

SALARY GUIDE

RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION



Salary & Insights Report
2025-2026

#BuildingTrust

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Introduction

Australia's Residential Construction sector is undergoing a transformative period. From evolving workforce expectations to increased job mobility and the push for flexibility, employers are now competing in a talent market defined by more than just pay. Our 2025–26 Salary & Insights Guide is informed by a national survey of over 1,600 professionals across Construction & Engineering, providing one of the most comprehensive views of the industry's employment landscape.

This guide focuses on the Residential Construction workforce, a dynamic segment shaped by rising career ambitions, dissatisfaction with pay progression, and shifting preferences regarding workplace culture and flexibility. We've analysed the survey data to extract deeper insights, not just into what workers are experiencing, but what they expect. From satisfaction levels to benefits preferences and job-switch motivations, this guide is designed to help hiring managers, HR leaders, and business owners align their attraction and retention strategies with today's talent expectations.

On the other hand, for candidates seeking transparency in a competitive market, these insights offer clear direction. What follows is a breakdown of key themes, supported by interpretation and practical implications.

Beyond the survey, our data is backed up by our consultants' analysis, which considers factors such as job roles and industry sectors, incorporating averages from the positions we recruit for.

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.

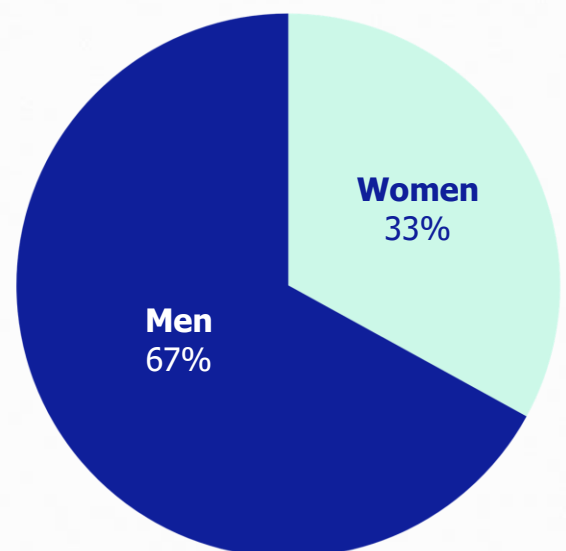


Workforce Demographics

Age & Gender

Nearly **65%** of the workforce falls within the age range of 25 to 44, indicating a mid-career-dominated sector. This age spread suggests a strong base of experienced professionals but highlights a potential risk of underrepresentation from both younger (under 25, at just **1.8%**) and older (55+, at just **13%**) cohorts. This could have long-term implications for knowledge transfer and succession planning.

On gender, men still represent a clear majority (**67%**), while women account for **33%** of the sector. Although this is higher than in some other construction segments, there's still work to be done in building equitable and inclusive workplaces. Employers who prioritise inclusive policies, visible female leadership, and equitable development pathways tend to foster stronger engagement and retention. In an increasingly candidate-driven market, culture matters, especially to younger generations entering the field.

