2026 Advice Fee Benchmarking Report

VBP

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Foreword

Pricing with Purpose

Over the past decade, few topics have generated as much discussion within the advice profession as pricing.

In many respects, that is unsurprising. Advice businesses have experienced significant change. Regulatory obligations have increased, the cost of delivering advice has risen, and adviser numbers have declined. At the same time, demand for quality financial advice continues to grow.

Against this backdrop, advice firms have been required to think more carefully than ever about how they price their services.

> The challenge is not simply determining what clients will pay. Rather, it is finding the right balance between charging enough to build a sustainable business while delivering genuine value to the clients who place their trust in us.

The purpose of this report is to contribute to that conversation.

Through a confidential survey of advice firms across Australia, we have sought to better understand how firms price a range of client scenarios and service propositions. The result is a practical benchmarking resource designed to help advisers gain insight into the fees being charged across the profession today.

However, it is important to be clear about what this report is - and what it is not.

This report is not intended to prescribe fees, establish industry standards or provide a template for pricing. There is no universally "correct" fee for financial advice. The right pricing model for any firm depends on a range of factors, including its target market, service proposition, operating model, cost structure, workflow design and desired profitability.

Benchmarking is simply one input into the pricing process.

Used well, benchmarking can provide valuable context. It can help advisers understand where their fees sit relative to other firms and challenge assumptions that may have developed over time. In our consulting work, we frequently encounter firms that have not reviewed their pricing in a meaningful way for many years. Often, they continue to charge fees based on historical precedent rather than current costs, client expectations or the value they deliver.

At the same time, benchmarking should never be used as a shortcut for pricing strategy.

A common mistake is to view industry averages as a recommended fee or to assume that another firm's pricing model can be replicated without understanding the underlying business model that supports it. Two firms may serve similar clients and charge similar fees, yet operate with completely different cost structures, profitability outcomes and service delivery approaches.

> Pricing decisions should always be considered alongside broader business fundamentals.

The highest-performing advice firms are rarely the firms with the highest fees. Rather, they are typically firms that have thoughtfully aligned multiple elements of their business model. They have clear target markets, well-defined service propositions, efficient workflows, scalable systems, effective use of technology and pricing structures that reflect the value they deliver. Pricing matters, but it is only one component of a sustainable and profitable business model.

The profession also finds itself at an important crossroads.

As adviser numbers have declined and the availability of advice has reduced, many firms have experienced strong demand for their services. In many cases, this has resulted in higher fees being charged to clients than would have been common a decade ago.

While this reflects economic reality, it also raises an important question for the profession.

A sustainable advice sector requires profitable advice businesses. Yet it also requires advice to remain accessible to the Australians who need it. The objective should not be to charge the highest fee the market will tolerate. Rather, it should be to build advice offerings that are appropriate for the clients a firm seeks to serve and to establish pricing that fairly reflects both the value delivered and the resources required to deliver it.

> In other words, "just because you ***can*** doesn't mean you ***should***".

Good pricing is ultimately about creating alignment between client outcomes and business sustainability. When those two objectives are in balance, clients receive advice they value and firms generate the revenue required to invest in their people, systems and future growth.

It is our hope that this report helps firms better understand how their peers are approaching that challenge.

We encourage readers to view the findings as a source of insight rather than instruction; a reference point rather than a rulebook. Used in that way, benchmarking can play a valuable role in building pricing confidence and supporting informed, commercially sound business decisions.

Sue Viskovic
Head of Consulting
Vital Business Partners (VBP)

How To Use This Report

Do	Don’t
• Use the data to understand the range of fees charged by other firms. • Use benchmarking to build confidence when reviewing fees. • Consider how your pricing compares with firms serving similar client types. • Review your costs, workflows and profitability alongside the benchmark data.	• Assume the median fee is the “correct” fee. • Adopt another firm’s pricing model without analysis. • Use benchmarking as a substitute for financial modelling. • Compete solely on being cheaper than the market.

A Note on Benchmarking

Benchmarking provides valuable context, but it should not be assumed that every fee represented in this research reflects a commercially sustainable pricing model.

Some participants quoted fees that appear materially lower than would typically be required to recover the full cost of advice delivery and generate an appropriate commercial return. Equally, some firms may be charging fees that reflect highly specialised expertise, premium service models or unique client segments.

For this reason, readers should resist the temptation to assume that a fee appearing in this report is automatically "right" simply because another firm is charging it. The objective is to understand the range of approaches being used across the profession, not to replicate them.

Research Methodology

About the Research

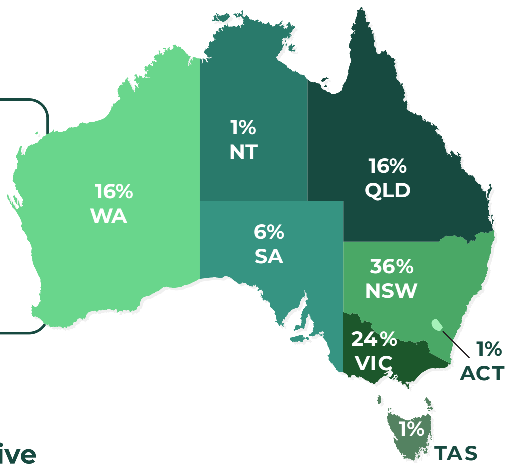
The 2026 Advice Fee Benchmarking Report was developed to provide advisers with greater transparency around how advice firms are pricing both initial and ongoing advice services across Australia.

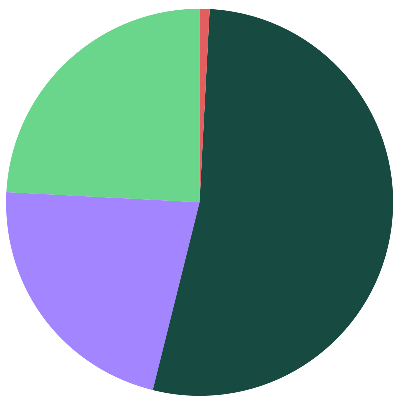
Data was collected via a confidential online survey completed by advice firms in the first quarter of 2026. Participants were asked a series of questions about their business, pricing methodologies and fee structures before being presented with five detailed client scenarios representing common advice client types. Participants then indicated whether they would offer services to each client and, if so, what they would charge for both the initial advice engagement and ongoing service arrangements.

The research was designed to explore not only fee levels, but also the pricing philosophies and commercial models underpinning those fees.

Participant Profile

A total of **143 advice firms** participated in the research, representing approximately **500 financial advisers** across Australia.





- **1% Digital Native**
- **53% City**
- **24% Regional**
- **23% Suburbs**

Participating firms varied significantly in size, location, client focus and business model, providing a broad cross-section of the contemporary advice profession.

Scenario-Based Benchmarking

Rather than asking firms what they charge "on average", participants were asked to respond to five hypothetical client profiles representing common advice client types:

Ted and Valerie
Pre-Retirees

Rob and Tanya
Business Owners

Paul and Alison
Retirees

James and Susan
High Net Worth

Scott and Lucy
Wealth Builders

This approach provides greater context than broad pricing surveys by allowing participants to price the same client scenarios, making comparisons more meaningful.

