

NFP WORKFORCE PLANNING AND SALARY SNAPSHOT 2026/2027



Welcome

Welcome to NGO Recruitment's annual Workforce Planning Survey report. I'd like to thank the 120+ not-for-profit organisations (NFP's) that shared their views this year. Your insights give us a valuable picture of how the sector is currently approaching recruitment, retention and workforce planning.

This year's survey has revealed that recruitment is generally becoming easier, creating an employer friendly market with greater access to candidates. As we all know, most NFP's, NGO's, member organisations and charities successfully recruit through their own networks and job boards. That has always been the reality of our sector, and I certainly don't believe for a minute that organisations need an agency's involvement for every appointment.

What has remained constant throughout NGO Recruitment's 23 years in business is that senior, niche and persistently hard-to-fill roles remain high-risk appointments, regardless of the state of the candidate market.

Successfully filling these roles requires more than attracting applicants. It takes a thorough search for passive candidates, deep market knowledge and the expertise to properly assess the talent available. These are capabilities we have developed and refined through decades of specialist recruitment experience.

Taking a broader view of the report, having more candidates available in the market is also indicative of unemployment on the rise, and a heartless neo-liberal economic model that depends upon the loss of jobs to cool consumer demand and therefore reduce inflation. The last thing we need as a society is for job losses to be regarded as a positive. Surely the economic burden should be shifted away from job losses and mortgage holders through targeted fiscal policies and reduced corporate profit margins.

I hope again this year you and your colleagues find this report, alongside our salary insight, useful tools as you consider your workforce priorities in 2027.



Richard Green

Founder & Director
NGO Recruitment

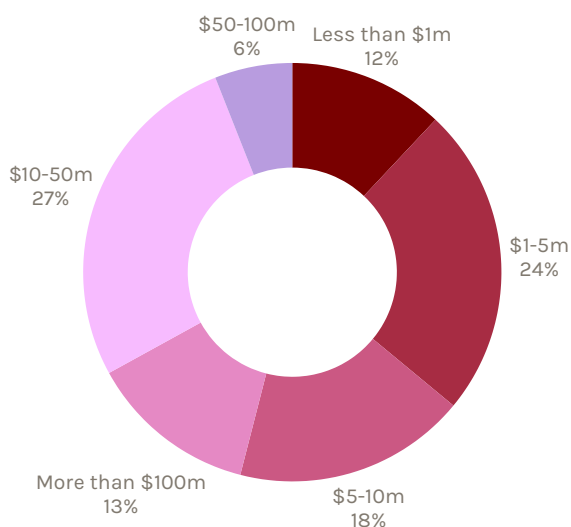
About the Survey

NGO Recruitment surveyed a select cohort of 120+ NFP professionals in June 2026, with strong representation across community groups, healthcare, education, industry and membership bodies, charities and indigenous organisations. More than 45% of respondents work in NFPs with annual revenues in excess of \$10 million. More than 40% of respondents operate with a mixed funding model, while a further 34% rely primarily on government funding.

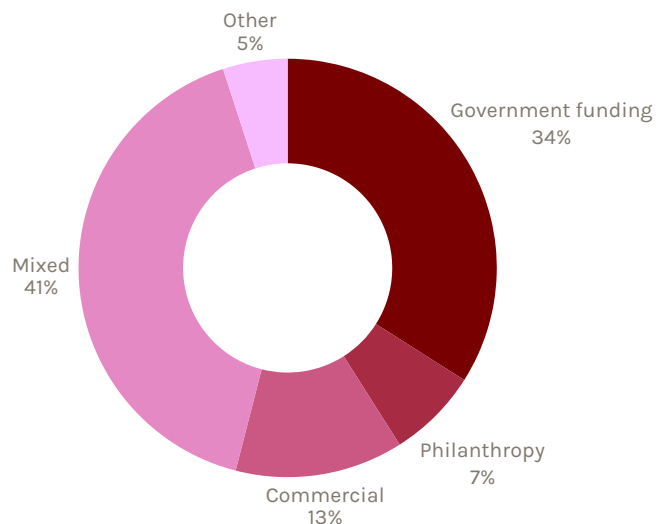
About the Salary Snapshot

This report also includes our latest salary snapshot based on our internal recruitment data, with average figures exclusive of superannuation, bonuses and benefits for most roles within the sector. Our data shows average salary increases of 3-7% over the past 18 months, broadly in line with the latest SEEK Advertised Salary Index*, which reports year-on-year salary growth of 3-5%.

