

24/25 FINANCIAL YEAR

# ACCOUNTING FIRM SALARY GUIDE

*Partner to Junior Accountant*



LAWSON DELANEY

Prepared by  
Lawson Delaney  
Professional Services Team

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# A LETTER FROM US

As we reflect on the 2024/2025 financial year, one thing is clear. The professional services sector continues to evolve rapidly. Shaped by ongoing economic pressure, new regulatory expectations, and shifting workforce dynamics.

## **Market Conditions and Workforce Trends**

In public practice, demand for compliance and advisory services has remained consistent. However, meeting this demand continues to challenge firms. Talent shortages are still front of mind, driving practices to explore more innovative ways to rethink their talent functions. While wage growth has stabilised somewhat, following sharp increases in recent years, the scarcity of experienced professionals means high-quality skilled accountants are still able to command premium salaries, particularly in business services, tax, and SMSF.

## **Creating a Place Where People Want To Be**

In such a competitive market, employers are assessing their own culture and values alignment to ensure they retain and attract the best available person for a role. Candidates are prioritising employers who create an environment people want to be a part of, over a workforce that is told to show up. Having fun at work is the key to competitiveness, and letting people see how this is achieved through strong employer branding.



## **Employer Risk Mitigation & Policy Review**

Now is a good time for employers to be reviewing policies, ensuring they are complying with the ever-changing obligations pushed on them. As part of this process, you have the opportunity to benchmark yourself against your competitors on hot policies such as Hybrid Working, Maternity/Paternity Leave and Additional Leave Purchase, to name a few.

At the Lawson HR Group, we provide a wide range of services from Professional Services Recruitment, Industry Recruitment (for all of your clients' needs), Remuneration Benchmarking Reports, and Broader Policy reviews delivered via our dedicated HR Consulting team.

To learn more, feel free to reach out to one of our team members or visit our website [www.lawsondelaney.com.au](http://www.lawsondelaney.com.au).

# TALENT TRENDS



## Recruitment Trends in Accounting

The accounting sector continues to grapple with the lack of new graduates needed to meet the existing and future needs of the profession. This lack of flow has created scarcity, particularly at the Senior Accountant level, where firms seek individuals who can seamlessly integrate and be productive from day one.

Salary growth has moderated compared to previous years; disparities persist between larger metropolitan firms and smaller boutique practices. Larger firms often offer comprehensive packages, including professional development opportunities and structured career pathways, making them attractive to top talent. Conversely, smaller firms leverage flexibility and custom work environments to compete for skilled professionals.

This dynamic has led to a more nuanced approach to remuneration, where firms tailor offers based on individual candidate value and market positioning.

## Embracing Technology

The integration of technology into accounting practices has accelerated, prompting firms to seek candidates with proficiency in digital tools and platforms. Moreover, there's a noticeable trend of firms recruiting individuals from diverse educational backgrounds, including technology and engineering, to meet the evolving demands of the profession. This approach not only broadens the talent pool, but also infuses fresh perspectives into traditional accounting roles.

## Purpose-driven Employment

Beyond competitive salaries, professionals are increasingly prioritising alignment with organisational values and a clear sense of purpose in their work. Firms that articulate a strong mission and demonstrate commitment to ethical practices and social responsibility are more successful in attracting and retaining talent.

This trend highlights the importance of cultivating a workplace culture that resonates with employees' personal and professional aspirations.



# TAKEAWAYS

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- Stay informed about what your competitors are offering to ensure you attract and secure top-tier talent, not just the best candidate who happens to apply via Seek.
  - Foster a workplace culture that people are proud to be part of, and support your team in finding purpose and fulfilment in their work.
  - Take a proactive approach to workforce planning. Recruiting only when the need arises can lead to missed opportunities. Instead, map out growth areas and timelines, and identify high-risk roles so you have contingency plans in place.
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Please note:

This study has been compiled by contacting candidates and clients who work solely in public practice. It is the most targeted study of its kind in the Melbourne market.

