

# 2021 MJD EXECUTIVE MARKET INSIGHT REPORT



## OUR 2021 MARKET INSIGHT REPORT



**MARTIN DINEEN**  
**Managing Director**

“After such a tumultuous 2020 we are delighted to be working with many organisations and individuals who are vigorously moving forward with their strategic planning beyond FIN Year 20/21. With a team that proudly boasts over 50 years of experience in recruitment we are well known for going well beyond filling vacancies, respected for being true business and industry advisors to our varied networks. Sharing our knowledge and helping our clients and candidates become better educated in relation to what is happening in the recruitment & relative markets is one of the more enjoyable things that we do. Hence the name of this report being Market Insight report, rather than just a Salary Survey.

Heading toward June 30 we understand it is a vital time for many organisations and employees as they ponder performance and salary reviews. However this year, even more so than others, it is imperative to understand what the market is up to collectively in terms of employee engagement, attraction, retention, training and other matters of importance to employees and employers, not just salary.

One of the benefits of the downturn in not only the recruitment market, but many industries last year, was the increased time we had to sit with organisations and candidates and really understand the challenges, innovations and solutions they were coming up with to adapt to the ‘new norm’ and plan for the future. We were blown away with how the business community and employees adapted so well initially, but alongside many of the HR specialists we were speaking to, we knew the challenges and change would continue to come thick and fast in to 2021. We hope that some of the insight we provide in our report will be useful in even the smallest way.”

*M Dineen*

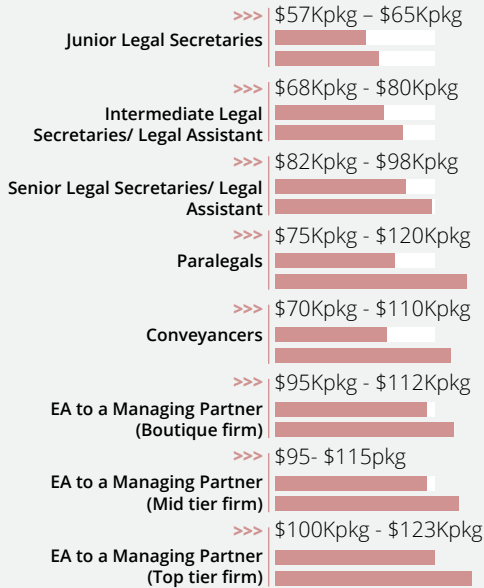
**Martin Dineen, Managing Director**  
**MJD Executive**

## SALARY SURVEY RESULTS



### Legal support roles

(annual package including superannuation)



#### Our insight into these results:

In 2021 we have seen significant change at the junior end of the market, from entry level to two years' experience. Salaries previously at \$45-50K pkg are now more likely to be \$55K pkg for entry level and \$65k pkg for someone with 18 months experience.

We have seen clients struggle when trying to efficiently source quality candidates happy with a \$65K pkg, Legal Secretaries with 2 years and above experience are now seeking \$70k pkg as a minimum.

Senior level Legal Secretaries have seen a \$3-5K increase from the previous market "normal" of 85k pkg, now more frequently \$88k pkg and above and up to 95k pkg, depending on the breadth and depth of the role.

EA to Managing Partner roles vary a lot from firm to firm. Salaries tend to be higher when supporting a management role that operates in an executive capacity rather than one that is running a practice. Other variants here which can have an impact on salary include whether there are staff management responsibilities, working hours and international duties.

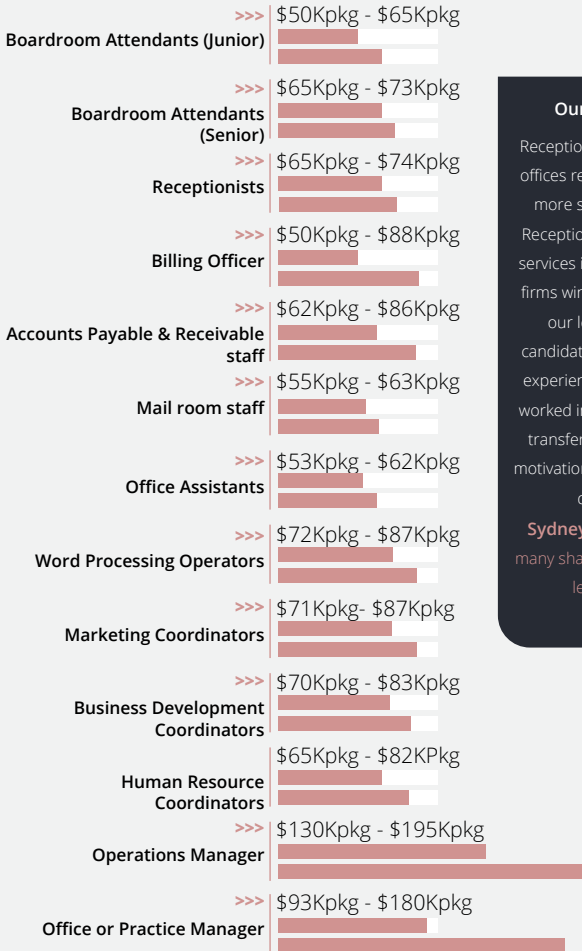
**Sydney Vs Melbourne** In many cases salaries for Legal Secretaries are \$3-5K less in the Melbourne market.

