

2026 SALARY GUIDE

GTM / Tech Sales



TABLE OF CONTENTS



3	About Pulse	15	Customer Success
4	Survey Methodology	17	Sales Leadership
5	Australian Tech Sales Market	19	Sales Development
6	Key Trends	21	Sales Engineer
8	Demand and Supply by role	23	Sales Support & Operations
9	Account Exec/BDM	25	How to use this guide
11	Account Management		
13	Channel Sales		

ABOUT PULSE



Pulse is Australia's leading specialist recruiter for go-to-market and tech sales professionals.

For over 20 years, we've connected high-performing salespeople with Australia's most innovative technology companies, from high-growth AI startups to global enterprise software vendors.

We understand tech sales: the difference between SMB and Enterprise selling, the value of pre-sales expertise, and what separates top performers from the rest.

93%

Engagement to fill
ratio on an
exclusive basis

13.5
working
days

Average time from
initial job brief to
candidate offer

97%

Candidate
retention rate 6+
months

This 2026 guide provides Australia's tech sales salary benchmarks by synthesising placement data from 400+ roles, surveys from 850+ professionals, and workforce analytics covering 50,000 workers. Validated against major firms, these insights offer a precise look at base salaries and OTE structures across the AI, SaaS, cloud, and cybersecurity sectors.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY: MARKET SEGMENTS DEFINED



52,000+

Tech Sales professionals

6,800

Job movements in the last 12 months

22 months

22 months: Average tenure in high-growth/AI-native segments

Geographic Distribution:

Sydney: 19,500 (37%) | Melbourne: 16,200 (31%) | Brisbane: 7,800 (15%) | Perth: 4,200 (8%) | Adelaide, Canberra, other: 4,300 (9%)

Gender Split:

46% female overall | 32% in senior leadership roles

Top 3 Reasons for Seeking New Roles:

1. Compensation (62%)
2. Career progression (41%)
3. Company culture/leadership (38%)

SMB:

- <\$50K deals; 1–3 month cycles; high-volume transactional.

Mid-Market:

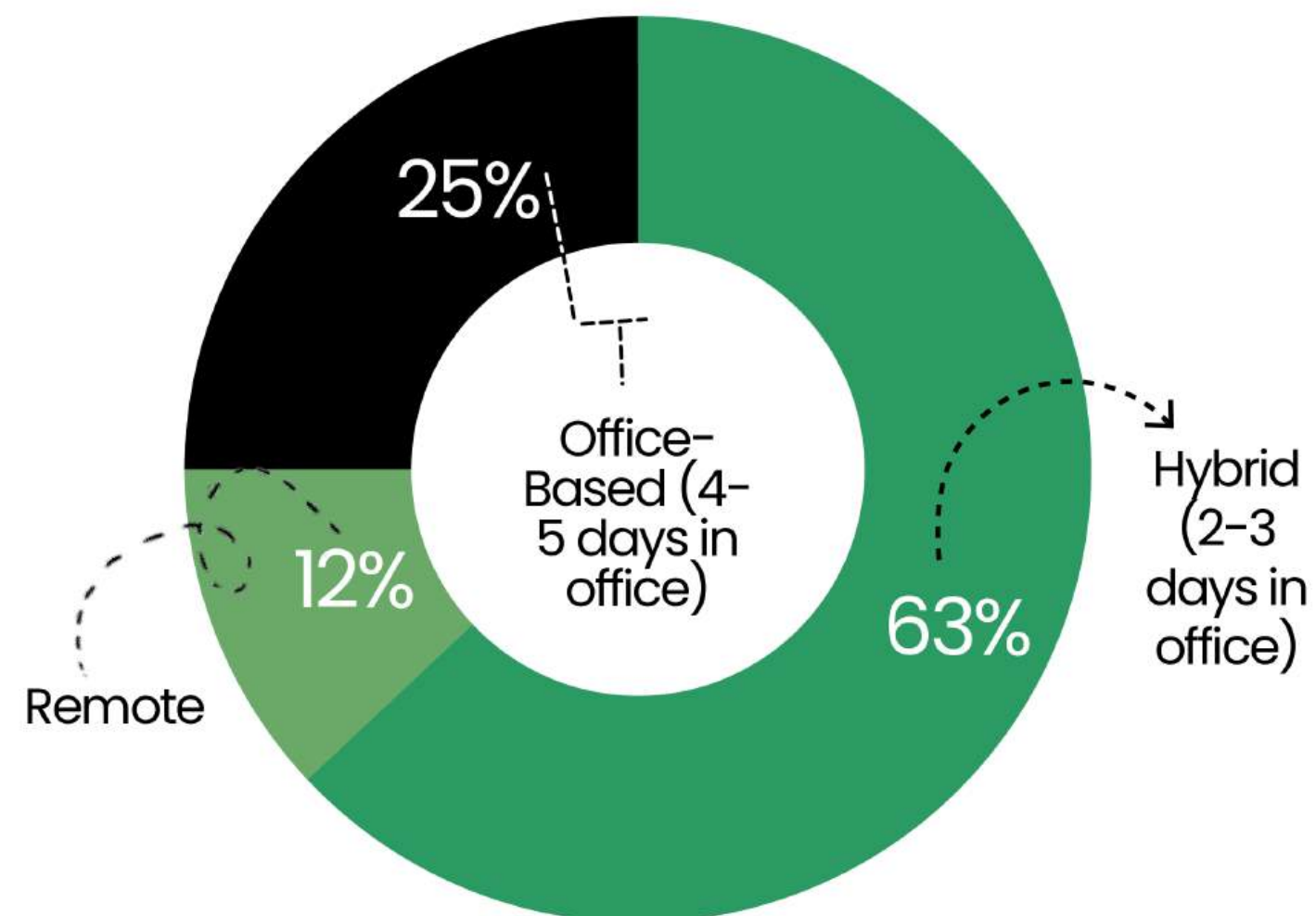
- \$50K–\$300K deals; 3–6 month cycles; multi-stakeholder consultative.

Enterprise:

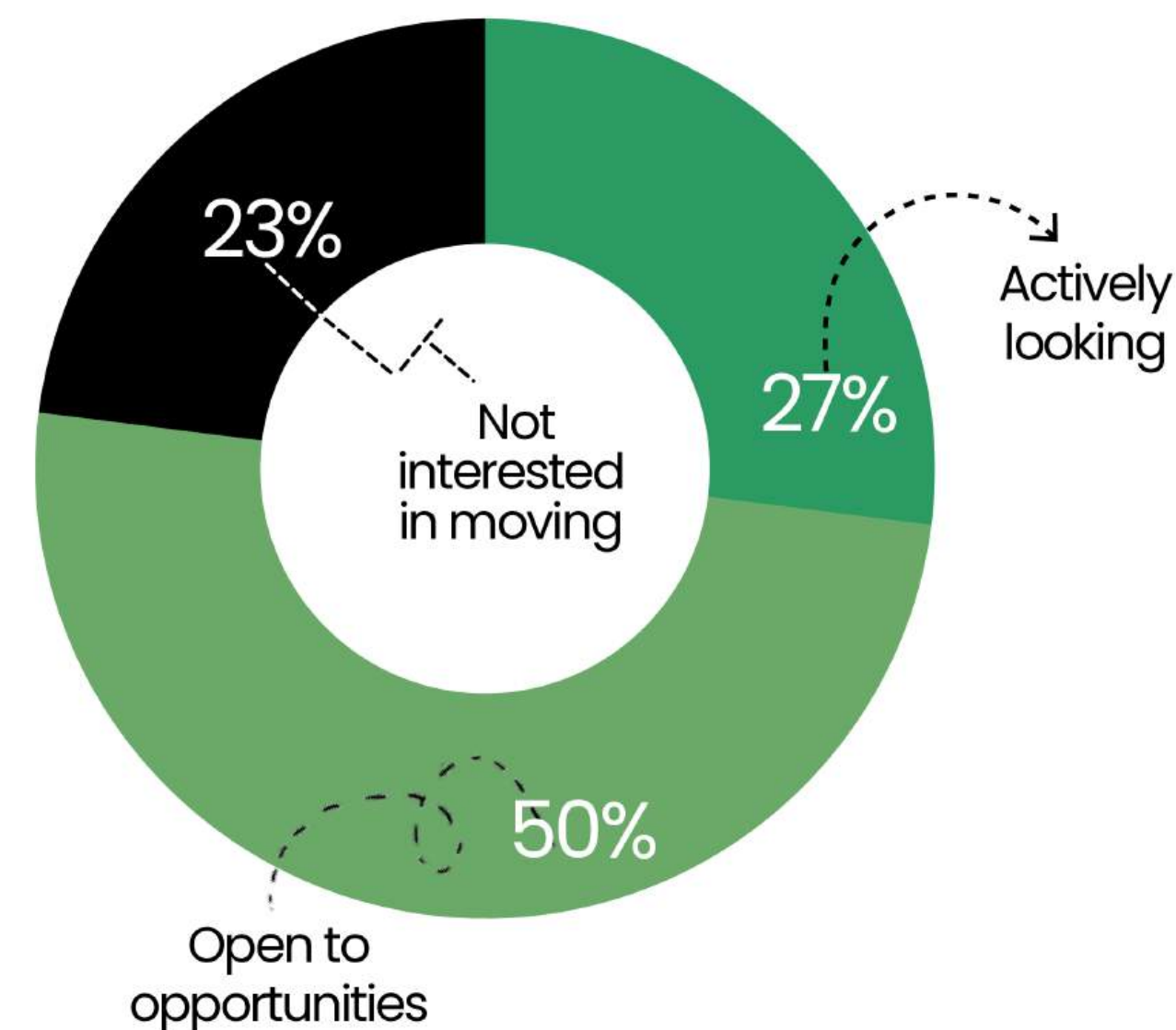
- \$500K+ deals; 6–18 month cycles; C-suite engagement.

AUSTRALIAN TECH SALES MARKET 2026

Work Environment



Job Search Status



Hybrid work is now standard. Companies requiring full-time office attendance face significantly reduced talent pools and must offer 8-12% salary premiums.

KEY TRENDS: COMPLEXITY & RETENTION



1. The Broken Pay Hierarchy

Mid-Market (\$130K–\$170K) and Enterprise AEs (\$170K–\$230K) now frequently out-earn their managers, causing a leadership pipeline crisis. Because top sellers lack financial incentive to promote, management roles are often filled by less-experienced sellers, stalling leadership quality. To fix this, companies are boosting managers' comp via team accelerators, equity grants, and higher base pay.

2. Complexity > Seniority

Pay follows technical depth, not tenure. Sales Engineers and Architects command 15–30% premiums.

- **AI/ML Expertise:** +20–25%
- **Cybersecurity:** +12–18%
- **Technical Integration:** +10–15%
- **Vertical Specialization:** +8–12%

3. The Retention Economy

Average tenure is 22 months, though Enterprise roles have stabilized to 2.3 years as talent prioritizes security. Replacing an AE costs 1.5x salary plus lost productivity, forcing a shift in valued skills:

- **Retention/AM Skills:** +53% YoY demand
- **Customer Success:** Fastest salary growth in 2026
- **The Trend:** Renewal-focused roles now command higher premiums than traditional "hunter" positions.

KEY TRENDS: AI IMPACT



AI-native companies are flooding the market and driving fierce competition for sales talent.

The New Reality

AI-native companies (generative AI, automation, agent platforms) offer aggressive compensation, equity upside, and the chance to sell cutting-edge technology.