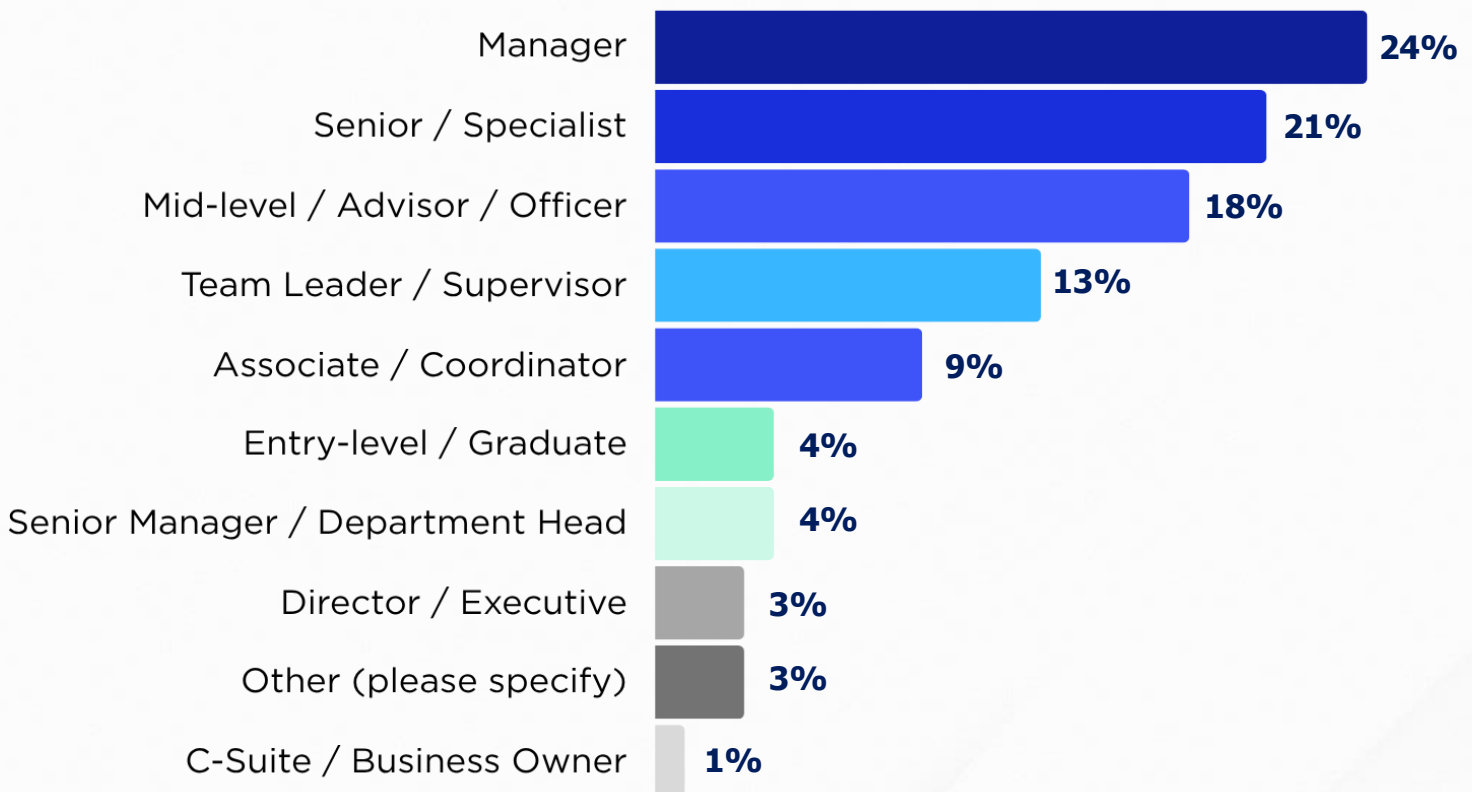


Education

The industry draws from a wide range of educational backgrounds. Diplomas (**25%**) and Certifications (**21%**) are slightly more common than Bachelor's degrees (**24%**), reflecting the sector's strong vocational orientation. Interestingly, **15%** of respondents hold a postgraduate qualification (Masters or above), which suggests an expanding need for strategic, compliance-driven, or design-based roles. Employers should be aware that today's workforce is better qualified and may have broader career expectations.

Experience & Seniority

A clear majority (**61.4%**) have less than 10 years' industry experience, reflecting a workforce still building its depth. This presents both a challenge and an opportunity: while technical leadership may be in short supply, employers also have a younger workforce that could be shaped by the right development programs. The most common seniority levels are Specialists (**21%**), Team Leaders (**13%**), and Mid-level Advisors (**18%**), showing a robust middle layer of talent ready for progression. However, only **13%** hold senior leadership positions, indicating a limited talent pipeline at the top.