NFP respondents in terms of annual revenue:



NFP respondents in terms of primary funding model:



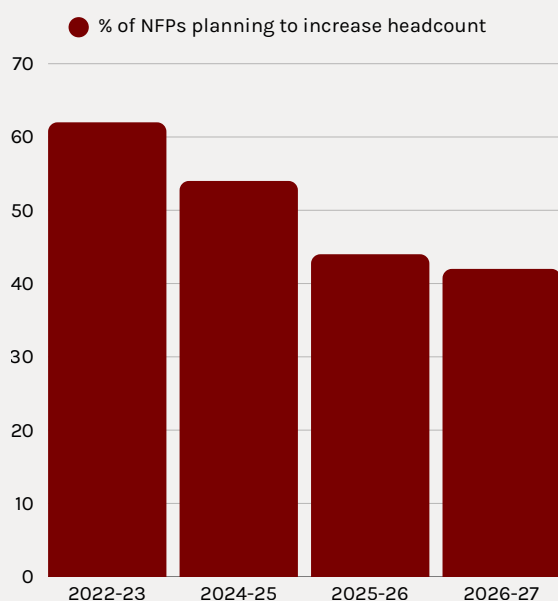
Recruitment is becoming easier – but organisations are not becoming more confident

The most obvious change in the data over the past three years is the easing of recruitment difficulty.

In FY2024/25, an estimated 63% of organisations reported that recruiting talent was difficult. That fell to approximately 37% in FY2025/26 and to 27% in FY2026/27.

In more good news, staff retention has also improved. Those who found it hard to retain staff fell from an estimated 47% to 24% and then to 22% this year.

Fewer NFPs plan to increase headcount in 2026/27 than previous years.



The same survey data shows that organisations are becoming more cautious about workforce expansion.

The proportion of organisations intending to increase headcount has declined from an estimated 54% in FY2024/25 to 44% in FY2025/26 and 42% in FY2026/27.

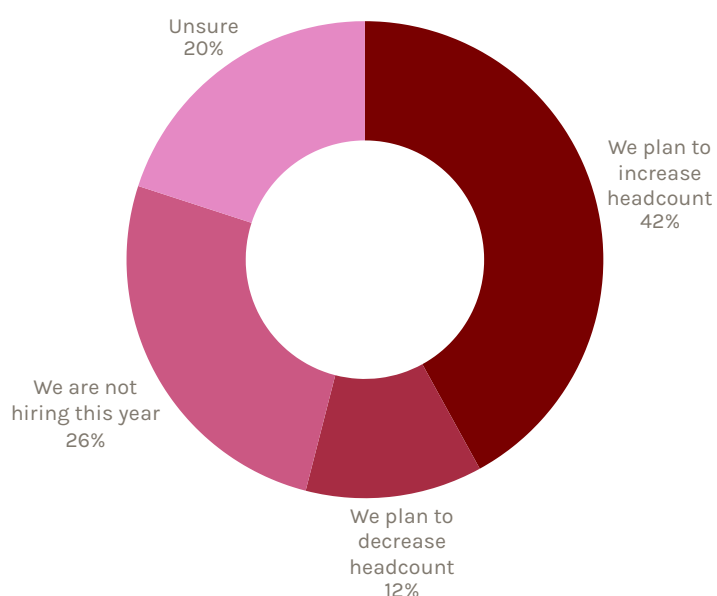
Meanwhile, 25% of survey responders report being in a hiring freeze, and approximately one in five organisations remain uncertain about their hiring plans.

The constraint is increasingly shifting from talent availability to financial confidence.

