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2026 Technology Salary Guide

Inside this guide

01
The iterate way

02
2025, wrapped.

03
A quick note

04
Know your levels

05
Salaries by specialisation
Engineering & Architecture
Design & Product
Digital
SRE, Platform & Cloud
Infrastructure & Support
Security
Data & Analytics
Project Services
Leadership & Executive

06
The gender gap

07
The road ahead

08
The team behind the guide

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The iterate way

Building a dream team?
Blazing a trail?
You've found your people.

Small but mighty, iterate is a boutique recruitment partner with firm roots in the Melbourne IT and Tech community.

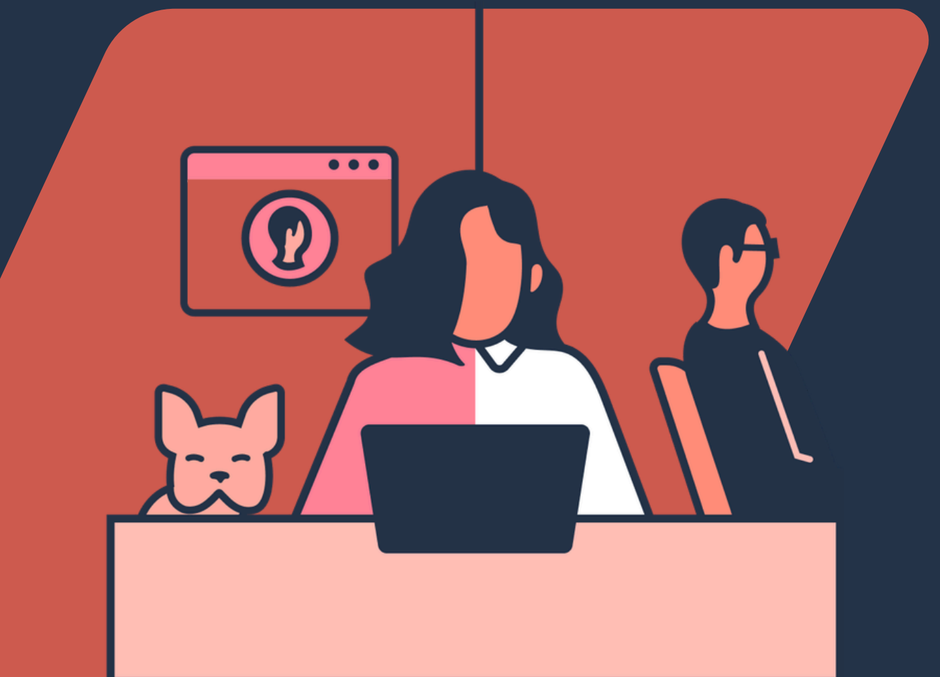
We've built lasting relationships with Australia's leading tech companies, and the highly specialised talent who keep them at the top of their game.

Our approach is simple: understand your business, your ambitions as well as you do. Stay curious. Most importantly, always look for ways to add more value. Like this Salary Guide.

- **Software & Development**
- **Cloud, Infra & Security**
- **Digital**
- **Project Delivery**
- **Product / UX**
- **Data**
- **Marketing**
- **Leadership**

2025, wrapped.

Years of rebuilding and reshaping meant the 2025 tech market wasn't short on structure or ideas. It was short on patience.



As indecision started to carry real cost, companies hit 'commit'. On operating models. On risk thresholds. On where they would invest, and where they wouldn't—with AI acting as the filter across all three.

Early year uncertainty surrounding Trump's transition steadied faster than expected and long-awaited rate cuts began edging off inflationary pressure. The stable, selective pattern of investment that emerged was anchored by long-running demand in Security and Data. Returning VC and private equity confidence brought start-ups and scale-ups back in play, with AI-focused ventures snaring the largest rounds.

For many organisations, their self-examination period was over. They settled into the operating models they'd redefined. Though cost discipline remained, it was more incremental than reactive. Restructures narrowed, budgets were clearer, and decision loops eased.

