

&FRIENDS® FREELANCE RATE & MARKET GUIDE 2023

Australia and Creative Services and Digital Industry

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CONTENTS





Freelance rates & market conditions



KEY FINDINGS

&FRIENDS

• Freelance rates increased by 6% (+ \$33 per day) between 2021 and 2203 from \$563 to \$596. This increase is the largest jump in freelance rates over the past 5 years and indicates the freelance market has not only recovered from the lows of COVID, but experienced a boom of sorts in 2022 given a number of factors including a growing talent shortage and record inflation.

• While \$33 on the surface seems like a pretty big jump, when we consider the huge inflation increases in 2022, it tells a slightly different story. If rates increased at the same rate as inflation, we would have seen a circa 10% jump from late 2020 to now - This would have added \$56 to the average day rate, increasing it to \$619. This suggests freelance rates haven't quite caught up with inflation.

• As a broad discipline Content Creation has exploded over the past 2 years and with that rates have increased substantially. The average content creation rate increased by \$84 (14%) to \$683 and is a clear leader over all other categories. Strategy is second at \$676 and Marketing at \$601. Whats more, 4 of the top 5 most expensive roles per day are content creation related as brands and agencies are creation more video and motion content than ever before.

• While Sydney remains by far the highest freelance rates, Melbourne and Brisbane look to be catching up. Melbourne rates increased by 5% to \$565 while Brisbane increased by 6% to \$574. Sydney on the other hand only increased by 1% to \$617 which still leads other markets by up to \$43 p/d. When comparing seniority, Senior rates increased the most by \$40 p/d to \$609. Midnight was second with an increase of \$30 to \$497. Leads increased by \$17 to \$744, while Juniors decreased by \$4 to \$364



GLOSSARY

- Designer
- Seniority Levels of seniority within each Specialism
- Standard Specialisms (e.g. Graphic Designer) Junior, Mid-weight, Senior, Lead
- Exec Specialisms (e.g. Creative Director) Associate, Mid-weight, Executive



• Specialisms - Specific roles within each discipline. e.g. Front End Developer, Art Director, Graphic

• Projects - Projects created on the &FRIENDS platform



FREELANCE RATES & MARKET CONDITIONS



With over 8,000 freelancers on &FRIENDS, the rates in this report provide an up to date view of the Creative Services Freelance market.

The data has been extracted from &FRIENDS and represents anonymous averages from across our freelance member base. Where there are blank cells, we did not have enough data to include a rate. We have also included "* Small data set" in disciplines that have low sample sizes.





AVERAGE FREELANCE DAY RATES

Freelance rates increased by 6% (+ \$33 per day) between 2021 and 2203 from \$563 to \$596. This increase is the largest jump in freelance rates over the past 5 years and indicates the freelance market has not only recovered from the lows of COVID, but experienced a boom of sorts in 2022 given a number of factors including a growing talent shortage and record inflation.

Is this increase in-line with Inflation?

While \$33 on the surface seems like a pretty big jump, when we consider the huge inflation increases in 2022, it tells a slightly different story. If rates increased at the same rate as inflation, we would have seen a circa 10% jump from late 2020 to now - This would have added \$56 to the average day rate, increasing it to \$619. This suggests freelance rates haven't quite caught up with inflation.

What about the looming recession?

