

SALARY GUIDE

ENGINEERING



Salary & Insights Report
2025-2026

#BuildingTrust

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Introduction

Engineering remains a foundational pillar in Australia's infrastructure, energy, resources, and innovation economies. However, the pressures of skill shortages, shifting workplace expectations, and the increasing importance of flexibility and purpose are creating both risk and opportunity for employers.

Drawing on insights from over 1,600 professionals nationwide, this report offers a window into the mindset, motivations, and trends shaping the engineering talent landscape. From salary expectations to satisfaction drivers, we uncover what's changing and where employers need to adapt to remain competitive.

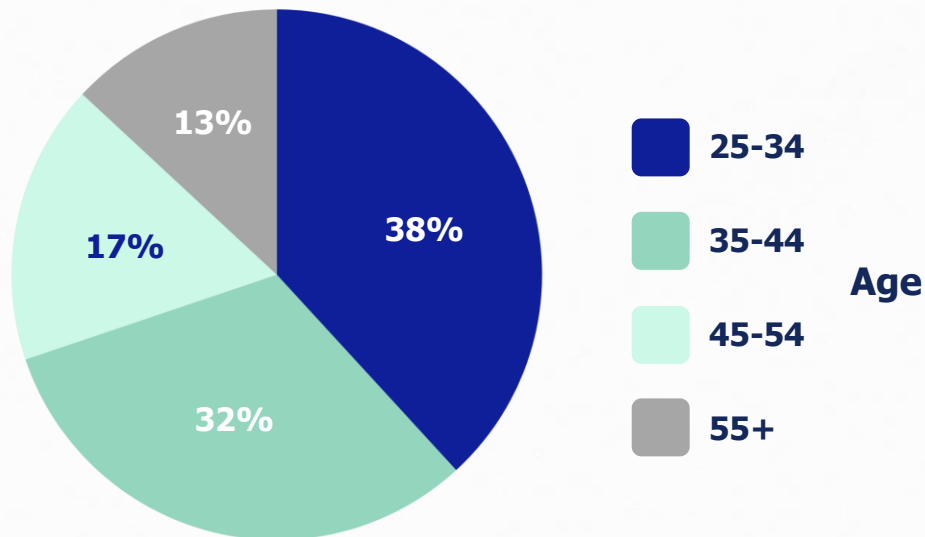
In this document, we analyse data across various disciplines and seniorities to better understand the lived experiences, motivations, and expectations of today's professionals. These findings are more than statistics; they are a mirror held up to the industry, revealing clear pathways to stronger retention, smarter attraction strategies, and more future-ready workplaces for employers.

For job seekers, this guide provides clarity on current expectations, motivators for job switching, and trends in workplace satisfaction. Combined with the expertise of our Engineering recruitment team, it provides practical, evidence-based direction for the year ahead.

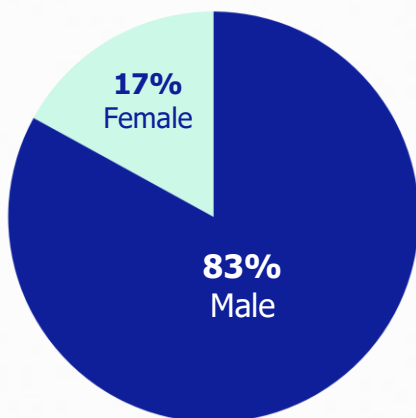
Our focus on quality assurance ensures the accuracy and reliability of our findings. While the Salary Guide serves as a general reference, please remember that individual factors and market dynamics may influence compensation. For personalised consultations, please contact our expert team.



Industry Demographics



This reflects a workforce concentrated in early-to-mid career stages — highly productive, skilled, and mobile. With only a modest portion aged 55+, the immediate retirement cliff isn't yet apparent, but this creates a false sense of security. Many of those now aged 35–44 will be stepping into leadership within the decade, but only if equipped with the right development support.

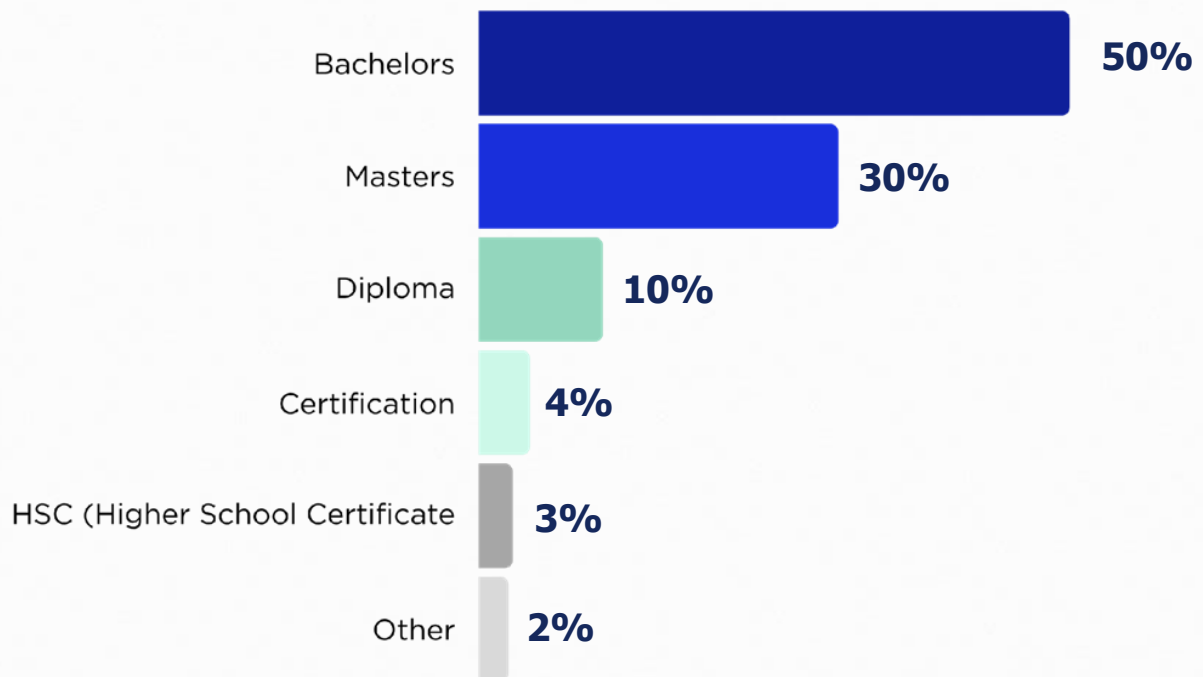


Gender Representation

Despite years of dialogue on diversity, these figures indicate that engineering remains a challenge in achieving gender balance. This is not simply a pipeline problem; it's a cultural and structural one. The challenge is not only attracting women into engineering but retaining them through the mid-career bottleneck, where flexibility, mentorship, and progression often fall short.

