Salary Guide & Market Insights 2026



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Foreword

Over the past year, we've seen the Australian talent market continue to evolve, with AI, Cyber, and Data skills driving growth across almost all sectors. A key observation is that clients are increasingly hiring for capability rather than credentials, reflecting a broader shift towards outcome-focused, project-style delivery that is nimble and adaptable to their evolving needs. This is changing the way we approach recruitment, it's all about enabling the key business outcomes, not simply filling vacancies.

We are also seeing macro-economic factors continue to play a role. Australia remains stronger than many other OECD countries, but inflation and potential interest rate changes can influence growth. Despite this, confidence is growing across the sectors we serve, opening doors not only within core markets but also in adjacent areas where we can add real value.

Looking ahead, the fundamentals remain the same: building strong relationships, connecting with highly skilled (often passive) talent, and taking a consultative approach are key. The market may feel familiar, but opportunities are presenting themselves in new ways for those ready to adapt and act.

Darran Butcher

Managing Director, Professional Services













National Market Overview

The Australian job market experienced a modest contraction and stabilisation over the last 12 months. Hiring has generally been cautious, with organisations carefully considering which roles to fill and how to allocate resources. Our data shows that contractor rates have continued to rise steadily (around 2–3% per year from 2023 to 2025) indicating a maturing, stable demand for flexible specialist talent even as overall hiring slows. Despite this, candidates remain active and engaged, driven by rising cost of living pressures and concerns about job market uncertainty.

This combination of slower role growth, modest salary increases, and high candidate activity has created a competitive yet selective market. Fewer advertised roles and rising applications per job mean candidates are facing elevated competition for desirable positions. Employers are working to strike the balance between cautious hiring and the need to attract the right talent, creating an opportunity to secure candidates with niche skills who might otherwise have been hard to reach.

Looking ahead, employment projections remain cautiously optimistic with Australia's overall employment forecast to grow by 6.5% over the next five years¹. The Federal Government forecasts a digital talent shortfall of more than 8,000 public sector roles over the next five years, driven by emerging technologies and the expected retirement of around 20% of the tech workforce². Labour market tightness is predicted to remain elevated, even as unemployment is projected to be around 4.4%³. Businesses that balance permanent core roles with flexible, contingent talent will be better positioned to manage both risk and opportunity.



Job Market Trends



Rates Rebalance as Market Stabilises

The contractor market has softened slightly over the last 12 months, with the average hourly rate dipping from \$125 to \$120/hr. This reflects a mild correction following several years of post-pandemic rate inflation. Despite fewer open roles in the market, our data shows that most sectors have held steady on pay, signalling ongoing demand for experienced specialists even in a cooler hiring climate.

Paxus data reflects the strongest rate growth in Financial Services, driven by transformation programs, regulatory uplift, and cyber investment. The Energy and Government sectors saw more moderated movement as budgets tightened. Across the board, employers continue to prioritise capability over volume, with Project Management, SAP specialists, Business Analysts, Software Developers and Architecture roles maintaining their position as some of the most consistently in-demand contractor categories when it comes to experienced talent. This stabilisation suggests the market is finding its balance, becoming more competitive, skills-driven, and increasingly focused on attracting talent with proven experience.



Jobs in the Age of Al & Technology

Australia remains at an early stage of Al adoption. The fastest uptake is concentrated in technology and digital roles, where Al is being embedded into software development, data analysis, and administrative workflows. This is reflected in Paxus data with software engineering and data analytics seeing increased demand in the last 12 months. In 2024, 57% of ASX200 companies referenced Al-related investment in their annual reports, signalling growing organisational interest in automation and efficiency.⁸

As technology and generative Al automate routine tasks, we are seeing them reshaping rather than replacing jobs. Higher-skilled roles are evolving to focus more on human judgement, creativity, and oversight, driving both job hybridisation (as roles merge across disciplines) and job specialisation (as niche Al-related expertise becomes more valuable). This shift is expected to produce more efficient and adaptive workforces, with new occupations emerging at the intersection of technology and human capability.

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Job Market Trends



Who Holds the Reins on Hybrid Work?