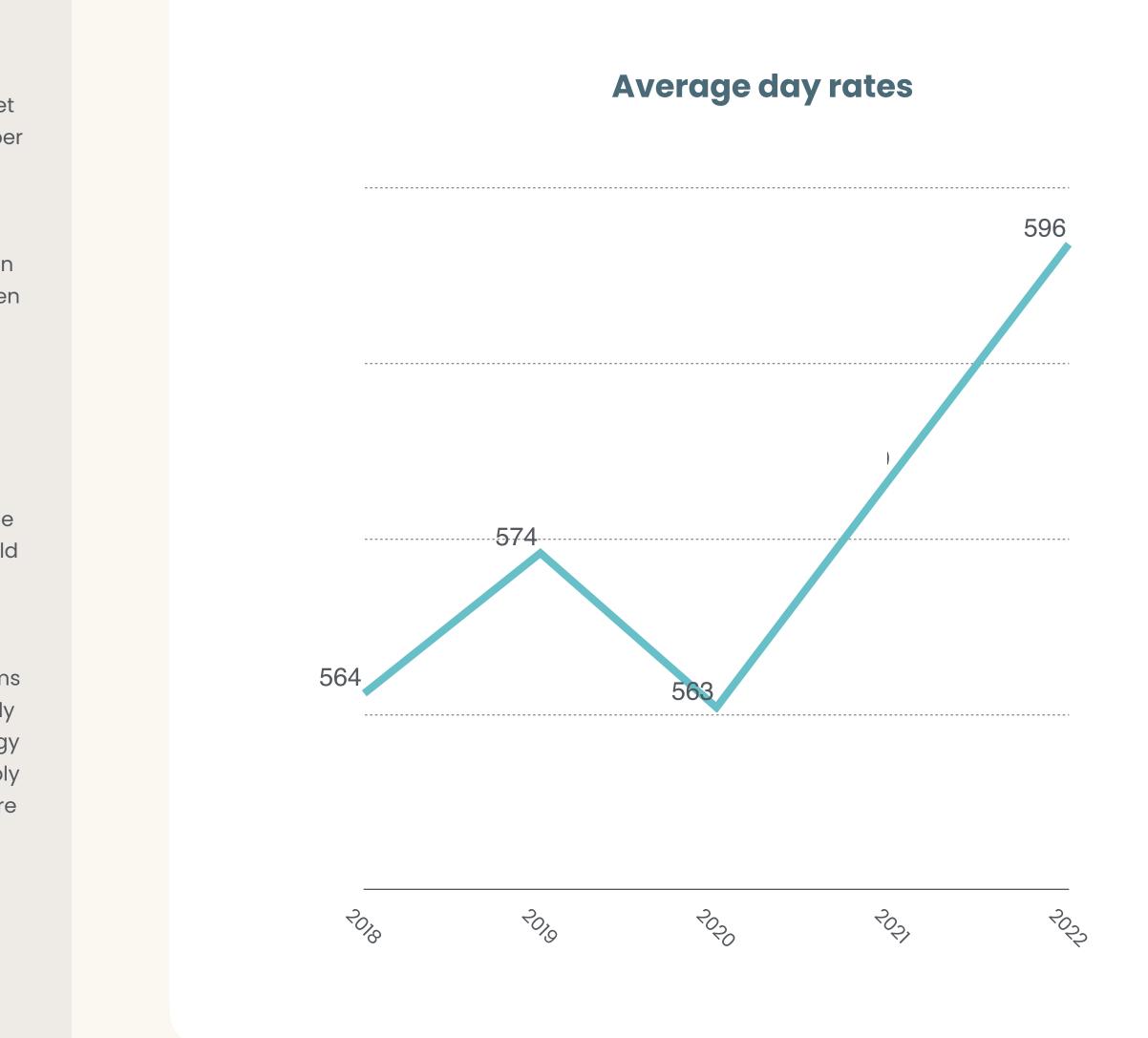
With some form of recession hitting Australia in 2023, it's safe to assume overall marketing spend will decrease or at the very least be deferred. Over the past 5 years, freelance demand has been the industry's 'canary in the coal mine', providing an early indicator of reduced marketing spend hitting the industry. Because of this, we expect to see some form of softening of the freelance market which should in some way slow down the rate increases from freelancers.

Is the shortage in talent real thing?

While there is little doubt there is a growing skill shortage in the advertising industry is very real, it seems to be acute in certain areas and not in others. At &FRIENDS, the clear areas where demand strips supply have been in the longer team contract roles such as Account Service, Project Management, Technology and UI/UX. These roles generally carry longer contract periods which makes it harder to align the supply of available freelancers with projects that have hard kick off dates. Conversely, supply and demand are much more harmonious in areas that have shorter contracts and more supply in the market such as Graphic Design, Copywriting and Content Creation.

