

Hiring a head of lending

Three advertisements in six months said what this job pays, and they ranged from \$110,000 to over \$300,000.

The title covers at least two different jobs.

3 of 15 advertisements named a figure

6 of 6 that stated experience wanted five years or more

Nobody offered to train

When you make this hire

You are still the person every complex file goes to, and you have accepted that this will not change by working harder.

The signal is not headcount.

It is that the business now has more brokers than you can personally mentor, and the mentoring is what actually sets the quality of the work.

A team of four where you check everything is a bigger business than a team of eight where nobody checks anything.

The second signal is that growth has become a scheduling problem rather than a demand problem.

Lender relationships, panel accreditations, the workflow from lead to settlement, none of it is broken, and all of it is waiting for you.

This is the most expensive hire in the series and the one most often mis-specified, because the title covers a brokerage manager who still writes loans and an institutional executive who has not touched a file in a decade.

Those are not the same job and they are not the same price.

FinTalent placement experience, 2025 to 2026

The market you are hiring into

3 of 15

advertisements named a figure

The lowest disclosure of any role in this series, against 62 per cent for brokers and 57 for client service managers. The most senior seat is the most secretive about money, so a candidate at this level is negotiating with almost no public reference points and so are you.

BD Machine ad index, 15 head of lending advertisements, 23 Feb to 20 Aug 2026. Fourteen distinct listings once a duplicate is removed

\$110k to \$330k

is the spread of those three

A general manager running a broking team at \$110,000 to \$160,000. A head of mortgage broking at \$200,000 base with uncapped earnings above it. A head of lending products at \$300,000 to \$330,000. Three advertisements, three genuinely different jobs, and the middle one is the only one most brokerages would recognise.

BD Machine ad index. Quoted individually because three is far too few to average

6 of 6

that named an experience level wanted five years or more

Every advertisement that put a number on experience wanted five years plus, and not one of the fifteen offered to train anybody. This is the one rung in the market where nobody is prepared to develop the person, which is worth knowing if you are planning to.

BD Machine ad index, 15 head of lending advertisements

Too few to count

how many are brokerages

About six of the fifteen are brokerage-side once banks, product roles and a collections seat are set aside. That is below the threshold this series uses for publishing any percentage, so everything here describes the advertisements rather than counting them, and the weight of the guide comes from placements instead.

Stated rather than derived. The series has never published a count below 21 and this family is 14 after deduplication

The two jobs behind one title

At a brokerage, a head of lending runs the broking team and usually still writes. One Sydney business advertising this seat wanted somebody to lead eleven people, six of them offshore support, while staying close to the complex deals, and said in the same advertisement that great brokers know their stuff and great leaders help others shine. That is a player-coach and it is priced accordingly.

At a bank or a lender, the same title means running a product, a channel or a credit function, and the person has not written a loan in years. That version sits at the top of the band and is not what most brokerages are shopping for.

Decide which you are buying before you write a word of an advertisement, because the two attract completely different people and the wrong one wastes a quarter.

The brokerage version has a second question hidden inside it. If they still write, whose deals do they write, and what happens to those clients when the team grows and they stop? A head of lending who keeps a personal book is buying themselves a soft landing and you have to decide whether that is fine.

The honest version is that the split is temporary by design. When FinTalent placed a chief executive into a private-equity backed brokerage in October 2025, Australian Broker reported that he expected to spend about half his time writing loans in the short term while supporting the brokers and staff with the rest. His own words about the arrangement were about leaving it: over the next twelve months, as the team grows, he steps out and becomes more of a chief executive. Plan for the exit from the split at the same time as you plan the split.

BD Machine ad index, FinTalent placement records, and Australian Broker, 9 October 2025

The numbers

A head of lending, by city.

Base only.

This band is wide on purpose.

Sixty thousand dollars where every other role in the series runs twenty to twenty five, because the title covers those two jobs and a single narrow band would be wrong for both.

The brokerage version sits at the bottom of it.

Two people we have placed or know at this level were on \$140,000 and \$160,000 plus super, and the one brokerage advertisement in six months that carried a range said \$110,000 to \$160,000.

The institutional version sits at the top.

Equity is the part that closes the gap and it is common at this level.

One of those two took a lower base and bought into the business, which is why a package here is often smaller on paper and larger in reality.

CITY	HEAD OF LENDING
National	\$160,000 to \$220,000 + Super
Melbourne	\$165,000 to \$225,000 + Super
Sydney	\$170,000 to \$230,000 + Super
Brisbane	\$155,000 to \$215,000 + Super
Perth	\$150,000 to \$210,000 + Super
Adelaide	\$160,000 to \$220,000 + Super

What actually keeps them

Nobody takes this job for the base.

They take it because it is the last rung before running something of their own, and they stay or go on whether that turns out to be true.

So the retention question is ownership, in both senses.

Do they own the decisions, and can they own part of the business?

Equity or a buy-in is common here and it changes the conversation completely, because a person who has bought in has stopped comparing your base to the market.

The thing that loses them fastest is being hired to run the team and then not being allowed to.

A principal who keeps the lender relationships, keeps the pricing calls and keeps overruling on credit has bought an expensive coordinator and will lose them inside a year.

The second thing is the split never ending.

Somebody who was told they would be leading and is still writing half the book at month eighteen has learned that the plan was not real.

FinTalent placement experience and client call records, 2025 to 2026

How to screen them

You are testing three things: whether they have led rather than just been senior, whether they can still do the work, and whether they will let go of doing it.

01

Phone screen, twenty minutes

Ask how many people reported to them, what they were accountable for, and what they changed.

Senior is not the same as leading, and plenty of very good brokers have never done the second one.

