaning communication and leadership skills are as important as technical depth. Employers find that this group prioritises roles offering flexibility, technical autonomy and clear opportunities to influence product direction — making employee value proposition critical in securing top talent.

Gender Distribution:



23%



77%

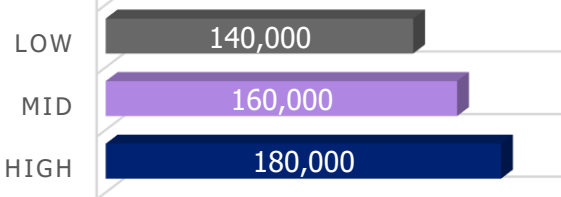
Average Tenure:

2.2 years

Demand:

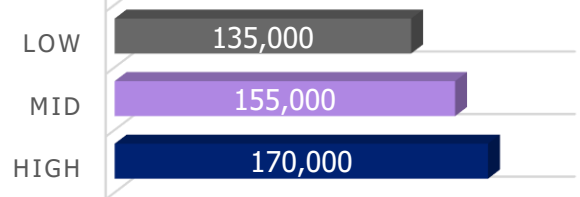
Very High

Melbourne



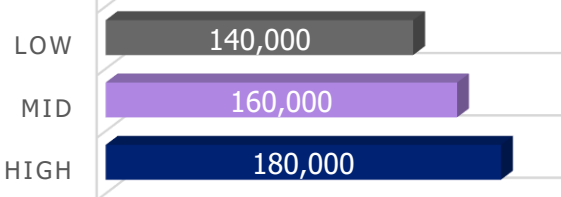
CONTRACT: \$900-\$1,050 Per Day

Brisbane



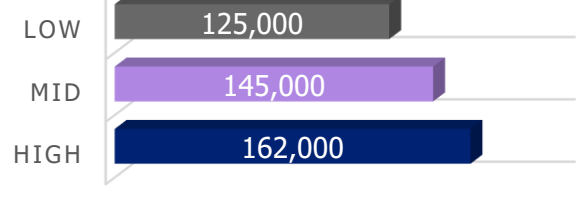
CONTRACT: \$855-\$1,000 Per Day

Sydney



CONTRACT: \$920-\$1,080 Per Day

Perth



CONTRACT: \$830-\$1,000 Per Day

Staff Engineer

The Staff Engineer role has become a linchpin in larger engineering organisations, bridging the gap between senior engineers and technical leadership. These individuals are relied upon to set technical direction, standardise architectural practices and scale best practices across multiple teams. Employers are particularly focused on Staff Engineers who can embed reliability, performance and security at scale while still remaining close enough to the code to influence design decisions.

Demand is strongest in financial services, health and government, where large systems require technical depth and strong stakeholder influence. Candidates are often measured as much by their ability to mentor peers and influence cross-team alignment as by their technical expertise.

Gender Distribution:



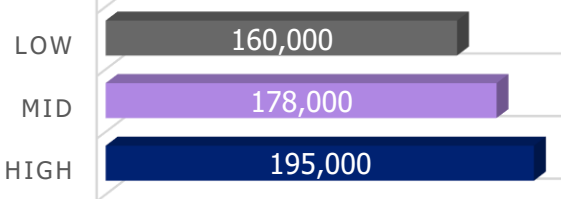
Average Tenure:

3.7 years

Demand:

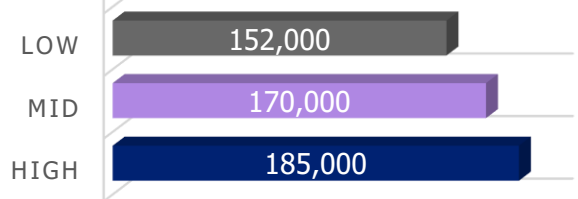
Very High

Melbourne



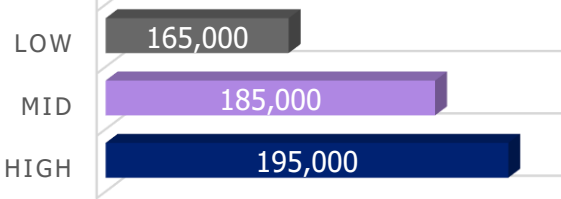
CONTRACT: \$1,050-\$1,200 Per Day

Brisbane



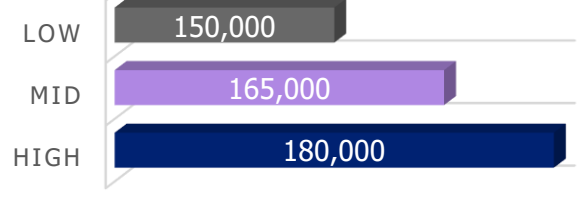
CONTRACT: \$1,000-\$1,150 Per Day

Sydney



CONTRACT: \$1,050-\$1,250 Per Day

Perth



CONTRACT: \$985-\$1,050 Per Day

Technical Lead

Technical Leads are increasingly being seen as the glue between hands-on delivery and engineering leadership. Employers value leads who can still ship code but who also excel at guiding squads through agile rituals, shaping architecture, and balancing delivery speed with long-term technical health. Strong skills in mentoring, stakeholder management and DevEx advocacy are in demand, with the best leads creating environments where engineers can thrive without bottlenecks.

