

# AWS job opportunities up 37%, outstripping supply of job seekers

AWS skills and certification shortage an opportunity for IT students and pros

Auckland, NZ and Sydney, Australia – Wednesday 31 May 2017 -- According to analysis by global job site Indeed, the number of AWS job postings in Australia has increased by 153 per cent from March 2014 to March 2017, and it is up 37 per cent year over year. Over the past year the number of AWS job postings was consistently 6 to 12 times the supply of job seekers looking at these roles. Yet often when AWS specialist recruiter Carmen Parnos, Founder and Director of the Cloud Talent Group, meets with AWS skilled IT professionals, she cannot place them because they do not have AWS Associate level certification.

“There already was a shortage of right-skilled technology professionals to fill the rising number of AWS roles available in the ANZ market,” said Parnos, “and this has been compounded by employers increasingly preferring or requiring a minimum of Associate-level AWS Certification.”

Trent Rosenthal is the CEO of Bespoke Training Services, the AWS authorised training partner for Australia, New Zealand and Singapore. Rosenthal said, “The use of the AWS platform has matured over the past three to four years, and the presence of AWS in this region is growing and driving demand for skilled staff. Increasingly employers need and expect a certain level of AWS skills and experience, even basic certification, and the bar will only get higher as the market continues to mature and the technology continues to evolve.”

“Massive demand” for certified AWS engineers

“I have one customer at the moment who is looking to put on 50 cloud engineers with a mix of AWS skills and certification preferences for different practices within the cloud business. There is a massive demand for certified AWS engineers, but opportunities for the un-certified are fewer and far between,” Parnos said.

“Those who are toying with the idea of becoming AWS certified should not toy with it. It is quickly becoming a baseline expectation,” said Parnos. “My advice to job seekers is: don’t let the market leave you behind. Invest in yourself. In fact, as far as salary opportunities go, a solutions architect or devops engineer’s worth in the market goes up as high as 30% by having an AWS certification under his or her belt.”

Rosenthal cautioned against seeing AWS associate level certification on its own as a quick fix for job seekers. “The industry has matured to where employers really are expecting a core set of skills, a confident understanding of the AWS platform and the ability to effectively leverage its solutions and services,” he said.

“That’s why we offer training designed by AWS and delivered by accredited AWS trainers, to not only offer a clear understanding of what’s expected to achieve certification, but to help prepare individuals for the roles they seek and to enhance their performance in their current roles.”

Employers Feel the AWS Skills Shortage

Sebastian Krueger, Director of Cloud Engineering and Co-Founder of NZ-based specialist Advanced Amazon Web Services consultancy API Talent said that associate-level certification should be considered an entry-level requirement but you need the skills and hands-on experience on the platform, in context, to back it up.

When API Talent opened its doors in 2014 it was the early days for AWS in this region. There were no experienced AWS consultants around so Krueger says he took a generic approach to hiring and looked for infrastructure automation skills sets like how well the applicant could write code. Three years later and, according to Krueger, "I put a huge emphasis on culture, making sure people that work here are all geared towards wanting to work with people who are all experts at AWS. We feed that passion for AWS, give them interesting work to do and an environment that encourages people to be the best in their technology and product space."

"There are plenty of potential entry-level employees in the IT market, but we do see a skills shortage in terms of experience," Krueger said. "We continue to optimise our hiring approach and we look for staff with knowledge of particular patterns within AWS collateral, who can demonstrate that they understand AWS principles."

According to NZ-based, global small business accounting software company Xero's GM Product - Small Business, Mark Rees, the AWS skills shortage in Australia and New Zealand is felt whether they are hiring staff or seeking support from consultants.

"It is really hard to find people that are really properly skilled on AWS because we don't need people to help us with basic things but rather we need advanced skill sets," said Rees. "We are a global business servicing more than a million customers, so any cloud, programming, design or delivery challenges we have are difficult challenges, not basic ones. We have always found it really hard to find right-skilled people to hire and we've also found it quite hard to find external consultants at the right level to work on AWS with us."

#### Professional Development Programs Help to Fill Skills Shortage Gap

Rees said that Xero does value AWS certification in its potential new hires and if they cannot find the skilled staff they need, they focus on staff training via AWS fundamentals workshops and courses as well as focused sessions at their annual Xero Product Team Unconference events. Xero's professional development program extends to engaging "AWS Game Days" where staff are issued a series of challenges to test their skills and ingenuity with the platform.

API Talent also has a clear focus on professional development that encompasses AWS training and certification.

"We firmly believe that if you call yourself an AWS consultant then you ought to be certified," said Krueger. "As our company grows, when we cannot find a suitable applicant who is already certified, we will hire based on cultural fit and attitude more than anything. We will continue to require that all our staff become certified as part of their career progression with API Talent and we will celebrate them when they do."

#### Training & Certification to feed people's passions & introduce options

Australian technology services company and software developer, DiUS, assembles teams of people with different skills and passions who typically work with different clients, technology and domains every three to six months.

Ricky Yim, Head of Technology and Delivery, DiUS said, "People who want to work here have to be really up for that. It means they have to learn about new technologies, industries and niches on a regular basis. That is part of what we do."

"AWS technology is quite empowering. You used to be able to only do so much and then would hit a roadblock and need someone else to get you

past that roadblock. AWS allows people to do so much more themselves,” said Yim. “If someone is exposed to this and it sparks an interest and a desire for more knowledge, we want to support that and that is where AWS training and certification comes into play.”

“Increasing the number of AWS certified professionals we have is good for our business and our position as an AWS partner,” said Yim, “and it helps the team member because it upskills them and can raise their profile. It’s about people’s passion and trying to find alignment. We don’t force it.”

Rees said the AWS certification model is very motivating for Xero staff.

“The professional exam is hard, so there is a lot associated with achieving it. Instructor-led AWS training courses in the classroom are valuable in terms of preparing for certifications,” said Rees. “There are aspects of the platform you need to learn in order to obtain certification that not everyone would naturally encounter in their day to day job.”

“Yes, that means you’re potentially learning about stuff your company doesn’t use,” continued Rees, “but it is good to have people on staff who understand a range of options for solving problems. Having staff go through these courses is a good way to get exposed to the options offered by the platform, and increases our understanding of AWS technology and features we may not use today.”

Professional-level certification emerging as the “IT factor”

“There are many skilled people that have AWS Associate level Architect Certification around the world,” Krueger said. “However, professional level certification means you have deep passing knowledge, and it helps to provide a learning path to AWS mastery for anyone who puts in the effort.”

Bespoke Training’s Rosenthal has observed that AWS usage in ANZ and Singapore has been steadily on the rise for the past few years, creating opportunities for IT professionals interested in building their skills on the platform.

“By August of 2016 we had seen sufficient interest in our Associate level AWS certification prep workshop (Exam Readiness Workshop: AWS Certified Solutions Architect – Associate) across our regions that we began delivering via WebEx to make the course much more accessible and to be able to offer it more often,” said Rosenthal.

“With Associate level certification becoming more of a job requirement than a nice-to-have, achieving the Professional level of certification is emerging as the real “IT factor. As the market’s use of the cloud platform matures, the pro level is becoming the feather in the cap that basic certification used to be,” said Rosenthal. “We expect our AWS Professional level exam readiness workshop (Exam Readiness Workshop: AWS Certified Solutions Architect – Professional) to become more popular over the next year.”

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