Will rates increase or not in 2023

We'd be surprised if there weren't minor increases in rates over the next 12 months. The impacts on inflation will force freelancers to consider increasing their rates, while a softening market will temper how aggressively they increase them.





MARKET CONDITIONS **EXPLAINED**

When sourcing freelancers companies are at the mercy of a number of market conditions and dynamics that can make finding freelancers easy or hard.

Understanding these market conditions can help companies to mould their planning to be more realistic and achievable.

The shorter the lead times, the smaller the pool of talent you have available to respond to your gig. For specialisms that typically get booked on short term gigs, this can often be ok. However for specialisms that have a long gig length, finding available freelancers at short notice is often pot luck.



GIG LENGTH

Specialisms vary in their typical gig lengths. The duration of a Graphic design gig is usually a few days whereas a UI project could be weeks or months. This impacts general availability as well as how fluid and active the market is.



TIME PERIOD FROM BRIEF TO BOOKING

The time period for finding a freelancer can vary significantly because of gig length, nature of project and scarcity. For example, finding a copywriter is likely to takes days, whereas finding a CX Strategist is likely to take 3-4 weeks.



Demand varies dramatically for different specialisms and in turn creates different power dynamics in each specialism market. For many high demand roles like technology and UX, the balance of power to call the shots sits with the freelancer, not the company. Whereas low demand, high supply specialisms, the power resides with the company.

5 weeks 2 weeks tomorrow

LEAD TIMES







DESIGN

DAY RATES AND MARKET DYNAMICS



DYNAMICS

There is an abundance of freelance designers with sourcing quality and industry expertise the main challenge for companies. Projects are generally short resulting in a fluid and active market.



DAY RATES

Specialism

Design Researcher

Design Director

Branding Designer

Industrial Designer

Graphic Designer

Retoucher

Finished Artist

Artworker

Specialism

Design Director

Junior	+/- 2021	Midweight	+/- 2021	Senior	+/- 2021	Lead	+/- 2021
					_		
A\$388	15%	A\$525	5%	A\$813	11%	A\$922	6%
		A\$591	6%	A\$800			
A\$308	7%	A\$441	7%	A\$540	8%	A\$713	2%
A\$340	-11%	A\$458	53%	A\$538	-10%	A\$750	10%
A\$331	7%	A\$403	5%	A\$527	6%	A\$646	1%
A\$294	4%	A\$428	1%	A\$526	0%	A\$668	6%
A\$249	-17%	A\$402	1%	A\$512	8%	A\$513	5%
		A\$393		A\$476		A\$650	

Associate		Midweight		Executive	
A\$500	8%	A\$559	6%	A\$802	7%







UX & UI DESIGN

DAY RATES AND MARKET DYNAMICS



DYNAMICS

UI and UX designers are in high demand from tech companies, start ups, brands and agencies. Projects are typically weeks or months. To find the best candidates, longer lead times are recommended.



DAY RATES

Specialism

Service Designer

Information Architect

UX Designer

UI Designer

Junior	+/- 2021	Midweight	+/- 2021	Senior	+/- 2021	Lead	+/- 2021
4400	100/		10/	44000	110/	441074	00/
A\$403	-13%	A\$580	-1%	A\$830	11%	A\$1074	-3%
A\$400	0%	A\$497	-4%	A\$711	-9%	A\$642	1%
A\$371	-4%	A\$540	7%	A\$719	7%	A\$858	11%
A\$345	-3%	A\$492	8%	A\$626	6%	A\$770	4%







CREATIVE

DAY RATES AND MARKET DYNAMICS



DYNAMICS

There is a healthy freelance creative community with impressive quality and diversity. Projects are generally short resulting in a fluid and active market.