Reframe diversity initiatives as a talent necessity. Targets should be backed by flexible policies (such as remote or hybrid roles, job sharing), visible female leadership, and clear support pathways. Recruitment messaging must also shift — inclusive language, images, and representation on interview panels matter.

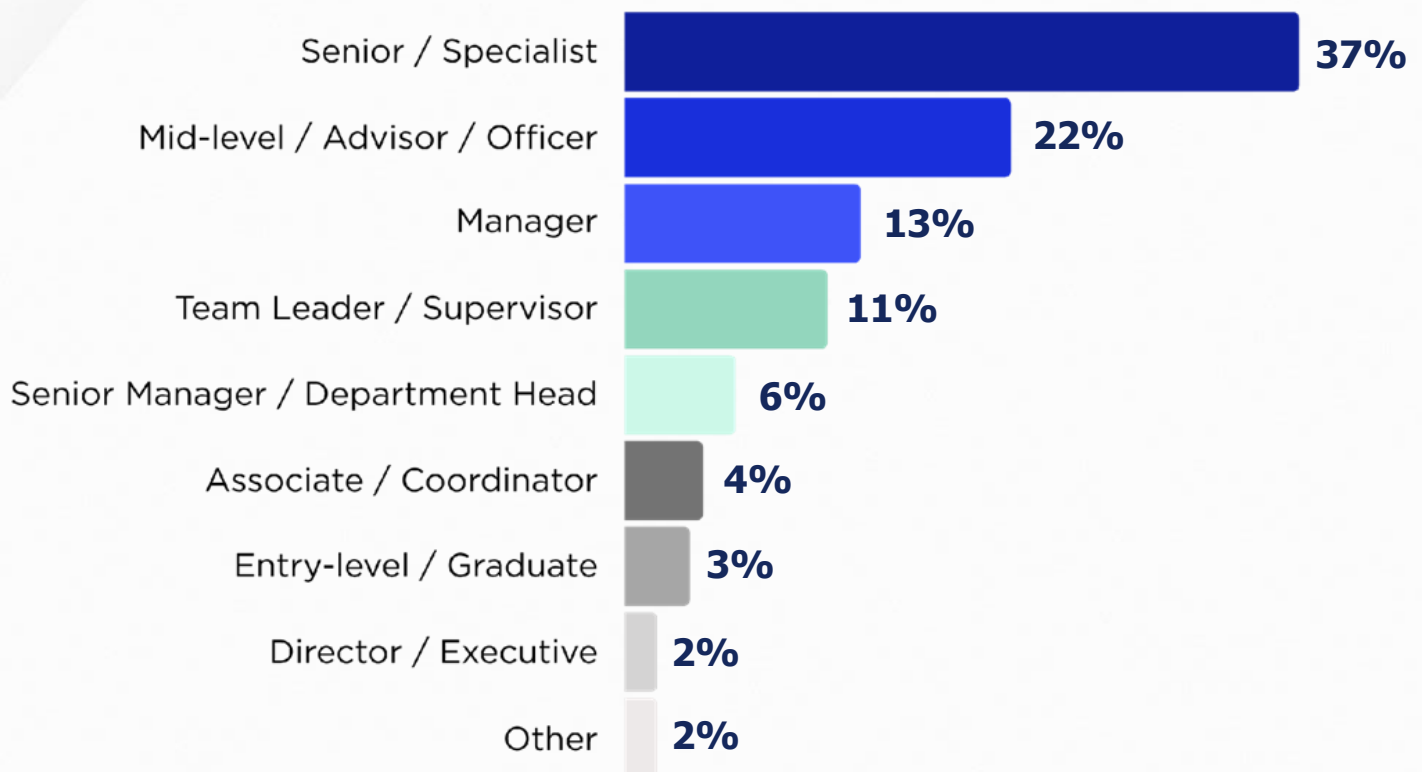
Education & Entry Pathways



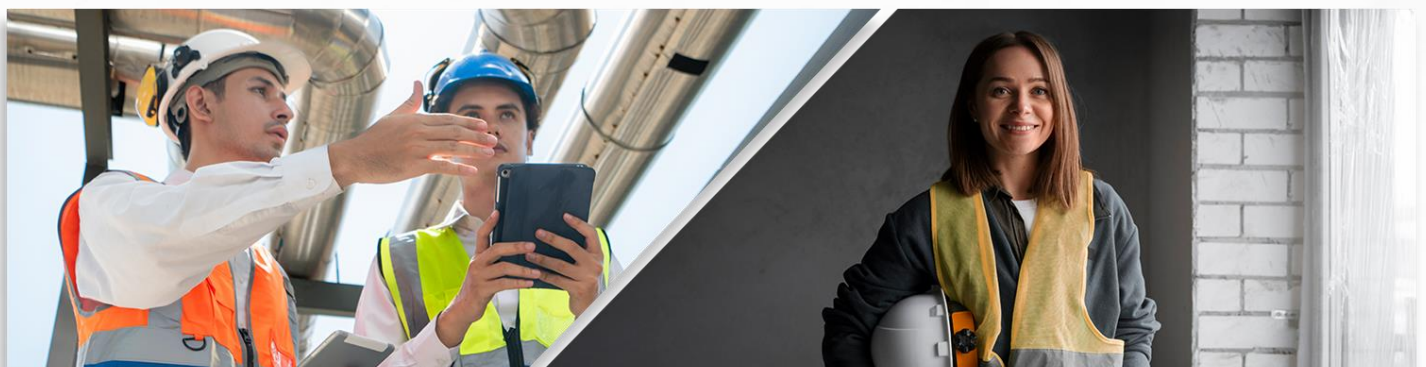
The engineering profession remains grounded in formal academic qualifications, with 80% of professionals holding either a Bachelor's or Master's degree. This affirms the field's strong reliance on university-based pathways and reinforces the perception that engineering remains a discipline with high entry standards.