How work got done remained an open question. Fully remote roles held employee favour, though hybrid remained the default. The office day push-pull continued, climbing from two to three. Four-day working weeks were trialled too, with success only when output was clearly measured.

Commitment showed up most clearly in how companies hired. Permanent roles where it existed; fractional and advisory work filled the gaps where it didn't. From mid year, the split was more evident—permanent hiring found rhythm as contracting slowed.

2025, wrapped.

For candidates, a market that looked “soft” from the outside often felt crowded and intensely competitive up close. High application volumes buried strong applicants and slowed decisions. Shortlists were reset and processes stretched as hiring calls were tested harder, leaving many in limbo for long periods.

Dwindling full-time senior leadership roles pushed experienced professionals towards fractional, project-based engagements. At the same time, companies took a harder line on external support. With every dollar questioned and patience in short supply, it was a tough year for many consultancies and vendors, both locally and off-shore.

The biggest disrupter since the internet faced its own cost–value tests.

AI side projects moved from demos into real workflows, raising hard questions: Does it genuinely reduce work, or just rearrange it? Who fixes it when it breaks? Would we defend it to a regulator? Most would fail—an inevitable part of the sorting phase.

By year end, the market was less reactive and more deliberate. Choice returned for candidates at the top end, and movement picked up overall. After asking a lot of teams and individuals, the 2025 market closed on firmer ground that felt earned. A push for action had moved recovery forward.

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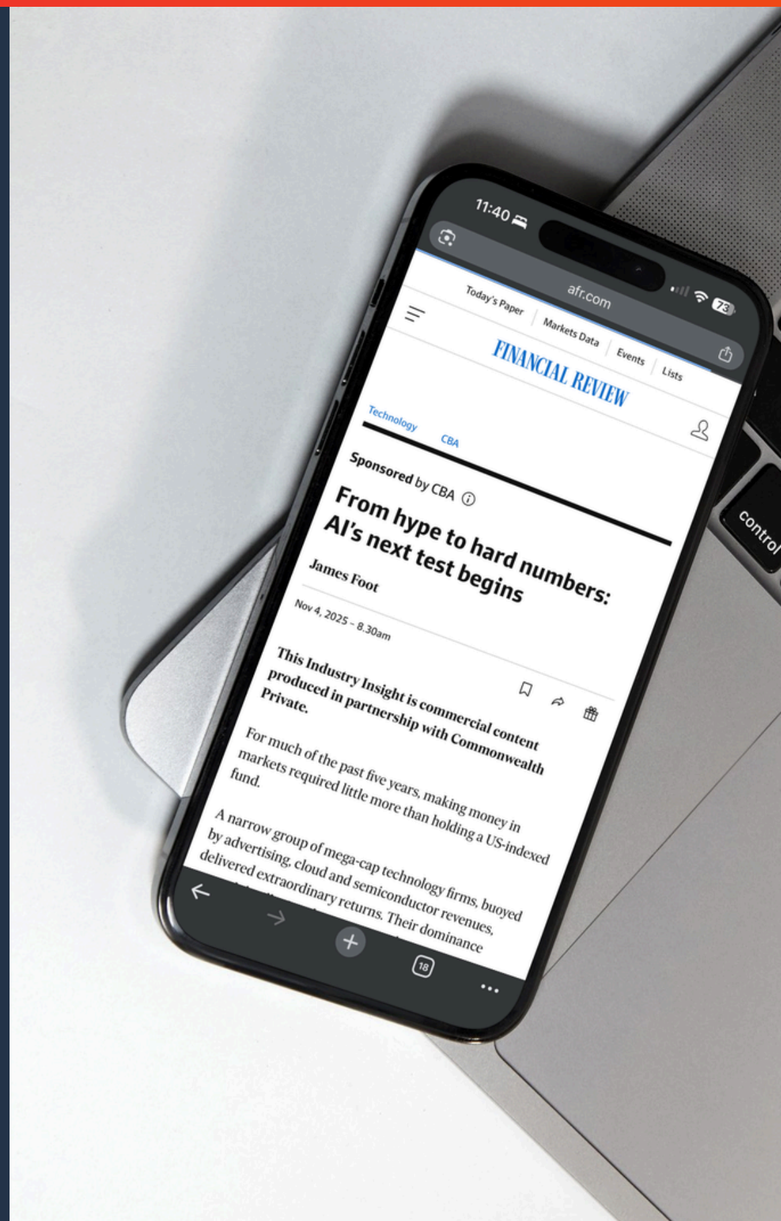

A quick note

Before we get into the numbers...

