

Sydney Supply Chain Market Report

Jobs, hiring trends, salary insights, skills in demand, and the Middle East supply chain impact for Greater Sydney.

Q1 2026 MARKET SNAPSHOT

218

ROLES ANALYSED

2.6%

GDP GROWTH
Above trend

4.1%

UNEMPLOYMENT
Near full employment

3.8%

CPI INFLATION
Above RBA target

\$162k

IBP/S&OP AVG SALARY

30%

PROCUREMENT ROLES

62%

HYBRID WORK ROLES

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KEY THEME THIS MONTH

Middle East escalation — Hormuz closure triggering the most significant supply chain disruption since COVID-19.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Sigma Search is a Sydney-based specialist executive recruitment firm focused on supply chain, logistics and procurement across Australia and New Zealand. This report analyses 218 direct employer roles from the Sydney metropolitan market in Q1 2026. Recruitment agency, government panel and confidential roles excluded.

CANDIDATE MARKET

Candidate-short at \$120k–\$180k. Best candidates off-market within 2–3 weeks.

TOP HIRING SECTOR

FMCG & Retail leads with Woolworths (6 roles), Endeavour (5), Bunnings (3) all active.

HOT SKILL RIGHT NOW

Supply chain risk & resilience — Middle East disruption driving premium demand.

SECTION 01

Macro Economic Landscape

Australia's economy has surprised to the upside heading into Q1 2026.

2.6%GDP GROWTH (ANNUAL)
Above trend**4.1%**UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
Near full employment**3.8%**CPI INFLATION
Above target

GDP grew 0.8% in Q4 2025 — the strongest quarterly expansion in nearly three years — driven by firm household consumption and a surge in private investment, particularly in data centres and aircraft. Annual growth is now tracking at 2.6%, well above consensus.

The RBA has shifted hawkish — raising the cash rate by 25bps to 3.85% in February 2026 after inflation proved stickier than expected, with CPI holding at 3.8% year-on-year. The unemployment rate sits at 4.1%, near full employment, though the RBA forecasts a modest rise toward 4.5% through the year.

Sydney's trade volumes remain healthy — Port Botany throughput continues to be buoyed by strong import activity, particularly in consumer goods and industrial materials. The ongoing development of the Western Sydney Aerotropolis and intermodal hubs at Moorebank and Eastern Creek continue to drive demand for logistics and supply chain leadership.

KEY MACRO SIGNALS FOR SUPPLY CHAIN PROFESSIONALS

- **Defence & Aerospace:** AUKUS procurement accelerating — Thales, Downer, Safran and BAE Systems actively hiring in Sydney.
- **FMCG:** Margin pressure intensifying post rate rise, driving demand for procurement and cost optimisation.
- **E-commerce:** Growth normalised but fulfilment and last-mile roles remain strong.
- **Energy Transition:** Cleanaway, Veolia, Ausgrid and Transurban all building out supply chain teams.
- **Construction / Industrial:** Lendlease, Boral, Ventia and Coates Hire all active — infrastructure pipeline supporting demand.

LABOUR MARKET INSIGHT

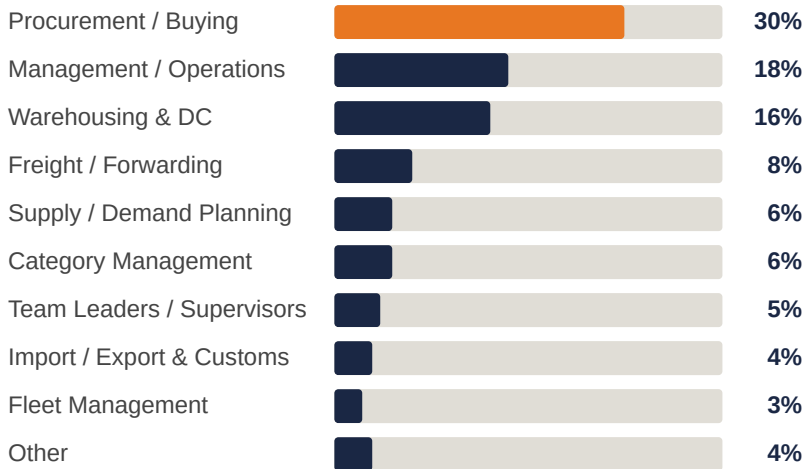
The labour market for supply chain professionals remains candidate-short, particularly at the mid-senior level (\$120k–\$180k). The February rate rise has not dampened employer demand — if anything, it has intensified the need for procurement and cost optimisation talent. The best candidates continue to be off-market within 2–3 weeks of first approach. Employers running open advertising for senior roles are consistently finding that the best candidates are already in conversation elsewhere. Speed of process and competitive compensation are the two factors most frequently determining outcome at the final stage.

