The DIA recently released the results of its 2017/18 Fees and Salary Survey during Melbourne Design Week in March 2018.

According to past DIA National President David Robertson AM LFDIA, who compiled and analysed the survey results for the DIA, average earnings for experienced designers are recovering in most disciplines after a record low point recorded in the 2013 DIA Fees and Salary Survey.

‘According to the latest survey results, the “typical” Australian designer responding to the survey was female (around 60.3%) and working in graphic or interior design in either Sydney or Melbourne,’ explained David.

‘She was salaried and, with five or more years’ experience, earned an average AUD$71,820 and used an hourly charge-out rate of $150 +GST. ‘But it is important to note that salaries and fees can vary greatly depending on the scale of the business, location, designer skill level and other employment factors,’ he added.

‘Figures quoted reflect surveyed data only and are not intended as recommended fees or salaries.

Report analysing outcomes identified in the survey.
The DIA 2017/18 Fees and Salary Survey can be downloaded at design.org.au/services/practice-notes

Key outcomes from the latest DIA survey include:

1. An increase in median charge-out fees to $150 per hour (+GST)
2. The recovery of self-employed income levels following the GFC
3. A halt in the decline of fees relative to average income.

Designer incomes improving

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‘...the typical Australian designer responding to the survey was female (60%).’

A valuable advocacy tool

Widely regarded as an important industry benchmark, the DIA Fees and Salary Survey enables the DIA to identify industry trends and advocate on behalf of designer members for better fees, salaries and business models. The largest group of responses in the 2017/18 survey was from graphic designers (37.3%) followed by interior designers (36.3%).

Positive signs

The ‘typical’ Australian designer:

$150
Used an average charge out rate of $150 +GST.
More likely to be female.

60%  

Five or more years of experience.

More likely to live in Sydney or Melbourne.

More likely to be a graphic or interior designer.

‘...average earnings for experienced designers are recovering in most disciplines.’