The remuneration figures recorded are made up of a base excluding superannuation only, and don't reflect total earnings from profit share or dividend income.



We have a wealth of experience in our specialist Accounting Firm Recruitment & Advisory team here in Melbourne.

Should you want to discuss this report or our services in-depth, feel free to reach out to our team. Best wishes for the new financial year ahead!

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# PARTNER/DIRECTOR

Mergers and acquisitions have remained strong throughout the 2024/25 financial year, especially among one-Partner firms being absorbed into mid-sized practices. These moves are typically driven by a need for operational scale, broader service capability, and relief from the resourcing pressures that continue to challenge smaller firms.

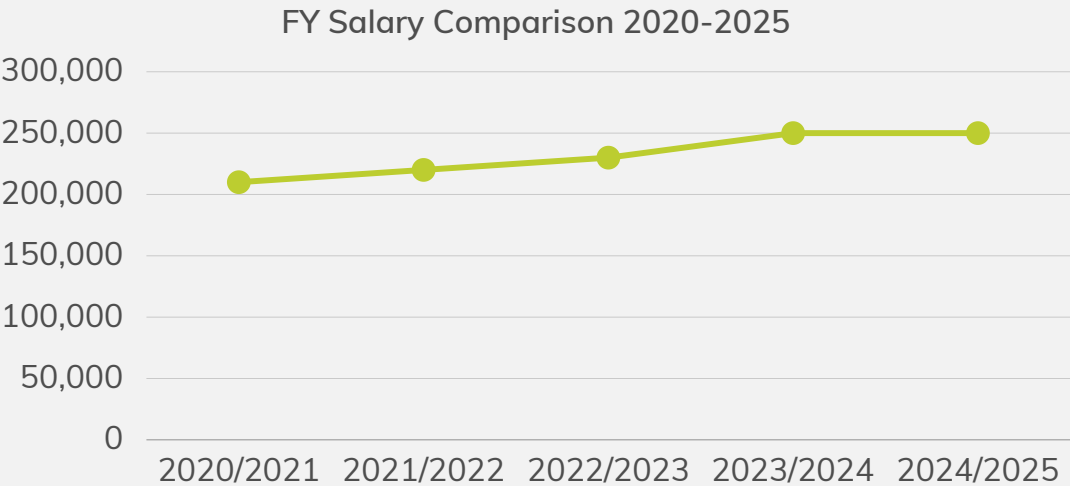
Experienced Partners seeking new roles are placing significant importance on cultural alignment, wellbeing, positive working relationships with fellow Partners, and more ability to work in the way that they believe is best. We regularly hear from these professionals that they want to reward people in their team who deserve it, without being limited by over-the-top bureaucracy.

In contrast, leaders who are stepping up to Partner positions are often making decisions based on equity timelines, shareholding structures and total income potential.

Competition for Partner-elect candidates has intensified, with equity access and speed of progression now major differentiators. Firms that are open, upfront and structured in their communication around equity and succession planning are seeing the greatest success in attracting this emerging leadership tier.

Many firms are hiring Partner-elect professionals with the intention of offering equity within 12–24 months and are often paying them higher salaries than existing Partners to offset the absence of dividends.

Partner/Director 2024/25 FY Salary	
Min	\$ 180,000
Average	\$ 250,000
Max	\$ 330,000



\*Base salary excluding superannuation

# EXPERIENCED MANAGER/ SENIOR MANAGER

Experienced Managers, whether currently in Manager positions or Senior Manager positions, who have been at the management level for several years, are typically split into two groups: those who want to progress to equity Partner and those who are happy to remain at this level.

The salaries for both have increased to the point that this level is sometimes paid \$180k plus super. However, it is more common to see \$140k-\$160k plus super.