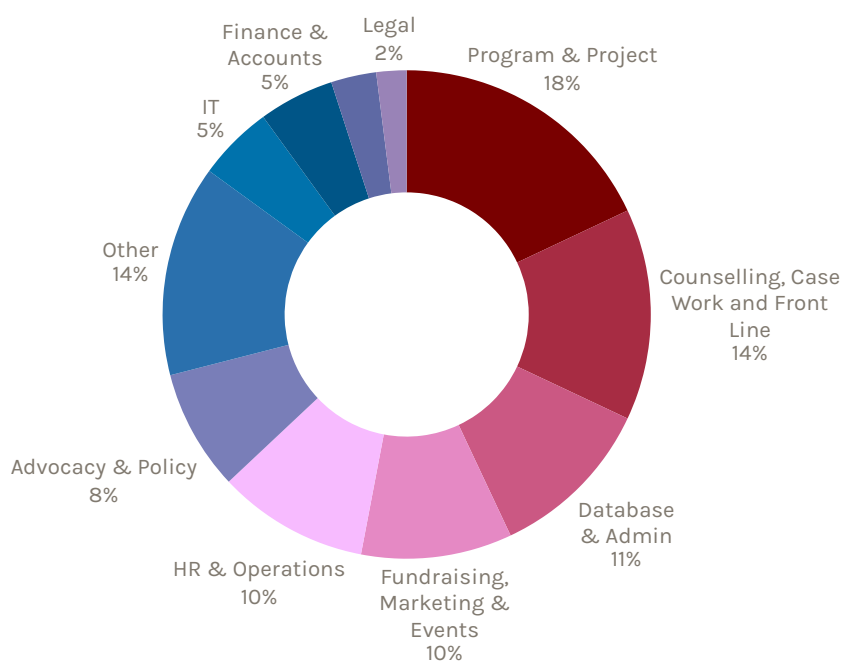
That interpretation is reinforced by the broader Australian labour market, where employers have also become more cautious about recruitment. The NFP sector is therefore responding not only to its own funding environment, but to a wider cooling in employment demand.



What are your hiring intentions for the FY 2026/27?



What types of roles are you planning on recruiting?



What roles will NFPs be hiring for?

Compared with the last two years, there has been a noticeable shift in the types of expertise organisations are seeking.

The most significant changes are in Advocacy & Policy and Database & Administration.

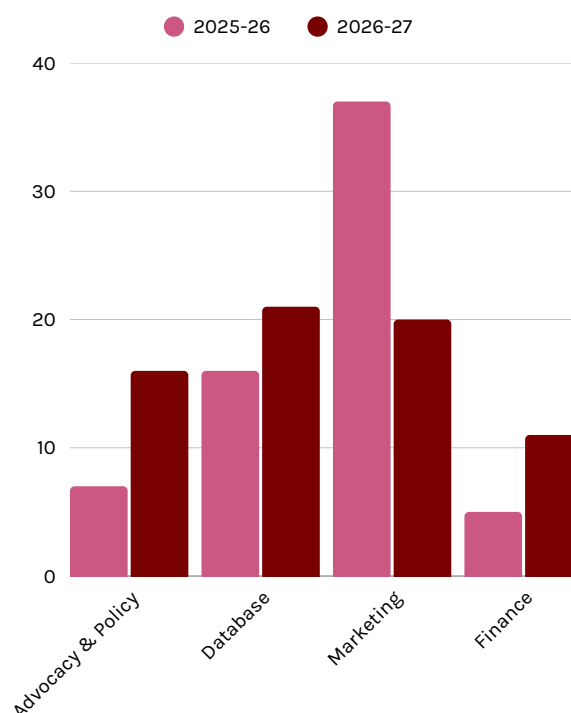
The proportion of organisations planning to recruit Advocacy & Policy roles has more than doubled, from around 7% last year to 16% this year. Database & Administration has seen an even stronger increase, rising from around 7% to 21% – almost three times the previous year's level.

The shift may reflect a growing focus on the operational, analytical and influencing capabilities needed to support effective services and programs in an increasingly complex environment.

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The organisations recruiting successfully will need to be clear about which capabilities they genuinely need to build, which skills can be developed internally and where external expertise is required.