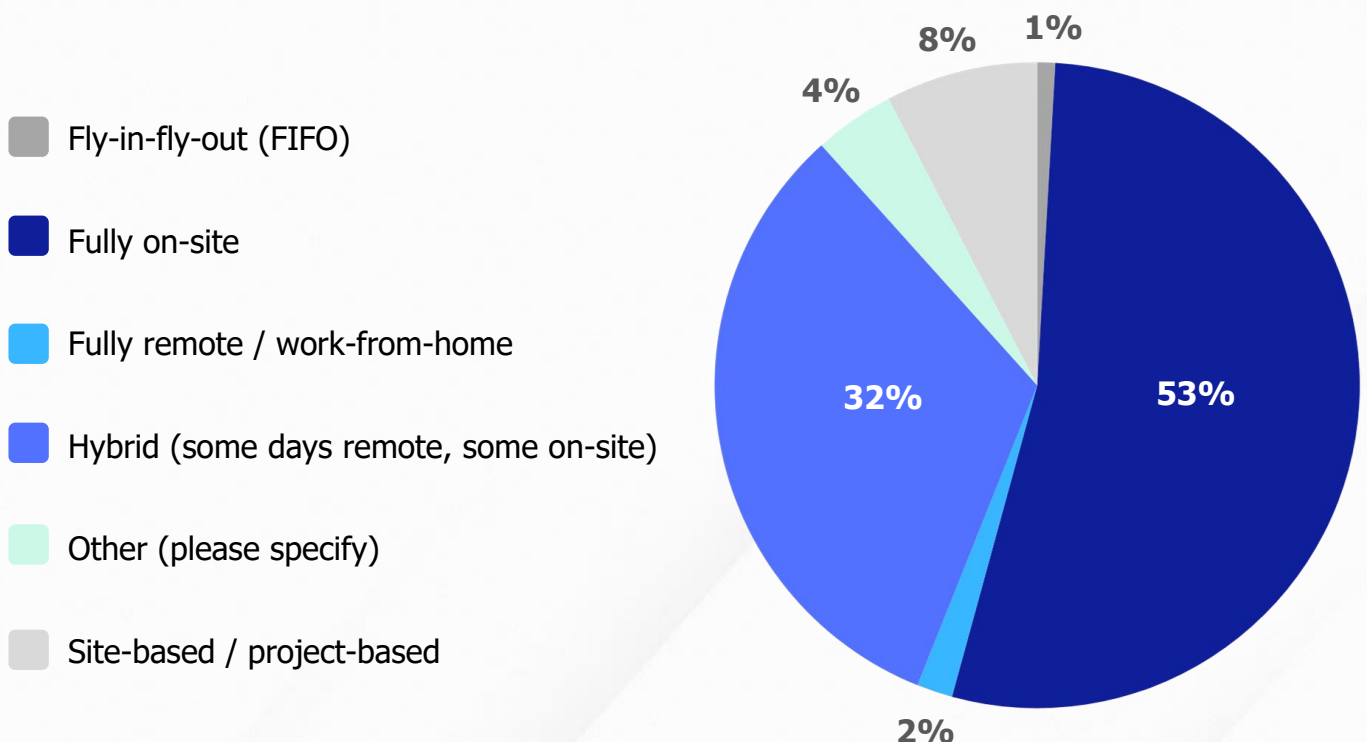
Employment Snapshot

Work Type & Status

The industry is characterised by employment stability. A massive **92%** are in full-time, permanent positions, suggesting long-term workforce commitments and structured roles. However, this also indicates that many organisations may lack agile or project-based engagement options. Contract work accounts for just **2%** of the workforce, a surprisingly low figure for a sector often subject to fluctuations in project work.

Work Arrangements

Flexibility in working models is gaining traction, but the sector still relies heavily on on-site work. Over half (**53%**) are fully site-based, while **32%** enjoy hybrid working, a promising indicator of change. Only **2%** are fully remote, reflecting the hands-on nature of the construction industry. However, this doesn't rule out further adoption of remote or hybrid for planning, coordination, and senior roles. Companies looking to attract non-traditional candidates (e.g., parents or career changers) will need to consider these options.



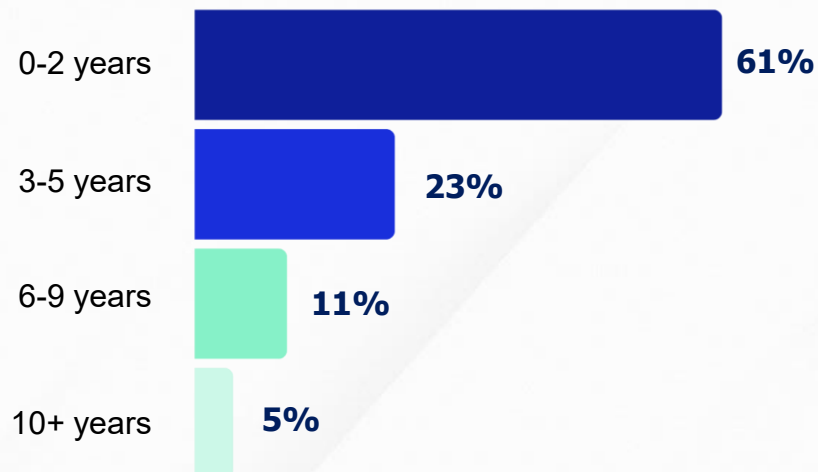
Path to Current Role

Recruitment channels are well-distributed, with **25%** of candidates entering via agencies, **24%** through direct applications, and **16%** via internal promotions. Notably, only **15%** were promoted into their current role, indicating that career growth remains externally driven. Companies that invest in internal development can gain a significant advantage in employee retention.



