market insight report

Talent, People & Recruitment Strategy in Australia's Sales Sector

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introduction

The Australian sales employment market has moved on from the aggressive, candidate-driven conditions of 2021–2023. FY26/27 is shaping up as a more measured, selective phase — but “selective” does not mean “cooling.”

Employers aren't paying less for sales talent. They're paying more precisely. Reward is increasingly tied to demonstrated commercial outcomes rather than tenure, title or potential, and the gap between what a strong performer can earn and what an average one can expect has never been wider.

Through Morgan Consulting's ongoing work placing sales talent across technology, industrial, healthcare, FMCG and logistics sectors, we are seeing this play out in three consistent ways: how fixed pay is being replaced by performance-based earnings, where genuine talent scarcity actually sits, and which regions and sectors are commanding a premium.

This report sets out what we're seeing in the market in FY26/27 and what it means for organisations building, retaining or restructuring high-performing sales teams.

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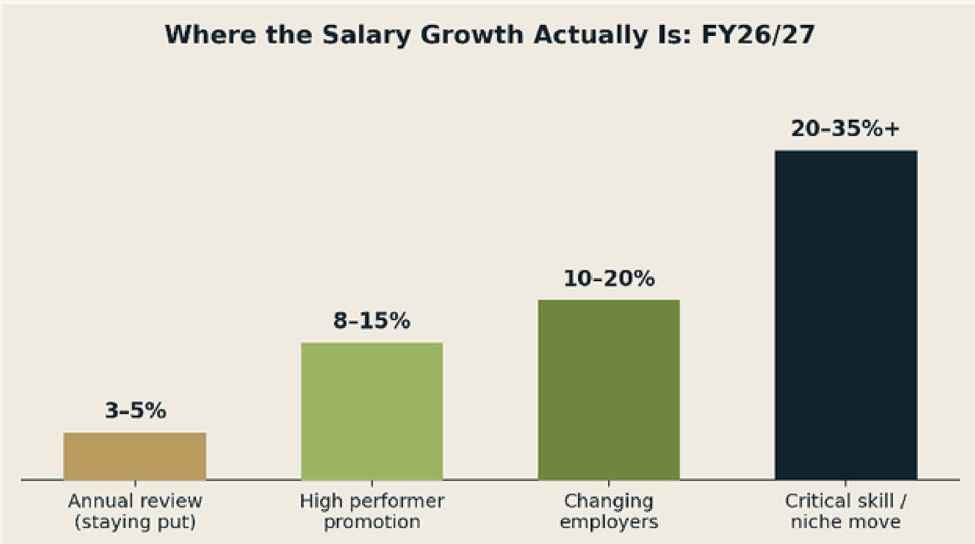
A Market Recalibrating, Not Cooling

Overall salary increase budgets across Australia have settled at around 3.5%–4.0% for FY26/27, down from the elevated increases seen during the post-pandemic talent shortage. Taken on its own, that figure suggests a flat year for sales remuneration.

It doesn't tell the real story. That headline number describes only what happens when someone stays in their current role. The moment a sales professional changes employer, is promoted into a critical position, or brings a scarce specialist skill set to the table, the numbers move very differently — and recruitment firms report employers remaining willing to increase offers by a further 6%–15% during negotiation for the right candidate.



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This is the defining feature of the FY26/27 sales market: the reward for staying still is modest and predictable, while the reward for movement, performance or scarcity is substantial. For hiring organisations, that means retention and internal mobility strategy now matter as much as external hiring strategy.

What's Driving Sales Talent Decisions in FY26/27

Employers Are Paying for Revenue, Not Potential

With economic conditions remaining cautious, organisations are prioritising hires who can demonstrably generate revenue over those who simply show promise.

Candidates with a track record of opening new markets, winning large accounts and building pipeline are consistently securing the strongest increases — well ahead of technically capable but less commercially proven peers.