A note on interpretation

The findings presented in this report are based on self-reported responses provided by participating firms and have not been independently verified. The research captures a broad cross-section of the Australian advice profession, with 143 firms representing approximately 500 advisers participating in the study. While this provides a meaningful and representative sample, it should not be assumed that the findings reflect the pricing practices of every advice firm in Australia.

The purpose of this report is not to determine what firms should charge, but rather to provide a practical snapshot of how participating firms are approaching pricing in today's environment.

Pricing Practices Across the Profession

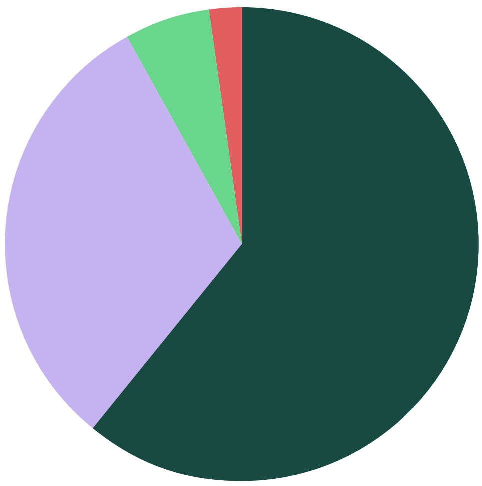
Before examining how firms priced each of the client scenarios presented in this research, we explored the broader pricing practices being used across the profession.

Participants were asked how they structure their initial advice fees, whether investable assets influence pricing decisions, how they charge for ongoing services and whether they share revenue with referral partners.

The findings highlight that while there is no single dominant pricing methodology across the profession, some clear trends are emerging.

Pricing Initial Advice Engagements

Participants were asked how they typically structure fees for new client engagements.



What model do you use to price your initial engagements?

- **61%** One engagement fee that covers enquiry through to advice generation and implementation
- **31%** Separate advice and implementation fees
- **6%** Commence monthly fees from inception
- **2%** Other

Explanations of 'other' included:

> *"Once off advice fee. Implementation is part of monthly ongoing"*

> *"First meeting cost and then SOA fee"*

> *"Initial advice cost through to implementation, then option between one-off implementation or an OSA"*

The most common approach, used by 61% of participating firms, is a single engagement fee covering the entire advice process from initial enquiry through to advice preparation and implementation. A further 31% of firms separate their advice and implementation fees, while only 6% commence ongoing monthly fees from the outset of the client relationship.

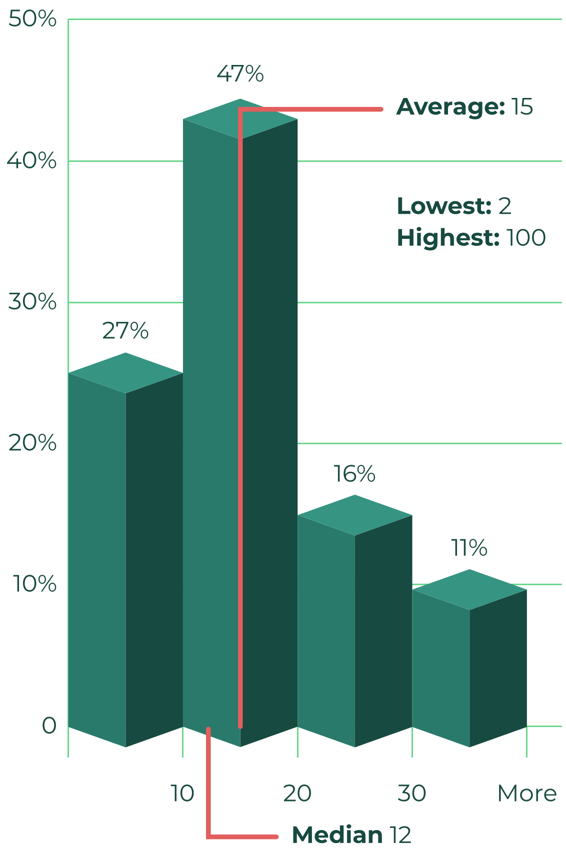
Although the practice of commencing ongoing fees from the outset of the client relationship has existed within the profession for more than a decade, it continues to be adopted by only a small proportion of firms.

This stability suggests that most firms continue to view the initial advice engagement and the ongoing service relationship as two distinct client decisions, each with its own value proposition and pricing structure.

New Client Acquisition

Before examining how firms price initial advice engagements, participants were asked how many new advice clients, on average, each adviser in their business had onboarded during the preceding 12 months.

How many new clients did you provide advice to in the past 12 months?

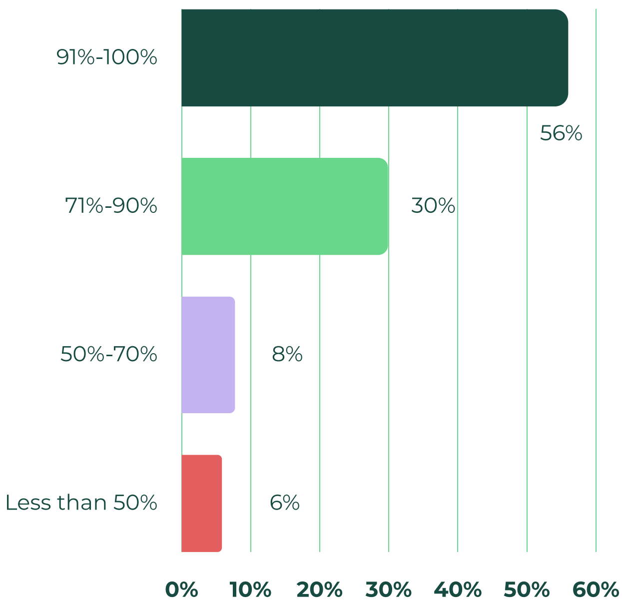


The median participant reported onboarding 12 new clients per adviser during the year, while the average was 15. Responses ranged from as few as two new clients through to more than 100.

This variation highlights the different stages of growth and capacity experienced across the profession. Some firms appear to be focused on actively building their client base and bringing on significant numbers of new clients, while others may be operating closer to capacity and taking a more selective approach to new client acquisition.

The findings reinforce an important reality within the advice profession today: growth is rarely constrained by demand alone. For many firms, the challenge is not attracting prospective clients but having the capacity to service them profitably while maintaining a high-quality client experience.

The commercial significance of these new client relationships becomes more apparent when viewed alongside the proportion of clients who subsequently proceed to an ongoing advice arrangement.



In the past year, what percentage of the new clients you provided advice to, signed onto an ongoing (or fixed term) agreement?

While many firms still achieve strong conversion rates, only 56% of participants reported that more than 90% of the clients they provide advice to subsequently sign onto an ongoing or fixed-term service arrangement.

> In other words, for a significant proportion of firms, not every client who receives initial advice will become a long-term ongoing client.

This has important implications for how firms approach the pricing of initial advice engagements and presents an important commercial consideration. Firms must strike a careful balance when pricing initial advice engagements.