## SALARY SURVEY RESULTS



### Legal

further support roles



#### Our insight into these results:

Receptionists are in super high demand with offices returning to pre-covid numbers. Even more so than usual finding a high quality Receptionist with experience in professional services is one of our biggest challenges. The firms winning this talent war are considering our left field approach of introducing candidates with high end retail or hospitality experience, cabin crew and those who have worked in corporate or high-end travel. Their transferrable skills are incredible and their motivation is high after getting their feet in the door to the corporate world.

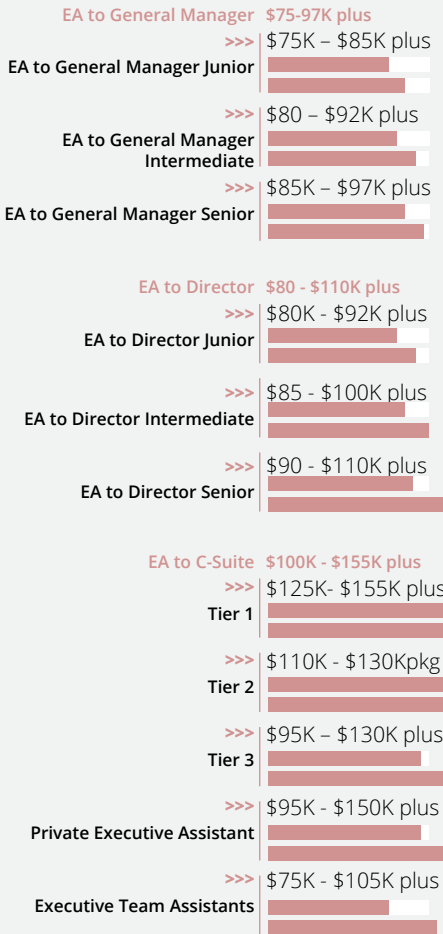
**Sydney Vs Melbourne** As a general rule many shared services support roles are \$3-5K less in the Melbourne market.

## SALARY SURVEY RESULTS



### Executive Assistant support roles

(salary excludes superannuation)



#### Our insight into these results:

Salaries for EA roles did take a tumble in 2020, when organisations were recruiting the remuneration was often coming in at 10-20% lower than March 2020. However since as early as January EA salaries have made a full recovery and are now sneaking up. Counteroffers are on the rise and there is competition for high calibre candidates who have options again.

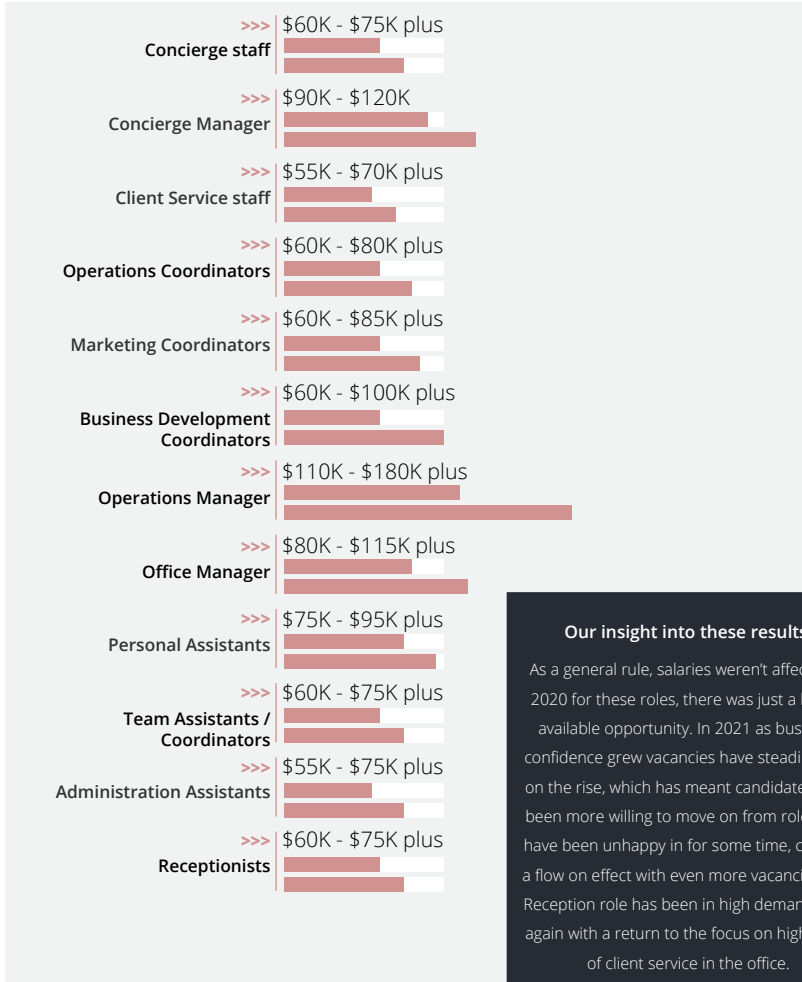
**Sydney Vs Melbourne** EA & PA salaries in Sydney are generally 10% higher than Melbourne.