Hybrid work remains common, but flexibility is narrowing as employers regain control. In a recent SEEK survey, 71% of large organisations said they now set structured hybrid expectations (typically fixed office days), only 21% offered full employee choice, and 4% had no remote options at all. Despite hybrid work remaining standard, only 7% of employers have expanded flexibility in the past year, with 21% scaling it back.⁹ As cost-of-living pressures persist, candidates are increasingly prioritising salary over flexibility, suggesting the market is settling into a pragmatic balance between pay, productivity, and hybrid work.



Premium Roles in Architecture, Data & Cloud

Top technology roles continue to command strong rates across all states, reflecting sustained demand for highly specialised skills. Our data shows that Data and BI Architects are earning \$150–\$185/hr+, Enterprise and Solutions Architects \$150–\$165/hr, Cloud Engineers \$135–\$155/hr, and Network/Infrastructure Specialists \$145–\$160/hr. These premium roles are concentrated in sectors driving digital transformation, where organisations are willing to invest in top talent to ensure successful technology delivery and complex project outcomes.

Our data shows that the combination of rapid AI adoption, cloud migration, and data-driven decision-making is increasing the need for professionals with deep technical expertise. Candidates in these segments are in a strong negotiating position, with employers competing to attract and retain the right specialists. The high rates observed across these roles underline the value of niche experience and the ongoing premium placed on critical digital capabilities in the current market.



Government Sector Insights



Mary Connolly
Sector Head | Federal Government

"Over the past year, the Government IT market has balanced tightening federal budgets with continued demand for specialist digital capability. While overall activity has softened, agencies remain focused on critical programs that require skilled Architecture, Cyber Security, Cloud, Data, and Technical Delivery professionals, particularly those with clearance and proven government experience.

We're also seeing more structured procurement and a stronger emphasis on outcomes, which is creating clearer, more collaborative engagement with industry. Despite the challenges, the market remains steady, and there is growing confidence that targeted digital investment and transformation initiatives will drive renewed momentum into 2026."

Salary Snapshot Government contractor rates have remained largely steady over the past year, with targeted growth in specialised roles reflecting ongoing transformation and digital initiatives.



Project Managers & Software Developers lead in placements



Overall Engineering rates see consistent YoY gains



Future government focus on developing AI, LLM, and machine-learning roles 41%

29

105.8K¹

Paxus Total Contract Placements Paxus Average Days to Fill Total Industry
Job Vacancies

Top Paxus Contract Roles by Volume

Project Manager

Software Developer

Business Analyst

Enterprise / Solutions Architect

Data Engineer

Highest Paid Paxus Contract Roles

Enterprise Architect

Cyber Security Engineer

Program Manager

Senior Software Developer

Data Scientist



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Professional & Technology Sector Insights



Brett JohnsonSector Head | Professional & Technology

"Australia's professional services and technology market has been characterised by steady growth tempered by economic caution throughout 2025. Digital transformation, Al adoption, and cybersecurity imperatives remain front and centre. The sectors face persistent talent shortages, particularly in Al/ML, cloud computing, cybersecurity, and data analytics. We're seeing firms evolving from traditional contingent labour models to more outcome-based services as demand for managed and consulting solutions grows.

Competition for senior, high-value domestic talent continues to intensify, prompting increased investment in upskilling, skills-based hiring, and partnerships. While the sectors remain optimistic, success hinges on agile recruitment strategies and the ability to adapt to rapidly evolving, Al-centric skills demand."

Salary Snapshot

Professional Services and Technology sectors continue to reward specialised expertise, with strong rates maintained for premium roles and evolving dynamics across software and project-focused positions.



Project Managers & Enterprise Architects continue to command premium rates of \$165/hr on average



SAP remains highest-paid with rates increasing from \$160 to \$172/hr



Software Developer demand has doubled YoY, rates have softened to \$116/hr 1/3

of Sector Paxus Placements come from Top 5 Contract Roles 21

210K¹⁰

Paxus Average Days to Fill

Total Industry
Job Vacancies

Top Paxus Contract Roles by Volume

SAP Consultant

Software Developer

Desktop Engineer

Business Analyst

Technical Consultant

Highest Paid Paxus Contract Roles

SAP Consultant

Senior Solutions Architect

Business Consultant

Software Engineer

Project Manager



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Industrial & Energy Sector Insights



Emile Stanton
Sector Head | Industrial & Energy

"Australia's energy and industrial sectors are accelerating their focus on efficiency, safety, and sustainability, driving demand for digital and project-based talent. Investment in automation, advanced analytics, and integrated OT/IT environments is increasing demand for data engineers, cloud specialists, cyber security consultants, and solution architects.