Then ask what proportion of their week was their own files.

If they cannot answer that quickly they were probably not tracking it, which tells you how the split will go here.

Ask what they would want to stop doing within a year.

The answer separates somebody who wants to lead from somebody who wants a title and a bigger book.

02

The interview

Give them your actual problem.

Here is the team, here is what I still do personally, here is what I want to hand over.

Ask them what they would take first and what they would leave with you.

A strong candidate argues with the order.

A weak one agrees with all of it.

Then ask the money question directly, including whether equity is something they would want.

At this level it is not a presumptuous question and their answer tells you what they think they are joining.

The practical stage

Two conversations, not a task.

One with your most senior broker, one with whoever runs your operations.

Both are people who will have to be led by this person and both will tell you something you will not see.

What you are listening for afterwards is whether your team was interested or defensive.

A head of lending who cannot win over the desk in a single conversation will not win them over in a quarter.

Red flags and green flags

RED FLAGS

- **They cannot say what proportion of their week was their own files.** At this level that number is the job description, and not knowing it means they were not really running anything.
- **They want to bring their book and say little else about the team.** You are buying leadership and they are describing a broker seat with a better title.
- **No view on your handover order.** If they accept your list of what to take over without changing any of it, they have not thought about your business, only about the job.
- **A title with no scale behind it.** Head of lending at a two-person business is a business card. Ask who reported to them and what they were accountable for.

GREEN FLAGS

- **They ask what happens to their personal clients when they stop writing.** It means they have done this before and know the split has to end.
- **They ask about equity before you raise it.** At this rung that is a person planning to stay, and the two packages we know at this level both involved ownership or a buy-in.
- **They name something they would leave with you.** A candidate who says you should keep the lender relationships for now understands sequencing, which is the whole skill.
- **They have led people who were better than them at something.** The Sydney advertisement put it well: great brokers know their stuff, great leaders help others shine, and it wanted both.

The first ninety days

The failure here is slow and quiet.

Ninety days in, everybody is polite, nothing has been handed over, and the principal is still the escalation point.

01

Days 1 to 30. Watch and write

They sit with every broker and every support person and write down how the business actually runs, which is never how it is described.

You hand over nothing yet.

The temptation to dump on day one is what makes the first real mistake happen in week three.

02

Days 31 to 60. One thing, completely

Pick a single function and hand it over entirely.

Lender relationships, or the pipeline meeting, or credit escalation.

Not shared, theirs.

Shared ownership at this level means yours, and everybody in the business can see it.

03

Days 61 to 90. Name the writing plan

Agree in writing what share of their week is still their own files now and what it will be at month twelve, and what happens to those clients.

This is the conversation almost nobody has, and it is the one that decides whether you have hired a leader or an expensive broker.

The three mistakes principals make

Advertising the title without deciding which job it is.

The word covers a brokerage manager who still writes and an institutional executive who does not, and an advertisement that does not say which brings you both.

Hiring the leader and keeping the decisions.

Pricing calls, lender relationships, credit overrides.

Keep any two of those and you have bought a coordinator at a head of lending salary, and they will work it out well before you do.

Treating the split as permanent.

Half writing and half leading is a sensible way to start and a bad way to stay.

The one public example we have of it was described as short term by the person doing it, with a twelve-month horizon on stepping out.

Write the horizon down or it will not happen.

The one thing to do today

Write the list of what you will actually hand over, and put a date beside each item.

Lender relationships.

Pricing.

Credit escalation.

The pipeline meeting.

Recruitment.

Then mark which ones you are honestly not ready to let go of, and be truthful, because that list is the job description whether you write it down or not.

If everything on it has no date, you are not ready to make this hire yet, and finding that out today is a great deal cheaper than finding it out at month nine.

Where these numbers come from

This guide is deliberately lighter on counts than the others in the series, because the advertisement set is too small to carry them.

What it has instead is placements.

BD Machine ad index.

991 Australian mortgage and finance advertisements posted between 23 February and 20 August 2026, frozen so the counts cannot move.

Fifteen carried a head of lending title, fourteen once a duplicate listing is removed, and about six are brokerage-side once banks, product and collections roles are set aside.

That is below the threshold this series uses for publishing a percentage, so the advertisements are described and quoted individually rather than averaged.

FinTalent FY26/27 Salary Guide.

Published at fintalent.com.au.

Base only, with super named on every figure.

The band was widened on 2 September 2026 after this guide's research: the previous floor of \$200,000 described the institutional end only, and no brokerage evidence supported it.

A FinTalent placement at this level.

FinTalent placed Shannon Weaver as chief executive of Australian Finance 360 in October 2025, after private equity firm Recludo Group took a majority stake and founder David Le stepped back from day to day operations.

The appointment was reported by Australian Broker.

He brings more than two decades in mortgages and finance, most recently as national broker development manager at Empower Wealth, and set out to grow the business from roughly \$10 million in settlements a month to between \$50 and \$70 million within three years.

Australian Broker, 9 October 2025.

Reporting by Kellie Ell.

The description of the time split between writing loans and supporting brokers is the publication's own reporting rather than a direct quotation, and is presented that way above.

The words about stepping out within twelve months are his.

Two packages at this level.

\$140,000 and \$160,000 plus super, one of them with an equity buy-in.

Deliberately not attached to a name: the appointments are public, the remuneration is not, and this series does not publish a person's pay because their job title was in the trade press.

If you are about to run this hire

The hardest part is not finding somebody.
It is deciding what you will genuinely stop doing, because that list is the job and most principals write it for the first time in the interview.

If it would help to work out what you are actually handing over before you go to market, that is a conversation rather than a pitch.