



Q1
2026

**ENVIRONMENTAL
CONSULTING
JOB MARKET**

QLD, NSW, VIC - AUSTRALIA

ALRA

Market Sentiment

- Contaminated Land
- Planning & Approvals
- Ecology - Flora & Fauna
- Engineering / Other

The Environmental Consulting sector in Australia remains generally quite buoyant, and mostly un-phased by local/global market shocks (Iran war, interest rate rises, inflation). Hiring is still strong, with demand at all levels from graduate through to Principal.

Whilst headline talks are on Global Engineering Firms experiencing softness, it is felt mostly due to major projects winding down, and in particular on the Engineering sides of the business. Boutiques and Nationals remain bullish on growth outlook. Throughout last year, the environmental teams within majors and boutiques were able to manoeuvre with the market and continue being busy, with Victoria even coming back to life with most teams now citing profitability where only 12 months earlier large majority were in the red.

SE Queensland still remains the strongest in terms of activity with the 2032 Olympics build ramping up. We are seeing new offices open up in Brisbane to capitalise on this activity, particularly from consultancies with capability in NSW and VIC.

After a strong decade of infrastructure projects in Melbourne and Sydney, we are now starting to see regional hubs come back to life as government spending is redirected to these areas alongside renewable energy hubs.

AI remains the topic of conversation however no meaningful advancements in real job attrition observed. Whilst we are seeing graduate level roles disappearing across some of the other sectors we operate in (Legal, Professional Services, Property), it is yet (and unlikely to) catch on in Environmental Sciences. This is primarily attributed to the nature of field based work being >90% of the entry level roles in the Environment Sector. To this tune, it is more likely the report writing elements of Senior roles that are more likely to be impacted, an outcome that is less likely to result in less jobs, just more efficient output.

Available Job Snapshot

Contaminated Land:

New South Wales

- SYD: Associate CLM, Project Delivery, National Firm \$175k
- SYD: Senior Principal, Technical (CEnvP SC), National Firm \$200k
- SYD: EPA Auditor, Audits and Technical Guidance to NSW team, \$300k
- SYD: Manager, team of 15, North Sydney \$175k
- SYD: Senior Associate, Project Manager, \$160k
- SYD: Senior Audit Assistant, National Firm with 3x Auditors \$135k

QLD:

- BRIS: Principal CLM, Clients and BD, Global Consultancy \$240k
- BRIS: Team Leader CLM, Global Consultancy \$145k
- BRIS: National Oil & Gas Leader CLM, Global Consultancy \$275k
- BRIS: Laboratory Manager for Mobil Lab, Asbestos, Start-Up \$125k
- BRIS: Technical Director, Review and Delivery, International, \$185k
- BRIS: Senior Associate, Project Manager / Delivery CLM, International \$175k
- BRIS: Principal Environmental Scientist, Client Facing / BD, National Firm \$200k

VIC:

- MELB: Principal Occupational Hygienist, National Role to Build Service \$200k
- MELB: Principal CLM Consultant, Project Delivery, International \$200k

REGIONAL:

- DARWIN: Principal Environmental Scientist, CLM, National Firm \$180k
- NEWCASTLE: Senior Environmental Consultant/PM focus to deliver \$160k

Ecology:

NSW

- SYD: Senior BAM Ecologist, National Team, Renewables/Transport \$140k
- COFFS HARBOUR: Senior Ecologist, Renewables Projects \$140k
- SYD: Senior Ecologist, Transport Projects, Global Consultancy \$145k
- NEWCASTLE: Senior Ecologist, Project Delivery, BAM \$155k

QLD:

- BRIS: Principal Ecologist, EPBC Referral Negotiations \$180k
- BRIS: Senior Terrestrial Ecologist, Renewables, Olympic Infrastructures \$140k
- BRIS: Senior Ecologist, Major Transport and no mining projects \$140k
- SUNSHINE COAST: Regional Manager, Ecology/Planning Team \$200k+
- BRIS: Principal Offsets Divisional Leader \$200k+

OTHER:

- MELB: VQA Senior Ecologist, National Firm, Renewables \$135k
- PERTH: Ecology Team Manager, Local Boutique with strong reputation \$160k
- NTH QLD (Weipa): Principal Ecologist / Operations \$160k

Planning & Approvals:

- BRIS: Senior Approvals PM, Support Delivery Major Pipelines \$150k
- BRIS: Mid-Senior Environmental / Urban Planner, Renewables, Olympic Infra \$125k
- BRIS: Team Leader, Environmental Planning \$180k
- SUNSHINE COAST: Regional Manager, Ecology/Planning Team, Build \$200k
- SYD: Senior EIA Consultant, Mining Approvals, Boutique, \$160k
- SYD/NEWC: Environmental EIA Consultant, Mining \$100k
- SYD: NSW Manager - Environmental Planning and Approvals, National, \$200k+
- COFFS HARBOUR: Senior Environmental Planner, Renewables \$130k



Q1
2026

SALARY GUIDE

QLD, NSW, VIC - AUSTRALIA

ALRA

Data Collection

Data Source & Sample Size

This report is based on a voluntary salary survey of environmental professionals within consulting across Australia with voluntary consultancy contribution and our own placement data.