Project services capability is becoming more critical, with growing demand for business analysts, project managers and change managers to support large-scale transformation. Sustainability and safety initiatives are further reshaping skill requirements. We are seeing the market shifting toward hybrid IT-project roles that blend technical expertise, operational understanding, and structured delivery frameworks."

Salary Snapshot Contractor rates in the Energy and Industrial sectors have remained broadly stable, with targeted growth in specialist roles reflecting ongoing demand for critical skills.



Projects Managers and BAs remain in highest demand



SAP & Cyber Security show steady rate gains driven by niche skills



Senior BAs & Enterprise Architects record strongest rate growth 2/3

of Sector Paxus Placements come from Top 5 Contract Roles 20

151.1K[®]

Paxus Average Total Industry
Days to Fill Job Vacancies

Top Paxus Contract Roles by Volume

Project Manager

Business Analyst

Enterprise/Solutions Architect

Network Engineer

Senior Business Analyst

Highest Paid Paxus Contract Roles

Al Consultant

Data & Analytics Lead

Change Manager

Governance, Risk & Compliance Analyst

Senior Project Manager



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Financial Services Sector Insights



Corin LeckieSector Head | Financial Services

"Across banking, insurance, and superannuation, hiring has shifted from broad hiring drives to highly targeted, outcome-focused recruitment. Institutions are investing in specialist talent that can deliver transformation in areas such as cloud migration, core system renewal, payments modernisation, automation, and applied Al.

Demand is strongest for professionals who blend deep technical capability with financial domain knowledge. Roles such as cloud migration leads, core banking engineers, ERP specialists, integration architects, and MLOps engineers continue to sit at the centre of transformation programs."

Salary Snapshot The Financial Services sector has seen strong growth in contractor rates, reflecting high demand for specialised project and analytical roles.



Strong YoY growth in data engineering and software engineering roles



Senior BAs achieved strong gains, rising from \$93 to \$128/hr



This sector recorded the strongest rate growth across the entire market

1/2

of Sector Paxus Placements come from Top 5 Contract Roles 23

57.7K[™]

Paxus Average Days to Fill Total Industry
Job Vacancies

Top Paxus Contract Roles by Volume

Senior Business Analyst

Software Engineer

Project Manager

Data Engineer

Systems Engineer

Highest Paid Paxus Contract Roles

Program Manager / Director

Agile Coach

Senior Project Manager

Risk Manager

Principal Business Analyst



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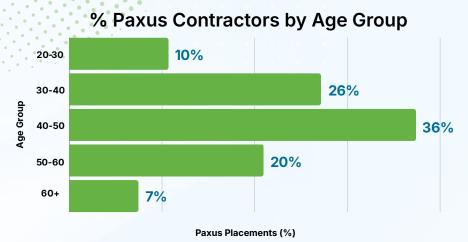
Paxus Services

The People We Place and How They Work

The largest share of Paxus contractors were placed in project services, software development and cloud infrastructure in the last 12 months.

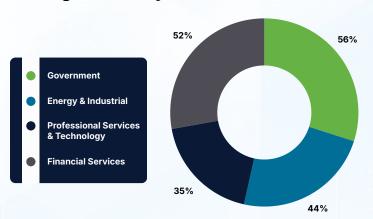
61% of all placements were sourced from our internal database, highlighting the strength of our long-standing, experienced talent network.

48% of all Paxus placements involved some form of working from home suggesting a broadly hybrid workforce.

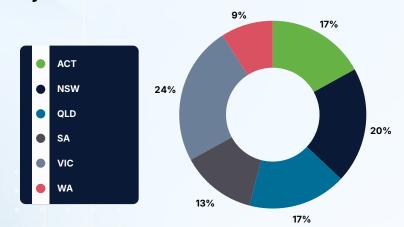


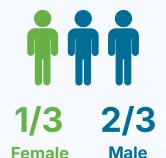
The age profile of our contractors reflects the tech and digital workforce as well as client demand for seasoned expertise. Employers are looking for experience, and here at Paxus we are uniquely positioned to deliver it.