At the same time, planned recruitment in Fundraising, Marketing & Events has fallen from around 37% last year to 20% this year, potentially reflecting greater caution around investment in these functions, as organisations continue to navigate funding uncertainty and revenue pressures.



Funding pressure is becoming the workforce issue to watch

Perhaps the most important shift in the 2026 survey is that the strongest warning signals are increasingly financial rather than purely workforce-related.

Funding challenges at-a-glance

Half of respondents – 51% – reported increased competition for grants and corporate sponsorships.

A further 41% reported greater difficulty securing funding from major donors.

30% identified greater reliance on government funding.

These funding pressures are occurring despite the overall scale and economic contribution of Australia's charity sector.

The ACNC's latest Australian Charities Report** recorded sector revenue of \$239 billion, an increase of 7.5% year-on-year. Yet expenses increased even faster, rising 8.6% to \$231 billion. Government funding remains the sector's largest revenue source at \$118 billion.

The message for workforce leaders is clear: a growing sector does not necessarily mean a financially unconstrained sector.

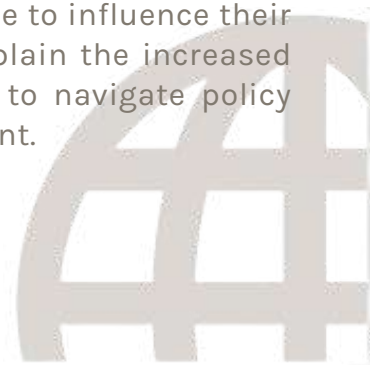
These pressures have direct workforce implications. As funding becomes more competitive and less predictable, workforce planning becomes increasingly challenging.

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Beyond politics

The survey also explored the impact of the 2025 federal election. For most organisations (54%), the re-election of the Labor government had minimal or no direct impact, while 21% reported a negative impact and 17% a positive one.

The findings suggest that the more significant workforce consideration is not the political situation itself, but funding certainty. For NFP leaders, government policy, funding arrangements and broader economic conditions will continue to influence their ability to plan and invest in their workforce. This may also help explain the increased focus on roles such as Advocacy & Policy, as organisations seek to navigate policy change, funding uncertainty and a more complex external environment.



The employment proposition is becoming broader than salary

Salary pressure has not disappeared simply because recruitment has become easier.

The survey data indicates that cost-of-living pressures continue to influence candidate expectations. At the same time, however, NFP organisations are increasingly looking beyond salary alone to attract employees.

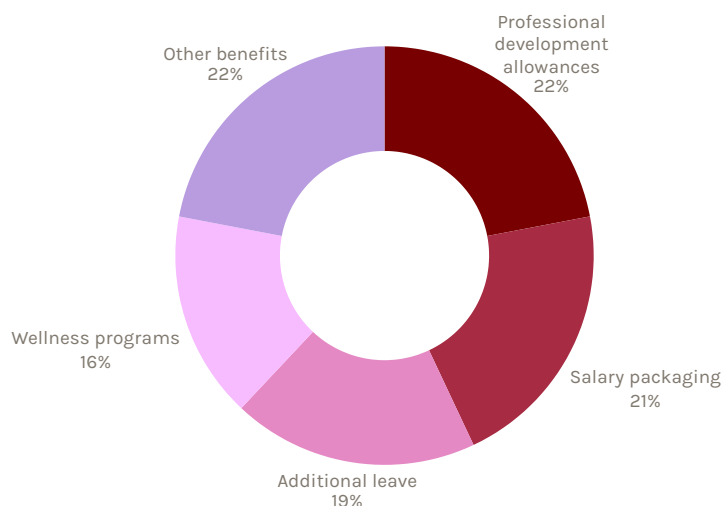
In 2026, professional development allowances were the most reported non-salary response, used by 58% of organisations, followed by salary packaging at 56%, additional leave at 49% and wellbeing programs at 41%.

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The competition for talent is not simply about who can pay the most.

It's about the overall value of employment: flexibility, development, wellbeing, leave, purpose and the quality of the working environment.

Additional benefits to offset higher salary expectations



For NFP employers, this creates both a challenge and an opportunity.

