Comparison of salaries of Medical Specialists
Australia and New Zealand

November 2019

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Making sense of the numbers

This comparison of the salaries of Medical Specialists uses the base salaries paid in New Zealand and in several Australian states, including the major minimum allowances paid to all, or most, staff covered by the relevant agreements.

The key finding is that pay rates in Australia are significantly higher. For Medical Specialists, the average salary in New Zealand is less than 60 percent of the average Australian salary. Australian and New Zealand Medical Specialist salary scales do not overlap. The top salary step on the New Zealand pay scale is slightly below the lowest salary step for a newly qualified Australian Specialist.

The top salary step on the New Zealand pay scale is slightly below the lowest salary step for a newly qualified Australian Specialist.

This report presents a comparison of the salaries for New Zealand and the Australian States examined, then goes on to describe each jurisdiction in more detail. In Appendix A, a summary of the other non-salary benefits is presented.

A ratio of the top to bottom salary steps is presented for each jurisdiction. This provides information on the relative spread of the salary steps, and enables a comparison between areas of the salary progression potential.

Non-salary benefits are also summarised. Of note is that despite the travel costs of receiving ongoing medical education potentially being higher for New Zealand based specialists, entitlements to access this training are lower. Annual leave is the only provision where the New Zealand agreement exceeds that available in Australia.

The relevance of an Australian comparison

International comparisons of wages and employment conditions vary in their degree of appropriateness and validity. In the context of health professionals, a New Zealand - Australian comparison is highly appropriate due to the similar and in some cases shared systems, the relative ease with which employees can move between the two countries, and existing immigration flows.

Medical Specialists in New Zealand and Australia share a training system and, with the exception of only three, the specialist Colleges are shared across both countries. Once qualified in one country, the qualifications are recognised in the other.

The arrangement of immigration controls between New Zealand and Australia, and closeness of the two economies, means that citizens and permanent residents can relocate freely from one country to the other.

Australia and New Zealand share a labour market for Medical Specialists

The combination of these factors means that the labour market for Medical Specialists is essentially shared across Australia and New Zealand, meaning the two countries are in competition when trying to attract doctors from other countries.
Cost of living comparison

To put the salary comparison into context, an assessment of the cost of living based on household expenditure in both countries has been included in this report. This comparison provides context to the salary comparison by demonstrating the relative purchasing power.

Using data from the Household Expenditure Surveys of each country, the spending by households on a range of essential items was compared. The analysis focussed on spending by those households with incomes comparable to that earned by Medical Specialists in each country.

*Those earning Australian salaries have a higher purchasing power than those in New Zealand.*

Household expenditure is higher in Australia, but increased costs do not explain the difference in the salaries of Medical Specialists. Those earning Australian salaries have a higher purchasing power than those in New Zealand.
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1 Base salary comparisons

New Zealand Medical Specialists on step one of the salary scale earn 60 percent of the average Australian Specialist step one salary.¹ Those on the top step earn 65 percent of their Australian counterparts, not including managerial allowances.

The salaries of each of the jurisdiction examined in this report are summarised in Table 1.1 and illustrated in Figure 1.1.

Table 1.1 Comparison of base salaries between New Zealand and Australian states²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>New Zealand ($NZ)</th>
<th>New Zealand ($A)</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>New South Wales</th>
<th>South Australia</th>
<th>Queensland</th>
<th>Western Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest step</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>227,488</td>
<td>312,811</td>
<td>324,812</td>
<td>358,352</td>
<td>375,455</td>
<td>384,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of steps</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.1 Base salaries, top and bottom steps, in New Zealand and Australian states

Pay scale progression in New Zealand is also slower. Progression to a higher step has been assumed to occur annually, with the exception of New South Wales where specialists must remain on step five for a minimum of three years before being appointed to Senior which is step six.

In New Zealand the ratio of the bottom to top step of the salary scale is the smallest at 0.67, and New Zealand Medical Specialists take 15 years to reach the top step compared to nine in most Australian states.

¹ Currency conversion rate used is $NZ1.055 to $A1
² Rates for Victoria are as at 2019 not including annual increases.
Once New Zealand Medical Specialists reach the top step with 15 years’ experience, they earn less than Australian Medical specialists on step one in any of the states examined. To illustrate this point a table is provided comparing the salary progression of New Zealand Specialists against those in Victoria, the lowest paid of the Australian states examined in this report. Not only is the step one salary in Victoria is higher than the step 15 salary in New Zealand, but the earnings gap grows throughout the progression.

### Table 1.2 Salary progression New Zealand compared to Victoria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step/year</th>
<th>New Zealand ($A)</th>
<th>Victoria ($A)*</th>
<th>Difference ($A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>152,895</td>
<td>228,857</td>
<td>75,962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>156,918</td>
<td>251,503</td>
<td>94,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>161,947</td>
<td>269,110</td>
<td>107,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>166,977</td>
<td>277,184</td>
<td>110,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>172,007</td>
<td>285,499</td>
<td>113,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>177,036</td>
<td>294,064</td>
<td>117,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>182,065</td>
<td>302,886</td>
<td>120,821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>187,095</td>
<td>311,973</td>
<td>124,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>192,124</td>
<td>321,332</td>
<td>129,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>197,156</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>202,370</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>209,479</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>215,640</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>221,327</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>227,488</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes three percent annual pay rise as per the current agreement, which lasts until 2021. It is assumed that this provision will be retained into the future.
2 Other benefit comparisons

In addition to salaries and allowances, there are a number of other elements to remuneration packages. Of specific note is the salary sacrifice arrangements which are not available to New Zealand employees.