Employers now expect AI fluency from sales professionals:

- Familiarity with AI-powered sales tools
- Ability to sell AI-driven products
- Comfort discussing AI use cases with technical buyers

The Premium:

Sellers who can credibly demonstrate AI product knowledge command measurable salary premiums in 2026.

What This Means

For Employers:

Competition for talent is intensifying. AI companies are well-funded and moving fast. Traditional tech companies must match comp or risk losing talent.

For Sales Professionals:

AI fluency is no longer optional. Experience selling AI products or selling into technical/data science teams = higher pay.

This trend will accelerate through 2026–2027.

SUPPLY & DEMAND BY ROLE: WHERE DEMAND OUTPACES SUPPLY



High Demand, Limited Supply

(Hardest to Fill: 45–90 days)

- Enterprise Account Executives
- Sales Engineers / Pre-Sales
- Channel Sales Managers
- Customer Success Managers (Mid-Market & Enterprise)
- AEs selling cybersecurity,
- AI/ML, or infrastructure

These roles see multiple counter-offers and command top-of-range or above-range compensation.

Balanced Supply & Demand

(30–45 days to fill)

- Account Managers (Mid-Market)
- Sales Development Reps (Mid-Market/Enterprise)
- Inside Sales Representatives
- Sales Operations Analysts

Healthy candidate flow and predictable compensation.

High Supply, Selective Demand

(Easiest to Fill: 20–35 days)

- Account Executives (SMB)
- Business Development Managers (generalist, no vertical focus)
- Sales Development Reps (SMB)
- Junior Account Managers

Large candidate pools make these quick to fill. Employers can be highly selective.

Retention Risk by Role:

Highest 12-month attrition: AEs (SMB) 34% | SDRs 31% | BDMs 28%

Highest retention: Sales Leadership 89% | Sales Engineers 84% | Account Managers (Enterprise) 82%

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE/BDM SALARY BENCHMARKS

NOTE: Figures represent \$AUD Base Salary only. 12% Super, OTE, and allowances are additional.

MARKET SEGMENT	RANGE	AVERAGE BASE	TYPICAL OTE SPLIT
SMB	\$90K – \$130K	110K	50/50 to 60/40
Mid-Market	\$130K – \$170K	150K	50/50 to 60/40
Enterprise	\$170K – \$230K	200K	50/50 to 60/40

YEAR-OVER-YEAR: +3% average across all segments

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE/BDM SALARY BENCHMARKS

What Commands a Premium:

- Enterprise SaaS experience with \$500K+ deal sizes: +15–20%
- Cybersecurity or infrastructure sales background: +12–18%
- Consistent quota attainment (3+ years at 100%+): +10–15%
- Vertical specialization (Financial Services, Healthcare): +8–12%

Market Insights:

- **Enterprise AEs:** Most competitive roles with 60–90 day hiring timelines and frequent counter-offers; top performers often out-earn managers via accelerators.
- **SMB AEs:** High annual turnover (34%) as reps typically transition to Mid-Market or Enterprise roles within 18–24 months.
- **OTE Health:** In high-performing teams, 60–70% of AEs reach 100% OTE. Achievement below 50% usually signals poor quota setting, territory design, or product-market fit.

ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT SALARY BENCHMARKS



NOTE: Figures represent \$AUD Base Salary only. 12% Super, OTE, and allowances are additional.