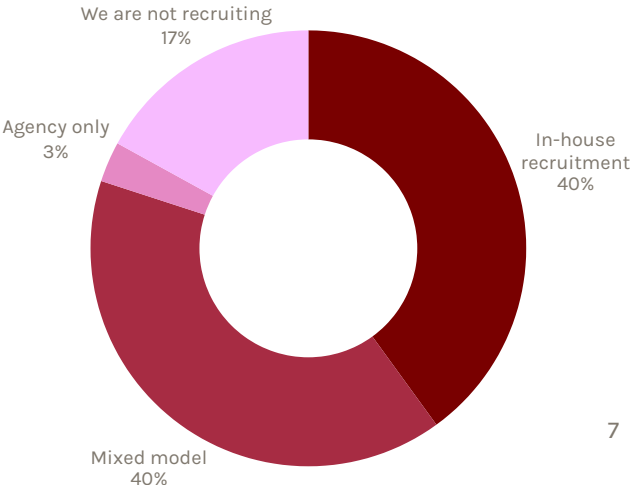
Organisations that cannot compete on base salary can try and attract quality talent if they understand what their people value and articulate that proposition clearly. At the end of the day though, offering a competitive salary is still very important.

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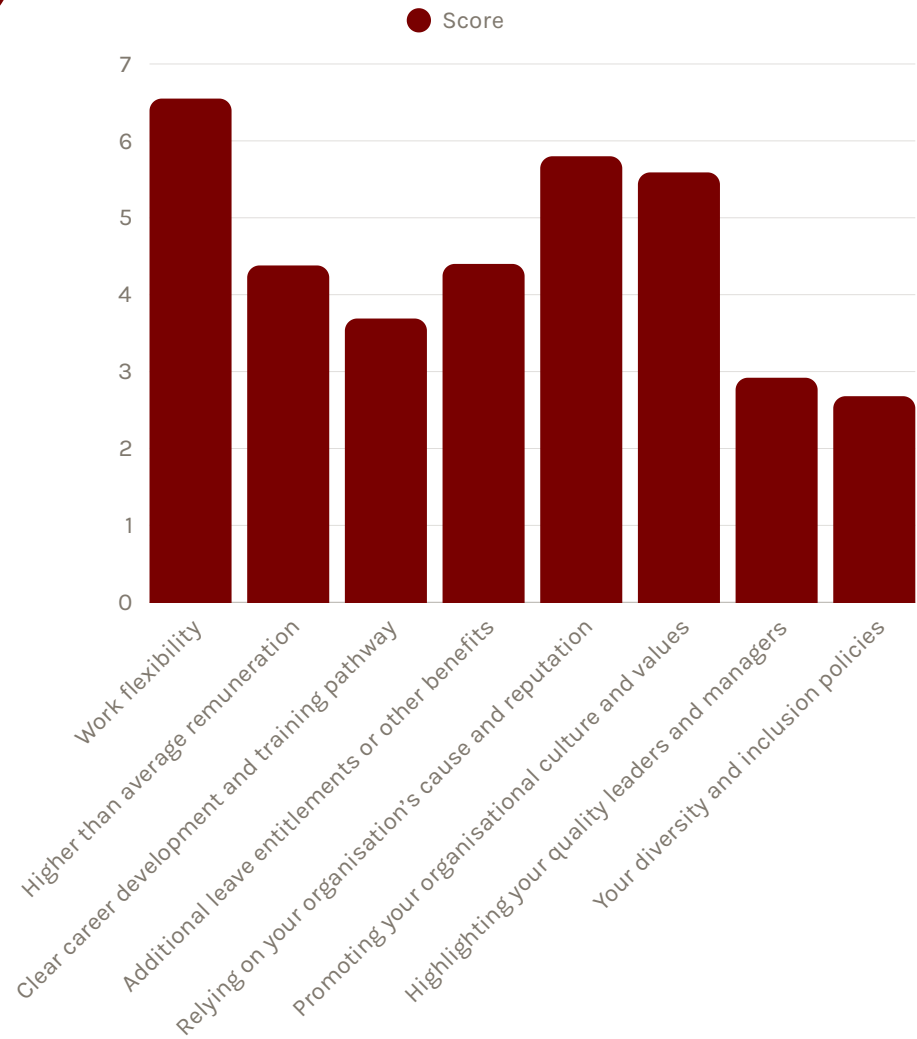


Talent Attraction

How is your organisation
currently recruiting?