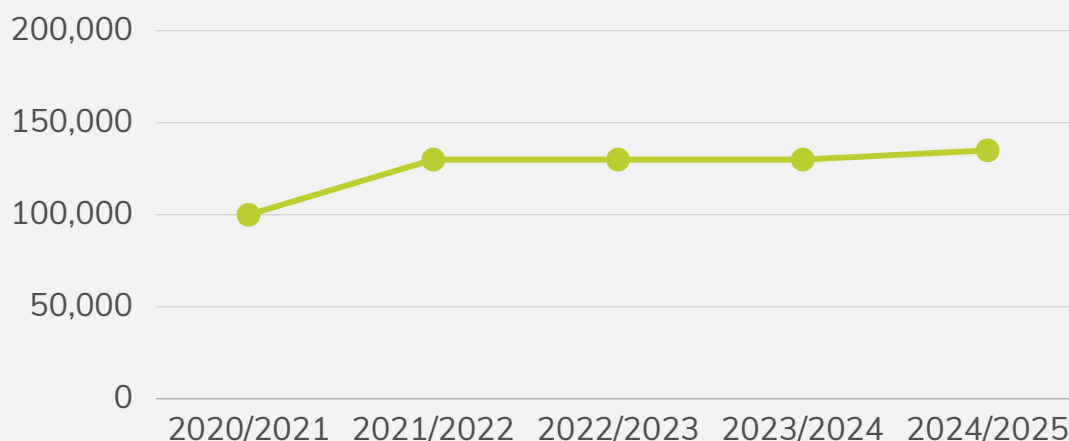
Those who are happy to remain at this level often hope for flexibility to sometimes work from home, but employers hiring at this level often want Managers in the office to support junior staff. The Managers wanting to progress to Partner in the future can come with a high potential upside. However, they may ask for salaries verging on Partner level without necessarily the new business development experience to back it up.

To retain talent at this pivotal level, firms are recognising the importance of transparent progression plans for those who want it and flexibility for others.

## Experienced Manager 2024/25 FY Salary

Min	\$ 125,000
Average	\$ 145,000
Max	\$ 180,000

## FY Salary Comparison 2020-2025



\*Base salary excluding superannuation

# JUNIOR MANAGER/ASSISTANT MANAGER/SUPERVISOR

The Assistant Manager level is often a natural next step for Senior Accountants transitioning into leadership roles. While many initially aim for Manager positions, they often accept Assistant Manager roles as a stepping stone, making this level a strategic offering for firms seeking to attract high-potential talent without placing them under immediate pressure.

While flexibility, such as hybrid working, and exposure to a diverse client portfolio remain important, these are now seen as baseline expectations. What sets firms apart is the level of support provided in professional development and career progression.

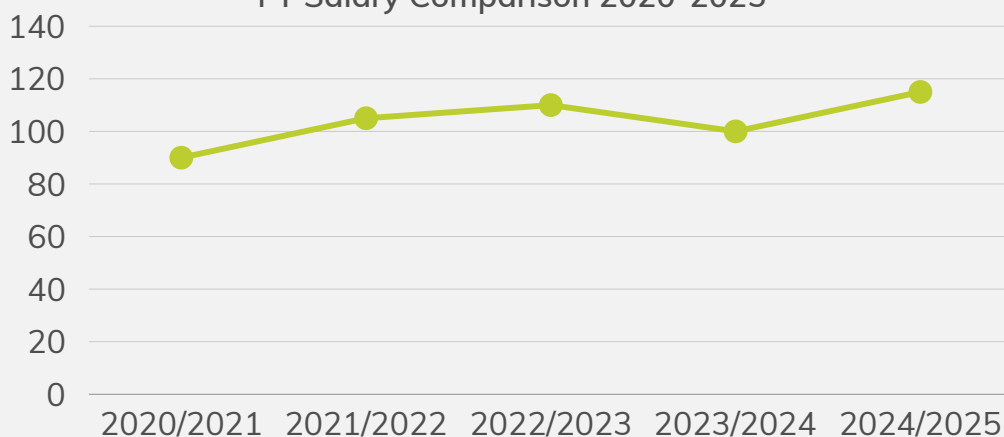
Salaries at this level typically align with well-paid Senior Accountants or entry-level Managers, though the range is narrower. In some cases, top-performing Senior Accountants may earn more than their Assistant Manager counterparts.