This isn't a raw data dump. Our salary ranges come from real roles, real offers, and very real conversations with candidates and hiring managers. They reflect the middle of the market as it actually behaves.

So if a salary sits above or below the range? That's not an error, that's an outlier.

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Know your levels

Junior

0-3 years of commercial experience
Familiar with the basics in your field
Eager to learn and grow
Capable of handling small tasks independently

Mid-level

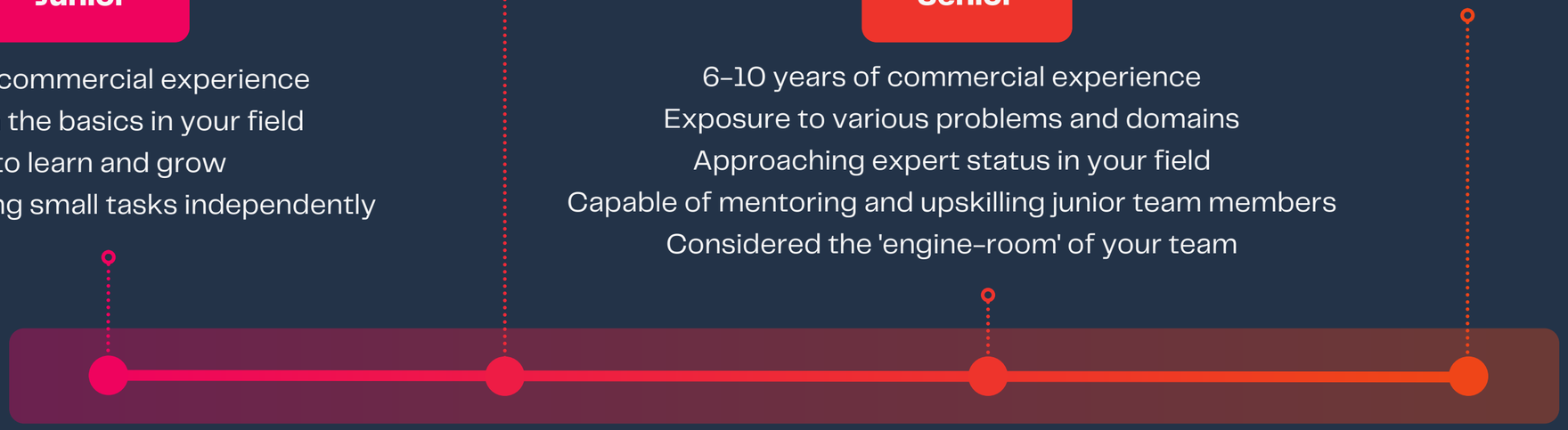
3-6 years of industry experience
Self-organiser who can independently complete complex tasks
You'll seek advice when faced with more challenging problems

Senior

6-10 years of commercial experience
Exposure to various problems and domains
Approaching expert status in your field
Capable of mentoring and upskilling junior team members
Considered the 'engine-room' of your team

Principal/Lead

At least 10-15 years of experience
Highest level of expertise as a 'hands-on' practitioner
You're recognised as a bonafide expert
A go-to in the team/company for subject matter expertise
You can mentor and coach others
Capable of making strategic decisions



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Engineering & Architecture

	Junior	Mid-level	Senior	Principal/Lead
Software Engineer	$70–90K	$90–140K	$140–170K	$170–200K
Staff Software Engineer	$200–210K	$210–220K	$220–250K	$250–300K+
JavaScript / Front End Developer	$70–90K	$90–130K	$130–160K	$160–190K
Mobile Developer	$80–110K	$110–140K	$140–180K	$180–220K
Quality Engineering (QA)	$70–80K	$80–120K	$120–160K	$160–180K
Technical Architect	$170–180K	$180–200K	$200–220K	$220K+
Solution Architect	$180–190K	$190–210K	$210–240K	$240K+
Enterprise Architect	$200–220K	$220–250K	$250–280K	$280–300K+
Engineering Manager	$180–200K	$200–220K	$220–250K	$250–280K

