

Press release
February 2020

Getting a pay rise is the top career goal for 45% of Australians, latest Robert Half international survey reveals

- 45% of Australian workers say getting a pay rise is a top career goal for 2020 with 18 to 34-year-olds the most likely (54%) to seek a pay rise.
- More male workers (37%) are anticipating improving performance this year compared to only 27% of female workers.
- Over a quarter of workers (26%) aged 55+ don't have any career goals for 2020 and are least likely to prioritise a pay rise (26%).

Australia, 6 February 2020 - Australian employees will be evaluating their career goals as we make headway into a new year and decade. With a new year comes new career goals. Independent research by specialised recruiter [Robert Half](#) shows getting a pay rise, feeling happier at work, and upskilling are the top career goals for Australian workers in 2020. The results are perhaps unsurprising in the context of Australia's stagnating wage growth, rising cost of living and the need to acquire new skills in an era of automation and digital transformation.

Career goal findings

Salary remains a key consideration for Australian employees as they are faced with the rising cost of living¹ coupled with slow wage growth of 2.3%². Survey results show, however, that 46% of Australians workers feel that they are underpaid in their current job while 45% say that getting a pay rise is their top career goal for 2020.

In an era of digital transformation, nearly 4 in 10 (37%) employees plan to seek upskilling opportunities to sustain their employability in an automated workforce. The public and private sector are investing in the development in a workforce of technically skilled and digitally agile professionals who can drive forward nationwide digital transformation initiatives. Two thirds (66%) of Australian companies increased their staff training budgets in 2019³ while the government has rolled out training initiatives like the Upskilled program⁴.

Findings also suggest that Australians are looking to their existing employment situation with one third of respondents (33%) citing feeling happier at work as a top career goal. Changing jobs (19%) and changing careers (13%), on the other hand, are considered the least popular career goals for the coming year.

In the survey, 1000 Australian office workers were asked "Which do you anticipate will be your top career goals for 2020?"

Top career goals	% of Australian workers	% of male Australian workers	% of female Australian workers
Get a pay rise	45%	44%	46%

¹ <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6467.0>

² <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6345.0>

³ <https://www.roberthalf.com.au/press/education-primary-solution-australias-it-skills-shortage-say-tech-leaders>

⁴ <https://www.upskilled.edu.au/skillstalk/our-most-popular-government-funded-courses>

Upskill	37%	35%	38%
Feel happier at work	33%	33%	33%
Improve performance	32%	37%	27%
Get a promotion	26%	30%	22%
Strengthen professional relationships	24%	24%	23%
Get more flexibility	22%	23%	21%
Get more responsibilities/tasks	21%	21%	21%
Change jobs	19%	20%	19%
Change careers	13%	13%	13%
I don't have career priorities/goals for 2020	9%	9%	9%

Source: Independent survey commissioned by Robert Half among 1000 office workers in Australia.

Gender and age trends

The Robert Half survey shows more male workers in 2020 (30%) are prioritising strengthening professional relationships than female workers (22%). Meanwhile, improving performance is also higher on this year’s career goals agenda for male workers (37%) compared to female (27%). Both male (44%) and female workers (46%) are almost equally as likely to seek a pay rise this year.

The most likely age group to seek a pay rise in the coming months are 18 to 34-year-olds (54%), compared to 46% of 35 to 54-year-olds. Workers aged over 55 are least likely to prioritise a pay rise in 2020 (26%).

Over a quarter (26%) of Australian workers aged 55 years or over don’t have any career goals or priorities for 2020. This compares to only 2% of 18 to 34-year old workers and 7% of 35 to 54-year-olds.

“Understanding and meeting the needs of employees remains one of the most effective recruitment and retention strategies for nurturing high-performance employees in the competitive Australian market,” says **Nicole Gorton, Director of Robert Half Australia.**

An employee who feels valued, challenged and happy at work is more productive, engaged and likely to stay with the organisation, which has bottom-line benefits for the organisation. Managers should work with their employees to build a holistic employee engagement strategy that meets individual needs, with a focus on competitive remuneration, professional development and upskilling opportunities, and workplace wellbeing.”

“Remuneration remains a primary concern for employees, particularly as households face rising financial pressures, so recognising their value through a generous remuneration scheme can contribute significantly to their engagement and workplace happiness. Skills development can be a win-win for employer and organisations alike – while the employee gets a desired skillset that positions them for a promotion, and the organisation gets an experienced, skilled worker who feels supported.”

##

Notes to editors

About the research

The study is developed by Robert Half and was conducted in November 2019 by an independent research firm, surveying 1,000 office workers in Australia.

About Robert Half

Robert Half is the world's first and largest specialised recruitment consultancy and member of the S&P 500. Founded in 1948, the company has more than 300 offices worldwide providing temporary, interim and permanent recruitment solutions for accounting and finance, financial services, technology, and administrative professionals. Robert Half Australia has offices in Brisbane, Melbourne, Mount Waverley, Perth and Sydney. More information on roberthalf.com.au.

Follow Robert Half Australia



Read related articles on our [Robert Half's worklife blog](#)



For more information

LEWIS Communications

RobertHalfAU@teamlewis.com

02 8599 1000