



“ Show me the money! ”

Anonymously exchange and compare local salary data at huntersalaries.com.au and centralcoastsalaries.com.au

Hunter & Central Coast Salary Survey Snapshot

6,000 local and 14,000 Sydney salaries assessed

Trade & Industrial Focus - 12 months to August 2011

What is the Snapshot?

In March 2009 Forsythes Recruitment launched an independent online salary survey that allowed people from the Newcastle, Hunter Valley and Central Coast regions to anonymously exchange and compare salary information.

Every six months we summarise the live data and report on evolving trends. This snapshot is then forwarded to our clients and the media.

For more detail on specific employment categories or regions please visit www.huntersalaries.com.au or www.centralcoastsalaries.com.au. The survey and resulting statistics are live, readily accessible and provided as a complimentary service to the local business community.

Please contribute! More contributions mean better data for you.

Trade & Industrial summary

Renewed economic confidence and employment activity in the first half of this calendar year ensured a prompt return to a competitive labour market in trade and skilled occupations.

Employers in the Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and lower Hunter Valley areas competing with the Hunter Valley coal mining industry continue to suffer wage pressure in attempting to attract and retain good personnel. After some significant average wage increases last year, this past six months have produced only conservative percentage changes. However we expect to report a 3-4% average increase in most trade categories by December.

Retention of trade staff is the biggest challenge for regional employers. Employees are conscious of work abundance and often seeking the best pay rates over all other considerations. A popular strategy amongst proactive employers has been to review roster patterns and so provide tradespeople with shorter working weeks.

Current trade & Industrial normal time pay rates

Forsythes Recruitment's Trade & Industrial recruitment team specialises mostly in casual labour hire. Figures quoted are standard hourly rates and exclude the 25% casual loading.

Mech Fitter/Machinists	\$26 - \$30 per hour
Trade Assistant/Second Class Welder	\$21 - \$28 (\$19 - \$23 Central Coast)
Production Operator	\$19 - \$22
Process Worker	\$19 - \$21
Labour-Experienced	\$18 - \$21
Labourer-Inexperienced	\$16 - \$21

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All categories

There are mixed results for Hunter and Central Coast employees this period. Average salaries have increased in some job categories and decreased in others producing a net increase of less than 2%.

Sydney's harder fall relative to the Hunter and Central Coast in 2009 - 2010 has resulted in a bigger rebound for them this past 12 months with average salaries now 4% higher than this time last year. This figure is in line with the recently announced annual national Wage Price Index of 3.8%.

Average administration (and customer service) salaries have increased across all regions - the most in the three years since this survey commenced.

Sales professionals and engineers are notable absences from the top of the table below. Average salaries in these areas have levelled out particularly in the last six months.

Average building and construction salaries are again heavily influenced by location. Outside the Hunter Valley this is the second year this category has not kept pace with other categories in higher demand.

Across all surveyed job categories and regions, average salaries for women have increased 6% on last year. Average salaries for men over the same period have increased 3%.

Top 3 and bottom 3 changes in average salaries per job category per region

	Hunter Valley	Newcastle	Central Coast	Sydney
1.	Exec 7%	Exec 5%	Admin 5%	Accounting 6%
2.	Construction 6%	Admin 4%	Engineering 3%	Trades 5%
3.	Admin 5%	IT 3%	IT 2%	Admin 4%
7.	Engineering 0%	Engineering 1%	Exec -2%	Engineering 2%
8.	Sales -4%	Sales -3%	Sales -4%	IT 1%
9.	Accounting -5%	Construction -6%	Construction -6%	Construction -5%

Employee confidence

In our July 2009 snapshot, survey respondents were prepared to change jobs for a 25% increase in average salary (all other things being equal). In 2010 this conservative attitude had changed to 18% and in May 2011 this had dropped further to 16% reflecting an increased openness to change jobs. In the last six weeks this has crept to 17%.

Outlook

The regional labour market has softened from the peak reported in last year's snapshot. The Hunter Valley and Central Coast Research Foundation's June Quarter Report cites a diminishing number of local employment advertisements (for the first time in 18 months) and a lower level of intent to hire new staff as reported by local employers in the HVRF *Business Survey*.

But this is not a consistent story across sectors or regions. Resource-related industries are strong. The high volume of local engineering projects is consistent with the record statistics posted by the ABS's *Engineering Construction Survey* and the *Survey of New Capital Expenditure*.

The Central Coast does not directly share in many of the benefits of the resources boom but is more dependent on consumer spending and sentiment. Unemployment rates, job security and salaries will continue to fluctuate in this environment but should be tempered by strong activity in the Hunter.

Demand for trade and technical skills should continue to drain supply and benefit people in these areas of employment.

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