DAY RATES

Specialism

Art Director

Motion Graphic Design

Copywriter

Creative Team

Animator

Illustrator

3D Artist

Specialism

Creative Director

	Junior	+/- 2021	Midweight	+/- 2021	Senior	+/- 2021	Lead	+/- 2021	
	A\$369	-2%	A\$532	12%	A\$637	10%	A\$718	5%	
gner	A\$316		A\$565		A\$638		A\$706		
	A\$356	3%	A\$478	6%	A\$612	6%	A\$743	10%	
	A\$284	-8%	A\$430	17%	A\$614	6%	A\$718	4%	
	A\$357	3%	A\$514	4%	A\$580	8%	A\$688	2%	
	A\$495	55%	A\$424	5%	A\$597	13%	A\$754	-5%	
	A\$369	-2%	A\$455	14%	A\$546	24%	A\$656	10%	

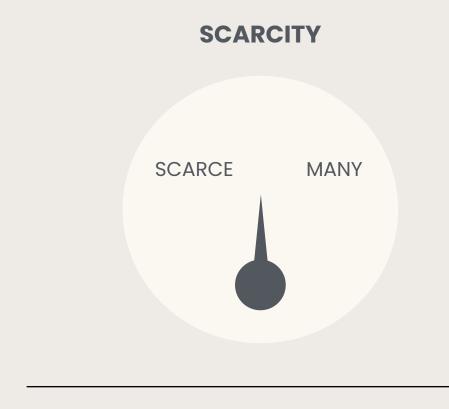
Associate		Midweight		Executive	
A\$604	A\$0	A\$635	7%	A\$825	4%





STRATEGY

DAY RATES AND MARKET DYNAMICS



DYNAMICS

The community of strategists is skewed towards Digital and Social Media. Whereas CX, Comms and Consumer planners are less common but are generally in higher demand, requiring longer lead times to source.



DAY RATES

Specialism

CX Strategist

Consumer Planner

Brand Strategist

Comms Strategist

Market Researcher

Digital Strategist

Content Strategist

Social Media Strategist

Specialism

Strategy Director

	Junior	+/- 2021	Midweight	+/- 2021	Senior	+/- 2021	Lead	+/- 2021
		1004				0.07		201
	A\$430	-10%	A\$663	15%	A\$816	8%	A\$1043	-1%
		-100%	A\$455	-10%	A\$727	-7%	A\$995	4%
	A\$325		A\$607		A\$760		A\$892	
	A\$307	-23%	A\$507	2%	A\$703	6%	A\$885	7%
	250	A\$0	A\$454	32%	715	-A\$0	A\$1164	-3%
	A\$471	5%	A\$469	1%	A\$629	3%	A\$774	-2%
	A\$258		A\$481		A\$603		A\$692	
t	A\$253	-21%	A\$421	6%	A\$556	12%	A\$677	5%

Associate		Midweight		Executive	
A\$625	0%	A\$741	-4%	A\$996	4%





TECHNOLOGY

DAY RATES AND MARKET DYNAMICS



DYNAMICS

A shortage of technologists has created scarcity and high demand. This is compounded by companies often needing specialist skills. Technologists call the shots and many prefer working from home or moonlighting.



DAY RATES

Specialism

Technology Strategist

Solution Architect

Business Analyst

IOS Developer

Bi Analyst

Back End Developer

Android Developer

Front End Developer

QA/Tester

Specialism

Tech Director

	Junior	+/- 2021	Midweight	+/- 2021	Senior	+/- 2021	Lead	+/- 2021
			A\$825	10%	A\$845	3%	A\$911	1%
	A \$ 0 5 0							
	A\$350		A\$536	14%	A\$753	-3%	A\$918	3%
	A\$427	28%	A\$465	8%	A\$679	6%	A\$891	12%
/	A\$557	30%	A\$441	-11%	A\$692	11%	A\$742	-6%
			A\$503	9%	A\$620	13%	A\$875	-20%
	A\$353	-5%	A\$491	1%	A\$640	8%	A\$737	3%
/	A\$383	1%	A\$567	-2%	A\$741	-2%	A\$650	-4%
	A\$323	-9%	A\$479	3%	A\$635	12%	A\$772	-3%
/	A\$278	-4%	A\$375	27%	A\$461	-5%	A\$602	
As	sociate		Midweight		Executive			
				00/	4000	1000		
			A\$721	-2%	A\$898	-10%		