Charge too much and prospective clients may perceive the fee as prohibitive at a point when they have not yet experienced the benefits of the advice relationship. Charge too little and the firm risks delivering the initial advice below cost, particularly if the client chooses not to proceed with an ongoing engagement.

As a result, pricing initial advice remains one of the more challenging aspects of advice business management. Firms are increasingly required to ensure their upfront fees appropriately reflect the cost and value of the work performed, rather than relying on future recurring revenue to recover any shortfall.

Charging for Initial Meetings

A small number of participants indicated that they charge a fee for an initial meeting following an introductory phone call or discovery conversation. Fees reported ranged from $350 to $990, with several firms charging between $440 and $660.

These firms typically described a short initial phone call to determine whether there was likely to be a mutual fit before progressing to a paid meeting. While personal advice is not provided at this stage, the first meeting is often used to help prospective clients better understand their circumstances, identify key issues and determine whether an advice relationship is likely to be beneficial.

The findings suggest that some firms view the initial meeting as a valuable professional service in its own right, while also using it as a way to ensure prospective clients are committed to engaging in the advice process.

> **Key finding**: Most firms continue to treat the initial advice engagement and the ongoing advice relationship as distinct commercial arrangements. This reflects the reality that not every prospective client will proceed to ongoing advice and highlights the importance of ensuring initial advice fees appropriately reflect the cost and value of the work performed.

Does Asset Value Influence Initial Advice Fees?

Participants were then asked whether the size of a client's investable assets influences the fee charged for initial advice.

When you charge for your INITIAL advice, does the size/value of the client's investable assets impact your fee?

- **38% -** Yes
- **23% -** No
- **39% -** Only if they have complex strategies

The results indicate that advice firms are increasingly distinguishing between wealth and complexity.

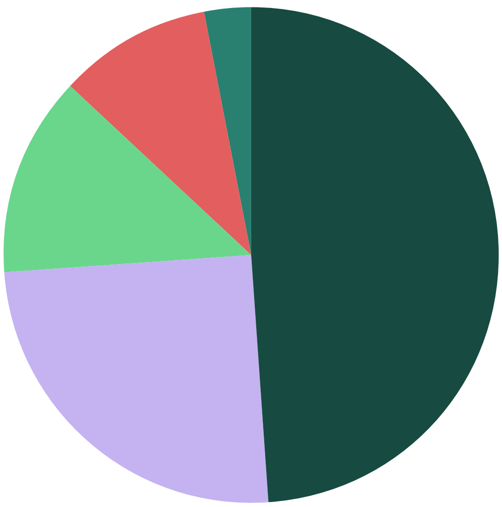
Only 38% of firms indicated that a client's investable assets directly influence the fee they charge for initial advice. A further 39% reported that asset values only affect pricing when they contribute to greater complexity, such as multiple entities, trust structures, taxation considerations or sophisticated financial strategies. Meanwhile, 23% said asset levels have no bearing on their initial advice fee at all.

Key finding: Complexity appears to be a more significant driver of initial advice fees than asset values alone.

These findings suggest that many firms are moving away from a direct relationship between wealth and fees during the initial advice engagement. Instead, pricing decisions appear to be increasingly linked to the scope of work and complexity involved in delivering advice.

Ongoing Service Pricing Models

For most advice firms, ongoing service fees represent the foundation of a sustainable business model. They provide recurring revenue, support business value and create the financial capacity to invest in clients, people and growth. With clients now required to actively consent to ongoing fee arrangements each year, firms must continually demonstrate value and earn the right to continue the relationship.



What model do you use to price your ongoing services?

- **49%** Fixed fees
- **25%** Hybrid - fixed plus % applied as a fixed dollar fee
- **13%** Hybrid - fixed plus %
- **10%** Asset-based fees
- **3%** Other

Explanations of ‘other’ included:

“*Fixed fee except for HNW*”

“*Some fixed; some percentage based*”

The results indicate that fixed fees are now the most commonly used pricing model for ongoing advice services, adopted by 49% of participating firms.

The findings suggest ongoing advice pricing is continuing to evolve. While fixed fees remain the dominant model, hybrid approaches appear to have gained considerable momentum. In similar research conducted in 2023, only 14% of firms reported using a hybrid pricing structure. In the current research, that figure has increased to 38%.

At the same time, the proportion of firms using a purely asset-based fee model has fallen from 18% in 2023 to 10% in 2026.

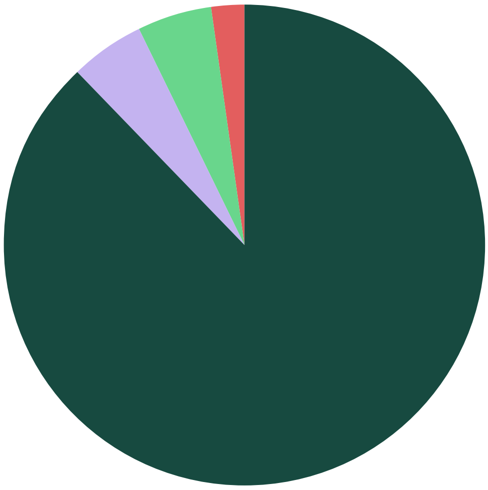
This may indicate that many firms are seeking to balance the transparency and certainty of fixed-fee pricing with an acknowledgement that the value of advice is not determined solely by the time required to service a client.

> **Key finding:** Fixed fees remain the most common ongoing pricing model, but the growth in hybrid structures suggests many firms are seeking a middle ground between traditional asset-based pricing and purely fixed-fee arrangements.

While service complexity and adviser effort remain important factors, firms may also recognise that larger portfolios often create greater client outcomes, additional implementation opportunities and increased responsibility for the adviser. In many cases, the financial impact of good advice - or the avoidance of a costly mistake - can be significantly greater for a client with substantial wealth than for a client with more modest assets. Hybrid models appear to provide a mechanism for recognising both considerations within a single pricing framework, allowing fees to reflect not only the cost of delivering advice but also the potentially greater value provided to clients with larger amounts of wealth.

Referral Fees and Revenue Sharing Arrangements

To provide additional context around the economics of advice businesses, participants were asked whether they pay referral fees to external parties or participate in revenue-sharing or joint venture arrangements.



Do you pay a referral fee to any external organisation or person that refers business to you?

- **88%** No
- **5%** Yes
- **5%** We have JV arrangements where we split revenue and/or capital value
- **2%** If clients refer to us, we discount their fees

Of those who split revenue and/or capital value, explanations included:

"Risk only - share Net Profit 50/50"

"25% of Initial Fee and 0% of Ongoing"

"30%"

"20% 1st Year Revenue"

"Flat referral fee of $750 + GST"

"15% of all revenue generated"

"We have a split 75% : 25% share"

"% of upfront and ongoing, usually 20%"

The results indicate that the majority of participating firms do not pay referral fees to external organisations or individuals. While some firms reported referral fee arrangements, revenue-sharing agreements or joint ventures, these represented a minority of responses.

The findings are perhaps unsurprising given the strong demand for advice services currently experienced across much of the profession. Many firms continue to attract new clients through referrals from existing clients and professional networks, reducing the need for formal referral payment arrangements.