While the dataset provides a strong directional view of the market, some segments (particularly niche disciplines or smaller locations) may have limited sample sizes and should be interpreted accordingly.

Salary Definition

All salary figures represent base salary (excluding superannuation) and do not include:

- Bonuses
- Profit share
- Equity
- Other benefits

Total remuneration packages may therefore vary from the ranges presented.

Range Interpretation

Salary ranges shown reflect reported minimum and maximum values within the dataset, with light normalisation applied in some cases to reduce distortion from outliers.

As a result, figures should be used as a market guide rather than absolute benchmarks.

Role Scope & Variability

Salary levels are influenced by a range of factors not fully captured in this dataset, including:

- Revenue responsibility
- Team leadership
- Project complexity
- Company size and structure

Particularly at Principal and Technical Director level, remuneration can vary significantly depending on commercial scope.

Salary Guide



Contaminated Sites

SYDNEY

TITLE	Exp	Salary Range
Senior Principal to Technical Director	20+	\$210,000 - \$350,000
Principal	15-20	\$170,000 - \$220,000
Associate	9-14	\$115,000 - \$155,000
Senior	6-8	\$98,000 - \$122,000
Consultant	2-5	\$75,000 - \$100,000
Graduate	0-2	\$62,000 - \$83,000

BRISBANE

TITLE	Exp	Salary Range
Senior Principal to Technical Director	20+	\$198,000 - \$223,000
Principal	15-20	\$127,000 - \$190,000
Associate	9-14	\$110,000 - \$130,000
Senior	6-8	\$110,000 - \$125,000
Consultant	2-5	\$90,000 - \$105,000
Graduate	0-2	\$62,000 - \$70,000

MELBOURNE

TITLE	Exp	Salary Range
Senior Principal to Technical Director	20+	\$190,000 - \$320,000
Principal	15-20	\$175,000 - \$180,000
Associate	9-14	\$145,000 - \$170,000
Senior	6-8	\$90,000 - \$145,000
Consultant	2-5	\$80,000 - \$90,000
Graduate	0-2	\$62,000 - \$72,000

SMALLER CAPITALS (Ade, Can, Dar, Per) + REGIONAL

TITLE	Exp	Salary Range
Senior Principal to Technical Director	20+	\$220,000 - \$280,000
Principal	15-20	\$150,000 - \$200,000
Associate	9-14	\$130,000 - \$150,000
Senior	6-8	\$90,000 - \$125,000
Consultant	2-5	\$70,000 - \$90,000
Graduate	0-2	\$62,000 - \$70,000

MARKET ANALYSIS

CLM and Hazmat continue to represent a strong and commercially driven segment of the environmental consulting market.

Salary progression is well-defined through early and mid-career stages, with a clear and consistent increase from Graduate through to Senior Consultant. The most significant shift occurs at Associate level (9-14 years), where salaries increase sharply and competition for talent intensifies.

At Principal and Technical Director level, this discipline shows the widest salary range in the dataset, reaching up to \$350,000. This reflects the strong link between remuneration and:

- Revenue generation
- Client ownership
- Team leadership
- Scarce technical capability (EPA Audit, CEnvP SC status)

Sydney remains the benchmark market for top-end salaries, however Brisbane is increasingly competitive across all levels, particularly in mid-to-senior roles.

Overall, CLM/Hazmat is the most competitive hiring market, with strong demand, high mobility cross state borders, and ongoing upward pressure on salaries – particularly at Senior and Associate level.