% Paxus Contractors with Hybrid Arrangements by Sector



% Paxus Contractors by State





Our gender distribution is aligned with LinkedIn Talent Insights and wider industry trends, highlighting our ability to connect employers with a diverse and representative talent pool.

Data Source: Paxus contractor placements Oct 24 - Oct 25



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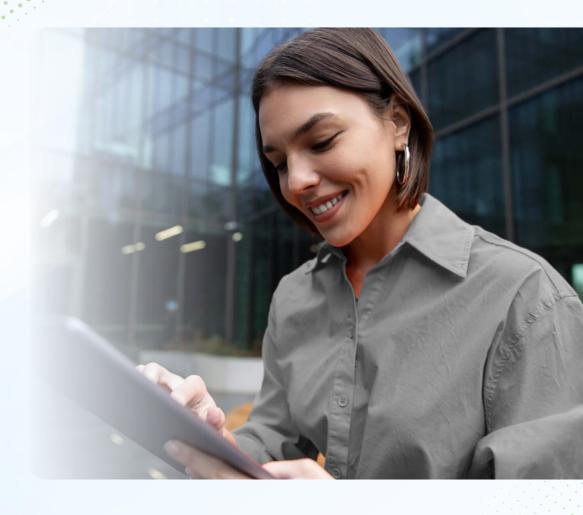
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About the Rates

The average contract rates listed on the following pages are collated from thousands of recent contract roles filled nationally by Paxus and benchmarked against industry. Low, Med, and High ranges represent the average rate per hour (rounded to the nearest \$5), based on what the contractor receives, excluding any other costs to the client.

The permanent salary ranges cover a broad range of locations and candidate experience levels and should be viewed with this in mind. They are collated from national data across both Government and Private enterprise and verified by our expert teams with on the ground industry knowledge.

For roles/locations where a range has not been included, we do not have adequate available data to provide a representative figure. This may be due to new roles or changing demand levels.





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Tech & Digital

Have a specific question? Gain deeper insight into Australia's Tech and Digital talent market by connecting with our specialist team.

Get in Touch



Project Services & Business Transformation

	Average Hourly Contractor Rates																	
4115		ACT			NSW			VIC			QLD			SA			WA	
Ш.	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High
Agile Coach	140	160	190	150	150	160	110	120	130	125	140	165	120	135	145	120	140	160
Business Analyst	115	135	165	80	120	140	75	120	130	90	125	160	90	105	110	100	135	140
Senior Business Analyst	120	150	175	105	140	180	85	130	140	105	135	185	100	125	125	115	140	160
Business Architect	135	180	210	-	-	230	100	120	140	105	135	185	140	155	170	120	130	140
Change Analyst	85	125	135	75	100	120	80	100	115	100	105	130	85	95	115	110	135	140
Change Manager	130	145	155	125	145	180	115	120	135	125	150	185	125	135	140	120	140	150
Delivery Manager	100	140	185	140	150	175	90	120	140	100	135	160	120	135	150	130	145	165
Master Scheduler	95	145	155	120	125	130	90	105	120	120	150	160	135	145	160	85	100	115
Project Manager	95	145	185	100	150	200	95	130	140	125	155	190	115	135	180	120	150	170
Program Manager	140	175	180	145	165	185	130	140	150	135	175	220	145	165	195	150	160	180
Project Officer	70	90	90	55	65	100	40	55	100	70	100	105	40	75	90	50	65	95
Project Coordinator	75	90	110	60	90	105	40	55	100	80	100	110	60	75	90	70	95	120
Program Coordinator	95	105	125	70	90	100	85	100	110	90	105	135	50	75	90	100	125	140
Release Manager	145	150	150	110	125	150	115	130	140	95	110	150	125	130	150	110	125	140
Scrum Master	125	135	150	115	140	155	100	125	140	125	140	165	100	115	150	125	150	165
Systems Analyst	115	130	165	110	120	140	75	115	130	110	135	185	75	100	115	95	135	160
Technical Writer	90	120	130	95	105	125	55	110	125	85	110	125	80	105	145	110	130	145

	anent Ranges
Nati	onal
Low (\$'000)	High (\$'000)
160	200
120	165
140	180
-	-
105	150
135	190
140	190
100	170
120	180
150	220
85	115
90	125
100	145
120	180
125	170
100	150
80	135