MARKET SEGMENT	RANGE	AVERAGE BASE	TYPICAL OTE SPLIT
Account Manager (SMB)	\$70K – \$120K	\$95K	70/30 to 80/20
Account Manager (Mid-Market)	\$120K – \$150K	\$135K	70/30 to 80/20
Key Account Manager (Enterprise)	\$150K – \$210K	\$180K	70/30 to 80/20

YEAR-OVER-YEAR: +4% average (growing faster than new business roles)

ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT SALARY BENCHMARKS



What Commands a Premium:

- Enterprise account portfolio management experience: +12–18%
- Proven track record of net revenue retention >110%: +10–15%
- Experience with complex, multi-year contracts: +8–12%
- Cross-sell/upsell success in technical products: +8–10%

Market Insights:

- **Market Shift:** AM is the fastest-growing tech sales category as firms prioritise retention over rising acquisition costs.
- **The Enterprise Role:** Key Account Managers handle \$5M–\$20M in ARR across 8–15 accounts, requiring executive negotiation and resource coordination.
- **Top Skills:** Client retention (+53% YoY) and territory management (+42% YoY) as Australia's fastest-growing sales capabilities.
- **Career Path:** Many Enterprise AEs transition to AM for a relationship-focused approach, more predictable income, and better work-life balance compared to "hunting" roles.

CHANNEL SALES SALARY BENCHMARKS



NOTE: Figures represent \$AUD Base Salary only. 12% Super, OTE, and allowances are additional.

MARKET SEGMENT	RANGE	AVERAGE BASE	TYPICAL OTE SPLIT
Channel Sales Manager (Reseller/SMB Partners)	\$110K – \$150K	\$130K	70/30 to 80/20
Channel Sales Manager (Vendor/Enterprise Partners)	\$150K – \$190K	\$170K	70/30 to 80/20

YEAR-OVER-YEAR: +5% average (highest growth among sales roles)

CHANNEL SALES SALARY BENCHMARKS



What Commands a Premium:

- Established partner network in Australian market: +15–20%
- Experience with global SIs (Accenture, Deloitte, etc.): +12–18%
- Track record of building channel programs from scratch: +10–15%
- Deep vertical expertise (Government, Financial Services): +10–12%

Market Insights:

- **Talent Scarcity:** Channel roles are chronically undersupplied, with most talent drawn from vendors or partners rather than a dedicated channel career path.
- **Skill Set:** Requires unique expertise in co-selling, margin structures, and "influence without authority" across partner ecosystems.
- **The Premium:** Managing large Enterprise partners (Global SIs, Consultancies) commands 20–35% higher pay than managing smaller resellers.
- **Career Path:** Typically follows 3–5 years as an AE; ideal for those who prefer ecosystem-driven selling and leadership over direct quota-carrying.

CUSTOMER SUCCESS SALARY BENCHMARKS



NOTE: Figures represent \$AUD Base Salary only. 12% Super, OTE, and allowances are additional.

MARKET SEGMENT	RANGE	AVERAGE BASE	TYPICAL OTE SPLIT
CSM (SMB)	\$90K – \$120K	\$105K	70/30 to 90/10
CSM (Mid-Market to Enterprise)	\$120K – \$180K	\$150K	70/30 to 90/10

YEAR-OVER-YEAR: +6% average (fastest salary growth of any sales role)

Companies with mature Customer Success functions see 90–95% gross retention vs. 75–85% for those treating CS as support. The compensation investment pays for itself.

CUSTOMER SUCCESS SALARY BENCHMARKS



What Commands a Premium:

- Enterprise CSM experience managing \$3M+ ARR books: +15-20%
- Technical product background (able to configure, troubleshoot): +12-15%
- Proven NRR (Net Revenue Retention) >115%: +10-15%
- Experience with usage-based or consumption pricing: +8-12%

Market Insights:

- **Role Evolution:** Top CSMs have shifted from reactive support to proactive commercial operators driving adoption, expansion, and renewals.
- **Salary Variance:** Wide ranges (\$90K-\$180K) reflect the split between support-heavy roles and high-paid "Strategic" CSMs who carry expansion quotas.
- **Modern Comp:** Leading firms now align CSM pay with Account Management, using variable incentives tied to NRR, renewals, and upsells.
- **Career Path:** CSM is now a deliberate career destination. Senior professionals typically progress into CS leadership (Head of/VP) or transition into Enterprise Account Management.

