

Press release

28 November 2023

1 in 2 employers will hire contract staff to cover employees on leave this summer

- 53% of Australian business leaders plan to hire contract staff this summer to fulfil year-end initiatives and cover for staff on leave
- 79% of employers expect to be able to find the talent they need to fulfil their business needs
- Payroll, security/privacy/compliance, data entry, financial reporting, customer service and call centre are the areas expected to have the most contract opportunities

Sydney, 28 November 2023 – 53% of Australian employers plan to hire contract staff between December 1, 2023 and January 3, 2024 to complete projects and cover staff on leave, independent research by specialised recruiter [Robert Half](#) finds.

Employers in Western Australia are the most likely to expect to be reliant on contract staff this year (59%), followed by their counterparts in Queensland (55%), Victoria (53%) and NSW (47%).

Existing employees on leave

January is the peak month of the year for employees to take annual leave, holidays, flex time or long service leave. This year, 43% of employees worked fewer hours than usual in that month because they took time off, the highest proportion since 2018¹.

With 60% of employees rolling over annual leave days from 2022 into 2023, and vacation deprivation rates on par with those experienced towards the end of COVID-19 lockdowns in 2021², a similarly high proportion of staff is expected to want to take leave in January 2024.

But holiday season is still busy

December is also a busy month for many businesses, as year-end activities come to a close or industries experience a festive season-inspired peak in operations.

“Despite the upcoming holiday season, companies are determined to operate at an optimal level to ensure their business offerings are on track through the end of the year and into 2024,” says **Andrew Brushfield, director at Robert Half**.

“Hiring contract staff is a cost-effective strategy to secure the skills needed to keep business moving while full-time workers take time off. Businesses can tap into a wide range of talent without committing to long-term employment contracts, which is valuable for short-term projects or for tapping into specialised skills.”

The roles most in need of contract staff

Finance and technology roles, as well as support positions, are expected to be abundant for professionals seeking contract opportunities at year-end.

CFOs, CIOs/CTOs and general hiring managers report the positions they are most likely to recruit contract staff for:

¹ [Insights into hours worked, ABS](#)

² [2023 Vacation Deprivation Report, Expedia](#)

	CFOs	CIOs/CTOs	General hiring managers
Most opportunities	Payroll (27%)	Security, privacy and compliance (26%)	Data entry (25%)
	Financial reporting (25%)	Software and applications development (24%)	Customer service/call centre (25%)
	Budgets and analysis (24%)	Cloud architecture and operation (22%)	Account management (21%)
	Finance and financial planning and analysis (17%)	Network and systems administration (21%)	Logistics (18%)
Least opportunities	Tax and treasury (17%)	Project and program management (17%)	Front desk/reception (16%)

Independent survey commissioned by Robert Half among 100 CIOs, CFOs, and general hiring managers in Australia.

*“Opportunities abound in the holiday period for contractors who are nimble, and particularly for those who hold stellar analysis and reporting skills in finance, security and privacy knowledge in the technology sector, and data entry and customer service skills in the business support industry,” says **Brushfield**.*

“The employment market is recalibrating during the holiday period, and companies are making opportunistic, selective hires to ensure they bring in the strongest talent.

*“Before hiring contractors, employers should carefully assess their needs, the nature of the work, and the potential benefits and drawbacks to ensure that it aligns with their overall workforce strategy,” concluded **Brushfield**.*

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Notes to editors

About the research

The study is developed by Robert Half and was conducted online in June 2023 by an independent research company, surveying 300 hiring managers, including 100 CFOs and 100 CIOs, from companies across Australia. This survey is part of the international workplace survey, a questionnaire about job trends, talent management, and trends in the workplace.

About Robert Half

Robert Half is the global, specialised talent solutions provider that helps employers find their next great hire and jobseekers uncover their next opportunity. Robert Half offers both contract and

permanent placement services, and is the parent company of Protiviti, a global consulting firm. Robert Half Australia has offices in Brisbane, Melbourne, Mount Waverley, Perth, and Sydney. More information on roberthalf.com.au.

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