Professionals at this stage place high value on clear performance expectations, access to mentoring from experienced leaders, and regular, structured feedback.

## Junior/Assistant Manager 2024/25 FY Salary

Min	\$ 105,000
Average	\$ 115,000
Max	\$ 130,000

## FY Salary Comparison 2020-2025



\*Base salary excluding superannuation



# EXPERIENCED SENIOR ACCOUNTANT

This year, we've made a clear distinction between experienced Senior Accountants and those earlier in their Senior-level careers, as both salary expectations and responsibilities can vary significantly within this group. Experienced Senior Accountants typically have over 6 years of post-qualification experience. Many are content to remain at this level, though some eventually seek progression into management, often later than their peers, sometimes after a decade or more.

Those who have stayed with one firm for a long period are often highly trusted and relied upon. In some cases, their salaries have grown to match or even exceed those of Senior Managers due to consistent annual increases.

These professionals can be ideal hires, experienced enough to manage teams and client relationships, yet still hands-on and comfortable with compliance work. However, they may also be deeply accustomed to a specific way of working and can require time to adapt to a new environment.

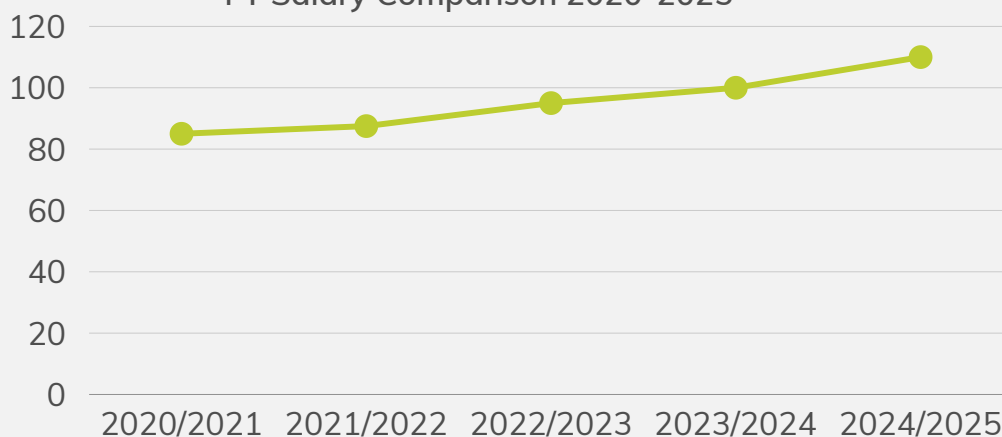
Salaries for this group typically start above \$100k, with most falling between \$120k and \$140k. It's important to note that their current salary may not reflect their expectations when changing roles.

Many see a move as an opportunity to realign their remuneration with their level of experience and contribution.

## Experienced Senior Acc. 2024/25 FY Salary

Min	\$90,000
Average	\$ 110,000
Max	\$ 130,000

## FY Salary Comparison 2020-2025



\*Base salary excluding superannuation

# SENIOR ACCOUNTANT

Senior Accountants are defined as those with approximately 3.5 to 6 years of post-qualification experience. More experienced Senior Accountants, with over 6 years, are addressed separately above.

There is currently strong demand for professionals at this level. While they are significantly more expensive than Intermediates, firms often view them as being able to integrate quickly into teams with minimal training or oversight. Ironically, many Senior Accountants at this stage are seeking new roles specifically to gain better training, mentoring, and development opportunities that will support their progression into management.