SALES LEADERSHIP SALARY BENCHMARKS



NOTE: Figures represent \$AUD Base Salary only. 12% Super, OTE, and allowances are additional.

MARKET SEGMENT	RANGE	AVERAGE BASE	TYPICAL OTE SPLIT
Sales Manager/Team Lead	\$150K – \$200K	\$175K	70/30 to 80/20
Senior Sales Manager / Director	\$180K – \$240K	\$210K	70/30 to 80/20
National Sales Director	\$210K – \$270K	\$240K	60/40 to 70/30
VP Sales / CRO (ANZ)	\$250K – \$300K+	\$272K	60/40 to 70/30

YEAR-OVER-YEAR: +4% average (growing faster than new business roles)

SALES LEADERSHIP SALARY BENCHMARKS



What Commands a Premium:

- Track record scaling teams from 5 to 20+ reps: +15-25%
- Built sales org from scratch (first hire to full team): +15-20%
- Enterprise SaaS background with \$10M+ ARR responsibility: +12-18%
- International experience or multi-country teams: +10-15%

Market Insights:

- **The Pay Gap:** High Enterprise AE earnings (\$300K–\$450K OTE) create a disincentive for leadership, as Sales Manager OTEs (\$200K–\$260K) often lag behind.
- **The Risk:** This imbalance risks filling management with weak performers or top sellers motivated by the wrong incentives, leading to poor leadership outcomes.
- **The Solution:** To restore attraction to the role, Australian firms are increasingly restructuring manager comp with higher variable pay, team-based accelerators, and equity grants.

SALES DEVELOPMENT SALARY BENCHMARKS



NOTE: Figures represent \$AUD Base Salary only. 12% Super, OTE, and allowances are additional.

MARKET SEGMENT	RANGE	AVERAGE BASE	TYPICAL OTE SPLIT
SDR / BDR (SMB)	\$75K – \$95K	\$85K	60/40 to 70/30
SDR / BDR (Mid-Market to Enterprise)	\$80K – \$115K	\$97K	60/40 to 70/30
SDR Team Lead / Manager	\$100K – \$130K	\$115K	70/30 to 80/20

YEAR-OVER-YEAR: +4% average

SALES DEVELOPMENT SALARY BENCHMARKS



What Commands a Premium:

- Enterprise SDR experience (prospecting into Fortune 1000): +10–15%
- Outbound specialization with proven meeting-setting rates: +8–12%
- Technical product background (infrastructure, security): +8–10%
- 2+ years SDR experience with promotion-ready skills: +5–8%

Market Insights:

- **The Entry Point:** Serving as the primary tech sales gateway, the SDR role is a 12–24 month sprint; staying beyond two years often hinders the transition to AE/AM roles.
- **Segment Divide:** SMB SDRs focus on high-volume activity (60–100 calls/day), while Enterprise SDRs prioritize deep research and complex organizational navigation (15–25 calls/day).
- **Promotion & Retention:** With 31% annual turnover, the best programs use SDR roles as leadership development with clear promotion paths.
- **Career Path:** Top performers typically promote to AE within 14–20 months. Success requires treating the role as a strategic stepping stone rather than a long-term career.

SALES ENGINEER SALARY BENCHMARKS



NOTE: Figures represent \$AUD Base Salary only. 12% Super, OTE, and allowances are additional.

MARKET SEGMENT	RANGE	AVERAGE BASE	TYPICAL OTE SPLIT
Sales Engineer (SMB)	\$100K – \$140K	\$120K	70/30 to 80/20
Sales Engineer (Mid-Market to Enterprise)	\$160K – \$220K	\$190K	70/30 to 80/20

YEAR-OVER-YEAR: +5% average (among highest growth roles due to chronic undersupply)
Sales Engineers with AI/ML platform experience are commanding 20-25% premiums in 2026.

