Press release
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Close, but not quite: Most employers admit gaps in salary alignment

- 21% of employers say their compensation is fully aligned with the skills and experience required for the roles they hire for
- 13% admit their compensation is slightly or not at all aligned with role requirements
- 51% of employers who align pay with skills say it has significantly improved their ability to secure preferred candidates
- 17% of employers who admit misalignment say it has negatively impacted their ability to hire top talent

Sydney, 20 October 2026 – While most Australian employers believe the salaries they offer broadly reflect the skills and experience required for their roles, only one in five (21%) are confident they have fully nailed the equation, new independent research by specialised recruiter Robert Half reveals.

Close, but not quite

While most (87%) employers believe their compensation broadly reflects the skills and experience required for their roles, only 21% are confident their salaries are fully aligned with market expectations.

When asked how well the compensation their organisation offers reflects the skills and experience needed for roles they hire for, employers said:

Alignment	% of employers
Fully aligned - Compensation accurately reflects the skills and experience required	21%
Mostly aligned - Compensation is appropriate for the level of skills and experience	41%
Moderately aligned - Compensation somewhat reflects the required skills and experience	25%
Slightly aligned - There is some alignment, but the salary is generally lower than expected	12%
Not at all aligned - Compensation is significantly below what the skills and experience warrant	1%

Independent survey commissioned by Robert Half among 500 hiring managers in Australia.

"Pay has always been king, and in today's market, how compensation aligns with a candidate's skills and experience is often a decisive factor in whether a role is seen as a good match. Organisations that continue to refine this alignment are well-positioned to meet evolving market expectations," says **Nicole Gorton, Director at Robert Half**.

Getting pay right pays off

Employers who align compensation with the skills and experience required for their roles are seeing clear benefits in the hiring process.

Among those who say their pay is at least moderately aligned, more than half (51%) report that this alignment has significantly improved their ability to secure preferred candidates. A further 39% say it has helped somewhat, although they continue to face challenges in a competitive hiring environment.

Only 8% believe compensation alignment has had little impact on their recruitment outcomes, citing other factors such as flexibility, company culture or career progression opportunities as playing a larger role in candidates' decision-making process. Just 1% say they have not noticed any impact at all.

The cost of misaligned compensation

Among the 13% of employers who admit their compensation is not at all or only slightly aligned with the skills and experience required, some are already feeling the consequences.

While 70% believe the misalignment has had little impact on their ability to secure preferred candidates, nearly one in five (17%) acknowledge it has negatively affected their hiring success. A further 13% say they have not noticed an impact.

"Salary may not be the sole driver of a candidate's decision, but it sets the baseline for perceived value. When remuneration accurately reflects skills, expertise, and role complexity, employers materially improve their ability to attract and secure preferred talent. Flexibility, culture, and career development are also powerful differentiators but they are most effective when built on a competitive salary foundation.

"What distinguishes leading organisations is a proactive, data-driven approach to salary benchmarking. In a cautious hiring environment, regularly recalibrating pay to evolving skill demands is essential to maintaining recruitment momentum," concludes **Gorton**.

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Notes to editors

About the research

The study is developed by Robert Half and was conducted online in October 2025 by an independent research company of 500 finance, accounting, IT and technology, and HR hiring managers. Respondents are drawn from a sample of SMEs as well as large private, publicly-listed, and public sector organisations across Australia. This survey is part of the international workplace survey, a questionnaire about job trends, talent management, and trends in the workplace.

About Robert Half

Robert Half is the global, specialised talent solutions provider that helps employers find their next great hire and jobseekers uncover their next opportunity. Robert Half offers both contract and permanent placement services, and is the parent company of Protiviti, a global consulting firm. Robert Half Australia has offices in Brisbane, Melbourne, Melbourne South East, Perth, and Sydney. More information on roberthalf.com/au.

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