However, the question remains relevant when considering the commercial performance of advice businesses. The fee charged to a client does not necessarily equate to the revenue retained by the advice firm. Where referral fees, joint venture arrangements or revenue-sharing agreements exist, a portion of the revenue generated from the client relationship may be shared with another party.

As a result, two firms charging similar fees may experience very different profitability outcomes. While pricing is an important driver of business performance, factors such as revenue retention, operating efficiency, adviser productivity and service delivery costs also influence the financial outcome ultimately achieved by the practice.

> **Key finding:** Most participating firms do not pay referral fees or share revenue with referral partners, meaning the fees charged to clients are generally retained by the advice business. For those that do, however, revenue-sharing arrangements can materially influence profitability and should be considered when comparing pricing outcomes across firms.

What These Findings Tell Us

The findings in this chapter reinforce that there is no single approach to pricing advice in Australia.

While participants demonstrated considerable diversity in how they structure both initial and ongoing fees, several broader themes emerged. Most firms continue to treat the initial advice engagement and the ongoing service relationship as distinct decisions, reflecting the reality that not every client who receives advice will ultimately proceed to an ongoing arrangement.

The results also suggest that pricing is becoming increasingly linked to client complexity, the scope of services provided and the value delivered, rather than relying solely on traditional measures such as investable assets. This is particularly evident in the growing adoption of hybrid fee models, which appear to balance the certainty of fixed-fee pricing with recognition that the value and responsibility associated with advising clients may increase alongside their wealth.

At the same time, the continued decline in purely asset-based fee models reflects an ongoing evolution in pricing practices across the profession. Rather than converging around a single preferred model, firms appear to be adopting a range of approaches designed to align with their target market, service proposition and business objectives.

Perhaps most importantly, the findings highlight that pricing should never be viewed in isolation. What a firm charges is only one element of a sustainable business model. Profitability is also influenced by factors such as client conversion rates, revenue retention, operational efficiency, adviser productivity and the cost of delivering advice.

Taken together, these findings reinforce one of the central themes of this report: benchmarking can provide valuable context, confidence and perspective, but it should not be mistaken for pricing strategy. The most effective pricing models are not necessarily those that mirror the broader market. Rather, they are those that align a firm's target clients, value proposition, operating model and commercial objectives.

With this context in mind, we now turn to the client scenarios that form the core of this research, exploring how participating firms priced five common client profiles and the considerable variation that continues to exist across the profession.

Client Scenario Benchmarking Results

The preceding chapter explored how advice firms structure their pricing models. We now turn to the central focus of this research: how participating firms priced a range of common client scenarios.

To support meaningful comparisons, participants were presented with five hypothetical client profiles representing different life stages, levels of wealth and advice needs. Each participant was asked:

- Whether they would offer advice services to the client
- What they would charge as an initial engagement fee
- What they would charge as an ongoing annual fee

The scenarios were intentionally designed to reflect client types commonly encountered by advice firms across Australia. They range from younger wealth accumulators through to pre-retirees, retirees, business owners and high-net-worth individuals, allowing us to explore how pricing practices vary across different advice relationships.

> Importantly, the results presented in this chapter should be viewed as benchmarking data rather than pricing guidance.

The objective is not to identify a "correct" fee for any particular client type. As highlighted throughout this report, fees are influenced by a wide range of factors including service scope, client complexity, adviser expertise, business efficiency, target market and the value proposition offered by a firm.

It is also important to recognise that the fees shown in the following pages represent what firms would charge for the client scenarios as described. In practice, even relatively similar clients may attract different fee levels depending on their personal circumstances, objectives, implementation requirements and the services ultimately provided.

What the data does provide is valuable context. It demonstrates how differently firms may price clients who, on the surface, appear broadly comparable. For advisers reviewing or refining their pricing models, this context can be useful in understanding the range of approaches currently being adopted across the profession.

Several themes emerge throughout the findings:

- Not every firm seeks to serve every client type.
- Fee variation remains significant, even for relatively similar client scenarios.
- Client complexity often appears to have a greater influence on pricing than asset values alone.
- Ongoing service fees vary considerably, reflecting differences in service models, target markets and business strategies.
- There remains no single market rate for advice - and, importantly, not every fee observed in the research necessarily represents a commercially optimal outcome for the firm providing it.

The sections that follow explore the results for each client profile, beginning with one of the most commonly accepted client types in the research.

Ted & Valerie | Pre-Retirees

Ted (56) and Valerie (55) are looking to retire in the next 5-10 years and are seeking advice on how to best manage their affairs to maximise their retirement.

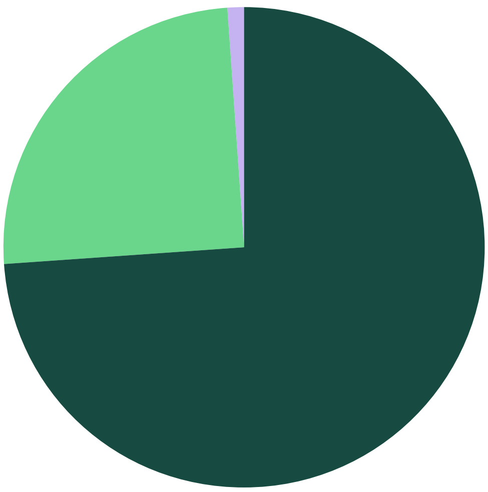
They'd like to improve their financial knowledge, make good financial decisions and get clarity on when they can retire.

Assets	Income
• Own home (val. $2m – newly debt free) • **$232k** super (Valerie) • **$573k** super (Ted) • **$150k** in personal investments • **$100k** in BHP shares (Ted's ESP)	• Ted works full-time ($200k + super) • Valerie works 4 days pw ($80k + super)

Family

3 grown & independent children;

- Oldest son – married with 3 kids
- Middle daughter – separated with 2 kids. (supporting her financially until acrimonious divorce is finalised)
- Youngest son - about to get married

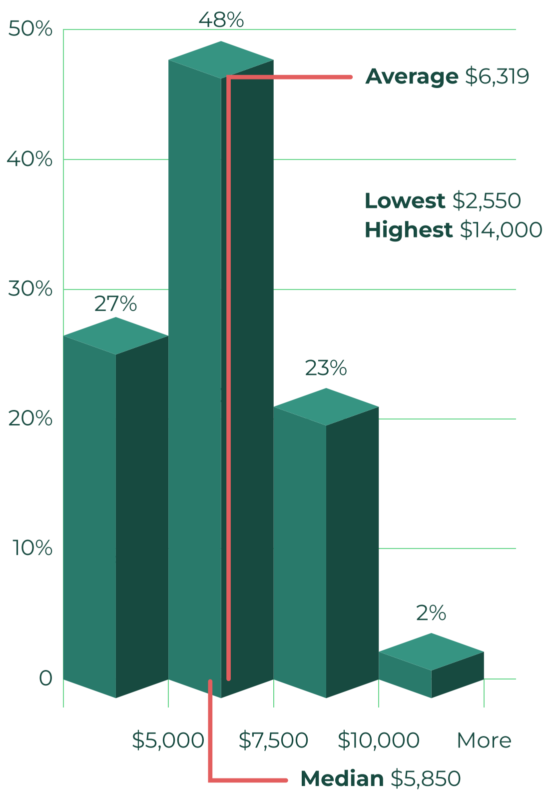


Would you offer financial planning services to Ted and Valerie?