As the industry faces a looming skills shortage, particularly in early-career roles, limiting access to only traditional academic pathways may constrain growth. Employers and industry bodies can work together to broaden entry channels by partnering with TAFEs, supporting lateral career changers, vocational qualifications and certifications. These alternatives can build new technical capability and provide agility in sourcing junior and mid-level talent.

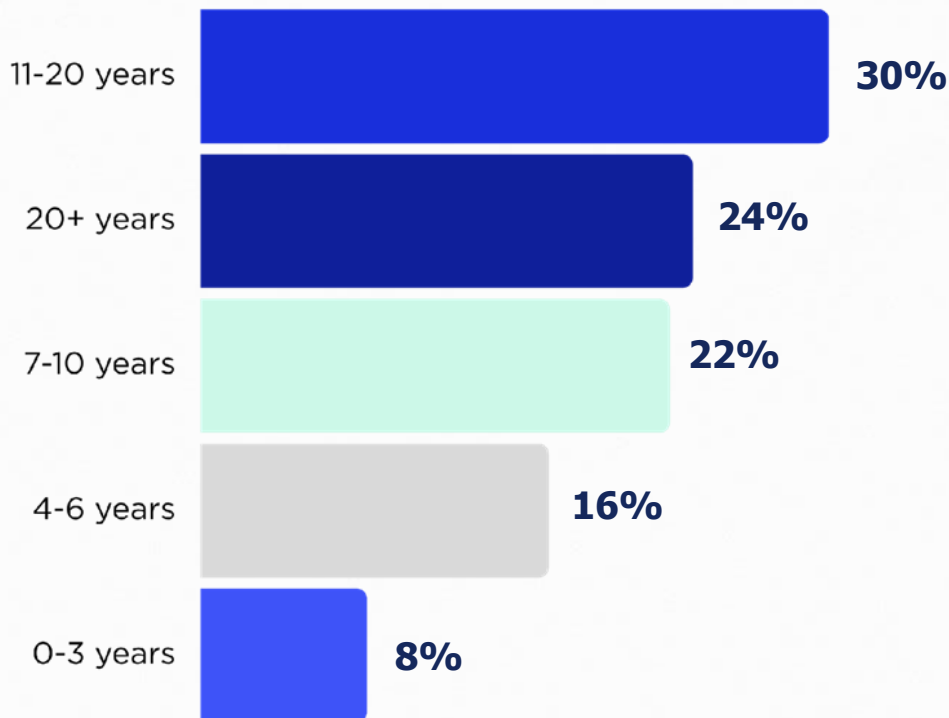
Experience, Tenure & Succession Pressure



A skew toward mid-to-senior professionals signals maturity, but it also reveals vulnerability. With so few graduates entering the sector, it's unclear who will backfill critical roles five years from now. Many companies rely on external recruitment to fill capability gaps at the expense of long-term internal development.