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All salary ranges exclude super

Design & Product

	Junior	Mid-level	Senior	Principal/Lead
UI / Visual Designer	$70–90K	$90–120K	$120–150K	$150–180K
UX / Product Designer	$70–100K	$100–140K	$140–160K	$160–190K
Design / UX Research	$70–90K	$90–120K	$120–150K	$150–170K
Service Designer	$70–100K	$100–140K	$140–160K	$160–180K
UX Writer / Content Design	$70–90K	$90–120K	$120–160K	$160–170K
DesignOps / Design Systems	$70–$100K	$100–$130K	$130–$160k	$160–$180k
UX / Design Manager	$160–$170K	$170–$180K	$180–$190K	$190–$220K
Product Owner	$90–100K	$100–130K	$130–160K	$160–180K
Product Manager	$90–110K	$110–150K	$160–190K	$190–220K
Group Product Manager	$190–200K	$200–220K	$220–230K	$230K+

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All salary ranges exclude super

Digital

	Junior	Mid-level	Senior	Principal/Lead
Web Optimisation	$70-90K	$90-120K	$120-150K	$150-170K
Web Accessability	$70-100K	$100-130K	$130-160K	$160-180K
Web & Digital Analytics	$80-100K	$100-120K	$120-160K	$160-180K
CRM Management	$70-90K	$90-130K	$130-160K	$160-170K
Digital Designer	$70-100K	$100-130K	$130-150K	$150-170K
Digital Producer	$90-100K	$100-130K	$130-150K	$150-170K
Head of Digital	$90-110K	$110-140K	$140-180K	$180-220K
Copy / Content Producer	$70-90K	$90-120K	$120-160K	$160-170K
Product Marketing Manager	$80-100K	$100-130K	$130-160K	$160-200K

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All salary ranges exclude super

SRE, Platform & Cloud

	Junior	Mid-level	Senior	Principal/Lead
Site Reliability Engineer	$100–130K	$130–150K	$160–180K	$180–250K+
Staff SRE	$180–190K	$190–220K	$220–250K	$250–300K+
SRE Manager	$180–200K	$200–220K	$220–240K	$240–250K
DevOps/Platform Engineer	$90–110K	$110–140K	$160–180K	$190–220K
Cloud/Infrastructure Engineer	$80–110K	$110–130K	$130–160K	$160–180K
Cloud Architect	$100–120K	$120–150K	$160–190K	$200–220K
DevOps Manager	$180–200K	$200–220K	$220–240K	$240–250K
DevSecOps Engineer	$100–130K	$130–150K	$160–180K	$180–220K
Cloud Security Engineer	$90–110K	$110–150K	$150–180K	$180–220K

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All salary ranges exclude super

Infrastructure & Support

	Junior	Mid-level	Senior	Principal/Lead
IT Helpdesk	$60–70K	$70–80K	$80–90K	$90–100K
Desktop Support	$60–70K	$70–80K	$80–90K	$90–100K
Service Desk Manager	$80–90K	$90–100K	$100–130K	$130–150K
Systems Administrator	$60–70K	$70–90K	$90–130K	$130–150K
Systems Engineer	$60–80K	$80–100K	$100–140K	$140–160K
Network Administrator	$60–70K	$70–90K	$90–110K	$110–130K
Network Engineer	$70–80K	$80–130K	$130–160K	$160–180K
IT Manager	$100–110K	$110–140K	$140–170K	$170–200K

iterate.