Salary Guide



Ecology

SYDNEY

TITLE	Exp	Salary Range
Senior Principal to Technical Director	20+	\$190,000 - \$235,000
Principal	15-20	\$145,000 - \$190,000
Associate	9-14	\$125,000 - \$146,000
Senior	6-8	\$90,000 - \$120,000
Consultant	2-5	\$70,000 - \$105,000
Graduate	0-2	\$64,000 - \$75,000

BRISBANE

TITLE	Exp	Salary Range
Senior Principal to Technical Director	20+	\$140,000 - \$240,000
Principal	15-20	\$150,000 - \$190,000
Associate	9-14	\$116,000 - \$140,000
Senior	6-8	\$90,000 - \$125,000
Consultant	2-5	\$74,000 - \$105,000
Graduate	0-2	\$65,000 - \$80,000

MELBOURNE

TITLE	Exp	Salary Range
Senior Principal to Technical Director	20+	\$160,000 - \$215,000
Principal	15-20	\$149,000 - \$149,000
Associate	9-14	\$110,000 - \$145,000
Senior	6-8	\$100,000 - \$115,000
Consultant	2-5	\$74,000 - \$105,000
Graduate	0-2	\$64,000 - \$74,000

SMALLER CAPITALS (Ade, Can, Dar, Per) + REGIONAL

TITLE	Exp	Salary Range
Senior Principal to Technical Director	20+	\$200,000 - \$220,000
Principal	15-20	\$150,000 - \$180,000
Associate	9-14	\$120,000 - \$155,000
Senior	6-8	\$90,000 - \$115,000
Consultant	2-5	\$74,000 - \$95,000
Graduate	0-2	\$62,000 - \$78,000

MARKET ANALYSIS

Ecology salaries show the lowest ceiling across the three disciplines, particularly at Principal and Technical Director level, where packages typically top out around \$240,000.

Salary progression is relatively consistent from Graduate through to Senior level, however compression begins to appear at the mid-tier, with a narrower jump from Senior to Associate compared to other disciplines. This can create retention pressure, particularly for high performers seeking faster progression or broader scope.

At senior level, compensation is less driven by technical expertise alone and more influenced by leadership responsibility, project ownership, and team management. As a result, senior ecology hires often require a clear pathway to leadership or equity to remain competitive with adjacent disciplines.

Geographically, Ecology shows moderate variation across metro markets, with Sydney and Brisbane slightly outperforming Melbourne. Regional markets can match metro salaries at senior level where there is a shortage of experienced professionals.

Salary Guide



Planning & Approvals

SYDNEY

TITLE	Exp	Salary Range
Senior Principal to Technical Director	20+	\$200,000 - \$275,000
Principal	15-20	\$150,000 - \$190,000
Associate	9-14	\$116,000 - \$155,000
Senior	6-8	\$105,000 - \$135,000
Consultant	2-5	\$85,000 - \$105,000
Graduate	0-2	\$68,000 - \$80,000

BRISBANE

TITLE	Exp	Salary Range
Senior Principal to Technical Director	20+	\$235,000 - \$274,000
Principal	15-20	\$165,000 - \$180,000
Associate	9-14	\$135,000 - \$165,000
Senior	6-8	\$95,000 - \$125,000
Consultant	2-5	\$80,000 - \$95,000
Graduate	0-2	\$65,000 - \$75,000

MELBOURNE

TITLE	Exp	Salary Range
Senior Principal to Technical Director	20+	\$200,000 - \$275,000
Principal	15-20	\$150,000 - \$190,000
Associate	9-14	\$116,000 - \$155,000
Senior	6-8	\$105,000 - \$135,000
Consultant	2-5	\$85,000 - \$105,000
Graduate	0-2	\$68,000 - \$80,000

SMALLER CAPITALS (Ade, Can, Dar, Per) + REGIONAL

TITLE	Exp	Salary Range
Senior Principal to Technical Director	20+	\$180,000 - \$250,000
Principal	15-20	\$163,000 - \$175,000
Associate	9-14	\$123,000 - \$155,000
Senior	6-8	\$95,000 - \$125,000
Consultant	2-5	\$74,000 - \$100,000
Graduate	0-2	\$68,000 - \$75,000

ANALYSIS

Planning and Approvals sits between Ecology and CLM in terms of salary positioning, with strong mid-to-senior earning potential and a solid progression curve.

Salary growth is consistent through Consultant and Senior levels, with a more noticeable uplift at Associate and Principal level, reflecting increased responsibility in stakeholder engagement, project delivery, and approvals strategy.

At the top end, Planning roles can reach \$275,000+, particularly where individuals are leading major infrastructure or development portfolios. This places Planning above Ecology in terms of ceiling, but generally below CLM in terms of variability and commercial upside.

Brisbane stands out as a highly competitive market for Planning professionals, driven by infrastructure investment and development activity. Sydney remains strong at the senior end, while Melbourne shows more structured and stable salary banding.

Overall, Planning is a balanced and steadily growing market, with strong demand for experienced professionals who can combine technical knowledge with stakeholder and approvals expertise.



Contact

Brett Clemenson
0447 946 446
brett@alra.com.au

Peter Dakers
0405 487 560
peter@alra.com.au