Experience

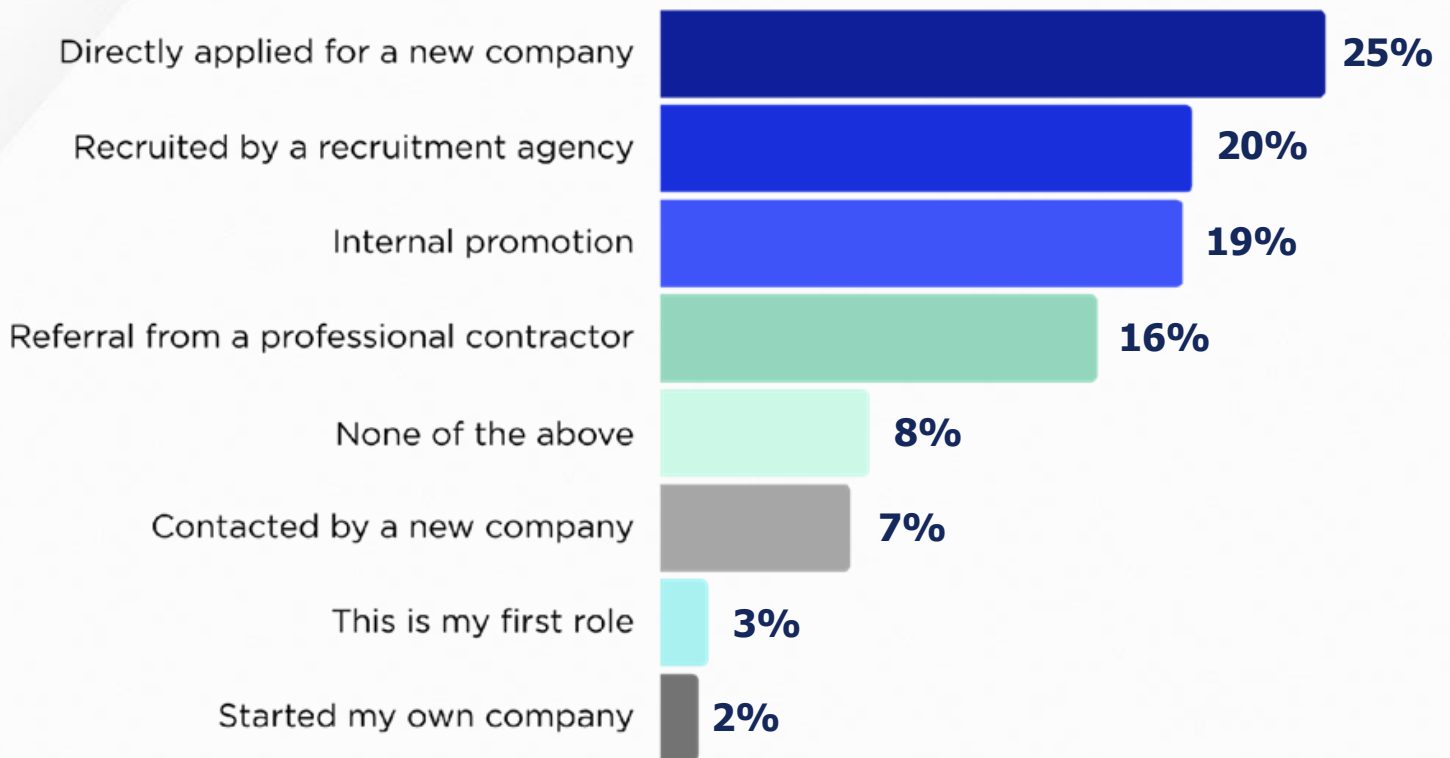


This layered insight reveals a workforce rich in technical experience, with nearly half of the respondents having more than 11 years in the field. This is a clear strength, offering employers deep expertise, leadership potential, and a steady hand on complex projects. However, the small proportion of early-career engineers (just **8%** with fewer than three years of experience) suggests that the pipeline of emerging talent is not keeping pace with future workforce needs.

Rather than indicating an immediate crisis, this points to an opportunity: organisations that actively invest in junior development now can gain a long-term competitive edge. Early-career professionals bring fresh perspectives, digital fluency, and the adaptability needed to thrive in rapidly evolving environments - qualities that complement and extend the capability of senior staff.

Recommendation: Begin mapping succession risks proactively. For every senior engineer, evaluate whether junior staff are being meaningfully mentored, whether their knowledge is being documented, and whether learning is built into project structures. Where mentoring is informal or inconsistent, formalise it through structured programs and visible incentives. This will not only safeguard institutional knowledge but also boost engagement and retention among both junior and senior team members.

Work Patterns & Employment Models



The spread shows a near-equal split between internal mobility and external hiring. Interestingly, recruitment agencies outpaced direct applications, underscoring their influence and reach in the engineering space. Internal promotion remains a vital attraction and retention tool, but only for those with clearly structured career paths.

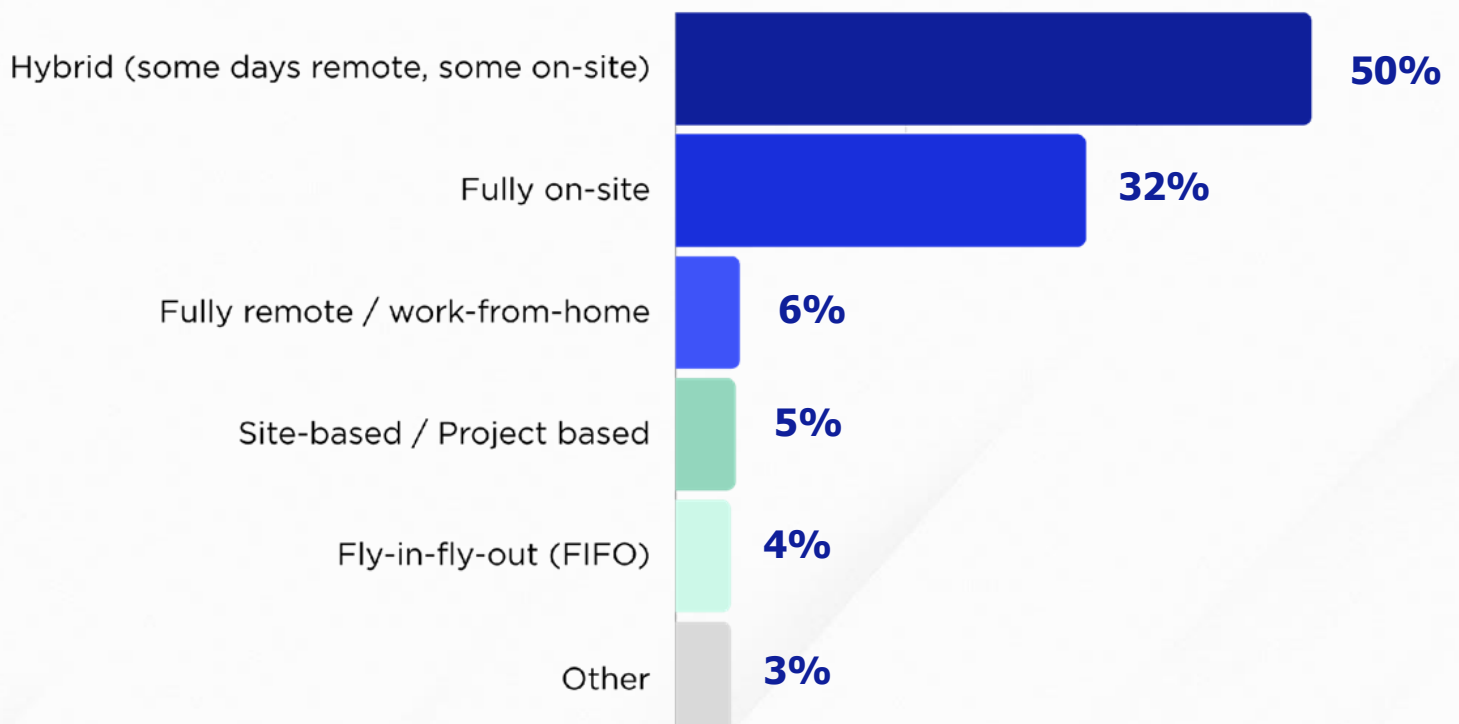
Companies can partner closely with specialist agencies that understand niche roles and technical language. Simultaneously, establish clear frameworks for internal promotion to retain rising stars. A lack of visible opportunities is one of the biggest triggers for mid-career engineer turnover.

Engineering remains one of the most stable sectors in white-collar employment. Unlike tech or marketing, where freelance and portfolio work are on the rise, most engineers are still tied to traditional models. However, the **8%** temp/contract workforce still represents important flexibility, especially on projects with fluctuating scopes or funding cycles. **4%** are part-time and **88%** are on permanent full-time roles.