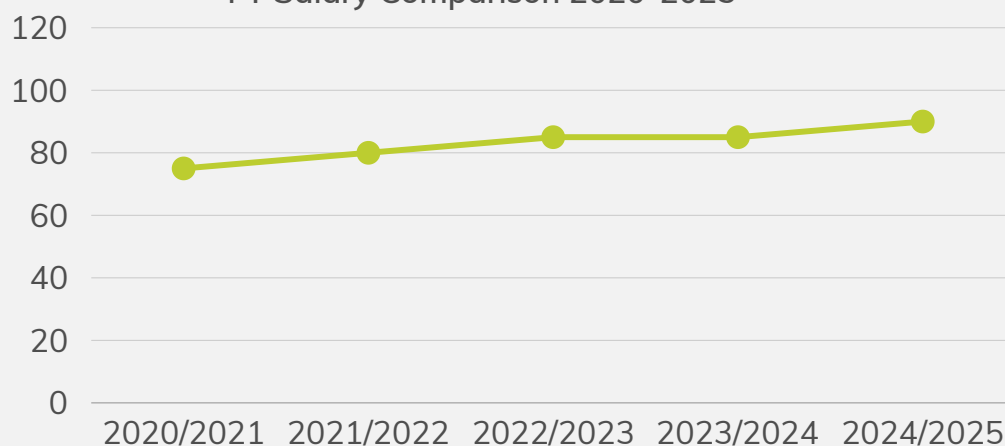
Salaries at this level are rising rapidly, as these candidates are among the most sought-after in the market. Public practice frequently loses talent at this stage to industry, which is perceived as offering less pressure and higher pay. Those who choose to stay in public practice tend to be ambitious and are motivated by clear and authentic career progression. If a firm cannot demonstrate this, other firms likely will, and this is a key factor in attracting top-tier Senior Accountants.

The graph below compares the full salary range for all Senior Accountants in previous years with this year's less experienced cohort, and even with the narrowed scope, there has still been an upward shift.

## Senior Accountant 2024/25 FY Salary

Min	\$ 75,000
Average	\$ 90,000
Max	\$ 110,000

## FY Salary Comparison 2020-2025



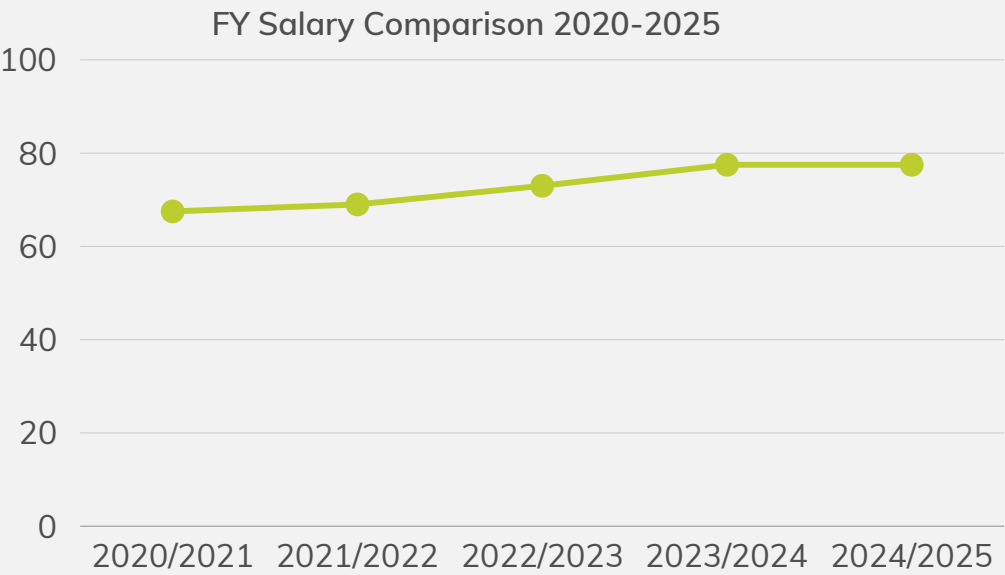
\*Base salary excluding superannuation

# INTERMEDIATE ACCOUNTANT

Intermediate Accountants, typically with 1.5 to 3.5 years of post-graduate experience, remain in short supply. Many started their careers working remotely, missing out on hands-on development, mentoring, and team learning. As a result, they're increasingly seeking roles with better access to Partners, broader client exposure, and stronger day-to-day support. These benefits are more commonly found in boutique and mid-tier firms.