Top talent attraction strategy



Flexibility has moved from competitive advantage to workforce expectation

If there is one finding that has remained remarkably consistent across the three latest surveys, it is the importance of flexibility.

Workplace flexibility has ranked as the leading reason employees leave organisations, ahead of remuneration, career progression and burnout. It has also remained the strongest talent-attraction lever reported by organisations across the three-year period.

In 2026, 84% of organisations surveyed are operating hybrid workplaces, while only 10% are fully office-based and 6% fully remote.

Hybrid work is no longer an experiment or temporary response to the pandemic. It has become a standard feature of the NFP employment market.

Remuneration: a widening conversation about pay

The survey also highlights a tension within the NFP employment market: organisations remain under pressure to provide competitive remuneration, but their capacity to respond through salary alone is constrained.

Across the three surveys, the proportion of organisations intending to provide some form of pay increase has remained relatively stable – approximately 84% in FY2024/25, 83% in FY2025/26 and 79% in FY2026/27. What has changed is the timing. In FY2024/25, an estimated 66% planned to provide increases within the first six months of the financial year. By FY2026/27, that had fallen to 36%, with 42% waiting until later in the year.

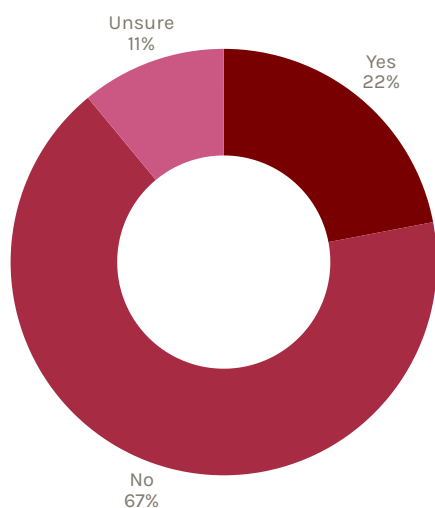
External salary data adds another dimension. Pro Bono Australia's 2026 Salary Survey*** reported a 9% increase in median NFP CEO base salaries between 2025 and 2026. Over the same period, national wage growth was approximately 4%.

The contrast is worth watching, although executive remuneration should not be assumed to represent salary movements across the broader NFP workforce.