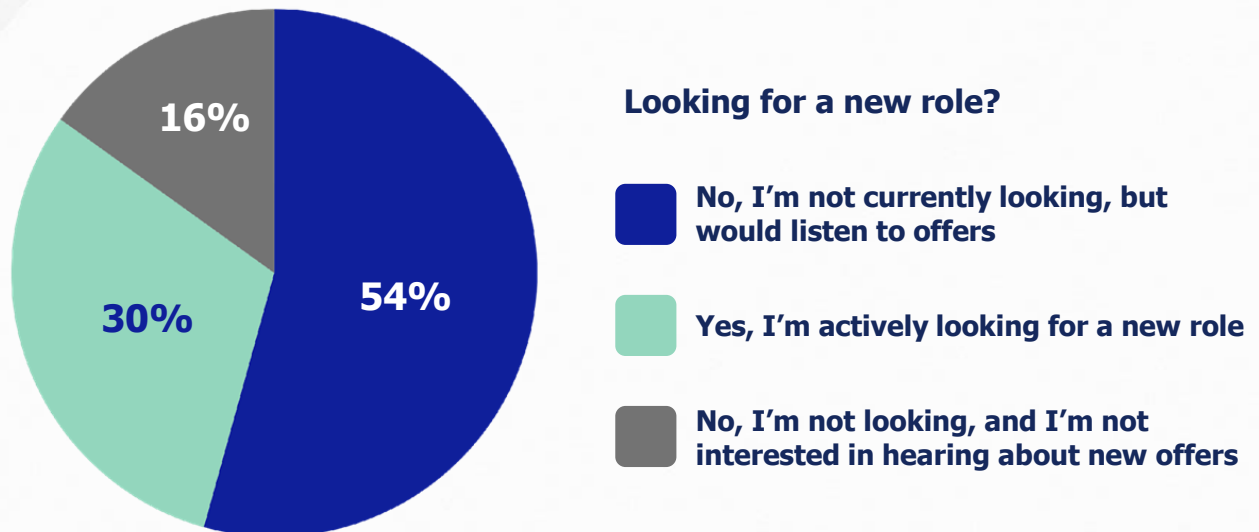
While full remote work is rare, hybrid work has now become the standard. This is a remarkable shift for an industry historically defined by on-site presence, particularly in disciplines such as civil, infrastructure, or mechanical engineering.

Recommendation: Avoid all-or-nothing approaches. Even one remote day per week can improve retention. Employers should be explicit about their flexibility upfront in job descriptions — vague promises won't attract top talent.

Employment Status



Engagement & Motivation to Move



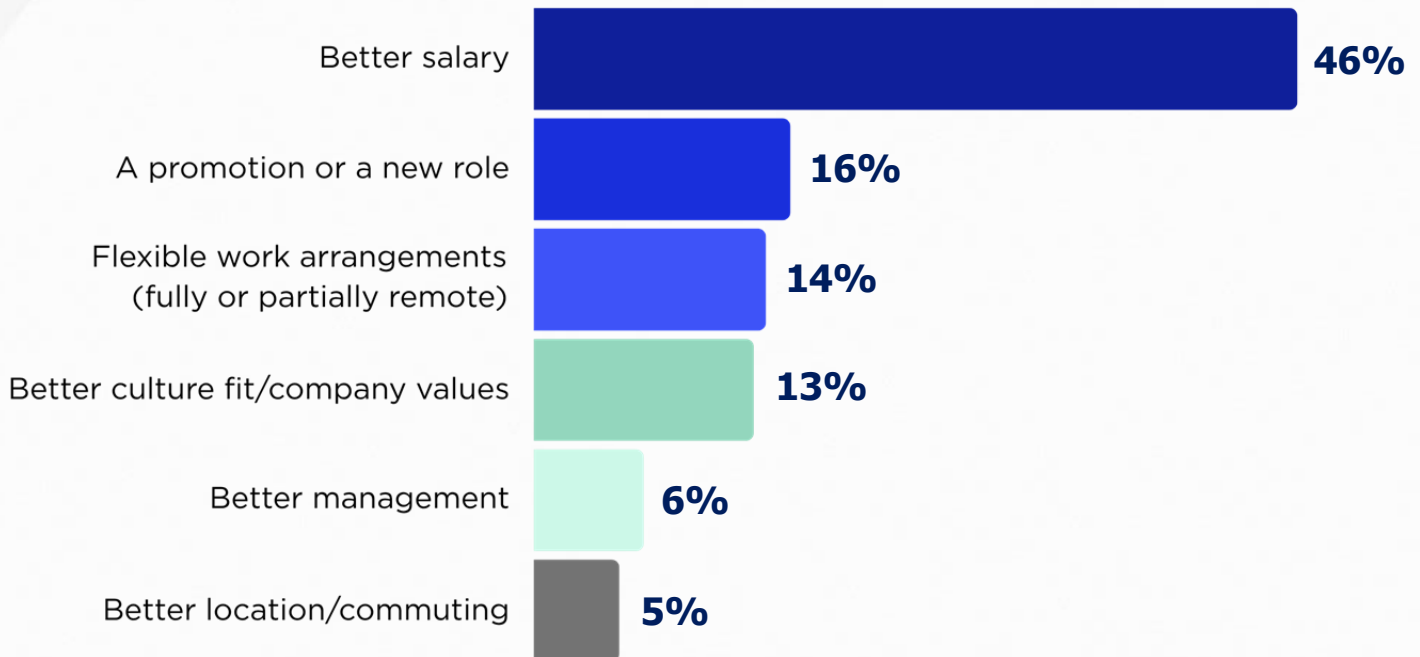
Nearly half of all engineering professionals (**45%**) have joined their current company within the past two years, highlighting a highly mobile workforce and a clear trend toward shorter tenures. In contrast, only **8%** have remained with their employer for over a decade, suggesting that long-term loyalty is increasingly rare in the sector.

This shift highlights the importance of proactive retention strategies, as even experienced staff members are often open to new opportunities. This confirms what many have felt anecdotally — turnover is high, and long-term tenure is the exception. In a talent-short market, retention has become the new recruitment.

The **84% openness rate** to new job opportunities highlights the fluidity of the current workforce. Even "happy" engineers might leave for better packages, environments, or opportunities for advancement.

Retention should be viewed as a proactive form of recruitment. Offer internal mobility before staff look elsewhere. Run regular stay interviews and build tailored EVP campaigns for your own team.