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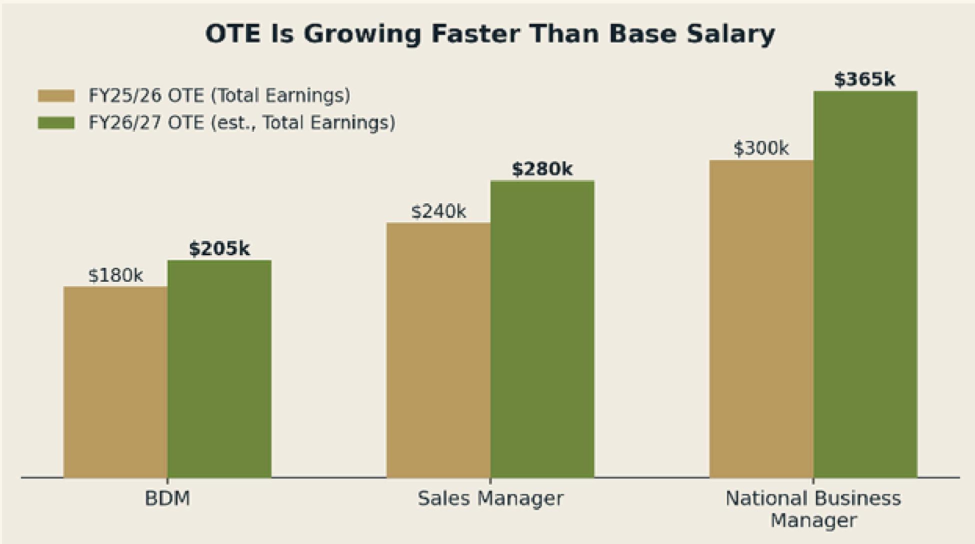
The Shift from Base Salary to On-Target Earnings

Rather than expanding fixed salaries, many employers are enhancing commission structures, introducing accelerators for overachievement, and using sign-on and retention bonuses to secure and keep top performers. Over half of Australian employers report increasing performance-based bonus offerings rather than relying solely on base salary growth.

The practical effect is that strong salespeople are experiencing significantly greater growth in on-target earnings (OTE) than in base salary alone — a trend that is reshaping how offers need to be constructed to be competitive.



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Sales Leadership Is the Genuine Shortage

Competition for junior sales talent has eased, giving employers more room to be selective at entry level. The real scarcity sits higher up the structure — at Sales Manager, State Manager, National Business Manager and Sales Director level, where organisations need leaders who can lift sales productivity, coaching effectiveness and CRM adoption while driving profitability, not just top-line revenue.

Private equity-backed organisations are particularly active in this segment, and growth here is increasingly tied to incentive plans and EBIT targets rather than base salary alone.

The Roles and Sectors in Highest Demand

Across our search work in FY26/27, candidate demand is concentrated in a consistent set of roles:

- Business Development Managers
- Technical Sales Engineers
- Key Account Managers
- National Business Managers
- Sales leaders with transformation experience
- SaaS and technology sales specialists
- Industrial and manufacturing sales professionals