- **74%** Yes, they are one of our ideal client types
- **25%** Yes, but they're not perfect match for us
- **1%** No, we wouldn't offer services to Ted and Valerie at our firm

Ted and Valerie were among the most widely accepted client profiles in the research, suggesting that pre-retirees with established asset bases remain a core market for many advice firms.

How much would you charge Ted and Valerie (pre-retirees) as an Engagement Fee – GST inclusive?



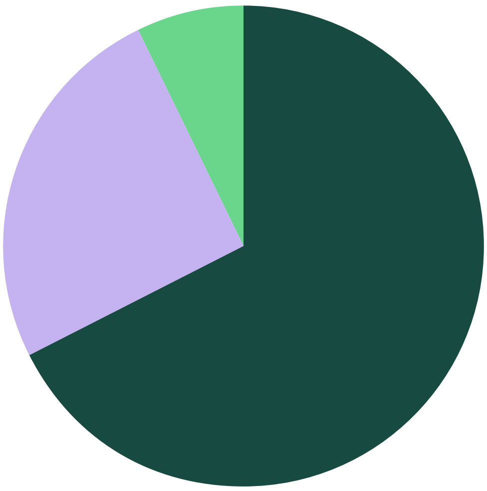
How much would you charge Ted and Valerie (pre-retirees) for their ongoing annual fee – GST inclusive?

Rob & Tanya | Business Owners

Rob (44) and Tanya (45) are seeking advice to maximise their wealth. Business owners, they're wanting to buy their business premises in their SMSF, build their wealth outside the business, protect their assets and maximise the sale value of the business in approx. 10 years.

Assets	Income
• Home (val. $3.5m with $1m debt) • **$3.3** mill in SMSF • **$250k** in Tanya's super (retail fund)	• Rob draws salary of $150k + super • Tanya draws salary of $100k + super from the business + earns~ $27k pa working 2 days pw in child-care • Business net profit ~ $420k pa

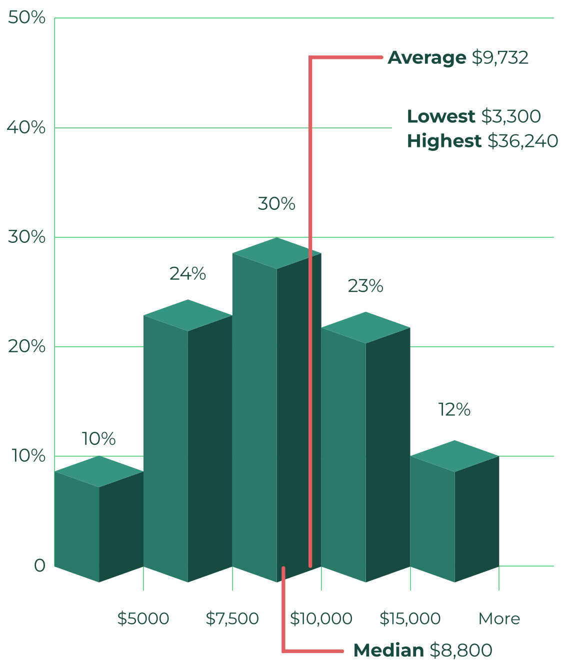
Family	Business structure(s)
• Two dependent kids – 9 & 12 • Rob has 1 child, just turned 18 with ex-wife (and business partner)	• Business owned in a company name • Corporate Trustee for SMSF • Family trust



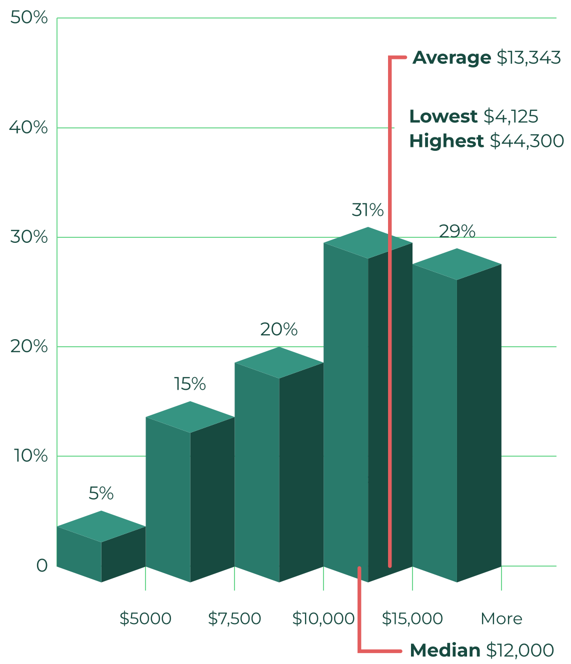
Would you offer financial planning services to Rob and Tanya(business owners)?

- **67%** Yes, they are one of our ideal client types
- **25%** Yes, but they're not perfect match for us
- **7%** No, we wouldn't offer services to Rob and Tanya at our firm

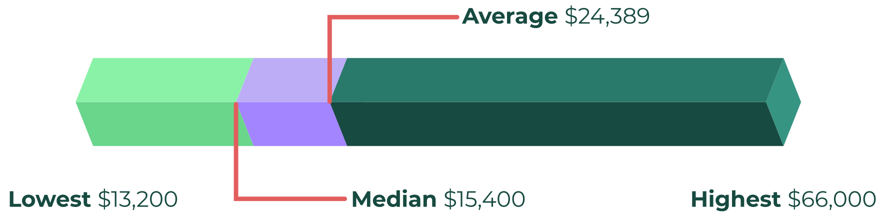
How much would you charge Rob and Tanya (business owners) as an Engagement Fee – GST inclusive?



How much would you charge Rob and Tanya (business owners) for their ongoing annual fee – GST inclusive?



Those who commence monthly fees from inception (7 firms):

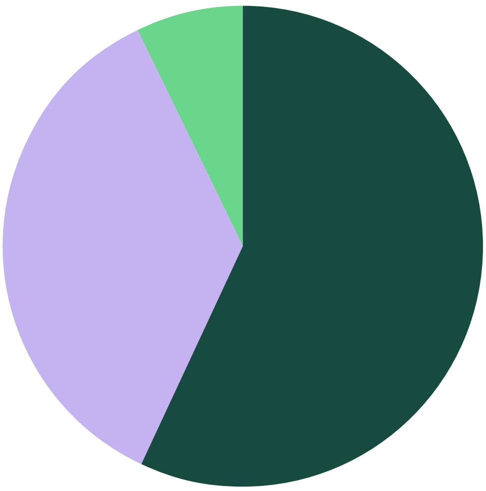


Paul and Alison | Retirees

Paul (67) and Alison (64) are retired and seeking a new financial adviser as their current adviser is retiring and they don't like their replacement.

They want to continue to enjoy their retirement without having to spend time managing or worrying about their money. They want their money to last while they live their best life – and intend to leave only the value of their house to the kids.