DAY RATES AND MARKET DYNAMICS



DYNAMICS

Media freelancing is still early in its evolution with only a small growing base of freelancers. This creates demand and supply challenges. However, Freelancers are typically comfortable to working remotely and will often work on concurrent projects



DAY RATES

Specialism

Growth Marketer

Performance Media Strate

SEO Manager

Community Manager

Digital Media Planner

PPC Manager

Media Director

Content Marketer

Traditional Media Planner

Specialism

Media Director

	Junior	+/- 2021	Midweight	+/- 2021	Senior	+/- 2021	Lead	+/- 2021
	A\$383	28%	A\$506	2%	A\$647	11%	A\$768	10%
ategist	A\$350		A\$503	1%	A\$592	14%	A\$720	3%
	A\$317	-37%	A\$455	9%	A\$589	5%	A\$562	-4%
	A\$280	1%	A\$416	-3%	A\$613	9%	A\$581	3%
	A\$400	8%	A\$442	5%	A\$435	-4%	A\$684	1%
	A\$233		A\$367	5%	A\$535	8%	A\$549	4%
			A\$476	5%				
	A\$340		A\$393		A\$550		A\$530	
er	A\$500		A\$395	7%	A\$615	13%	A\$400	

Associate	Midweight		Executive	
667	A\$454	5%	907	-A\$0





DELIVERY

DAY RATES AND MARKET DYNAMICS



DYNAMICS

The number of delivery focused freelancers is reasonably strong. However gigs are typically longer resulting in a less fluid and active market. This creates demand and supply challenges and requires longer lead times to source candidates.



DAY RATES

Specialism

Program Manager

Project Manager

Account Director

Digital Producer

Traffic Manager

Event Producer

Content Manager

Account Manager

Specialism

Delivery Director

Client Service Director

Junior	+/- 2021	Midweight	+/- 2021	Senior	+/- 2021	Lead	+/- 2021
A\$505	40%	A\$673	9%	A\$762	8%	A\$1136	31%
A\$411	5%	A\$482	8%	A\$629	11%	A\$761	3%
A\$425		A\$547		A\$541		A\$696	
A\$258	29%	A\$460	10%	A\$591	4%	A\$744	5%
A\$375		A\$493	-7%	A\$550	7%	A\$710	13%
A\$330	16%	A\$442	-8%	A\$593	2%	A\$630	10%
A\$358	-1%	A\$445	4%	A\$548	3%	A\$633	5%
A\$303	-12%	A\$396	3%	A\$480	4%	A\$574	2%

Associate		Midweight		Executive	
A\$500		A\$665	-14%	A\$934	16%
A\$659	-9%	A\$610	-10%	A\$752	1%





CONTENT

DAY RATES AND MARKET DYNAMICS



DYNAMICS

The supply of content talent is strong with new school content producers and old school TVC pros all available in the market. Projects are generally short resulting in a fluid and active market.



DAY RATES

Specialism

Drone Operator Videographer Cinematographer Camera Operator Filmmaker **Content Producer** Voice Actor Fixer Script Writer Video Editor Photographer Sound Engineer Composer Production Manager Gaffer Location Scout Set Designer Content Production Assist Visual Effects Artist Journalist Post Production Sound Designer Prop Stylist

Specialism

Director Photography Film Director

	Junior	+/- 2021	Midweight	+/- 2021	Senior	+/- 2021	Lead	+/- 2021
			1,300					
			825		928		1,183	
	556	-0.4%	1,143	59.5%	795	17.4%	1,079	42.8%
	867	22.6%	582	-2.0%	922	35.3%	1,325	68.0%
			800		1,200		804	
	338	-8.0%	550	6.5%	670	11.0%	771	-12.6%
			567				780	
							650	
	528	-15.5%	459	-5.8%	661	-2.3%	911	-11.7%
	443		548		736		703	
	335	-13.2%	603	17.1%	738	12.1%	768	-3.0%
	825	30.3%	600	56.5%	630	-10.0%	450	-3.6%
			500				755	
	375	-11.8%	532	-4.0%	683	1.3%	650	-14.0%
	400				800			
					350		725	
	350	0.0%	600	26.3%	455		695	58.0%
ant			350		417		850	
			613		300			
	423	23.2%	408	-0.6%	528	7.1%	688	5.8%
	300				540			
			400		400			
			400					
	Associate		Midweight		Executive			
			1,114					
			726	8.4%				





DAY RATES AND MARKET DYNAMICS



DYNAMICS

When companies need PR support, they generally require a vertical specialist. This increases the scarcity and lead times to source. However, Freelancers typically work remotely and juggle multiple clients.



