



Market changes

With a similarity to the mining market, Queensland's momentum is rising with 201 oil & gas related companies now working in the state compared to 94 last year. Driving this change is the Coal Seam Gas, Coal Bed Methane (CBM) and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) markets, which are growing due to the relatively low associated exploration costs compared to the crude oil energy sectors.

With many companies focusing on this sector, the demand for high-calibre candidates has increased. In fact, as the oil & gas market reaches full swing nationally, companies across Australia are responding to the shortage of talent by recruiting candidates from overseas.

South Australia is not immune to market growth, with an increase in both smaller owner operators and exploration programs. In a positive trend for local employers, the state has enjoyed a higher level of candidates returning home after spending years working either interstate or overseas. These candidates are often prepared to accept a salary lower than they could achieve elsewhere because they have returned home for lifestyle reasons.

Victoria has witnessed a small lull in its oil & gas recruitment market as organisations complete major capital project works before commencing new projects. However there are many projects at the feasibility, design and planning stages that are expected to come online over the coming year and that will push vacancy activity higher.

Demand for engineers from interstate employers has stabilised, with an increasing response from candidates wishing to return to their home state of Victoria.

With no less than five LNG projects at various stages of development in Western Australia, a major increase in exploration drilling and five FPSO's recently arrived or en route to the state, the oil & gas sector is experiencing its highest peak in activity in many years.

Positions in demand

The transportation of gas via pipelines has increased demand for Design, AutoCAD, Structural Engineers, Pipefitters and Welders in Queensland's market, with mechanical and electrical personnel right up to Project Managers in short supply.

South Australia requires Petroleum/Reservoir Engineers with optimisation and Tight Gas experience. There is also a large drive in coal bed

methane exploration and production, creating demand for Exploration Geologists and drilling specialists.

Revitalised interest in Victoria's exploration and production sector, both onshore and offshore, has created demand for Engineers with geoscience/subsurface experience, particularly on the production side. This resource has typically followed a global salary normalisation, factored by ex-pat status, contractor loading and rotational rosters.

Salary movements

Buoyant recruitment activity across all states and the strengthening of the Australian dollar has seen an increase in salaries locally and a levelling of salaries between Australia and other international oil & gas countries.

Locally long-term contracts, unlimited overtime and salary increases of up to \$25,000 have placed salary pressures on the market as employers compete for the top talent or are left behind without the staff required in this ever-changing market sector.

Nationally, Geologists received higher salaries because of limited candidate supply. For example, the maximum of the salary ranges increased at the entry-level in Queensland to \$100,000 and in NSW to \$110,000, at the Intermediate level in Victoria and South Australia to \$160,000 and at the Senior level in Western Australia to \$220,000 and in New Zealand to \$230,000.

Project Services professionals at the intermediate and senior levels (see Project Engineers roles) also enjoyed strong increases. For example Project Controllers, Planners, Cost Engineers and Contracts professionals all enjoyed steady salary growth as employers compete with the resource sector. As a result, the historical gap between salaries offered in cities and remote locations has closed.

On the EPC side, strong salary movements occurred in pipelines (both cross-country and subsea), although we expect offshore projects will be similarly affected by nominal 20 to 25 percent uplifts.

Geographically, Queensland's typical salaries increased strongly. For example, a Drilling Supervisor (see Drilling Engineer Intermediate role) can receive up to \$160,000.

Other notable increases in Queensland occurred for Geologists at the intermediate level (up to \$160,000), Discipline Engineers at the intermediate

level (\$160,000), Project Managers (see Discipline Engineers at the senior level to \$200,000) and Rig Fitters (see Drilling Engineer at the entry-level to \$120,000).

Changes to employer recruitment practices

Many specialist oil and gas companies are running expensive overseas advertising campaigns to attract staff and there has consequently been an increase in the sponsorship and relocation of personnel. In just one example, an employer sponsored 40 Drilling Supervisors and Tool Pushers.

There has been a significant increase in non-financial incentives such as share options, higher superannuation contributions, subsidised gym memberships, medical benefits, extra curricular training, flexible working hours, paternity leave (on top of and including maternity leave) and even time FIFO rosters.

The timing of the recruitment process has increased for EPC organisations. In stark contrast to operating companies, it is pleasing to see that dedicated resources have been allocated to ensure candidate applications are processed with greater efficiency to ensure success.

Advice to candidates

Candidates should be aware that despite the shortage of skills, organisations are averse to engaging in a bidding war over candidates. Last minute increases of a candidate's salary expectations because of counter-offers or multiple job offers inevitably do not impress hiring managers. In cases such as these, a specialist recruiter can perform a vital function in the negotiation phase to achieve the desired outcomes for all.

Candidates are also advised to think long-term about their career. Short-term monetary considerations should not take precedence over long-term career advancement and development opportunities.

Reservoir / Petroleum Engineer

Entry-level (0-5 yrs + degree)	Intermediate (6-12 yrs + degree)	Senior (Over 12 yrs + degree)	Principal / Manager
Salary Range	Salary Range	Salary Range	Salary Range

QLD	60,000 - 110,000	120,000 - 160,000	165,000 - 200,000	210,000 - 270,000
NSW	55,000 - 105,000	105,000 - 150,000	150,000 - 180,000	180,000 - 250,000
VIC	60,000 - 110,000	110,000 - 160,000	180,000 - 220,000	230,000 - 300,000
SA	60,000 - 110,000	110,000 - 150,000	150,000 - 190,000	180,000 - 250,000
WA	65,000 - 120,000	120,000 - 170,000	170,000 - 220,000	210,000 - 300,000
NZ	60,000 - 130,000	130,000 - 180,000	150,000 - 220,000	220,000 - 300,000