SECTION 02

Job Market Overview

Our analysis of 218 unique roles from direct employers in the Sydney market shows hiring activity remains robust heading into Q1 2026. Recruitment agency, government panel, and confidential advertiser roles have been excluded to focus on genuine market demand from employers.

ROLES BY FUNCTION



MARKET COMPOSITION

- **218 roles** from direct employers — agencies and panel roles excluded
- Market remains broad-based across FMCG, logistics, procurement, retail, defence and energy
- Planning roles (**6% visible**) significantly undersupplied vs actual demand
- Freight cluster (import/export + freight/forwarding = **12% combined**) elevated given Middle East disruption

KEY TAKEAWAY

Procurement & buying roles dominate at 30% of all advertised positions, reflecting sustained employer focus on cost optimisation and supplier diversification in the current rate environment. Management and operations roles at 18% signal continued investment in operational leadership, particularly in 3PL and FMCG. Warehousing & DC at 16% reflects the Western Sydney logistics build-out. Planning roles, at just 6% of visible adverts, remain significantly undersupplied relative to actual demand — IBP and S&OP practitioners at manager level are consistently placed off-market. The freight and forwarding cluster (12% combined) is notable given the Middle East disruption currently creating urgency around international logistics capability.

SECTION 03

Who's Hiring

A snapshot of the most active employers across the Sydney supply chain market this month. Recruitment agencies and government panel roles have been excluded.

MOST ACTIVE EMPLOYERS (MULTIPLE OPEN ROLES)

COMPANY	OPEN ROLES & FUNCTIONS	SECTOR
Woolworths Group	6 roles — Planning, Procurement, Transport, Category	Retail / FMCG
Endeavour Group	5 roles — Procurement, Category, Sourcing	Retail / Beverages
Thales	3 roles — Procurement, Distribution, Compliance	Defence
SEKO Logistics	3 roles — Operations, Freight, Management	3PL / Logistics
Suntory Oceania	3 roles — Planning, Warehouse, DC Mgmt	FMCG / Beverages
Bunnings	3 roles — Category Management	Retail
Asahi Beverages	2 roles — Planning, SC Management	FMCG / Beverages
Downer	2 roles — Procurement, Operations	Defence / Infra
Fisher & Paykel	2 roles — Inventory, Planning	Medical Devices
Mainfreight	2 roles — Operations, Freight	3PL / Logistics
Silk Logistics	2 roles — Operations, Warehouse	3PL / Logistics
GEODIS	2 roles — Operations, Air Freight	3PL / Logistics

RECENTLY ADVERTISING AT SENIOR / EXECUTIVE LEVEL

COMPANY	ROLE	SECTOR
Ausgrid	Senior Procurement Manager	Energy / Utilities
Woolworths Group	Head of Category – Fresh Produce	Retail / FMCG
Zip Co	Procurement Category Manager	Fintech
Bindaree Food Group	Supply Chain Development Executive	FMCG / Meat
Speedcast	General Manager, Operations	Technology / Satcom
Kimberly-Clark	Strategic Sourcing Category Manager	FMCG
Safran Electronic & Defense	Supply Chain Manager	Defence / Aerospace
Fisher & Paykel	National Planning & Inventory Manager	Medical Devices

SECTOR SNAPSHOT

FMCG / FOOD & BEV

Largest hiring sector. Asahi, Bega, Suntory, Nestle, Clorox, Colgate, Dulux and Arnotts all running concurrent searches. Margin pressure accelerating procurement investment.

3PL / LOGISTICS

SEKO (3 roles), Silk, Mainfreight, Geodis, Kuehne+Nagel, Linfox, DB Schenker, FedEx and DSV all active. Western Sydney hub for operations and warehouse leadership.

RETAIL

Woolworths Group (6) leads, followed by Endeavour (5), Bunnings (3), Kmart and Coles. Category management and procurement dominate retail hiring.

DEFENCE / INDUSTRIAL

Thales (3 roles), Downer (2), Safran and Ausgrid — AUKUS driving sustained demand for procurement, sustainment and compliance specialists.

SECTION 04

Salary Insights & Hiring Trends

Our data captures roles advertised at \$80,000+ base salary, representing the mid-to-senior end of the market — typically professionals with 3+ years experience, team leaders, managers and directors.