DAY RATES

Specialism

Healthcare Specialist

Government Specialist

Corporate Specialist

Technology Specialist

Consumer Specialist

Financial Services Speci

Fmcg Specialist

Travel Tourism Specialist

* Small data set

	Account Executive	+/- 2021	Account Manager	+/- 2021	Snr Account Manager	+/- 2021	Account Director	+/- 2021	Editorial	+/- 2021	
			A\$675		A\$563		A\$850	-29%	1000		
	700				A\$475	36%	A\$983	-9%	560		
	550		A\$438	14%	A\$750	76%	A\$881	8%	553	2%	
			A\$325		A\$490	-29%	A\$716	14%	745		
			A\$400		A\$695	28%	A\$648	-1%	386		
cialist			A\$350		A\$550	-15%	A\$583	9%	600		
			A\$375	-6%	A\$445	7%	A\$657	31%			
ist	400				A\$518	6%	A\$700	11%	467	-4%	





AVERAGE DAY RATES PER DISCIPLINE

RANKED HIGHEST TO LOWEST

	Specialism	Avg Rate	2021		Specialism	Avg Rate	2021		Specialism	Avg Rate	2021		Specialism	Avg Rate	2021		Specialism	Avg Rate	2021		Specialism	Avg Rate	2021		Specialism	Avg Rate
1	Director Photography	A\$1,407		17	Media Director	A\$771	12	33	Fixer	A\$650		49	Art Director	A\$608	46	65	Content Strategist	A\$546		81	Content Manager	A\$519	61	97	Traditional Media Planner	A\$457
2	Drone Operator	A\$1,300		18	Creative Director	A\$758	17	34	Business Analyst	A\$647	29	49	Ux Designer	A\$606	43	66	Creative Team	A\$544	58	82	Social Media Strategist	A\$516	66	98	Marketer	A\$452
3	Data Director	A\$1,110	1	19	Tech Director	A\$757	9	35	Script Writer	A\$646	19	49	Account Director	A\$604		67	Financial Services	A\$542	49	83	Travel Tourism Specialist	A\$515		99	Sound Designer	A\$400
4	Videographer	A\$987		20	Healthcare Specialist	A\$739	3	36	Technology Specialist	A\$646	31	49	Location Scout	A\$600		68	Pr Strategist	A\$540	54	84	Journalist	A\$511	67	100	Prop Stylist	A\$400
5	Cinematogra pher	A\$962	18	21	Government Specialist	A\$737	15	37	Video Editor	A\$642		49	Gaffer	A\$600		69	Fmcg Specialist	A\$539	79	85	Digital Media Planner	A\$508	64			
6	Strategy Director	A\$909	4	22	Solution Architect	A\$735		38	Client Service Director	A\$641		49	Bi Analyst	A\$597	44	70	Data Engineer	A\$539	41	86	Data Analyst	A\$496	65			
7	Delivery Director	A\$908	7	23	Design Director	A\$731	22	39	Photographer	A\$633	39	49	Back End Developer	A\$588	45	71	Data Architect	A\$537	37	87	Ppc Manager	A\$495	73			
8	Camera Operator	A\$883	23	24	Comms Strategist	A\$716	20	40	Consumer Specialist	A\$630	34	49	Motion Graphic	A\$585		72	Data Scientist	A\$535	57	88	3D Artist	A\$494	77			
9	Technology Strategist	A\$864	5	25	General Manager	A\$709		41	Sound Engineer	A\$630	42	49	Digital Producer	A\$584	48	73	Visual Effects Artist	A\$535		89	Graphic Designer	A\$491	71			
10	Filmmaker	A\$860		26	Brand Strategist	A\$702		42	Digital Strategist	A\$629	28	49	Set Designer	A\$582	78	74	Branding Designer	A\$532	63	90	Retoucher	A\$490	69			
11	Cx Strategist	A\$854	6	27	Corporate Specialist	A\$688	24	43	Composer	A\$628		49	Android Developer	A\$582	33	75	Content Production	A\$531		91	Finished Artist	A\$477	75			
12	Film Director	A\$853	10	28	Market Researcher	A\$688	13	44	Production Manager	A\$626	25	49	Copywriter	A\$574	51	76	Seo Manager	A\$531	56	92	Content Marketer	A\$476				
13	Program Manager	A\$833	14	29	Design Researcher	A\$680	30	45	Project Manager	A\$624	40	49	Front End Developer	A\$569	50	77	Animator	A\$528	62	93	Qa/Tester	A\$475				
14	Consumer Planner	A\$819	8	30	Content Producer	A\$660	27	46	Performance Media	A\$617	36	49	Traffic Manager	A\$566		78	Industrial Designer	524	68	94	Account Manager	471	72			
15	Service Designer	A\$777	11	31	Voice Actor	A\$652		47	los Developer	A\$612	35	49	Ui Designer	A\$564	53	79	Illustrator	521	70	95	Artworker	471				
16	Marketing Director	A\$775		32	Growth Marketer	A\$651	32	48	Information Architect	A\$608	26	49	Event Producer	A\$562	55	80	Community Manager	519	60	96	Post Production	460				