To attract and retain talent at this level, firms are broadening their hiring criteria and adapting responsibilities. Intermediates are showing strong interest in client-facing opportunities, including sitting in on meetings, which has become a key factor in securing top candidates. In some cases, they're also taking on review responsibilities due to the use of outsourced teams. A shift that allows Senior Accountants to step into more client advisory roles, keeping them engaged and less likely to move into commercial positions.

Intermediate Accountant 2024/25 FY Salary	
Min	\$ 63,000
Average	\$ 77,500
Max	\$ 80,000



\*Base salary excluding superannuation

# JUNIOR ACCOUNTANT

The narrative around graduate recruitment has shifted, with many firms now actively seeking Junior Accountants to build a long-term talent pipeline. By engaging with universities and graduate fairs, firms are addressing the shortage of Senior Accountants and investing in early-career hires they can train and develop in line with their own standards.

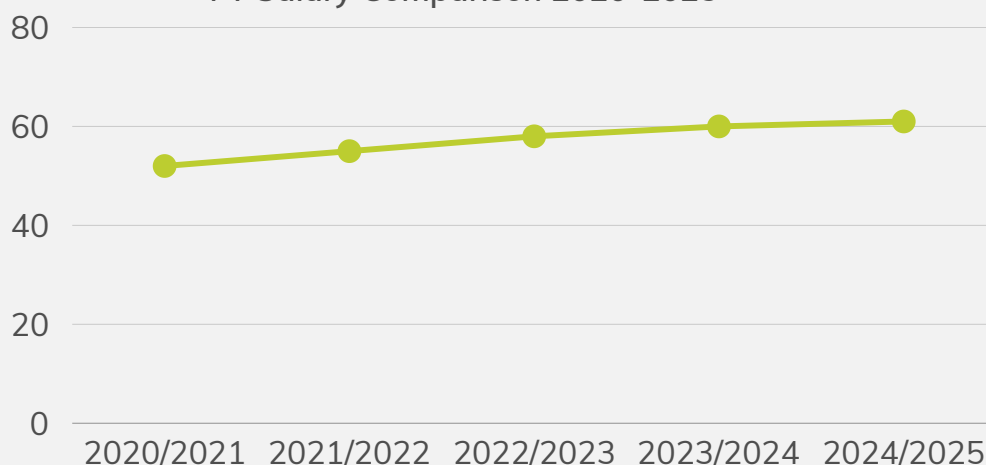
A Junior Accountant typically has up to 12 months of experience. While application volumes remain strong, firms without the internal capacity to train and mentor new starters are still hesitant to hire at this level.

However, practices with structured onboarding, graduate pathways and active mentoring are consistently attracting high-potential candidates. Often without needing to lean on salary. Graduates are increasingly prioritising professional growth and hands-on experience, making boutique and mid-tier firms more competitive when the right support systems are in place.

## Junior Accountant 2024/25 FY Salary

Min	\$ 55,000
Average	\$ 61,000
Max	\$ 66,000

## FY Salary Comparison 2020-2025



\*Base salary excluding superannuation

# BOOKKEEPER

Public Practice Bookkeepers are changing firms for a variety of reasons, most commonly in pursuit of higher salaries and greater workplace flexibility. Others are seeking more structured, supportive team environments.