## SALARY SURVEY RESULTS



### Office support roles

(salary excludes superannuation)



#### Our insight into these results:

As a general rule, salaries weren't affected in 2020 for these roles, there was just a lack of available opportunity. In 2021 as business confidence grew vacancies have steadily been on the rise, which has meant candidates have been more willing to move on from roles they have been unhappy in for some time, creating a flow on effect with even more vacancies. The Reception role has been in high demand once again with a return to the focus on high levels of client service in the office.

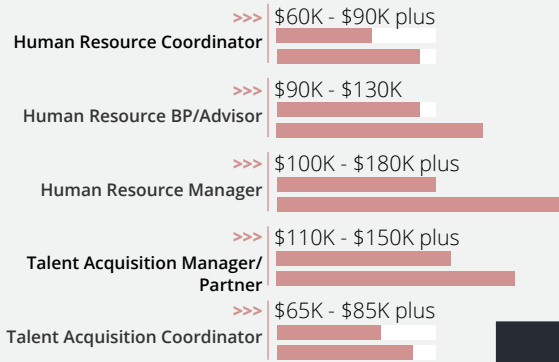
**Sydney Vs Melbourne** Business support salaries in Sydney are generally 10% higher than Melbourne.

## SALARY SURVEY RESULTS



### Human Resource roles

(salary excludes superannuation)



#### Our insight into these results:

Roles in the talent acquisition space were hugely impacted due to covid, but their popularity is higher than ever now there is major competition for talent. HR professionals needed to be agile, adapt and upskill in 2020 and those who successfully navigated through are in high demand to help mould the 'new workplace' into a high performing one.

## The Top 5 reasons office support roles are being recruited for again



### 1. Under resourced teams

Hiring freezes, attrition without replacement, redundancies, budget restrictions – you name it and it contributed to diminished team sizes in 2020. At the time staff were very happy to pitch in and do whatever it took to help the business and save their jobs. But the affects of under resourced teams are being felt by employees and employers. Executives need full functioning support again.

### 2. The value of the office support role is being recognised again

We often talk about office support roles as being 'business critical' and regularly undervalued. In times of downturn they are amongst the first to go, sometimes justifiably so, but sometimes to the detriment of the business and its ability to function successfully. We are beyond delighted that office support roles are receiving the full recognition they deserve again in 2021.

### 3. Employee movement equals increased vacancies

Many employees, even those that were incredibly unhappy in their roles, stayed put throughout 2020 for job securities sake. 2021 has brought new business confidence and as more and more roles become available, candidates confidently move about and open up new vacancies for their own roles.

### 4. The trend to promote from within

Employees are being rewarded for their loyalty, as well as their ability to be agile and learn news skills, adding value in different ways at a challenging time. Promotion from within is occurring often, leaving vacancies for juniors or those less experienced to move in to office support roles. Budget restrictions are also contributing to internal promotions and hiring less experienced staff.

### 5. Impact is being felt and its time to make a call!

We spoke to several clients who started 2021 quite conservatively, playing a 'lets wait and see' game rather than rushing back into business as usual budgets and strategies. However as business continued to flow through the door and client expectations have not been able to be met, there has been more of a swing to 'we need to spend money to make money' philosophy.



## The top 5 reasons candidates are open to exploring new opportunities now



### 1. **More job opportunities – more confidence**

At the beginning of 2021, candidates were still being quite conservative turning down genuinely good job opportunities as they feared the 'unknown' and the lack of options if they made a wrong move. As business confidence has continued to grow so has candidate movement

### 2. **Lack of flexibility in current roles**

Flexible working arrangements were thrust upon even the most conservative organisations in 2020. But as business has returned to somewhat of a norm, many organisations have asked employees to return to traditional workplace structures and it is rarely being welcomed.