Demand is consistent across enterprise and scale-up settings, particularly where digital product delivery is business-critical. Candidates are often motivated by the ability to influence technology choices and grow leadership capability, making career progression pathways an important attractor.

Gender Distribution:



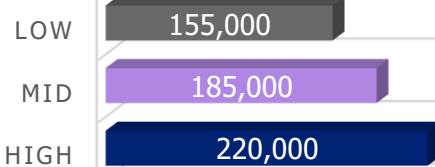
Average Tenure:

3 years

Demand:

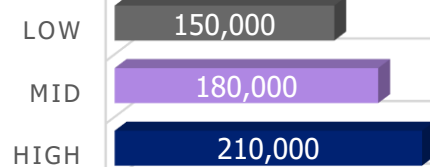
Very High

Melbourne



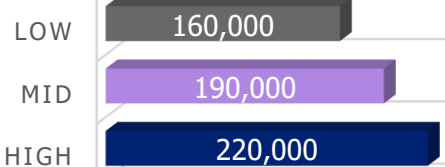
CONTRACT: \$1,100-\$1,200 Per Day

Brisbane



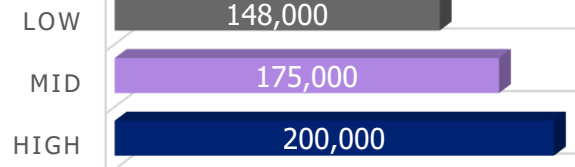
CONTRACT: \$1,050-\$1,150 Per Day

Sydney



CONTRACT: \$1,100-\$1,250 Per Day

Perth



CONTRACT: \$1,000-\$1,125 Per Day

Engineering Manager

Engineering Managers are being hired for their ability to build, scale and align teams around product outcomes. Employers want managers who can foster high-performance cultures, drive consistent delivery rituals and ensure engineering teams are tightly aligned with business strategy. Proven skills in hiring, performance management and enabling distributed teams are highly valued, as is the ability to introduce practices that improve developer experience and reduce delivery friction.

Demand is steady across Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, with Perth hiring more concentrated in industries like resources and utilities. Candidates in this cohort typically weigh leadership scope, influence and organisational culture heavily in their career decisions.

Gender Distribution:



13%



87%

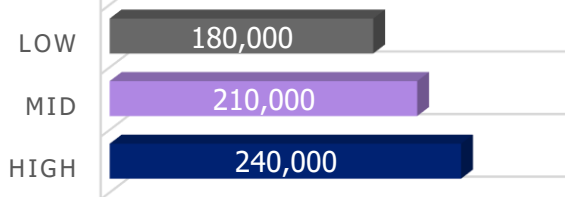
Average Tenure:

3.3 years

Demand:

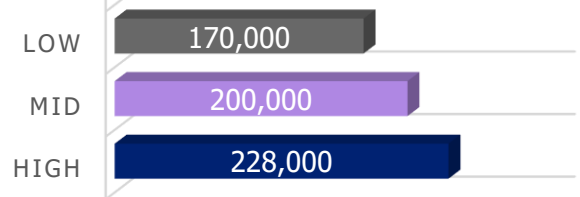
Very High

Melbourne



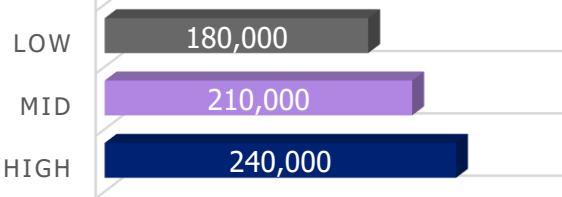
CONTRACT: \$1,200-\$1,400 Per Day

Brisbane



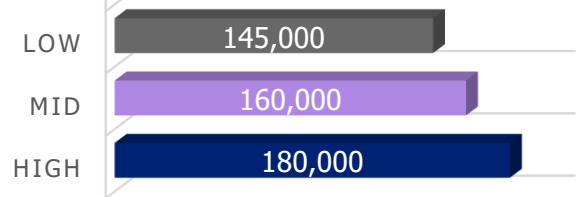
CONTRACT: \$1,145-\$1,300 Per Day

Sydney



CONTRACT: \$1,200-\$1,400 Per Day

Perth



CONTRACT: \$1,150-\$1,275 Per Day

Head of Engineering

The Head of Engineering role has evolved into a strategic leadership position, often tasked with driving transformation agendas or scaling product organisations. Employers seek leaders who can balance long-term vision with pragmatic delivery, often with board or executive exposure. Strong experience in hiring and retention, technical governance, cloud cost optimisation and security oversight are now baseline expectations.