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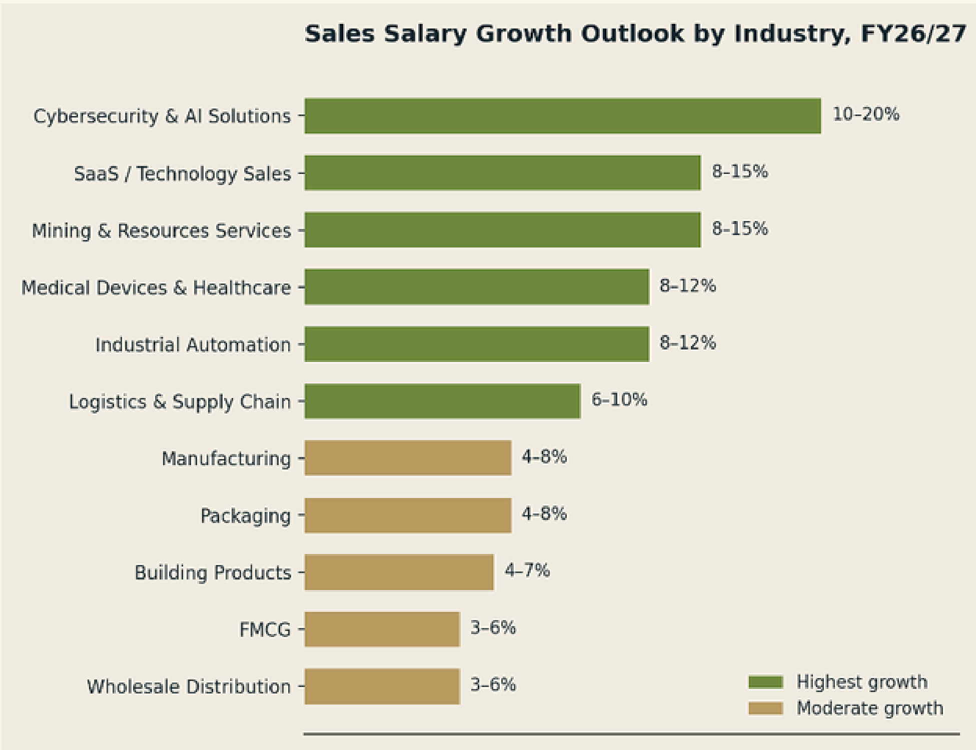
Business Development Manager pay is a good illustration of how sector-dependent sales compensation has become. Base salaries for BDMs span from around $95,000 in industrial and manufacturing environments to well over $200,000 in professional services — a reminder that “BDM” now covers a far wider range of seniority and revenue responsibility than the title alone suggests. Organisations benchmarking this role need to look at sector context, not just title, to set a competitive offer.

Industry growth outlook varies considerably. Technology-adjacent and specialist sectors are commanding the strongest premiums, while established, higher-volume industries remain healthy but face margin pressure that is limiting broad-based salary expansion.



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What Top Sales Talent Actually Look for in FY26/27

Through hundreds of conversations with sales professionals across the market, Morgan Consulting consistently sees a gap between what organisations believe attracts talent and what strong performers actually prioritise when considering a move.

Earning trajectory matters more than base salary alone. Candidates are weighing the full picture — OTE potential, accelerator structures and how uncapped the incentive plan genuinely is — rather than comparing base salaries in isolation.

Ownership and exposure are close behind. Many experienced sales professionals move not purely for money, but for access to larger territories, strategically significant accounts, or the chance to open a new market — opportunities that demonstrate career momentum rather than lateral movement.

> "The strongest salespeople move for the leader who will develop them and the plan that lets them win."

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Leadership quality is a frequently underestimated factor. Strong performers want to work for sales leaders they respect and believe will accelerate their development — in many cases, the strength of that relationship determines whether a hire occurs at all.

Speed and decisiveness in the process matter as much here as anywhere else in the talent market. High-performing sales candidates typically have multiple live conversations running simultaneously, and organisations that move slowly through interview stages consistently lose momentum — and candidates — to competitors who don't.

Where the Market Is Moving

Regional variance is now a meaningful part of the sales salary conversation. Sydney and Perth are both trading at approximately 9% above the national benchmark, Melbourne sits around 3% above, and Brisbane tracks close to the national average.

Perth's premium is closely tied to sustained activity in mining, resources and industrial infrastructure — sectors that continue to compete hard for commercially capable sales talent.