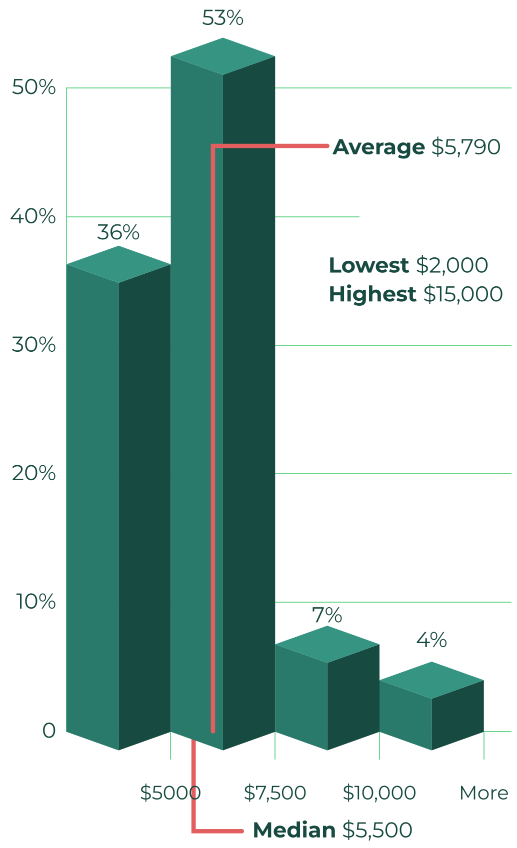
Assets	Lifestyle
• Home (val. $1.5m) • **$370k** in ABP (Paul) • **$410k** in ABP (Alison) • Caravan, 4WD, dinghy	• Travel Australia (caravan) in Winter months • International travel every second year – intend to continue as long as possible • Both in good health other than usual niggles (although Paul concerned there's dementia in his family and their previous adviser dealt with Paul mostly – Alison hasn't been involved with finances)



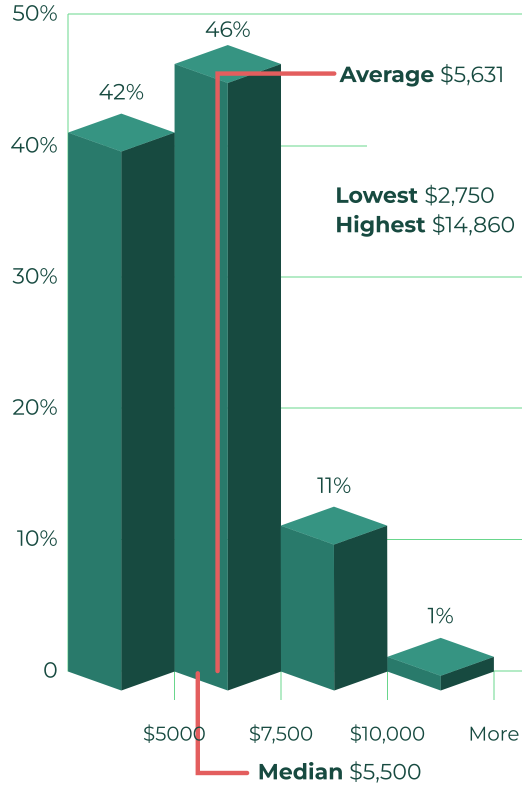
Would you offer financial planning services to Paul and Alison (retirees)?

- **57%** Yes, they are one of our ideal client types
- **36%** Yes, but they're not perfect match for us
- **7%** No, we wouldn't offer services to Paul and Alison at our firm

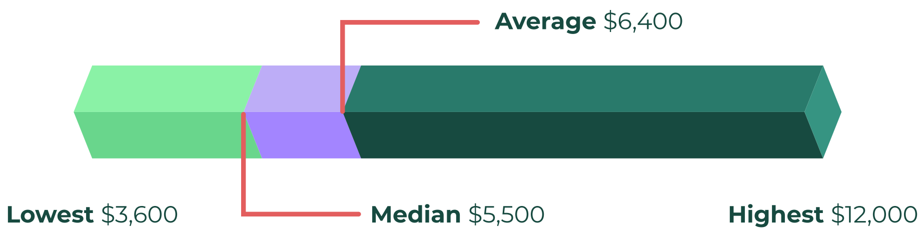
How much would you charge Paul and Alison (retirees) – as an Engagement Fee – GST inclusive?



How much would you charge Paul and Alison (retirees) – for their ongoing annual fee – GST inclusive?



Those who commence monthly fees from inception (7 firms):



James and Susan | High Net Worth

James (56) and Susan (49) are a wealthy couple, seeking a financial adviser to help manage their affairs.

To date, they've managed their wealth via a combination of an accountant, stockbroker and advice from James' father but are now seeking a more comprehensive professional adviser relationship. They have recently liquidated $6 million in cash from a property development. They have decided that now is the time for them to transition from making adhoc investment decisions on stockbroking tips and find a good adviser who will manage their investment portfolio as well as provide quality advice on their tax position, estate planning and structuring needs.

James sits on a number of different boards as a non-exec Director and enjoys doing small property developments, and Susan is an Anaesthetist and Chairs the Board of a not-for-profit organisation. They both inherited wealth from their families and have continued to build on this legacy through their work and business interests.

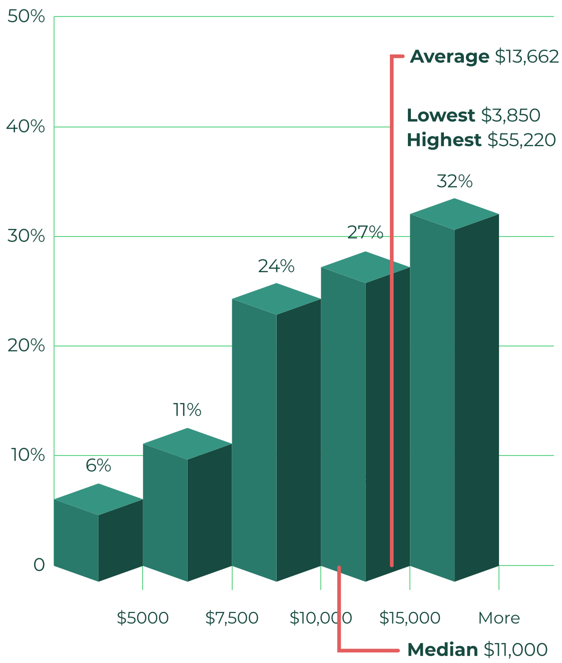
Assets	(Direct) Income
• Home (val. $12.5 million) • Cash - **$6.3 million** • **$8.9 million** in listed equities outside super • **$4 million** in SMSF • **$5 million** in properties	• James earns $350k p.a. in directors fees • Susan earns $400k salary p.a.

