Press release
October 2017

Growth in IT contract work set to expand
Australian CIOs set to increase temp headcount by average one-fifth over the next 12 months

- 92% of Australian CIOs are planning to increase their temporary IT headcount in their company by an average of 21% over the next 12 months.
- The main drivers behind hiring temporary professionals: lack of financial resources to hire permanent employees (44%), cost efficiency (43%), faster hiring process (42%) skills shortage and flexibility (39%).
- Demand for contract IT workers is strongest within IT security (34%) systems administration (34%), networking (29%) and database management 28%.

Sydney, 6 October 2017 – There's good news on the horizon for IT professionals looking for the variety and flexibility offered by contract work. New independent research commissioned by specialised recruiter Robert Half shows the overall majority (92%) of Australian CIOs are planning to increase their contract IT headcount by an average of 21% over the next 12 months, highlighting the possibilities for IT professionals on the Australian employment market.

CIOs within large companies[1] are leading the way as they're planning to increase their temporary IT headcount by an average of 25%, followed by medium-sized (23%) and small companies (17%).

The functional areas where contract IT workers are most in demand are IT security and systems administration (34%), networking (29%), database management (28%), software/application development (27%), and business analysis (26%).

Andrew Morris, Director of Robert Half Australia said: *"As Australia is facing a growing IT skills shortage, the Australian technology sector risks being left behind in global rankings if they cannot find skilled IT professionals to support customer-centric technology, tackle new IT initiatives and address cyber-security concerns. However, there's a change taking place in the way businesses staff their IT department. Industry growth and the changing workplace are driving employers to adopt a combination of permanent and temporary IT staff with the right mix of skillsets for strategic and operations requirements, making contract workers an intrinsic part of the IT department in Australian companies."*

The benefits of temporary staffing for companies
A lack of financial resources to hire permanent staff is the primary driver for almost half (44%) of CIOs who are adding to their temporary staff headcount, followed by cost-efficiency (43%) – indicating financial motivators are a key incentive behind hiring temporary staff. More than four in 10 (42%) say the hiring process of contract workers is faster, while 39% respectively refer to the growing skills shortage and flexibility offered by temporary staff as main drivers for increasingly hiring contract workers.

"Guaranteeing business continuity, managing IT projects and hiring external expertise for as long as companies need are all reasons why companies in today's market revert to contract workers – across all seniority levels, thereby also giving businesses access to a much larger talent pool of IT candidates."

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[1] **Company Size Definitions**
Number of staff in the respondent's business

Small	50-249 staff
Medium	250-499 staff
Large	500+ staff

"As companies understand the role temporary workers can play in filling the skills gap, upskilling existing staff and optimising cost efficiencies in relation to staffing, IT employers are increasingly rebalancing their workforce in steady and challenging times. Many are discovering that a year-round mix of core in-house employees and temporary workers is an efficient and flexible way to meet business demands and remain competitive."

"Temporary employment can help IT employees at all experience levels with various career goals. IT professionals will have the potential to gain experience within many different types of organisations and the chance to upskill by exposing themselves to multiple areas of new skillsets. The flexibility and variety offered by contract work also makes for a more substantial CV, highlighting the career potential offered by temporary work in both the short and the long run."

"While some professionals consciously choose to be a contract worker, there are other IT professionals who might be used to being employed on a permanent basis and are perhaps wary of temporary work because of uncertainties in relation to job security. It is certainly not uncommon however that working as a temporary worker can lead to a permanent job. If organisations wish to convert a temporary worker to permanent, they have the advantage of already knowing the person's strengths first hand, highlighting the potential of temporary work turning into permanent work," concluded **Andrew Morris**.

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Notes to editors

About the research
The annual study was developed by Robert Half Australia and was conducted in June - July 2017 by an independent research company. The study is based on 160 interviews with CIOs/CTOs from companies across Australia, with the results segmented by company size, sector and geographic location.

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 over 325 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.

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For more information

Gabrielle Nagy
Public Relations Manager, Robert Half Asia Pacific
gabrielle.nagy@roberthalf.com.au
02 8028 7751

Courtney Howe
Citadel-MAGNUS
chowe@citadelmagnus.com
02 8234 0111