AVERAGE DAY RATES BY CATEGORY

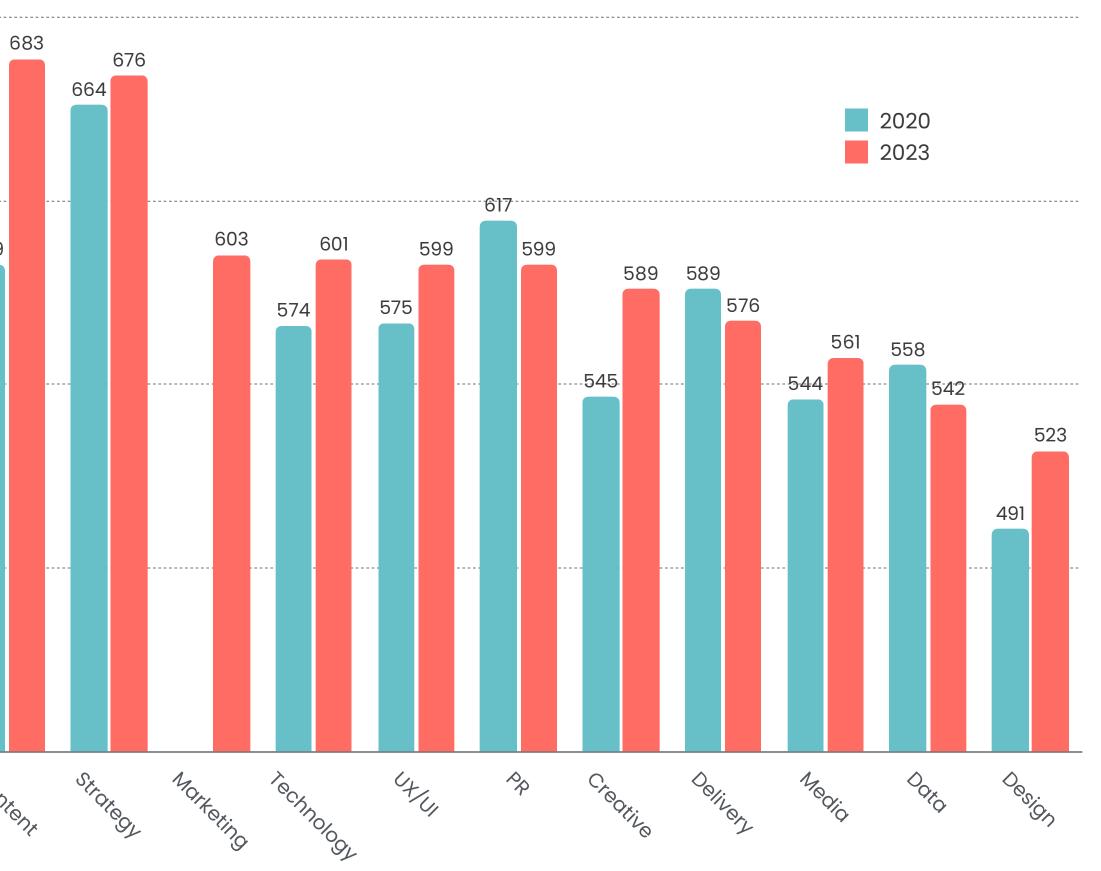
The average content creation rate increased by \$84 (14%) to \$683 and is a clear leader over all other categories.