Tenure in Current Company

The average length of tenure is relatively short, with **61%** of employees having been with their current employer for under three years. This suggests a highly mobile workforce and potential dissatisfaction with internal growth prospects. The data also shows that only **5%** of employees stay with an employer for over a decade, reinforcing concerns about long-term retention. For employers, this trend demands a stronger emphasis on career mapping, internal mobility, and proactive engagement.



Pay & Progression

Promotions

68% of workers have not been promoted at their current company. Combined with short tenure and high mobility, this suggests a major gap in career progression frameworks. Only **15%** of respondents have received a promotion in the last year. Without tangible growth opportunities, even satisfied employees are likely to look elsewhere.

Pay Rises

Pay progression is slow. Just **36%** received a raise in the past 12 months, while **42%** have not received one at all at their current company. This stagnation creates a risk of disengagement, especially among workers in early and mid-career stages who are actively comparing their compensation to market norms.



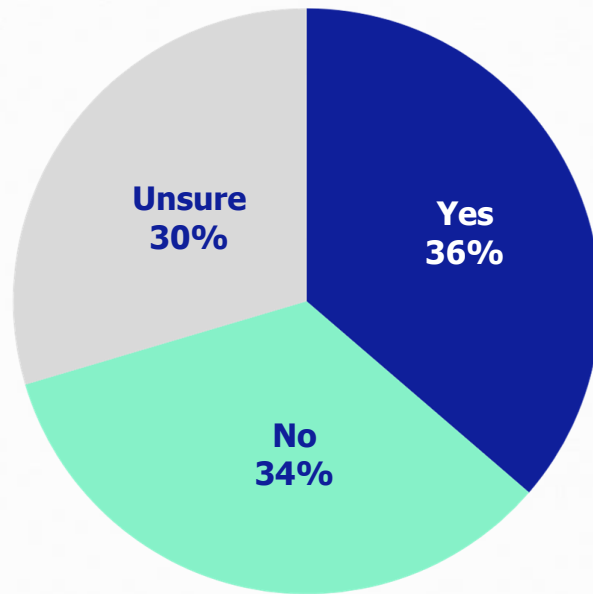
Bonus Schemes

71% of respondents report no access to bonus schemes. Where bonuses are offered, they are more likely to be linked to individual performance (**16%**) than company-wide results. This presents an opportunity for employers to establish more comprehensive and inclusive incentive structures, particularly to retain top performers and team leaders.

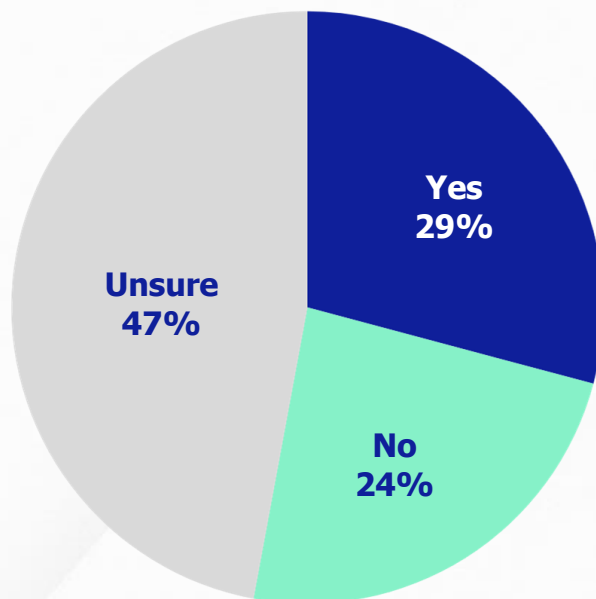
Expectations & Perceptions

Only **36%** of professionals believe they are paid at market rate, while **47%** are unsure about expecting a raise in the coming year. This mismatch between perception and expectation is a clear retention risk. Companies must prepare to defend or adjust compensation, or risk losing talent that feels undervalued.

Do you think you are being paid the current market rate?



Are you expecting a pay rise this year?



Retention & Turnover Signals

Open to Offers?