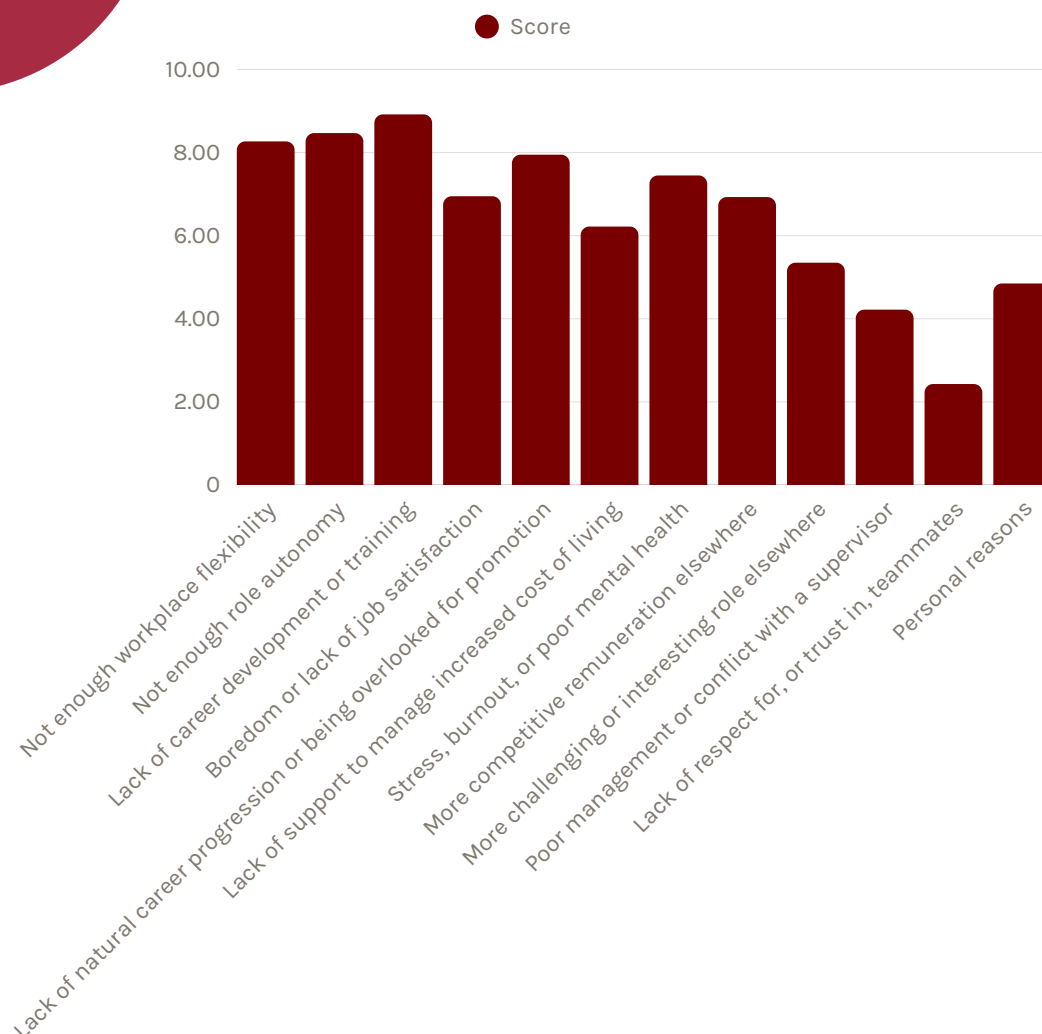


Employee Retention

Are you currently finding it hard to retain employees?



Top reasons why employees leave



NGO Recruitment's recommendations:

Even though we are experiencing a changing labour market with candidates more readily available, NFPs should continuously challenge their approach to recruitment to ensure those responsible for it internally do not fall into a false sense of security and mistakenly think that more candidates applying for roles means they are seeing quality candidates. A trap that we here at NGO Recruitment witness daily.

More candidates do not automatically mean better candidates. Organisations should focus on how they attract, assess and secure the people with the skills and experience they need.

Know your market.

Review salary expectations, competitor activity and the availability of specific skills before starting a recruitment process.

Strengthen your employee value proposition (EVP).

Purpose remains important, but employees will want to know what they actually gain from working with you. Work on your EVP.

Be realistic about flexibility.

When organisations may have less room to compete on salary alone, flexibility can be a strong differentiator.

Look beyond active jobseekers.

The strongest person for a role may not be looking for a new job. For senior or hard-to-fill positions, use specialist search agencies who will approach passive candidates and use their own networks.

Think workforce strategy, not just vacancy.

Consider which capabilities your organisation needs to build for sustainable growth, not simply which position needs filling today.

Challenge your recruitment process.

Rather than simply replicating previous recruitment processes, research, analyse and innovate.

Ultimately, winning the recruitment game in an employer-driven but financially uncertain market requires balance. NFPs may have greater choice of candidates, but funding pressures can make workforce investment harder. Those that understand their talent market, communicate their value clearly, make considered workforce decisions, and look beyond their usual networks will be better placed to secure the people they need, building a sustainable workforce.