Rates & Salaries

Data & Al



مرکئ	Average Hourly Contractor Rates																	
()	ACT				NSW			VIC		QLD				SA		WA		
Alc.	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High
Al Consultant	130	155	180	110	120	135	110	135	135	130	145	160	110	120	135	125	200	300
BI Architect	140	165	190	145	150	160	100	120	150	120	130	165	125	135	145	130	150	175
BI Developer (Data Visualisation Specialist)	120	135	160	105	135	140	110	140	165	100	120	140	85	95	110	120	130	140
Business Intelligence Analyst	110	130	150	135	140	150	90	100	115	100	120	145	90	125	135	115	125	135
Data Analyst	110	130	160	70	85	125	75	90	125	90	120	145	95	100	115	75	100	130
Data Architect	145	165	200	155	165	195	135	140	150	100	130	165	130	155	165	150	175	200
Data Engineer	120	140	170	120	140	170	80	110	135	115	135	140	120	135	145	115	130	150
Data Officer	90	100	110	90	100	130	90	100	130	90	100	145	80	90	120	80	90	120
O Data Scientist	120	145	185	90	115	150	100	120	195	120	130	165	110	140	150	120	150	190
Database Administrator	115	130	160	90	100	110	105	125	135	100	120	140	100	110	125	100	120	140
Database Developer	120	140	160	110	115	135	95	135	150	100	120	140	90	100	120	100	115	140
ETL Developer	120	145	165	100	115	135	80	120	135	110	145	160	95	100	115	120	145	155

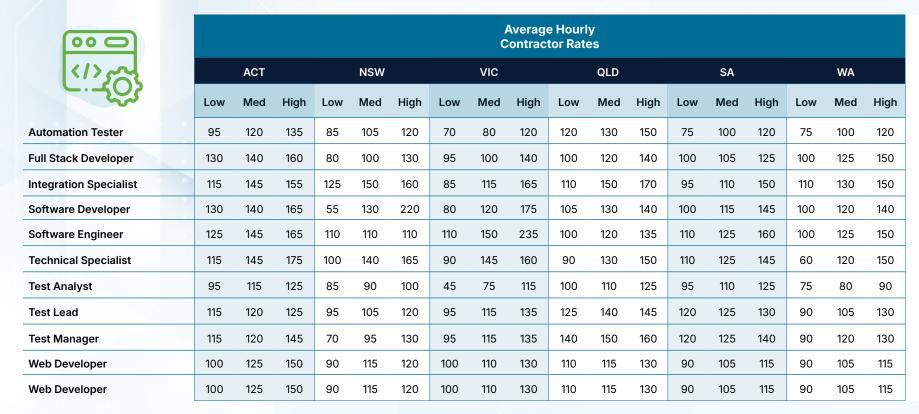
	anent
	Ranges
Nati	onal
Low (\$'000)	High (\$'000)
-	-
150	210
110	175
110	155
90	150
140	200
130	190
90	120
130	220
95	150
110	150
100	140



Data Rates on the Rise

Our data shows that Data Scientist rates have climbed from around \$150/hr in 2023 to \$188/hr in 2025, reflecting rapid growth in demand for data-driven insights and analytics expertise.

Software Development & Testing



anent Ranges
onal
High (\$'000)
175
175
165
150
165
160
130
155
175
170
170

Rates & Salaries

Cyber Security



مر اله									Average ontract									
7(0)5		ACT			NSW			VIC			QLD			SA			WA	
OJTCO	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High
Cyber Security Analyst	150	160	165	100	130	150	125	135	155	110	125	140	135	145	155	85	140	185
Cyber Security Consultant	150	155	180	145	160	170	135	155	165	110	130	155	110	135	145	145	150	180
Cyber Security Specialist	150	160	170	110	120	140	155	160	165	115	125	155	110	135	145	115	140	150
Governance, Risk & Compliance (GRC) Analyst	-	-	-	100	140	150	125	140	150	110	130	155	120	130	140	130	170	220
Network Security Engineer	150	155	160	110	125	150	110	145	165	120	130	160	135	155	170	135	145	160
Security Architect	160	175	185	160	165	175	155	160	175	135	140	160	130	150	180	110	130	220
Security Business Analyst	135	150	165	120	140	150	75	120	145	110	125	140	118	125	135	115	135	170
Security Engineer	150	155	160	110	125	150	110	145	165	120	130	160	135	155	170	120	140	160