Exploration / Production Geologist / Geophysicist

Entry-level (0-5 yrs + degree)	Intermediate (6-12 yrs + degree)	Senior (Over 12 yrs + degree)	Principal / Manager
Salary Range	Salary Range	Salary Range	Salary Range

QLD	75,000 - 100,000	120,000 - 160,000	165,000 - 200,000	210,000 - 270,000
NSW	60,000 - 110,000	110,000 - 150,000	160,000 - 200,000	200,000 - 250,000
VIC	60,000 - 100,000	100,000 - 160,000	180,000 - 220,000	220,000 - 290,000
SA	60,000 - 110,000	110,000 - 160,000	160,000 - 200,000	200,000 - 250,000
WA	65,000 - 120,000	120,000 - 170,000	170,000 - 220,000	220,000 - 300,000
NZ	60,000 - 90,000	100,000 - 150,000	170,000 - 230,000	200,000 - 280,000

Technical Assistant

Entry-level (0-5 yrs)	Intermediate (6-12 yrs)
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Salary Range	Salary Range
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QLD	65,000 - 90,000	90,000 - 115,000
NSW	60,000 - 90,000	80,000 - 110,000
VIC	60,000 - 90,000	80,000 - 110,000
SA	60,000 - 80,000	75,000 - 95,000
WA	60,000 - 90,000	80,000 - 110,000
NZ	50,000 - 70,000	60,000 - 90,000

HSEQ

Entry-level (0-5 yrs + degree)	Intermediate (6-12 yrs + degree)	Senior (Over 12 yrs + degree)	Principal / Manager
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Salary Range	Salary Range	Salary Range	Salary Range
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QLD	80,000 - 100,000	90,000 - 140,000	140,000 - 180,000	200,000 - 260,000
NSW	60,000 - 80,000	80,000 - 120,000	120,000 - 160,000	180,000 - 210,000
VIC	60,000 - 80,000	80,000 - 120,000	120,000 - 150,000	160,000 - 210,000
SA	60,000 - 90,000	90,000 - 110,000	110,000 - 160,000	160,000 - 220,000
WA	70,000 - 90,000	90,000 - 140,000	150,000 - 200,000	200,000 - 260,000
NZ	50,000 - 70,000	70,000 - 110,000	110,000 - 180,000	180,000 - 225,000

Asset Operations	Technician	Supervisor	Superintendent	OIM / Operations Manager
	Salary Range	Salary Range	Salary Range	Salary Range
QLD	50,000 - 85,000	90,000 - 110,000	150,000 - 170,000	190,000 - 240,000
NSW	70,000 - 90,000	90,000 - 115,000	120,000 - 150,000	170,000 - 230,000
VIC	70,000 - 100,000	100,000 - 140,000	150,000 - 180,000	200,000 - 270,000
SA	60,000 - 85,000	90,000 - 115,000	115,000 - 150,000	170,000 - 220,000
WA	90,000 - 110,000	110,000 - 140,000	140,000 - 190,000	220,000 - 270,000
NZ	90,000 - 120,000	120,000 - 150,000	140,000 - 190,000	220,000 - 270,000

Discipline Engineer (Process, Civil or Mechanical)	Entry-level (0-5 yrs + degree)	Intermediate (6-12 yrs + degree)	Senior (Over 12 yrs + degree)	Principal / Manager
	Salary Range	Salary Range	Salary Range	Salary Range
QLD	70,000 - 100,000	120,000 - 160,000	160,000 - 200,000	200,000 - 260,000
NSW	50,000 - 100,000	105,000 - 150,000	150,000 - 180,000	180,000 - 250,000
VIC	55,000 - 100,000	110,000 - 140,000	150,000 - 200,000	200,000 - 240,000
SA	50,000 - 100,000	100,000 - 130,000	130,000 - 180,000	180,000 - 240,000
WA	65,000 - 120,000	130,000 - 160,000	160,000 - 200,000	200,000 - 260,000
NZ	65,000 - 120,000	130,000 - 160,000	160,000 - 200,000	200,000 - 260,000

Drilling Engineer

Entry-level (0-5 yrs + degree)	Intermediate (6-12 yrs + degree)	Senior (Over 12 yrs + degree)	Principal / Manager	
Salary Range	Salary Range	Salary Range	Salary Range	
QLD	80,000 - 120,000	125,000 - 160,000	160,000 - 200,000	200,000 - 300,000
NSW	65,000 - 115,000	115,000 - 160,000	160,000 - 200,000	225,000 - 325,000
VIC	60,000 - 120,000	120,000 - 170,000	170,000 - 240,000	250,000 - 350,000
SA	50,000 - 80,000	80,000 - 120,000	120,000 - 160,000	200,000 - 250,000
WA	65,000 - 140,000	140,000 - 180,000	180,000 - 250,000	250,000 - 350,000
NZ	50,000 - 80,000	70,000 - 120,000	130,000 - 180,000	220,000 - 300,000

Project Engineer

Entry-level (0-5 yrs + degree)	Intermediate (6-12 yrs + degree)	Senior (Over 12 yrs + degree)	Principal / Manager	
Salary Range	Salary Range	Salary Range	Salary Range	
QLD	70,000 - 100,000	100,000 - 140,000	140,000 - 160,000	180,000 - 220,000
NSW	50,000 - 95,000	95,000 - 150,000	150,000 - 180,000	180,000 - 220,000
VIC	60,000 - 90,000	100,000 - 150,000	160,000 - 200,000	200,000 - 250,000
SA	70,000 - 100,000	95,000 - 150,000	150,000 - 180,000	180,000 - 250,000
WA	90,000 - 130,000	130,000 - 180,000	150,000 - 200,000	180,000 - 240,000
NZ	55,000 - 90,000	80,000 - 130,000	130,000 - 160,000	180,000 - 250,000