Family	Structures
• Three dependant kids – 16, 18 and 22	• Multiple family trusts plus properties owned in company/trust structures

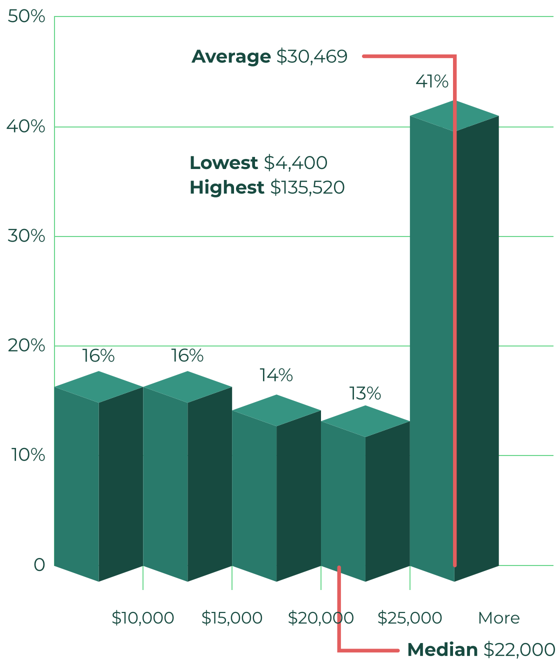
Would you offer financial planning services to James and Susan (High Net Worth)?

- **54%** Yes, they are one of our ideal client types
- **21%** Yes, but they're not perfect match for us
- **25%** No, we wouldn't offer services to James and Susan at our firm

How much would you charge James and Susan (High Net Worth)– as an Engagement Fee – GST inclusive?



How much would you charge James and Susan (High Net Worth)– for their ongoing annual fee – GST inclusive?



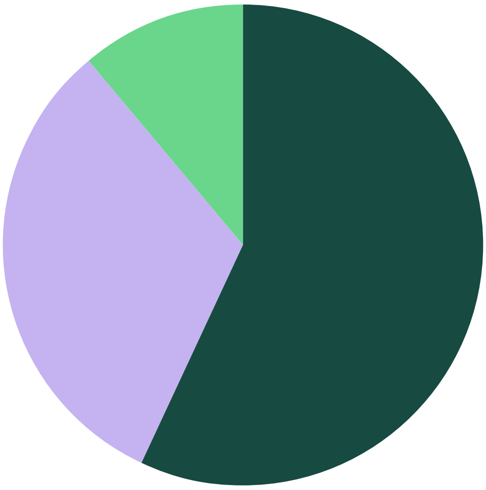
*There were no participants that would charge James and Susan a monthly fee from inception.

Scott and Lucy | Wealth Builders

Scott (32) and Lucy (27) are a young couple seeking advice to ensure they're making the most of their financial situation. Lucy has just returned to work after maternity leave and Scott has just received a promotion, so they now have surplus income to put to good use. They're firm believers in enjoying life to the full but also want to ensure they're making good financial decisions for the long-term financial stability of their family.

Assets	Income
• Home (val. $1.2 million) • Scott Super **$56,000** • Lucy Super **$37,500**	• Scott earns $250k pa • Lucy earns $160k salary pa (currently working 3 days pw, will increase to full time over next three years)

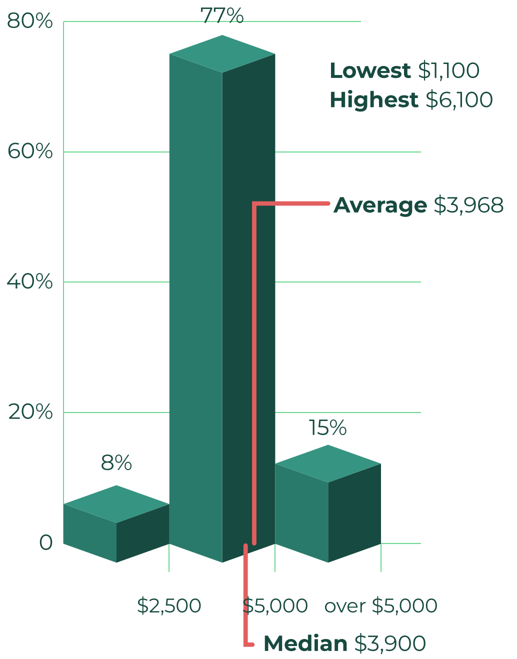
Debt	Family
• Mortgage $950k	• Two young children – a 3-year-old and a 10-month-old



Would you offer financial planning services to Scott and Lucy (Wealth Builders)?

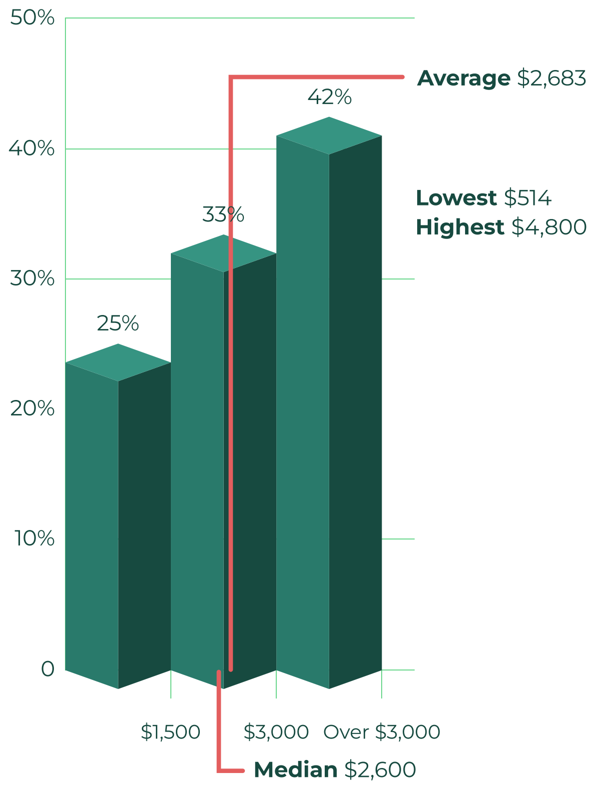
- **11%** Yes, they are one of our ideal client types
- **57%** Yes, but they're not perfect match for us
- **32%** No, we wouldn't offer services to Scott and Lucy at our firm

How much would you charge Scott and Lucy (Wealth Builders) as an Engagement Fee – GST inclusive?



Most would also receive insurance commissions in addition to fees.

How much would you charge Scott and Lucy (Wealth Builders) for their ongoing annual fee – GST inclusive?



Most would also receive insurance commissions in addition to fees.

A few examples of comments:

> *"Plan fee $2,200; Implementation fee $2,200 plus upfront insurance commission. Relatively low ongoing fee from super fund of $1,100 but I would expect to do substantial insurance work which would generate several thousand $'s in ongoing commission"*

> *"Subscription service (digital advice) $1550"*

There were no participants that would charge Scott and Lucy a monthly fee from inception.

Key Insights and Implications

There Is No Such Thing as a "Market Rate" for Advice

One of the clearest findings from this research is the significant variation in fees charged for each client scenario.

Even where participants were presented with identical client profiles and the same information, the range of fees quoted was substantial. This suggests that pricing decisions are influenced by far more than the characteristics of the client alone. Service scope, business model, adviser expertise, implementation philosophy, target market and commercial objectives all appear to play a role in determining what firms charge.