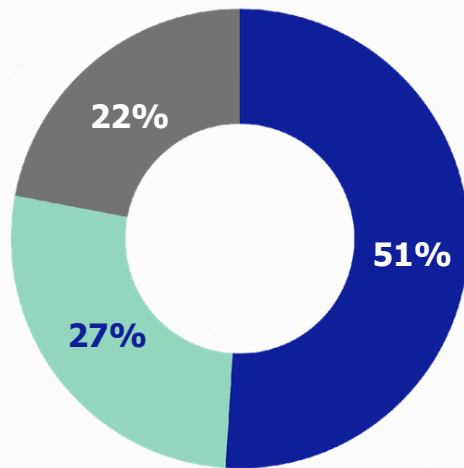
What Drives Engineers to Leave



Salary remains the top lever, but it's not isolated. Career stagnation and a lack of flexibility are increasingly prompting engineers to reevaluate their roles, especially as project timelines extend and burnout rates rise. A total package approach is needed: competitive salary, growth opportunities, and flexibility. These are no longer perks, but expectations.

One in three engineers prioritised something other than pay — whether it's career progression, flexibility, or culture — as their primary reason for changing roles. This reinforces that while remuneration is critical, it's only part of the story. In an environment where expectations are evolving, companies must take a holistic view of what keeps top talent engaged and recognise that for many, how they work and who they work with matters just as much as what they earn.

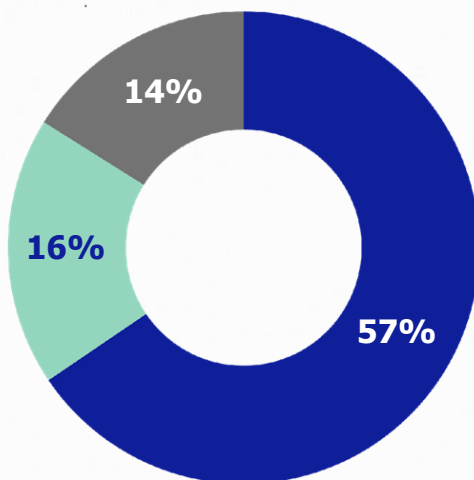
Remuneration, Benefits & Expectations



Pay Rise History

- Received a raise in the last year
- Have not had a raise at their current company
- Had one over a year ago

Promotion opportunities appear uneven across the engineering sector, with **41%** of professionals having been promoted within the past two years, while the remaining **59%** have not experienced any advancement during that time. This imbalance may indicate limited internal mobility in some organisations, potentially contributing to disengagement or turnover, particularly among mid-career professionals seeking growth and recognition. Many professionals contribute at a high level without experiencing upward mobility — a frustration that compounds with each performance cycle.



Bonus Access

- Receive no bonus
- Based on individual performance
- Tied to company performance

The majority of engineers are paid a fixed salary, with little financial upside tied to results. This can breed stagnation, particularly for high performers.

Employers should consider introducing even modest bonus structures to reward performance. Transparency is key, and unclear metrics lead to disengagement. For technical staff, performance doesn't have to mean sales; it could be tied to delivery, innovation, or mentoring.

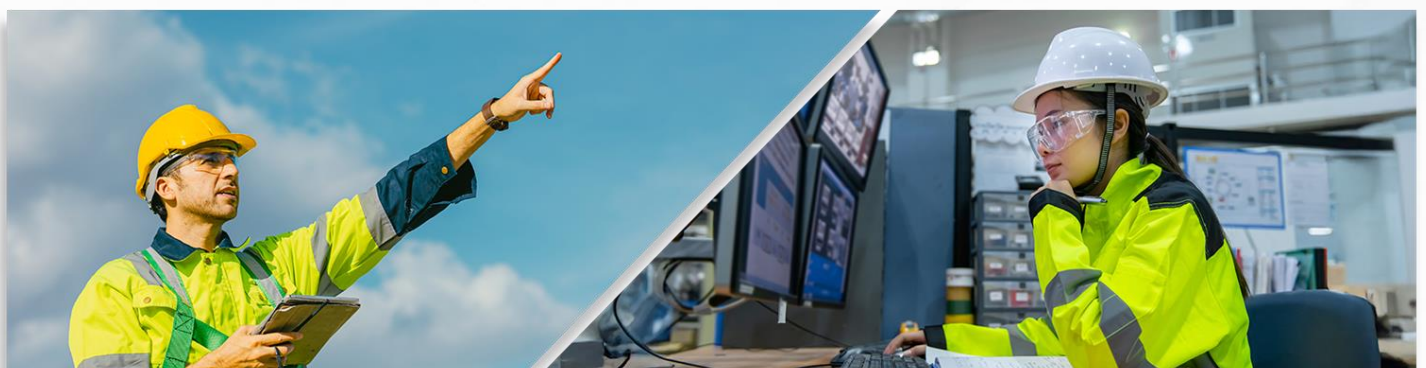
Pay Expectations

43% of engineering professionals believe they are being paid at market rate. The remaining **57%** are either unsure (**32%**) or feel they are underpaid (**25%**), highlighting a widespread lack of clarity or confidence around remuneration.

Despite this, **38%** of respondents expect a pay rise in the near future, while nearly half (**46%**) are unsure. Just **15%** say they are not expecting an increase at all.

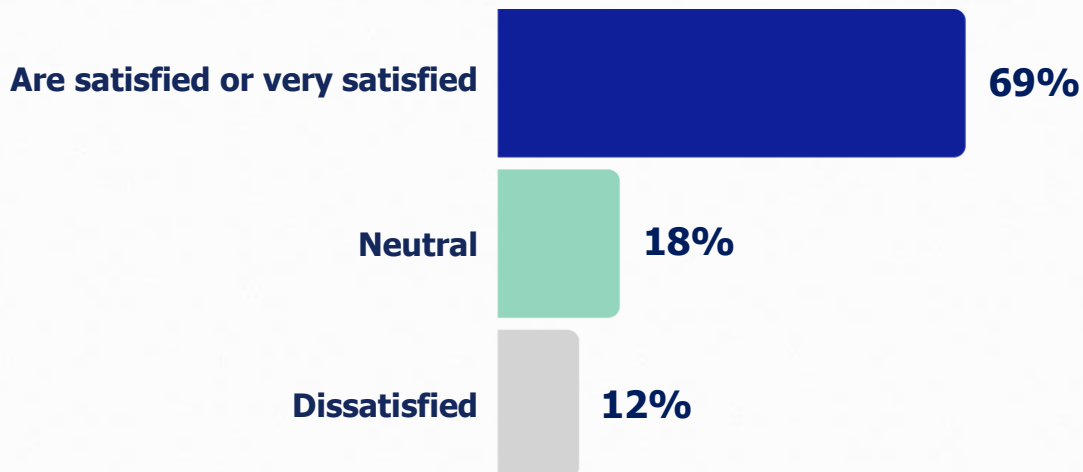
This disconnect between salary perception and pay expectations presents a clear challenge. When employees are unsure whether their pay is competitive — but still anticipate a raise — employers risk dissatisfaction and turnover if those expectations aren't met.