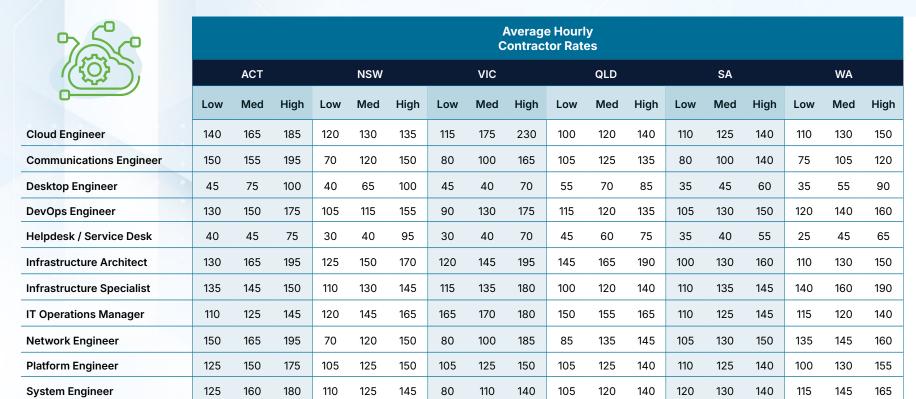
	anent Ranges
Nati	onal
Low (\$'000)	High (\$'000)
115	160
150	200
120	170
115	150
-	-
170	230
120	180
120	190



Cyber Talent in Demand

Our data shows that Cyber Security specialists saw national growth from ~\$83/hr to ~\$145/hr, peaking at \$176/hr in SA — the sharpest increases across the market.

Cloud & Infrastructure



	anent Ranges
Nati	onal
Low (\$'000)	High (\$'000)
130	180
95	125
70	120
125	180
60	110
145	200
125	170
120	180
125	175
135	175
120	170



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Enterprise Applications



		Average Hourly Contractor Rates																
! - - - - - - - - - -		ACT			NSW			VIC			QLD			SA			WA	
	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High
Application Architect	125	145	195	110	145	165	145	160	205	125	155	165	130	145	160	120	130	150
Application Developer	135	155	165	100	120	145	85	125	150	110	125	140	105	135	145	100	110	135
Enterprise Architect	140	160	195	130	165	225	110	160	205	150	170	205	145	155	180	145	160	180
Functional Consultant	120	150	165	140	155	160	120	155	190	120	150	180	90	130	160	95	130	160
O Integration Architect	135	155	160	125	150	160	135	145	160	125	155	165	110	130	150	140	160	180
SAP Consultant	140	155	185	115	150	200	130	160	260	100	135	200	120	135	145	135	145	160
SAP Functional Consultant	140	145	175	115	150	200	120	155	180	140	145	160	110	135	165	135	145	160
SAP Technical Consultant	140	150	170	125	155	180	150	170	175	130	150	175	120	130	150	135	145	160
Solutions Architect	125	155	190	125	165	225	100	155	205	125	155	165	125	155	180	145	160	180
Technical Consultant	140	165	195	85	150	205	90	155	205	110	150	195	70	135	180	100	145	180

	anent Ranges
Nati	onal
Low (\$'000)	High (\$'000)
150	200
110	160
180	240
140	200
150	205
115	165
145	205
135	200
155	220
115	180



Architecture Roles Hold Their Premium

Our data shows Architecture roles remain some of the most consistently high-value positions in the market, with Enterprise and Solutions Architects standing out as some of the market's top earners.

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Sales & Marketing

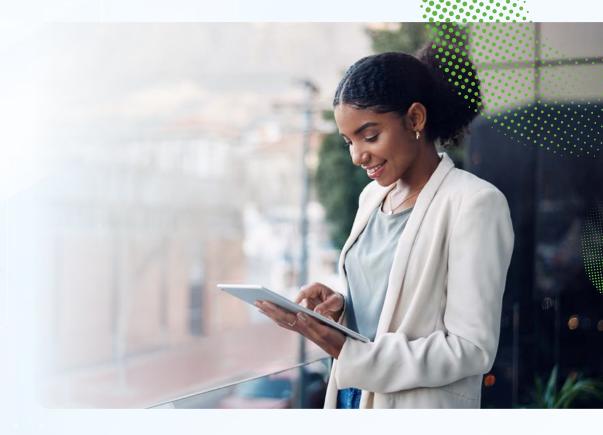
Have a specific question? Gain deeper insight into Australia's Sales and Marketing talent market by connecting with our specialist team.