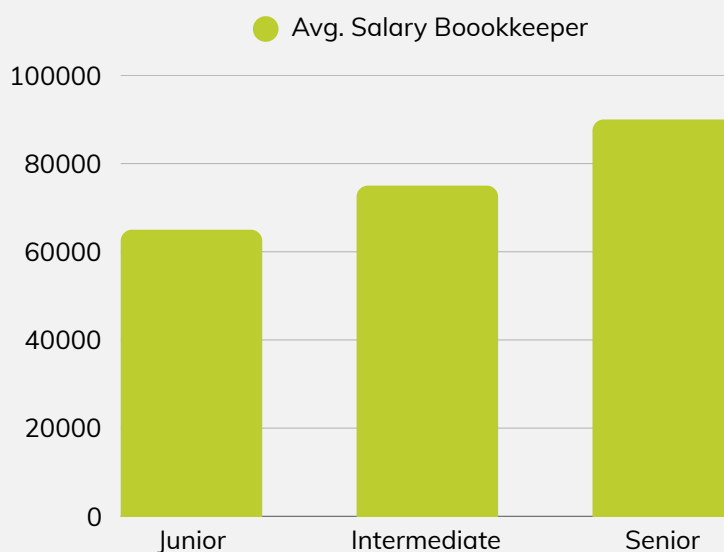
The demanding workload and pressure in some firms can also be a key driver, prompting bookkeepers to move to practices with established teams where responsibilities are more evenly shared.

Many bookkeepers have migrated from overseas and secured their first public practice role in Australia. In some cases, this has resulted in salaries below market average.

However, after gaining a few years of local experience, these professionals often seek new opportunities that offer a significant pay increase in recognition of their skills and contributions.

## Public Practice Bookkeeper 2024/25 FY Salary

Junior	\$60,000 - \$70,000
Intermediate	\$70,000 - \$80,000
Senior	\$80,000 - \$100,000



\*Base salary excluding superannuation



# CLIENT SERVICES COORDINATOR/MANAGER

Client Services Coordinators, Client Services Managers, and Corporate Secretaries within accounting firms are increasingly moving to new employers in pursuit of significant salary increases.

As accounting practices continue to grow year on year and take on new clients, these professionals are often tasked with onboarding and training new staff, as well as managing small teams.

However, many are not being adequately compensated for the expanded scope of their responsibilities and the increased workload, prompting them to explore better opportunities elsewhere.

Accounting firms are increasingly willing to offer competitive salaries to experienced Client Services Managers with strong client-facing skills, as many are prioritising a client-centric approach to enhance client retention.

## Client Services Coordinator 2024/25 FY Salary

Junior	\$65,000 - \$75,000
Intermediate	\$70,000 - \$75,000
Senior	\$85,000 - \$110,000



\*Base salary excluding superannuation

# CONCLUDING STATEMENT

We hope that Lawson Delaney's 24/25 Accounting Firm Salary Guide is a useful tool when navigating the market's changes. Our team is on hand to provide context to the nuances around the numbers.

We encourage you to engage with our team to fully understand what other employers are offering to ensure you remain competitive.

## Services available:

- Professional Services recruitment
- Remuneration Benchmarking
- Cultural assessment tools
- Managed recruitment solutions (outsourcing talent strategy and management to improve quality, risk management and reduce spend)
- Website development and social media strategies for career platforms and talent pipelines



# TALK TO US

## Professional Services Team

Lawson Delaney's Professional Services Recruitment practice is focused on providing executive search, professional recruitment and advisory services specifically tailored to professional services firms in the Accounting market, both locally and nationally.

Our team's candidate focus ranges from Accountant positions through to Partner and Practice Lead roles, as well as support roles. Our local, national and international clients include Big 4, top 10 global firms, large national firms, and high-calibre boutiques. We also support advisory, audit, insolvency, corporate finance, outsourced CFO, insurance, risk, and tax consulting firms, as well as Family Offices.



**Darren Banfield**  
Managing Director



**Richard Fischer**  
Group Managing Director



**Guy Sigston**  
Executive Director



**Colm Reddy**  
Director



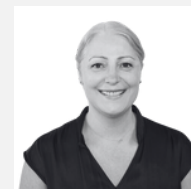
**David May**  
Director



**Tania Rogers**  
Director



**Lee Eggleston**  
Principal



**Jenny Ennis**  
Principal

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