Competition for proven leaders is strongest in product-led companies, fintech and larger enterprises undergoing digital modernisation. Candidates tend to prioritise strategic influence, organisational stability and opportunities to leave a legacy of high-performing engineering culture, rather than chasing purely financial incentives.

Gender Distribution:



12%



88%

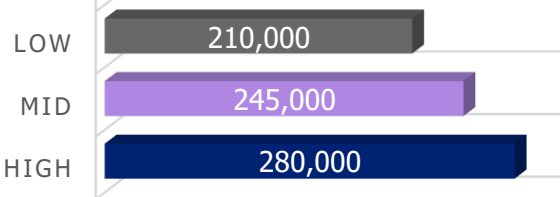
Average Tenure:

3.1 years

Demand:

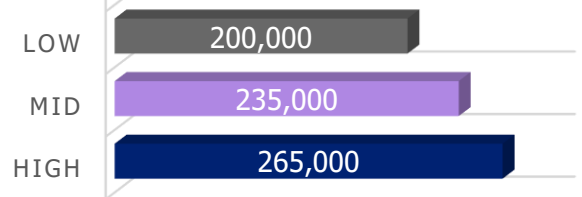
Very High

Melbourne



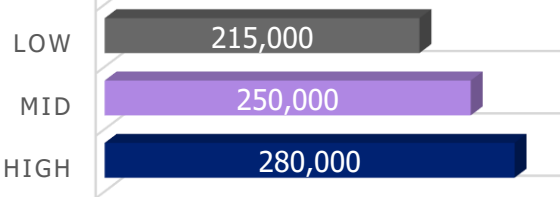
CONTRACT: \$1,500+ Per Day

Brisbane



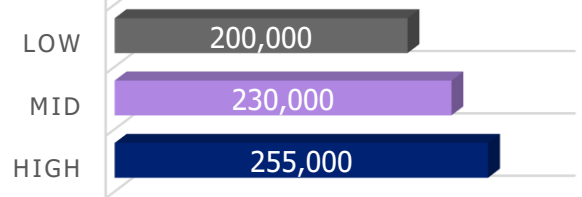
CONTRACT: \$1,500+ Per Day

Sydney



CONTRACT: \$1,500+ Per Day

Perth



CONTRACT: \$1,500+ Per Day

Manual Test Analyst

Manual testing roles are shrinking overall, but they remain relevant in industries where automation has yet to achieve full coverage, such as healthcare, government and highly regulated environments. Employers are hiring analysts with strong domain expertise, structured test planning skills, and a keen eye for user experience.

While automation dominates, manual testers are valued for their ability to identify edge cases, validate business logic and bring an end-user perspective. Candidates who combine manual testing capability with exposure to automation tools or test frameworks are in the best position to secure ongoing opportunities. Contract demand remains steady, tied to large transformation or migration projects that require blended testing approaches.

Gender Distribution:



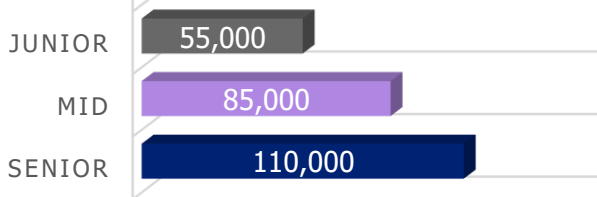
Average Tenure:

1.7 years

Demand:

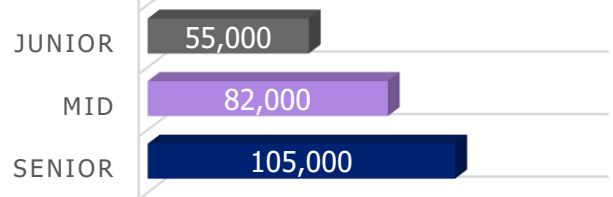
Medium

Melbourne



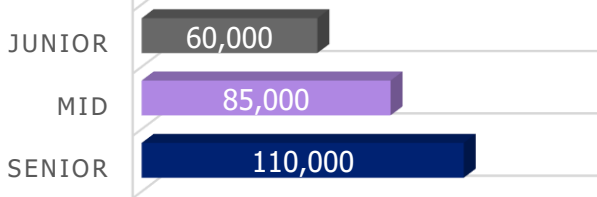
CONTRACT: \$500-\$700 Per Day

Brisbane



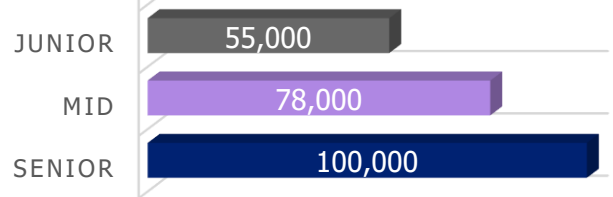
CONTRACT: \$475-\$665 Per Day

Sydney



CONTRACT: \$500-\$720 Per Day

Perth



CONTRACT: \$450-\$630 Per Day

Automation Tester (Analyst-Engineer)

Automation testers are in consistently high demand, as organisations prioritise faster release cycles without compromising quality. Employers are looking for testers who can design, script and maintain frameworks using tools like Selenium, Cypress, Playwright, and integrate these into CI/CD pipelines. Multi-language proficiency (Java, Python, JavaScript) and familiarity with containerised environments are strong differentiators.

Demand is highest in SaaS and product-led businesses where release velocity is a key competitive advantage. Candidates in this cohort are motivated by opportunities to shape automation strategy, work with modern tooling and partner closely with developers in quality engineering squads.

Gender Distribution:



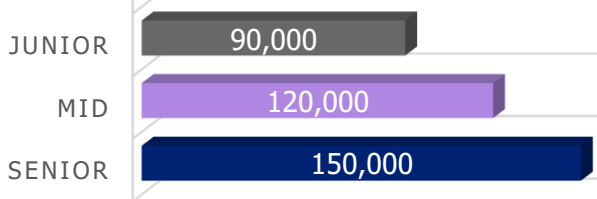
Average Tenure:

2.2 years

Demand:

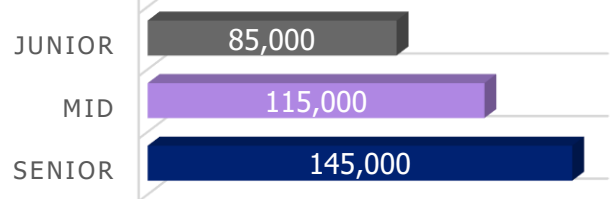
Very High

Melbourne



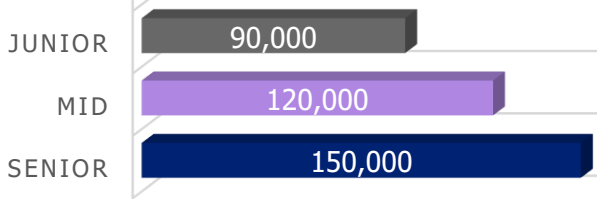
CONTRACT: \$700-\$950 Per Day

Brisbane



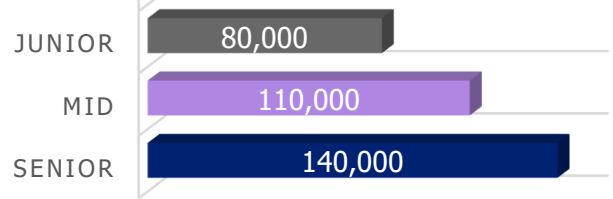
CONTRACT: \$670-\$900 Per Day

Sydney



CONTRACT: \$720-\$980 Per Day

Perth



CONTRACT: \$650-\$900 Per Day

Automation Manager

Hired to scale testing practices across organisations, Automation Managers embed automation frameworks, and drive shift-left strategies. Employers want leaders who can balance the speed of delivery with the need for risk management, often operating at the intersection of QA, DevOps and security. Skills in governance, strategy design, and stakeholder management are highly valued, particularly in enterprises undergoing large-scale digital transformation.

This is a leadership-heavy role where influence and people management are as critical as technical understanding. Candidates often look for opportunities where they can have a significant organisational impact, particularly in shaping quality culture.