### 3. **Changing life priorities or career direction**

The pandemic changed people's mindsets in some many ways, setting them on new paths in life and in their career. Some returning to study or wanting better balance are looking for part time work, others are ditching salary as a priority and trying something totally new.

### 4. **Stretched in their roles due to hiring freezes and changes to structure**

This is being felt particularly in the office support sector. Employees at this level are often expected to take on more and more without complaint, it is their 'duty' to just get on with it. When enough becomes enough without recognition they are freely moving on.

### 5. **It's a black or white scenario post pandemic**

From our observation there is little grey area, employees are either newly invigorated and grateful for their job – or done and dusted and need to move on in 2021. This has been quite prevalent where lack of progression or connection to the 'new culture' is an issue.

## Top 5 reasons clients are missing out on high quality candidates when hiring



### 1. Drawn out interview processes and procrastination

Wanting to make a high quality, low risk choice is high on the agenda right now for hiring managers. Over the last 6 months in particular this has led to very lengthy and highly scrutinizing interview processes which have been drawn out over a significant amount of time, followed by procrastination.

### 2. Debates over salary

Some organisations are still restricted with budgets but want high quality people in their business. Going to the effort of attracting these individuals to interview and securing their interest, then offering salary that is lower than expected is causing issues. Candidates are either rejecting offers or commencing with a bad taste in their mouth.

### 3. Poor demonstration of training or onboarding

Not being able to demonstrate commitment to a strong onboarding and training programme, setting new employees up for success is often proving to be the reason candidates second guess their decision to join a new organisation

### 4. Lack of adaption to modern interviewing

The office support market has turned quickly back in to a candidates market and those organisations who are not adapting are missing out. A modern approach is to handle the first interview as an opportunity to 'meet and greet' and get to know a candidate, offering a 'pitch' on why the opportunity is a good one and assessing 'fit'. Second interviews are then conducted with a more formal approach evaluating competency and capability.

### 5. Counter offers

If you don't expect the unexpected it will happen! Organisations losing quality staff are doing whatever it takes to try to retain them and counter offers are occurring at a high rate right now. Considering a proactive response to a counter offer or discussing it in the interview process is highly recommended to assess a potential employees flight risk.

## Our advice when it comes to retaining high quality office support staff in 2021



- Don't wait for a resignation to happen before acting. If you feel as though there is an issue brewing there most likely is, find the time and nip it in the bud.
- Communication is key! Lost a little in 2020, many staff want to feel engaged and connected again with their peers and management teams. Traditionally office support staff genuinely value constructive feedback and praise and like being 'kept in the loop' of what is happening in the business. Remember that their 'clients' are the people they report to and support and they need to know if you are happy with what they are delivering.
- In a recent survey conducted, it was emphasised that training was something office support staff valued and regarded as a huge motivator. Training was put on hold for many in 2020, it needs to come back to the forefront of organisations planning.
- Recognising that flexibility is regarded as a given and not a benefit will be key. Previously support staff may not have been given the luxury of flexible working arrangements when others in the organisation have, but the modern workforce has changed. Those organisations still selling flexible working arrangements as their major or only benefit may fall behind.
- When promoting office support employees internally, give them the time and consideration that a new employee would be given commencing in a new role. Grasping new tasks and concepts is a challenge even if you are familiar with the surroundings, culture and expectations.





## INTRODUCTION TO MJD EXECUTIVE

As office support recruitment experts, the MJD Executive team proudly partner with a number of highly respected organisations from top tier, to growing SME's to entrepreneur's. Our vast network of impressive candidates is widely revered and constantly growing with dedicated staff building relationships with the 'best of the best' in the market on a daily basis. We diligently research, source, attract and secure new applicants and employment opportunities for our clients and candidates and look to exceed service expectations for our stakeholders at all times.

Truly understanding the importance of having high value office and executive support people in these business critical roles, we offer services for the placement of permanent, contract and temporary employees with a specialisation in executive level office support roles. We have designated offices in Sydney and Melbourne, with clients and candidates that we support across Australia.

We work across a number of industry sectors claiming a specialisation in professional services, legal, investment banking, fund management, commercial property, accounting & financial services, audit & advisory, management consulting and with high net worth entrepreneurs. With highly experienced Consultants who possess excellent business acumen, we are confident assisting across a breadth of industry sectors, focussing on personality and 'fit' as well as transferrable skill sets.

Our senior members of the team are true, long term devotees to the office support specialisation and have long lasting relationships that continuously refer new work and candidates to our business. This is a testament to the personalised care and attention we give to each individual assignment, client and candidate.

### CONTACT US

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