Get in Touch



Content, Social & SEO Marketing

#	Permanent Salary Ranges						
	Low (\$'000)	High (\$'000)					
Communications Specialist	75	90					
Communications Manager	110	140					
Content Specialist	90	105					
Content Marketing Manager	100	125					
Content Writer	90	115					
Digital Marketing Specialist	80	100					
Digital Marketing Manager	95	125					
Engagement & Communications Lead	105	130					
SEO Specialist / SEO Manager	85	120					
Social Media Coordinator	75	90					
Social Media Manager	85	110					

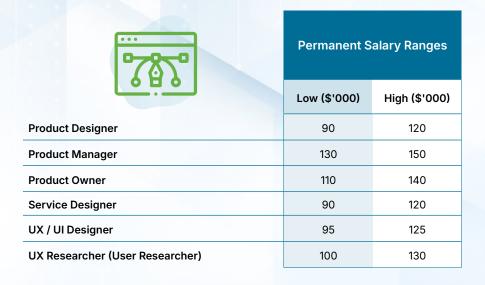




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UX / UI & Product Design



Business Development & Account Management

	Permanent Salary Ranges	
الم المال	Low (\$'000)	High (\$'000)
Business Development Executive / Consultant	75	90
Business Development Manager (BDM)	110	160
Business Manager	125	145
Client Relationship Manager	85	105
Executive Assistant	80	110
Strategic Partnerships Manager	105	135

Rates & Salaries

Finance

Have a specific question? Gain deeper insight into Australia's Finance talent market by connecting with our specialist team.

Get in Touch



Commercial Finance & Operations



Permanent Salary Ranges		
National		
Low (\$'000)	High (\$'000)	
120	150	
110	145	
150	195	
70	85	
55	65	
120	145	
95	115	
95	115	
90	120	
170	205	
-	-	
130	170	
120	140	



Rates & Salaries

Our Services

For over 50 years, Paxus has been shaping Australia's tech and digital workforce — connecting high performing talent with organisations of all sizes, sectors and stages. With a national reach and deep specialised expertise across government, industrial & energy, professional & technology, and financial services, we don't just fill roles, we build long term recruitment partnerships built for growth.

Known for tech and digital recruitment, we also deliver exceptional talent in sales, marketing, and finance, covering the full spectrum of business functions for your team. We place thousands of professionals in roles each year - all with transparency, integrity and a genuine commitment to finding you the right talent at the right time.



Looking for Consulting Services?

Explore our broader workforce solutions via Skills Collective

Learn More

Statement of Work (SOW)

Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO)

Staff Augmentation



Contract Recruitment

With one of Australia's largest independent contractor networks, we connect you with proven specialists across tech, finance, marketing, and more. From onboarding to offboarding, we scale support to fit your needs.



Permanent Recruitment

We know permanent hires need more than the right skills, they need staying power. Our specialist consultants match you with high-performing professionals who fit your team and your culture.



Executive Search

We help you secure leaders who bring strategic clarity, cultural alignment, and real results. Whether you need a visionary CTO or a steady hand in sales & finance, our search is thorough and focused on long-term impact.



Payroll Management

Free your team from admin overload with our complete contractor management and payroll services. We manage everything including contracts, onboarding, compliance, reporting, and offboarding—all through a single point of contact.

Learn More About Our Services



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Get in Touch



We've got local and sector expertise throughout Australia. Get in touch with your nearest Paxus office for insights on salary rates, market trends and more.

Adelaide

- **%** 08 7422 0600
- Level 1, 70 Hindmarsh Square Adelaide SA 5000

Brisbane

- **%** 07 3339 5600
- Level 20, 144 Edward Street Brisbane QLD 4000

Canberra

- **Q** 02 6151 9200
- Level 7, 54 Marcus Clarke Street Canberra ACT 2601

Melbourne

- **%** 03 8680 4200
- Level 1, 357 Collins Street Melbourne VIC 3000

Perth

- **%** 08 6151 1700
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Sources

Contractor rate data within this guide is Paxus owned. Other information and insights have been collated from Paxus data, market knowledge and various other key sources.

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