Gender Distribution:



13%



87%

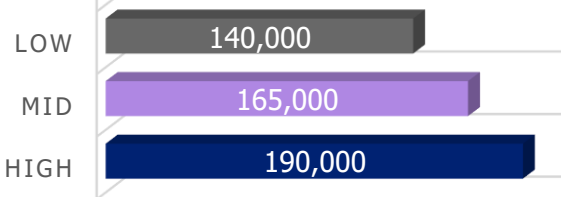
Average Tenure:

3.2 years

Demand:

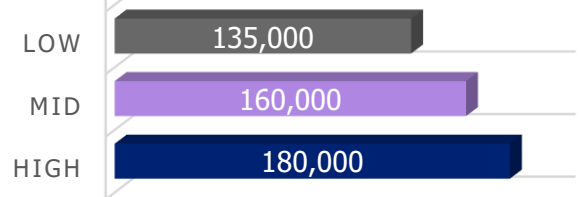
Very High

Melbourne



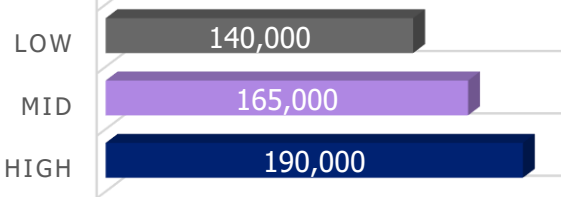
CONTRACT: \$800-\$1,075 Per Day

Brisbane



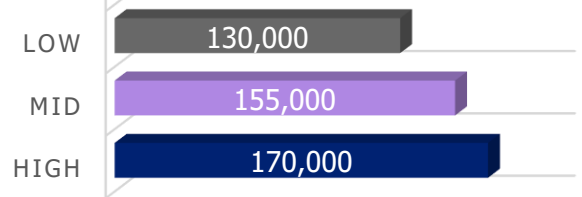
CONTRACT: \$760-\$1,025 Per Day

Sydney



CONTRACT: \$800-\$1,075 Per Day

Perth



CONTRACT: \$750-\$1,000 Per Day

Test/QA Manager

Test and QA Managers remain integral in enterprise environments, particularly where governance and cross-team coordination are critical. Employers are looking for managers who can align testing strategies with business outcomes, provide reporting at scale, and ensure teams adopt a blend of manual, automation and performance testing practices.

Skills in stakeholder engagement, oversight of automation initiatives and the ability to build strong test teams are in high demand. While start-ups and smaller product firms often fold QA into engineering, larger financial, healthcare and government organisations continue to recruit dedicated QA leadership. Candidates tend to prioritise influence, career progression, and the ability to modernise test practices in complex environments.

Gender Distribution:



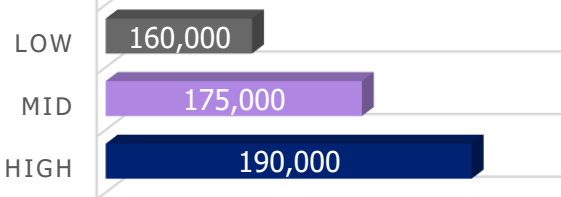
Average Tenure:

2.9 years

Demand:

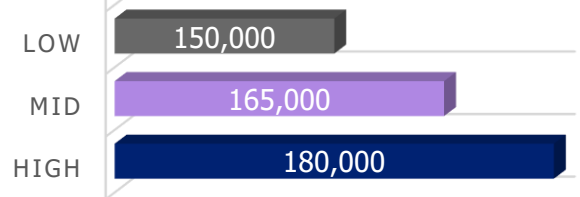
High

Melbourne



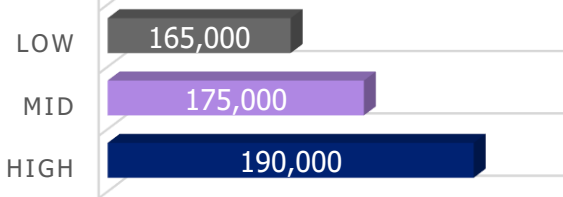
CONTRACT: \$900-\$1,025 Per Day

Brisbane



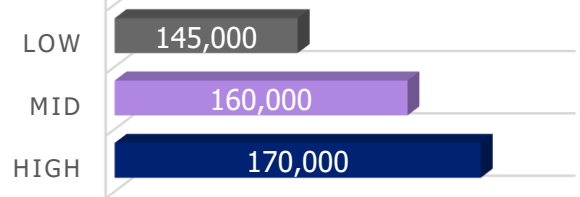
CONTRACT: \$855-\$975 Per Day

Sydney



CONTRACT: \$900-\$1,050 Per Day

Perth



CONTRACT: \$800-\$925 Per Day

Contact us



Office locations: Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth



(03) 8535 3100



info@techanddatapeople.com.au



www.techanddatapeople.com.au

TDP TECH
& DATA
PEOPLE
part of SEARCH4