All salary ranges exclude super

Security

	Junior	Mid-level	Senior	Principal/Lead
Security Analyst	$80–120K	$120–160K	$160–180K	$180–200K
SOC Analyst	$100–120K	$120–160K	$160–180K	$180–220K
Penetration Tester	$80–100K	$160–180K	$180–200K	$200–220K
Security Engineer	$120–140K	$140–160K	$160–190K	$190–210K
AppSec Engineer	$120–140K	$140–160K	$160–190K	$190–220K
Security Architect	$140–160K	$170–200K	$200–220K	$220–250K+
Identity Engineer	$120–$140K	$140K–$160K	$160–$190K	$190–$220K

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All salary ranges exclude super

Data & Analytics

	Junior	Mid-level	Senior	Principal/Lead
Data Analyst	$80–100K	$100–120K	$130–150K	$150–170K
BI Developer	$80–100K	$100–120K	$120–140K	$140–160K
Data Engineer	$100–120K	$110–130K	$160–180K	$180–200K
Data Scientist	$120–140K	$140–160K	$160–180K	$180–240K
AI / ML Engineer	$100–120K	$120–160K	$160–180K	$180–220K
Data Architect	$140–160K	$160–180K	$180–200K	$200–240K
Data Governance Analyst	$120–140K	$140–150K	$150–170K	$170–180K
Insights Analyst	$80–100K	$110–140K	$140–160K	$160–170K

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All salary ranges exclude super

Project Services

	Junior	Mid-level	Senior	Principal/Lead
Business Analyst	$80-100K	$100-130K	$130-160K	$160-180K
Iteration Manager	$90-120K	$120-150K	$150-170K	$170-180K
Change Manager	$120-140K	$140-160K	$160-180K	$180-200K
Project Manager	$140-160K	$160-170K	$170-180K	$180-200K
Program Manager	$170-190K	$190-200K	$200-240K	$240-300K
Delivery Lead	$130-150K	$150-170K	$170-190K	$190-200K
Delivery Manager	$150-160K	$160-190K	$190-230K	$230-250K

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All salary ranges exclude super

Leadership and Executive

	Start-ups	Scale-ups	SMEs	Enterprise
Head of Engineering	$200-210K	$210-230K	$230-250K	$250-300K
Head of Delivery	$180-200K	$200-$220K	$240-$260K	$250-$300K
Head of Design	$180-200K	$200-220K	$200-250K	$220-300K
Head of Product	$180-200K	$200-220K	$200-250K	$220-300K
Head of Data / AI	$180-200K	$200-230K	$230-270K	$270-350K
CPO	$200-250K	$250-300K	$300-350K	$350-450K
CTO	$220-250K	$250-300K	$300-350K	$350-500K+
CISO	$220-250K	$250-300K	$300-350K	$350-600K+
CIO	$300-340K	$340-380K	$380-450K	$450-800K+

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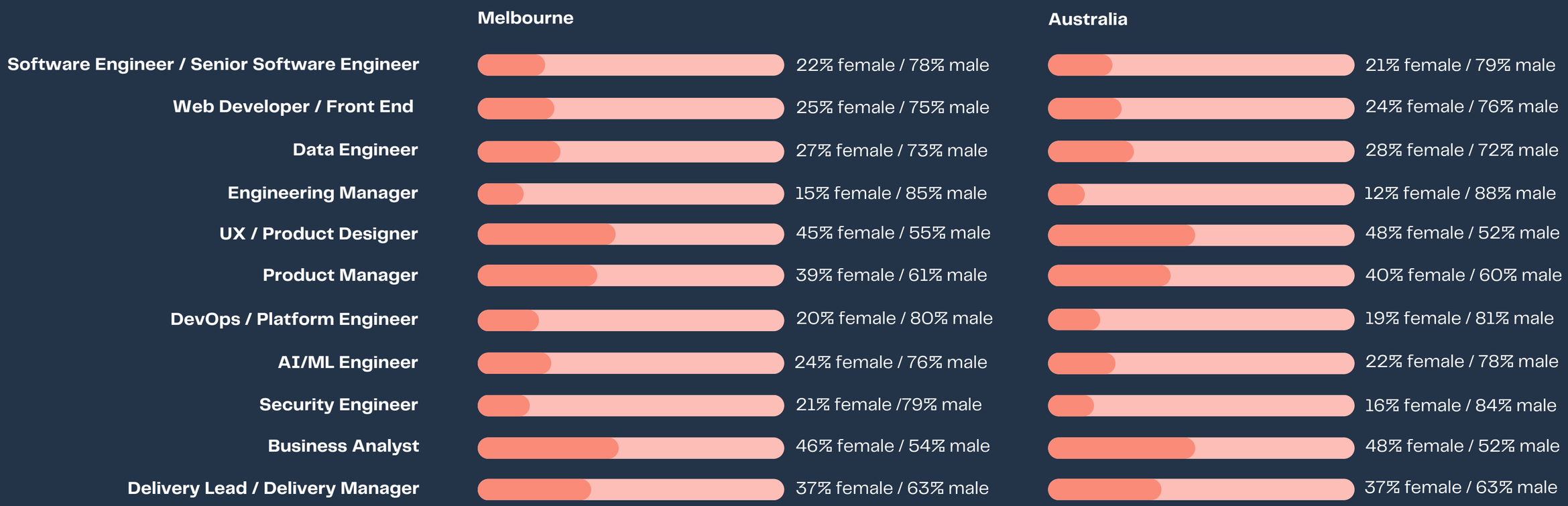
All salary ranges exclude super