Recommendation: Address pay perception through clearer communication around salary benchmarking and review processes. Even when budgets are tight, transparency builds trust and helps retain valuable staff in a competitive market.



Wellbeing, Work-Life Balance & Satisfaction

Work-Life Balance



These are healthy numbers — especially in project-based environments — but neutrality can be a red flag. A "neutral" employee is quietly disengaged and more likely to leave without warning.

Overall Role Satisfaction

This is a moderate result — engineers are neither disengaged nor thriving. Most sit in the "comfortable but curious" category, open to being poached or pivoting.

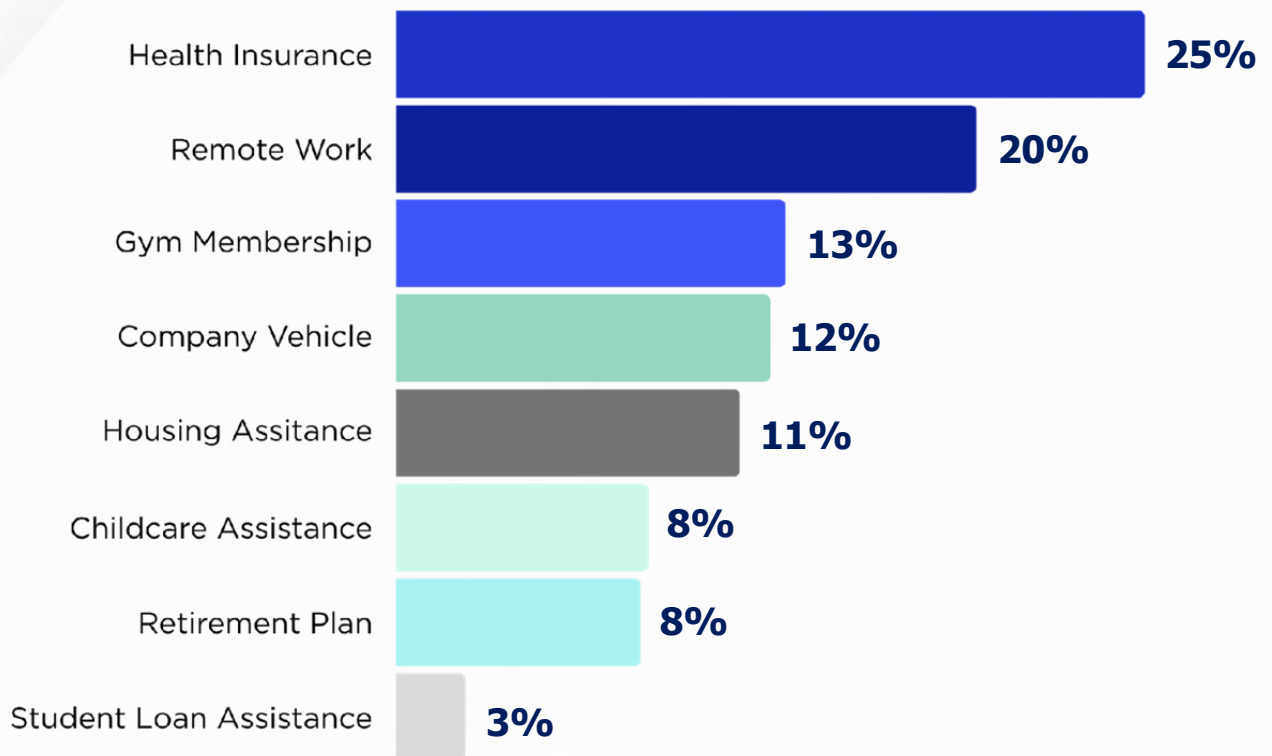
Employers can go beyond satisfaction surveys. Engagement stems from visibility, autonomy, and opportunities for growth. Ensure team members understand how their work contributes to project and organisational outcomes.

6.2/10



Average satisfaction score

Desired Benefits



While salary remains a core priority for engineers, non-financial benefits also play a key role in overall job satisfaction and decision-making. When asked what additional benefits they would most like to receive, respondents indicated a clear preference for support that enhances their well-being, lifestyle, and financial security.

This data reflects a broader shift in employee expectations — engineers are increasingly seeking holistic packages that support both their professional and personal lives. Health insurance and remote work flexibility, in particular, now rival salary as key components of the total compensation package.

Employers seeking to differentiate themselves in a competitive talent market should assess how their benefits compare to these expectations. Offering even one or two of the top-requested perks — such as health cover or hybrid flexibility — can create a strong value proposition, especially for mid-career professionals weighing multiple offers. Where budget constraints exist, consider low-cost, high-impact benefits like flexible scheduling, mental health days, or subsidised fitness programs.

Conclusion

The 2025–26 Engineering Salary Guide highlights a sector in transition — one where tradition meets transformation. Engineers today are highly mobile, highly skilled, and increasingly aware of their value in a competitive market. With 85% of professionals either actively seeking or open to new opportunities, the need for meaningful engagement, fair compensation, and growth pathways has never been greater.

For employers, these findings offer a roadmap to attract and retain talent more effectively. It's clear that salary alone is no longer enough. Flexibility, leadership development, wellbeing support, and career clarity are now key components of a compelling employment proposition. The data also raises a red flag on the underrepresentation of early-career professionals — a challenge that, if unaddressed, could strain future project pipelines and leadership succession.