Strategy is second with average rates of \$676 and the new category of Marketing was third with \$601.

Only PR, Delivery and Data decreased their average rates from 2021.

599 Content

Average day rates by category







AVERAGE DAY RATES BETWEEN CITIES

While Sydney remains by far the highest freelance rates in Australia, Melbourne, Brisbane are catching up with Perth experiencing a huge 23% jump to \$567 per day.



Average day rates between cities





AVERAGE DAY RATES BETWEEN CITIES

BY CATEGORY

Content, Design, Media and Strategy all recorded positive day rate growth across all major cities.

Whereas Technology, UI/UX, Data and Delivery were all a mixed bag with a combination of growth and declines in different markets.

Sydney experienced a decline in rates from four out of the ten categories, where Brisbane ex

Discipline Content Creative Data Delivery Design Media PR Strategy Technology

UX/UI

Adelaide	+/- 2021	Brisbane	+/- 2021	Melbourne	+/- 2021	Perth	+/- 2021	Sydney	+/- 2021
A\$475	8%	A\$569	3%	A\$715	18%	A\$832	113%	A\$677	5%
A\$454	-3%	A\$556	7%	A\$559	6%	A\$460	17%	A\$614	2%
		A\$475	138%	A\$520	5%	A\$704	10%	A\$535	-5%
A\$521	22%	A\$561	6%	A\$546	-4%	A\$602	1%	A\$594	-3%
A\$457	5%	A\$488	14%	A\$481	4%	A\$415	2%	A\$560	3%
A\$592	20%	A\$632	4%	A\$547	7%	A\$688	45%	A\$567	
A\$433	-40%	A\$672	-9%	A\$521	-14%	A\$357	-7%	A\$609	-2%
A\$610	57%	A\$673	2%	A\$609	2%	A\$580	15%	A\$701	
A\$573	-5%	A\$642	4%	A\$585	5%	A\$502	-11%	A\$601	3%
A\$459	11%	A\$596	7%	A\$554		A\$471	1%	A\$634	-1%



AVERAGE DAY RATES BETWEEN CITIES

BY SENIORITY

During 2020 Leads and Seniors reduced their rates to become more competitive as COVID rolled through the industry.

Fast forward 2 years later, unsurprisingly, this trend has reversed with Senior, Midweight and Lead rates increasing in all major cities. Location

Adelaide

Brisbane

Melbourne

Perth

Sydney

Junior	+/- 2021	Midweight	+/- 2021	Senior	+/- 2021	Lead	+/- 2021
			_				
413	8%	428	12%	540	9%	603	26%
307	5%	450	6%	602	9%	763	0%
348	-5%	471	5%	600	8%	734	3%
358	-12%	518	19%	572	19%	657	28%
368	-2%	520	2%	618	3%	758	0%



SHAPE OF & FRIENDS MEMBER BASE



In this section we summarise &FRIENDS service offering, break down the disciplines in our marketplace.





&FRIENDS FREELANCE EXPERTISE IS WELL DISTRIBUTED

While design and creative are the largest discipline categories, there are 6 categories in total that are in double digits. This broadly indicates a healthy distribution of skillsets within the &FRIENDS marketplace.

Areas of growth are Media, Data, PR and Content.