The gender gap

Overall female representation has lifted slightly, but most engineering roles remain heavily male.

Design, Product and Business Analysis still sit closest to parity. Movement has been modest, and that's not surprising. When fewer seats open and risk appetite narrows, representation tends to stall. As hiring continues to strengthen, so too will the opportunity to rebalance.



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Source: LinkedIn Talent Insights (Feb 2026)

The road ahead

Every budget questions it. Teams and roles are being rebuilt around it. Waiting on it has a cost. Love it or hate it, AI will move closer to the centre of everyday work in 2026.

This is the year AI strategy becomes an organisational baseline. Productivity gains will be pursued aggressively, and benefits will land unevenly. Accelerated delivery and reshaped workflows won't come without new friction, oversight, and pressure on individuals. Output expectations may quickly outpace job titles. As boundaries blur, roles are more likely to be stretched, merged, or absorbed.

At the same time, expect more regulation and high-profile standoffs. As Big Tech's AI arms race intensifies, so too will the push for governments to set clearer rules around data, content and accountability. The result won't be neat or universal, but it will affect AI adoption pace among organisations. Some will move fast, accepting risk. Others will slow, wary of downstream consequences.

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More broadly, the market is expected to move forward at a measured pace. Interest rates hiked early and may do so again, but conditions appear stable enough to absorb them. Start-up and scale-up funding will continue its selective flow into businesses able to prove their model in-market. While permanent hiring climbs with longer-term conviction, CapEx-funded programs will keep contractors busy where delivery speed, transformation, or specialist capability matters.

Firming demand for talent will put greater focus on flexibility. Fully remote roles and workplaces with more flex in their hybrid policies will have a hiring advantage. In parallel, encouraging international evidence will keep compressed week and fortnight trials in play.

Will stronger demand finally lift salaries and contractor rates? Can AI regulation catch up to innovation? And if AI genuinely lifts productivity, who wins — and who loses?

2026 will be asked some big questions and progress will come in bursts. Each improvement, stumble, adjustment will bring new risks and new opportunities. The year might not have all the answers, but it'll give us a clearer idea of where we're headed.

The team behind the guide

Hiring?
Considering a move?
Just trying to make sense of the market?
We're here to talk it through.

hello@iterate.com

Ryan Lynch
Director / Principal
Leadership, Engineering, Architecture

Michael Boyd
Director / Principal
Leadership, Engineering, Design

Thomas Clark
Principal Consultant
SRE, DevOps, Cloud, & Security

Kyla Boyd
Principal Consultant
Project Services, Engineering, Mobile

Stephanie Futerman
Principal Consultant
Data, AI/ML, Software Engineering

Sam Bowring
Principal Consultant
Design, Product, Digital

Tatiana Kimball
Senior Delivery Consultant

Hannah Campbell
Office Manager / Contractor Care Consultant