At the same time, for engineering professionals, this guide offers valuable benchmarking and insight into how peers across the industry are experiencing work. From pay perception to job satisfaction, from benefits expectations to promotion rates, the data helps individuals understand where they stand — and what they should be asking for. Whether negotiating a raise, considering a new opportunity, or reflecting on career progression, professionals can use these insights to make more informed, confident decisions.

Ultimately, the goal is shared: to build a sustainable, inclusive, and forward-looking engineering workforce — one where both employers and employees are equipped with the information they need to thrive. For more information and to access all our guides, visit our website below:

designandbuild.com.au



SALARY GUIDE

Engineering Consultancy

AVERAGE BASE SALARY

FOR 12
MONTHS

AUD

EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Principal Engineer

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$150,000 - \$230,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$120,000 - \$220,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$130,000 - \$220,000
WA - Perth	\$140,000 - \$240,000

Graduate Engineer

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$70,000 - \$120,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$65,000 - \$115,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$75,000 - \$120,000
WA - Perth	\$75,000 - \$125,000

Senior Engineer

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$110,000 - \$210,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$100,000 - \$200,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$110,000 - \$180,000
WA - Perth	\$120,000 - \$220,000

SALARY GUIDE

Engineering Consultancy

AVERAGE BASE SALARY

 FOR 12
MONTHS

AUD

EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Design Manager

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$130,000 - \$210,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$130,000 - \$210,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$135,000 - \$190,000
WA - Perth	\$140,000 - \$210,000

Senior Designer

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$90,000 - \$190,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$80,000 - \$180,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$90,000 - \$170,000
WA - Perth	\$100,000 - \$200,000

Designer

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$90,000 - \$135,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$65,000 - \$115,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$90,000 - \$140,000
WA - Perth	\$85,000 - \$140,000

SALARY GUIDE

Engineering Consultancy

AVERAGE BASE SALARY

FOR 12
MONTHS

AUD

EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Project Manager

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$100,000 - \$200,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$90,000 - \$190,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$90,000 - \$140,000
WA - Perth	\$110,000 - \$210,000

Senior Drafter

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$90,000 - \$135,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$70,000 - \$130,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$75,000 - \$130,000
WA - Perth	\$80,000 - \$140,000

Drafter

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$65,000 - \$100,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$45,000 - \$95,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$50,000 - \$110,000
WA - Perth	\$55,000 - \$105,000

SALARY GUIDE

Engineering Contractors

AVERAGE BASE SALARY
FOR 12 MONTHS
AUD
EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Senior Project Manager	
Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$200,000 - \$260,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$180,000 - \$250,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$180,000 - \$270,000
WA - Perth	\$180,000 - \$260,000

Project Manager	
Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$150,000 - \$250,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$140,000 - \$240,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$150,000 - \$250,000
WA - Perth	\$160,000 - \$230,000

SALARY GUIDE

Engineering Contractors

AVERAGE BASE SALARY
FOR 12 MONTHS
AUD
EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Senior Project Engineer

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$120,000 - \$240,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$130,000 - \$250,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$140,000 - \$260,000
WA - Perth	\$150,000 - \$270,000

Project Engineer

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$100,000 - \$180,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$105,000 - \$180,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$110,000 - \$190,000
WA - Perth	\$120,000 - \$200,000

SALARY GUIDE

Engineering Contractors

AVERAGE BASE SALARY
FOR 12 MONTHS **AUD**
EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Design Manager	
Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$120,000 - \$210,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$110,000 - \$200,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$130,000 - \$220,000
WA - Perth	\$120,000 - \$210,000

Supervisor	
Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$95,000 - \$180,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$90,000 - \$170,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$95,000 - \$180,000
WA - Perth	\$100,000 - \$190,000

SALARY GUIDE

Engineering Contractors

AVERAGE BASE SALARY

FOR 12
MONTHS

AUD

EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Contracts Administrator

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$80,000 - \$160,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$80,000 - \$150,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$90,000 - \$170,000
WA - Perth	\$85,000 - \$160,000

Quantity Surveyor

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$70,000 - \$140,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$70,000 - \$140,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$70,000 - \$150,000
WA - Perth	\$70,000 - \$145,000

Estimator

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$60,000 - \$140,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$60,000 - \$140,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$65,000 - \$140,000
WA - Perth	\$70,000 - \$150,000

SALARY GUIDE

Rail

AVERAGE BASE SALARY

FOR 12
MONTHS

AUD

EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Systems Manager

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$160,000 - \$260,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$150,000 - \$250,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$160,000 - \$260,000
WA - Perth	\$150,000 - \$255,000

Systems Senior Engineer

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$140,000 - \$220,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$135,000 - \$210,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$140,000 - \$220,000
WA - Perth	\$135,000 - \$215,000

Systems Engineer

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$120,000 - \$180,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$115,000 - \$170,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$120,000 - \$180,000
WA - Perth	\$115,000 - \$175,000

SALARY GUIDE

Rail

AVERAGE BASE SALARY

FOR 12
MONTHS

AUD

EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Rail Safety Assurance Manager

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$170,000 - \$250,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$160,000 - \$240,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$170,000 - \$250,000
WA - Perth	\$160,000 - \$245,000

Rail Safety Assurance Senior Engineer

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$150,000 - \$220,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$140,000 - \$210,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$150,000 - \$220,000
WA - Perth	\$140,000 - \$215,000

Rail Safety Assurance Engineer

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$130,000 - \$190,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$125,000 - \$185,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$130,000 - \$190,000
WA - Perth	\$125,000 - \$180,000

SALARY GUIDE

Rail

AVERAGE BASE SALARY

 FOR 12
MONTHS

AUD

EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Signalling Manager

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$170,000 - \$260,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$160,000 - \$250,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$170,000 - \$260,000
WA - Perth	\$200,000 - \$300,000

Signalling Senior Engineer

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$150,000 - \$220,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$140,000 - \$210,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$150,000 - \$220,000
WA - Perth	\$155,000 - \$235,000

Signalling Engineer

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$130,000 - \$190,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$125,000 - \$180,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$130,000 - \$190,000
WA - Perth	\$135,000 - \$200,000