For advisers seeking a definitive answer to the question *"What should I charge?"*, the findings provide an important reminder: there is no universally accepted market rate for advice. There are ranges, trends and reference points - but ultimately each firm must determine a pricing approach that aligns with its own circumstances.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of any pricing model is not measured by where it sits relative to a market benchmark, but by whether clients perceive sufficient value to engage, remain and continue renewing the relationship over time.

Advice Firms Are Becoming More Deliberate About Client Selection

The research demonstrates that not every firm seeks to serve every type of client.

Across all scenarios, there were firms that indicated they would not offer services to the client presented. While the reasons behind those decisions were not explored, the findings are consistent with a profession that is becoming increasingly deliberate about defining target markets and client niches.

In many respects, this is a positive development. Attempting to be all things to all people often creates inefficiencies and inconsistent client experiences. Firms that clearly define who they are best suited to serve may be better positioned to deliver strong client outcomes and sustainable commercial results.

The findings suggest that client fit is increasingly viewed as a strategic decision rather than simply a capacity decision.

Complexity Continues to Influence Pricing

While wealth clearly plays a role in many pricing decisions, the results suggest that complexity remains an important driver of fees.

Clients with business interests, multiple entities, sophisticated structures or broader strategic considerations generally attracted higher fees than those with simpler circumstances. This aligns with the reality that many advice engagements require significant expertise, judgement and coordination beyond the preparation of recommendations alone.

Importantly, the findings reinforce that complexity and wealth are not always the same thing. Some clients with moderate levels of wealth may require significant advice resources, while some higher-net-worth clients may have relatively straightforward needs.

For this reason, firms appear to continue balancing both factors when determining appropriate fees.

Wealth Alone Does Not Explain Fee Outcomes

One of the more interesting observations from the benchmarking is that fees do not always increase in direct proportion to client wealth.

If advice fees were driven solely by account balances, pricing outcomes would be expected to follow a more predictable pattern. Instead, the results suggest that firms continue to consider a wider range of variables including strategic complexity, expected service levels, implementation requirements and the value delivered to the client.

This reinforces an important principle: advice pricing is ultimately about more than inputs such as time or assets. It is also influenced by the outcomes being pursued and the risks being managed on behalf of the client.

Ongoing Advice Continues to Be Valued

Although clients are now required to actively renew ongoing fee arrangements, the research suggests that advice firms continue to place significant emphasis on building long-term client relationships.

The fees observed across the various scenarios indicate that firms continue to invest considerable resources in ongoing service delivery, reflecting the profession's increasing focus on providing strategic advice, accountability, behavioural coaching and long-term guidance rather than simply delivering technical recommendations.

As client expectations continue to evolve, the ability to demonstrate and communicate this ongoing value is likely to remain an important capability for advisers.

Regional Firms Are Not Necessarily Charging Less

A longstanding perception within the profession is that regional firms are unable to charge fees comparable to their metropolitan counterparts.

The findings provide only limited support for this assumption. While fee differences were observed across the scenarios, there was no consistent pattern suggesting that regional firms charge less than firms located elsewhere.

Average Fees Charged by Regional and Non-Regional Firms

Ted and Valerie (Pre-retirees)

Average Engagement Fees

Regional firms	$6,318	▲ 8% more in regional firms
Everywhere else	$5,873	

Average Ongoing Fees

Regional firms	$5,941	▼ 8% less in regional firms
Everywhere else	$6,463	

Rob and Tanya (business owners)

Average Engagement Fees		
Regional firms	$9,101	▲ 3% more in regional firms
Everywhere else	$8,858	

Average Ongoing Fees		
Regional firms	$11,869	▼ 8% less in regional firms
Everywhere else	$12,882	

Paul and Alison (Retirees)

Average Engagement Fees		
Regional firms	$5,657	▲ 7% more in regional firms
Everywhere else	$5,295	

Average Ongoing Fees		
Regional firms	$5,295	▼ 3% less in regional firms
Everywhere else	$5,380	

James and Susan (High Net Worth)

Average Engagement Fees		
Regional firms	$13,061	▼ 7% less in regional firms
Everywhere else	$14,025	

Average Ongoing Fees		
Regional firms	$28,523	▼ 7% less in regional firms
Everywhere else	$33,551	

Across the scenarios included in this research, regional firms often reported higher average engagement fees than their non-regional counterparts. However, this pattern was not consistent across every client profile. For example, regional firms reported higher average engagement fees for the pre-retiree, retiree and business owner scenarios, while non-regional firms reported higher engagement fees for the high-net-worth James and Susan scenario.

A different pattern emerged for ongoing fees, where regional firms generally reported lower average *ongoing* fees than firms located elsewhere.

These findings suggest that geography alone is unlikely to explain pricing outcomes. Factors such as client demographics, complexity, service models, adviser confidence, business efficiency and local market positioning may have a greater influence than postcode.

It is also important to recognise that these figures represent average fees across relatively small sub-groups of participants. In addition, the non-regional cohort includes firms operating in major metropolitan markets such as Sydney and Melbourne. Across all scenarios, firms in these cities reported higher average fees than firms located in other metropolitan, suburban and regional areas, which is likely to have influenced the non-regional averages.

Rather than demonstrating that regional firms charge more or less than their metropolitan counterparts, the findings suggest that pricing outcomes are influenced by a complex range of factors, of which location is only one.

For firms operating in regional communities, this should provide reassurance that pricing decisions need not be constrained by long-held assumptions about what local clients may be willing to pay.

Confidence May Be the Final Piece of the Pricing Puzzle

Perhaps the most important implication arising from this research is that there is often greater variation within peer groups than many advisers realise.

For firms that have not reviewed their pricing model for several years, this can be a confronting insight. It highlights that pricing decisions are not solely determined by market conditions or client demographics. They are also influenced by business confidence, pricing philosophy and a firm's willingness to clearly articulate the value it provides.

Benchmarking cannot determine what any individual firm should charge. What it can do is provide context, challenge assumptions and help firms understand where their pricing sits relative to others serving similar clients.

In many cases, that perspective is precisely what is needed to begin more informed discussions about pricing, profitability and sustainability.

Conclusion

This research was never intended to determine what advisers should charge. Rather, it was designed to provide context, challenge assumptions and improve pricing confidence by helping firms understand how their peers are approaching similar pricing decisions.

The findings highlight both the diversity and maturity of the advice profession. There is no single pricing model, no universally accepted fee and no definitive market rate for advice. Instead, firms are making pricing decisions based on a range of factors including their target market, service proposition, client complexity, business model and commercial objectives.

The most successful pricing models are unlikely to be those that simply mirror the market. They are the ones that align the value delivered to clients with the economics required to operate a sustainable advice business.

> Ultimately, pricing is not about finding the highest fee a client will pay, nor the lowest fee a firm can survive on. It is about finding a sustainable balance between client value and business viability. Firms that achieve that balance are more likely to attract clients, retain them over time and build businesses that can continue serving Australians for many years to come.

Benchmarking can be a valuable input into that process. It can provide perspective, challenge outdated assumptions and help advisers develop confidence in their pricing decisions. It should not, however, replace the work required to understand your costs, design an appropriate service proposition and determine the value you create for your clients.

2026 Advice Fee Benchmarking Report

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