SALES ENGINEER SALARY BENCHMARKS



What Commands a Premium:

- Deep technical expertise in infrastructure, security, or data: +18-25%
- Enterprise pre-sales experience with complex deals: +15-20%
- Hands-on implementation/consulting background: +12-18%
- Relevant certifications (AWS, Azure, security): +8-12%
- Ability to code/script for customised demos: +8-10%

Market Insights:

- **Talent Scarcity:** SEs are the most undersupplied tech sales role due to the rare combination of technical depth and commercial acumen.
- **Strategic Value:** SEs are critical for complex products, driving technical differentiation, accelerating POCs, and bridging discovery gaps.
- **IC Preference:** Most SEs prefer individual contributor roles over management. Senior Principal SEs in Enterprise can earn \$220K+ base (OTES \$300K+).
- **Career Path:** Typically requiring 3-5 years of engineering or DevOps experience, SEs progress to Principal levels, SE management, or transition into Product Management and Solutions Architecture.

SALES SUPPORT & OPERATIONS

SALARY BENCHMARKS



NOTE: Figures represent \$AUD Base Salary only. 12% Super, OTE, and allowances are additional.

MARKET SEGMENT	RANGE	AVERAGE BASE	VARIABLE COMP
Sales Support Admin / Coordinator	\$75K – \$95K	\$85K	Typically none
Sales Operations Analyst	\$95K – \$130K	\$114K	0–10% bonus
Sales Operations Manager	\$135K – \$185K	\$162K	10–15% bonus

YEAR-OVER-YEAR: +5–7% (operations roles growing as sales orgs mature)

SALES SUPPORT & OPERATIONS SALARY BENCHMARKS



What Commands a Premium:

- Salesforce administration / CPQ expertise: +12-18%
- Data analytics and visualization skills (Tableau, Power BI): +10-15%
- Sales enablement program design and execution: +10-12%
- Experience with sales compensation plan design: +8-12%

Market Insights:

- **Strategic Evolution:** Sales Ops has shifted from admin support to a strategic pillar owning CRM architecture, comp modeling, forecasting, and tech stack management.
- **The RevOps Trend:** Companies are consolidating sales, marketing, and CS operations into unified Revenue Operations (RevOps) functions, leading to broader scope and higher salaries.
- **Success Profile:** Top professionals blend analytical rigor with commercial insight to identify forecast risks and design incentive-aligned comp plans.
- **Career Path:** Typically entering from finance or consulting, analysts progress to Manager, Director, or VP of Revenue Operations.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE



For Employers:

Segment by Complexity: Benchmark based on deal size and sales cycles, not just job titles.

Adjust for Geography: Sydney/Melbourne roles typically command a 10–15% premium over other cities; remote roles usually track toward lower metro ranges.

Pay for Scarcity: Expect to pay above-market for high-demand roles like Sales Engineers and Enterprise AEs.

Maintain Credible OTEs: Unattainable quotas deter A-players. Ensure 60–70% of the team can realistically hit their OTE.

Fix Manager Pay Compression: To retain leaders, ensure manager compensation (via base, accelerators, or equity) stays competitive with top-earning ICs.

When presenting offers in 2026, lead with the 'Base + Super + OTE' breakdown. With the SG rate now at 12%, candidates are increasingly scrutinizing the gap between their take-home pay and the total package value

For Sales Professionals:

Benchmark Your Value: Use the 25th–75th percentile ranges to negotiate; if you are below the 25th, it's time to explore options.

Audit the OTE: Always ask what percentage of the team hit 100% quota last year. If it's below 50%, the OTE is likely fictional.

Move Upmarket: Prioritize selling Enterprise deals over brand names. High-value deal experience is the fastest way to maximize lifetime earnings.

Upskill Technically: The highest pay lives at the intersection of commercial and technical skill. Learn enough depth to speak credibly with architects.

Strategic Mobility: With a 22-month average tenure, moving every 2–3 years is standard, provided it's a strategic move upmarket or into leadership.



For more information, visit our website
pulserecruitment.com.au

Email:
admin@pulserecruitment.com.au