References

* [SEEK Advertised Salary Index](#)

** [Australian Charities Report](#)

*** [ProBono Australia Salary Survey](#)



NFP Salary Snapshot



		Permanent Salary Range per annum K, AUD	Permanent Average Salary per annum K, AUD	Contract Rate per hour AUD
GOVERNANCE	Board Chair (remunerated)	23 - 50	37	/
	Non-Executive Director (remunerated)	15 - 30	23	/
EXECUTIVE	Chief Executive Officer & Executive Director	200 - 400	300	100 - 200
	Chief Operating Officer	175 - 250	213	80 - 150
	Chief Financial Officer	175 - 250	213	80 - 150
	Chief Marketing Officer	140 - 250	195	80 - 100
	General Manager	160 - 200	180	80 - 100
OPERATIONS & ADMINISTRATION	Operations Manager	100 - 130	115	60 - 80
	Head of Finance / Finance Manager	125 - 150	138	70 - 90
	HR / People & Culture Manager	120 - 180	150	70 - 90
	Learning / Education Manager	120 - 125	123	70 - 90
	Executive Assistant	90 - 120	105	50 - 75
	Training Coordinator / Specialist	88 - 90	89	50 - 60
	Accounts and Administration Officer	75 - 90	83	40 - 55
	Receptionist / Office Support	74 - 95	85	40 - 50
PROGRAM & PROJECT	Clinical Director	130 - 195	163	70 - 95
	Program Manager	100 - 150	125	60 - 75
	Project Manager	90 - 130	110	55 - 70
	Project Coordinator	80 - 90	85	45 - 60
	Clinical Coordinator	90 - 123	107	45 - 60
FRONTLINE	Counselling Coordinator	90 - 120	105	45 - 60
	Counsellor	90 - 110	100	50 - 70
	Caseworker	80 - 95	88	45 - 60
	Support worker	75 - 90	83	/
ADVOCACY, POLICY & LEGAL	Director Policy & Government Relations	150 - 190	170	75 - 95
	Principal Solicitor	150 - 155	153	75 - 95
	Community Lawyer	100 - 110	105	70 - 90
	Policy Advisor	85 - 100	93	60 - 70
	Policy and Project Officer	75 - 115	95	50 - 60
FUNDRAISING, MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS	Business Development Manager	110 - 150	130	50 - 65
	Director of Fundraising / Marketing	165 - 195	180	65 - 90
	Marketing / Communications Manager	120 - 125	123	60 - 75
	Fundraising Manager	110 - 125	118	60 - 75
	Philanthropy Manager	100 - 160	130	60 - 80
	Partnerships Manager	120 - 160	140	55 - 75
	Major Donor Manager	110 - 160	135	60 - 75
	Bequest Manager	90 - 125	108	55 - 65
	Campaign Manager	70 - 120	95	55 - 70
	Supporter Relations Manager	85 - 100	93	45 - 55
	Database Manager	80 - 120	100	45 - 55
	Digital Marketing / Communications Officer	110 - 115	113	45 - 60
	Supporter Relations Officer	85 - 90	88	45 - 55
	Database Officer	70 - 90	80	40 - 50
	Member Liaison Officer	75 - 98	87	45 - 55
	Memberships Officer	70 - 102	86	45 - 60
	Fundraising / Digital Fundraising Officer	80 - 95	88	45 - 55
	Partnerships Officer	80 - 97	89	45 - 55
	Individual Giving Officer	87 - 100	94	45 - 55
	Grants Specialist	65 - 80	73	55 - 75

All salaries and rates are exclusive of superannuation, bonuses or benefits. Figures collated from NGO Recruitment placements and market research in 2025-2026 FY.

About NGO Recruitment

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

NGO Recruitment is the executive search and recruitment specialist for Australia's not-for-profit (NFP) sector and for international NGOs operating within Asia Pacific. Since 2004, we have connected more than 600 NFP organisations with over 5,000 talented professionals, strengthening the leadership capabilities within the sector, supporting program delivery and creating more diverse and inclusive workplaces.

Our services include highly effective exclusive executive search, permanent, contract and interim recruitment solutions, and our board advisory practice is skilled at sourcing remunerated and volunteer board members for NFPs across the sector. We believe in taking a consultative approach to set you up for success. Our consultants will partner with you at each step of the search process.

With offices in Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane and a dedicated Asia Pacific desk, we will search across metropolitan and regional Australia and into the Asia Pacific. Our proven international capabilities allow us to source exceptional talent for specialist leadership roles.



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