85%

PERMANENT
Dominant

12%

FIXED-TERM
Growing

3%

CASUAL / TEMP
Specialist only

WORK ARRANGEMENT BREAKDOWN

62%

Hybrid (2–3 days)

34%

On-site

4%

Remote

AVERAGE SALARIES BY ROLE LEVEL (\$80K+ MARKET)

ROLE LEVEL	AVERAGE SALARY	TYPICAL RANGE
Supply Chain Director / VP	\$235k	\$200k – \$280k+
Head of Procurement	\$205k	\$180k – \$240k
General Manager – SC / Logistics	\$195k	\$170k – \$250k
IBP / S&OP Manager	\$162k	\$145k – \$185k
Supply Chain Manager	\$158k	\$140k – \$180k
Senior Buyer / Category Mgr	\$145k	\$130k – \$165k
Logistics Manager	\$135k	\$120k – \$155k
Demand / Supply Planner	\$122k	\$110k – \$140k
Procurement Officer / Buyer	\$112k	\$100k – \$125k
Warehouse Manager	\$98k	\$85k – \$115k

SALARY INTELLIGENCE: WHAT WE'RE SEEING IN THE MARKET

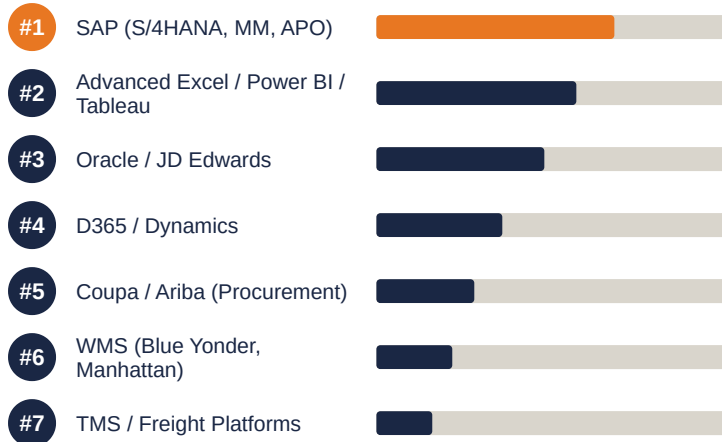
The **\$140k–\$180k band** is the most contested segment of the market right now. Candidates with IBP ownership, multi-site ANZ accountability, or FMCG sector depth are consistently receiving multiple approaches. Counter-offers are frequent — employers are discovering that losing a mid-senior supply chain leader mid-process is costly. At the executive level (\$180k+), the pipeline is thin and timelines are longer, but quality is strong for organisations willing to run a thorough search process. At the junior-to-mid level (\$85k–\$120k), supply is healthier and advertising is productive. The challenge is at the manager-to-senior manager tier where the best candidates are almost never actively seeking.

SECTION 05

Skills & Systems in Demand

Employers are increasingly looking beyond traditional supply chain competencies. The most sought-after candidates combine deep functional expertise with data literacy, systems proficiency, and cross-functional leadership capability.

TECHNICAL SKILLS & ERP SYSTEMS



CERTIFICATIONS THAT STAND OUT



HARD SKILLS

- S&OP / IBP process ownership
- Category mgmt & strategic sourcing
- Demand forecasting (statistical)
- Contract negotiation & commercial acumen
- Data analytics (SQL, Python a bonus)
- Lean / Six Sigma / CI

SOFT SKILLS

- Stakeholder mgmt (cross-functional)
- Change & transformation leadership
- Supplier relationship management
- Problem-solving under pressure
- Executive communication
- Team development & capability building

WHERE THE ROLES ARE: SYDNEY GEOGRAPHY

Western Sydney

Wetherill Park, Eastern Creek, Arndell Park, Silverwater, Chullora

Logistics, warehouse, 3PL operations and DC management. Highest volume zone.

Macquarie Park / North Sydney

Corporate FMCG belt

FMCG planning, procurement and category management. Cochlear, Fisher & Paykel, Suntory and multiple pharma/medical device employers.

Sydney CBD / Surry Hills

Corporate & professional services

Corporate SC strategy, professional services, energy and financial services. Endeavour Group, Ausgrid, Allianz and consulting firms.

Mascot / Botany / Matraville

Port Botany precinct

Freight forwarding, import/export, customs and Port Botany-linked roles. High concentration of international logistics operators.

SECTION 06

Middle East Crisis: Supply Chain Impact

The escalation in the Middle East following coordinated US-Israeli strikes on Iran in late February 2026 has triggered the most significant supply chain disruption since COVID-19. For Australian supply chain professionals, this is the defining market event of Q1 2026.