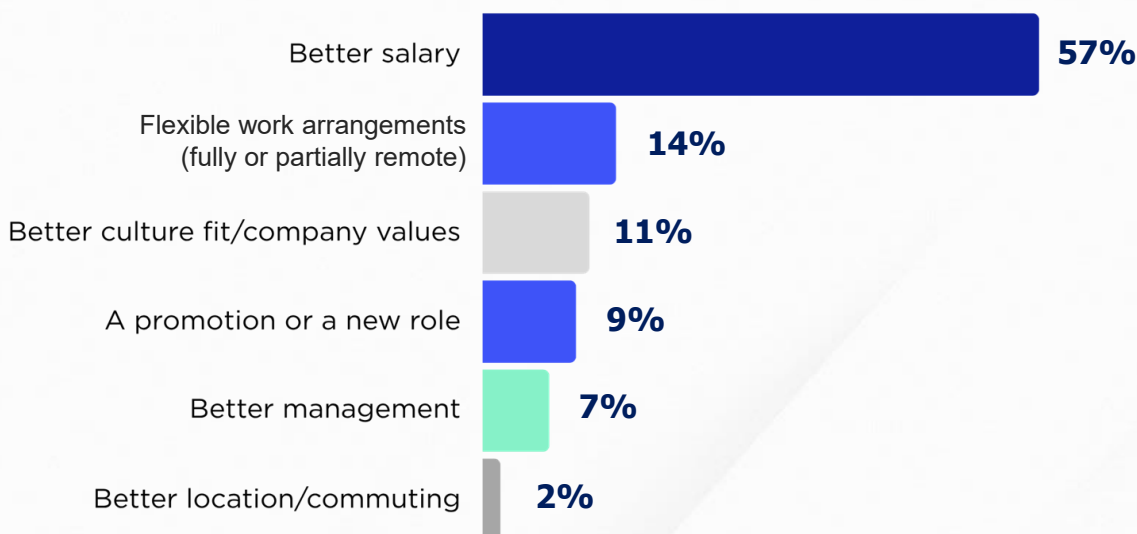
More than half the workforce (**55%**) is either actively or passively open to new roles. With **25%** actively searching, there's a strong underlying current of mobility. This suggests fragile loyalty, which can be strengthened only through meaningful changes to pay, progression, and working conditions.

Why They Would Move

The data reveals that:

- **57%** would leave for a better salary
- **14%** seek more flexible work
- **11%** prioritise a better cultural fit

While salary continues to dominate as a motivator, secondary drivers, such as flexibility and workplace culture, are gaining importance. This is particularly relevant as younger generations place greater value on alignment with company values and work-life balance.