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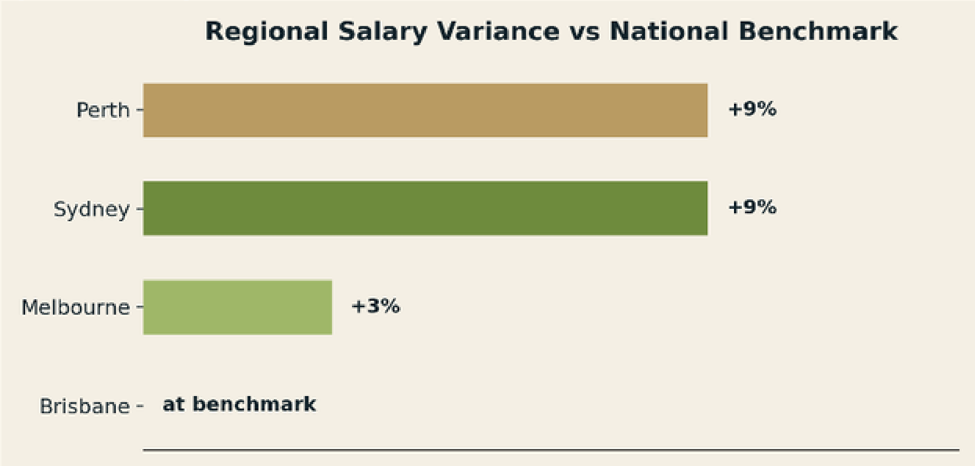

Morgan Consulting – Talent Intelligence & Search Methodology

Many of the strongest sales professionals in the market are not actively looking. They are usually over-achieving in their current role and are rarely visible through job advertising — they only move for a genuinely compelling opportunity, presented at the right time.

Rather than relying solely on traditional recruitment approaches, Morgan Consulting applies a structured talent intelligence methodology built specifically to identify and qualify high-performing, largely passive sales talent.

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Market Mapping

We build a comprehensive view of the talent landscape relevant to a specific role — identifying organisational structures across competing companies, analysing reporting lines, and mapping potential candidates long before a vacancy exists.

Video Interviews

Recorded video interviews give hiring stakeholders early insight into a candidate's communication style, energy and authenticity, significantly accelerating the early stages of evaluation.

Candidate Heatmaps

Structured heatmaps compare shortlisted candidates against agreed evaluation criteria — commercial capability, revenue track record, stakeholder engagement, cultural alignment and sector knowledge — so clients can quickly see relative strengths and gaps.

Recorded Reference Interviews

Where appropriate, we record reference conversations directly, allowing clients to interpret tone and context for themselves rather than relying on a second-hand summary of a candidate's track record and impact.

Strategic Talent Partnerships

In a market this selective, organisations benefit most from an ongoing partnership rather than a one-off search — giving Morgan Consulting the ability to continuously monitor the market, maintain relationships with emerging sales leaders, and flag opportunities before competitors even know a role exists.

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Conclusion

The sales talent market in FY26/27 is not simply a story of moderating salary budgets. It is a story of precision — employers rewarding proven revenue generators, leadership capability and scarce specialist skills far more decisively than they reward tenure.

The organisations that succeed will be those that:

- Build reward structures around OTE and incentive design, not base salary alone
- Identify and retain genuine sales leadership capability before it becomes a gap
- Move quickly and decisively when engaging high-performing candidates
- Understand regional and sector-level pay dynamics before they're forced to react to them

Firms that adopt these approaches will not only improve their ability to attract sales talent, but will also strengthen the long-term commercial performance of their teams.

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contact us

melbourne

Melbourne – CBD (Head Office)
Level 10, 356 Collins Street,
Melbourne VIC 3000 Australia

scoresby

Melbourne - South East
44 Lakeview Drive,
Scoresby VIC 3179, Australia

sydney

Sydney – CBD The
Commons 39 Martin Place
Sydney NSW 2000 Australia

brisbane

Brisbane – CBD
Level 6, 79 Adelaide Street,
Brisbane QLD 4000 Australia

Tony Henderson,
Director

thenderson@morganconsulting.com.au

MORGAN (1800 667 426)

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