What's Happened: Iran has claimed the Strait of Hormuz closed following the strikes. Major carriers — Maersk, MSC, Hapag-Lloyd, CMA CGM — have suspended Hormuz transits and Suez Canal passages. Over 140 container vessels are trapped or sheltering in the Gulf. Air cargo capacity on Asia-Europe routes has dropped ~18%, and Brent crude has surged toward US\$100/barrel.

IMPACT ON AUSTRALIA'S SUPPLY CHAINS

Fuel Supply Vulnerability

Australia remains structurally dependent on imported refined fuels from Singapore, South Korea and Japan. A prolonged Hormuz closure directly threatens upstream refinery feedstock.

Freight Costs & Transit Times

Cape of Good Hope rerouting adds 10–15 days to Asia-Europe voyages. Emergency surcharges are in effect. Air freight rates spiked up to 400% in the first 48 hours.

Fertiliser & Agriculture

Australia imports the majority of its nitrogen fertilisers from Gulf producers. Global urea markets are reacting sharply — a direct farm-input risk heading into the planting window.

Port Congestion Forecast

Diverted containers arriving in clusters will drive terminal congestion within 2–5 weeks. Western Sydney intermodal hubs and Port Botany will feel the pressure.

EXPECTED DISRUPTION TIMELINE

PERIOD	EXPECTED DEVELOPMENTS
Week 1–2 (Now)	Booking stops, surcharges, vessel rerouting. Insurance withdrawal for Hormuz. Air cargo capacity crunch on Asia-Europe and Asia-Middle East corridors.
Week 3–5	Port congestion as diverted cargo arrives in clusters at eastern Australian ports. Fuel price pass-through to domestic transport costs. Inventory shortfalls in fast-moving goods.
Month 2–3	Fertiliser supply gaps become visible. Contract renegotiations accelerate. Demand for procurement risk management and logistics optimisation talent surges.
Month 3–6	If sustained: structural cost uplift of 8–15% across supply chains. Reshoring and nearshoring strategies accelerate for critical goods categories.

SECTION 06 (CONT.)

What This Means for Hiring

The combination of macro pressures — rate environment, AI-driven cost reduction, Middle East supply disruption — is reshaping what employers need from supply chain professionals in 2026.

- **Procurement & sourcing talent in high demand:** Organisations are urgently diversifying supplier bases away from Middle East and traditional Asia-Europe routes. Category managers and strategic sourcing specialists with alternative market knowledge command premium packages.
- **Risk & resilience expertise now prized:** Supply chain risk management experience is now mainstream. Candidates who can build scenario models and manage supply continuity programmes are fielding multiple approaches.
- **Planning professionals scarce as ever:** Only 14 planning roles visible in our data vs actual demand considerably higher. IBP-capable practitioners, particularly those with FMCG and multi-site ANZ experience, continue to be placed off-market within 2–3 weeks.
- **Fixed-term transformation roles on the rise:** 12-month contracts tied to supply chain restructuring and cost optimisation are increasing as organisations hedge against ongoing uncertainty by preferring project-based capability uplift.
- **Salary pressure upward at mid-senior level:** The \$140k–\$180k band remains the most competitive. Candidates in active roles are receiving counter-offers. Employers who move slowly risk losing their preferred candidate within 2 weeks of first interview.

About Sigma Search

Sigma Search is a Sydney-based specialist executive recruitment firm focused exclusively on supply chain, logistics and procurement roles across Australia and New Zealand. With 15+ years of executive search experience, we work on retained and exclusive assignments to source senior talent that is typically off-market and cannot be found through traditional advertising channels.

We have our finger on the pulse of the supply chain market across Australia and New Zealand — from emerging talent trends and salary movements to the off-market candidates that never appear on job boards. Our clients engage us because we bring market intelligence, not just CVs.

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WHY RETAINED SEARCH DELIVERS BETTER OUTCOMES

Off-Market Access

The best supply chain candidates at \$140k+ are not browsing job boards. They respond to direct, confidential approaches from trusted recruiters who understand their specialisation.

Speed of Process

In the current market, top candidates receive multiple approaches simultaneously. A structured retained search with clear milestones moves faster and wins more often.

Market Intelligence

A retained search includes live salary benchmarking, competitor mapping and candidate feedback — intelligence that improves the hire and informs future workforce planning.

Commitment & Focus

Retained assignments receive dedicated resourcing and senior consultant time from day one, rather than competing for attention in a contingent pile.

This report has been prepared by Sigma Search for general market information purposes. Salary data represents market observations from advertised roles and direct candidate engagement and should be used as a guide only.

All role data sourced from direct employer advertising in the Sydney metropolitan area. Recruitment agency, government panel and confidential roles have been excluded. © Sigma Search 2026. Not to be reproduced without permission.