Satisfaction & Benefits

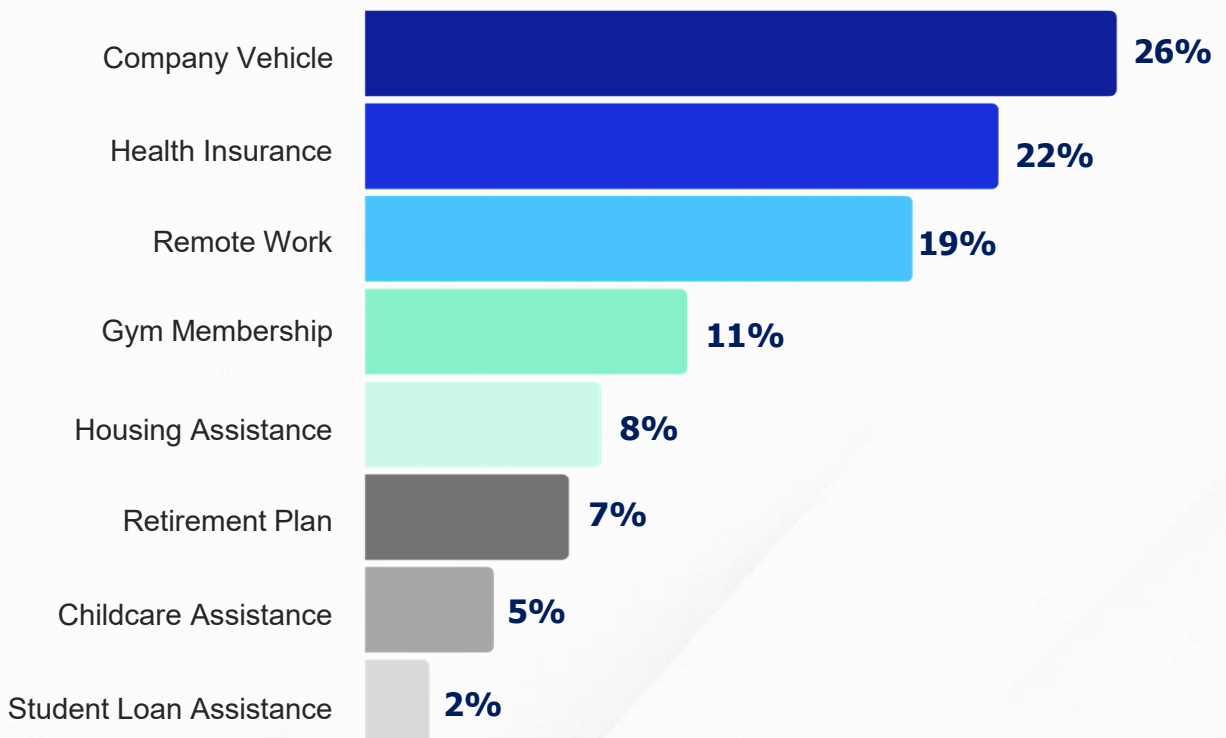
Work-life Balance

Responses were mixed: **37%** are satisfied, **30%** are neutral, and **15%** are dissatisfied. This leaves nearly half the workforce feeling either neutral or negative. These figures underscore a crucial area of improvement. Companies that can provide flexible arrangements or better workload planning may find it easier to attract and retain top talent.

Overall Role Satisfaction

On a satisfaction scale from 1 to 10 with their current role, the cumulative score across was an average of **6.2**. This is a moderate result, suggesting that while employees aren't actively disengaged, there is considerable room to increase their satisfaction. Addressing both tangible needs (salary, promotion) and intangible ones (recognition, culture) could significantly increase this score.

What is your most desired benefit?



Conclusion

The data paints a clear picture: the residential construction workforce is willing to stay but only if employers meet evolving expectations around pay, progression, and benefits. Promotions, pay rises and bonus schemes are limited in the current scenario. While this hasn't yet resulted in mass attrition, **55%** of respondents are already open to new opportunities.

Structured development, more transparent salary benchmarking, and non-monetary perks could consistently increase loyalty. Addressing flexibility and culture, even on-site, will go a long way in making teams feel heard and valued. Most critically, employers must balance short-term retention tactics with long-term strategies that foster internal capability and leadership development.



For employers, this guide provides a roadmap for staying competitive in a rapidly evolving market. For candidates, it provides the clarity needed to make informed, confident decisions about their next move.

For more information and to access all our Salary Guides, Whitepapers, and current positions available, visit our website below:

designandbuild.com.au



SALARY GUIDE

Estimating

AVERAGE BASE SALARY

 FOR 12
MONTHS

AUD

EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Estimating Manager

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$120,000 - \$170,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$120,000 - \$160,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$120,000 - \$160,000
WA - Perth	\$90,000 - \$150,000

Senior Estimator

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$100,000 - \$160,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$90,000 - \$150,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$90,000 - \$150,000
WA - Perth	\$70,000 - \$100,000

Estimator

Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$80,000 - \$150,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$80,000 - \$140,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$70,000 - \$140,000
WA - Perth	\$65,000 - \$130,000

SALARY GUIDE

Design/Drafting

AVERAGE BASE SALARY
FOR 12 MONTHS
AUD
EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Design/Drafting Manager	
Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$120,000 - \$160,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$100,000 - \$120,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$100,000 - \$120,000
WA - Perth	\$90,000 - \$140,000

Draftsperson	
Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$70,000 - \$120,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$60,000 - \$110,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$70,000 - \$100,000
WA - Perth	\$65,000 - \$115,000

SALARY GUIDE

CA & Site Supervisor/Manager & Carpenter

AVERAGE BASE SALARY
FOR 12 MONTHS
AUD
EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Contracts Administrator	
Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$80,000 - \$150,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$80,000 - \$140,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$65,000 - \$100,000
WA - Perth	\$60,000 - \$95,000

Site Supervisor / Site Manager	
Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$80,000 - \$160,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$90,000 - \$140,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$80,000 - \$140,000
WA - Perth	\$95,000 - \$140,000

Carpenter	
Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$80,000 - \$110,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$70,000 - \$110,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$75,000 - \$105,000
WA - Perth	\$70,000 - \$100,000

SALARY GUIDE

Sales

AVERAGE BASE SALARY
FOR 12 MONTHS
AUD
EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Sales Manager	
Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$140,000 - \$200,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$100,000 - \$120,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$100,000 - \$120,000
WA - Perth	\$100,000 - \$120,000

Sales Person	
Location	Salary Range
NSW - Sydney	\$60,000 - \$100,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$60,000 - \$100,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$70,000 - \$90,000
WA - Perth	\$60,000 - \$80,000