Many agreements have allowances for minor items such as cell phones and car parking, these are not detailed in this report. An outline of major non-salary benefits is presented in Appendix A.

2.1 Continuing medical education

Entitlements to expenses and leave for continuing medical education are allowed for in all of the agreements examined. In Australia the entitlements range from 10 days leave, equivalent to the New Zealand entitlement of up to 25 days each year. Expenses can be incurred for between $21,000 and $35,000 each year. In New Zealand expenses are allowed for up to $15,165 ($16,000 NZD). This should be seen in the context of the high cost of travel from New Zealand, and the relative likelihood of the need to travel to attend specialist training.

2.2 After-hours duties and allowances

Each jurisdiction has a unique arrangement for compensating work after hours and requirements to be available on-call. Typically this is additional annual leave, penalty pay rates, or some combination. Within New Zealand this varies by the employing District Health Board (DHB). The complexity of how these entitlements are calculated and the unknown quantum of the amount of after-hours duties required makes comparison difficult.

2.3 Salary sacrifice arrangements

In Australia, a salary sacrifice arrangement (also referred to as salary packaging or total remuneration packaging) is an arrangement between an employer and an employee. The employee agrees to forgo part of their future entitlement to salary or wages in return for the employer providing them with benefits of a similar value. This can result in significant savings on tax payable, effectively increasing the value of the salary package. There is no equivalent arrangement available under the New Zealand tax system.

2.4 Leave

2.4.1 Annual leave

Annual leave is the one component where New Zealand entitlements exceed that of the Australian agreements. In New Zealand, Medical Specialists are entitled to six weeks of annual leave, two weeks more than the legal requirement of four weeks. New South Wales is the most generous Australian state in this regard, with five weeks of annual leave.

2.4.2 Long service leave

Entitlements to long service leave vary considerably. In most jurisdictions Medical Specialists become eligible for long service leave after ten years of continuous service. Information on the long service leave entitlements was not available for South Australia or Queensland.

3 For more information see https://www.ato.gov.au/General/Fringe-benefits-tax-(FBT)/In-detail/Employees/Salary-sacrifice-arrangements-for-employees/
The New Zealand the long service leave entitlement is two weeks after every ten years’ service. This leave can only be accrued from 3 July 2017, creating an internal inequity as around half of New Zealand DHBs had previously existing long service entitlements that continue to be protected in the current nationwide agreement.

2.5 Remote locations allowances

Attraction and retention and other allowances which are paid to all Medical Specialist staff in that state have been factored into the base salary calculations for the purpose of this report.

Additional attraction and retention or remote location allowances are available for Medical Specialists working in some specific remote locations. The Queensland Non-metropolitan Program offers an inaccessibility package which uses a system of seven categories of remoteness to determine these additional allowances which range from $6,900 to $14,400 per annum.
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3 Cost of living comparison

While wage rates may be higher in one place compared to another, variations in the cost of living may result in comparatively lower purchasing power. To evaluate this effect between New Zealand and Australia, the Household Expenditure Survey from each country has been used to compare spending by households on a range of essential items. These findings give context to the discussion of the salaries available in each location.

The figures shown in Table 3.1 are actual expenditure on selected items by a sample of households, and do not represent their total weekly expenditure. Discretionary spending such as holidays, alcohol and tobacco has been excluded along with some other categories which are not directly comparable between New Zealand and Australia.

In order to maintain relevance to the salaries of Medical Specialists, this analysis is restricted to households in the top 20 percent of incomes for each country.

Table 3.1 Weekly household expenditure comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>New Zealand ($NZ)</th>
<th>New Zealand ($A)</th>
<th>Australia ($A)</th>
<th>% Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food and non-alcoholic beverages</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing and footwear</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation (excluding holidays)</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal care</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic fuel and power</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual rentals for housing</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest payments (Mortgage and credit)</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,428</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,353</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,578</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some categories show significant variation between the two countries. Australian households spend significantly more on communication, rent, and transport. The only item where New Zealanders spend more is on domestic energy, possibly due to the colder climate and local electricity prices. Overall, expenditure is higher in Australia by 14 percent across the chosen categories.

This analysis does not directly compare prices in each country, but rather the spending of households, the differences will appear as a result of price differences and other cultural and environmental factors which affect the cost of living. It is likely that a major contributing factor is the much higher incomes in Australia meaning that people can choose more expensive options.

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4 New Zealand

In New Zealand the relevant agreement is the Multi Employer Collective Agreement for Association of Salaried Medical Specialists (ASMS) members employed by New Zealand District Health Boards which covers the period 1 July 2017 – 31 March 2020.

4.1 Salary range and steps

The current New Zealand agreement has 15 steps ranging from a base salary of $153,000 ($161,000 NZD) to $227,000 ($240,000 NZD). Advancement occurs annually, based on a simple threshold of ‘satisfactory performance’ of one’s agreed duties and responsibilities (e.g., job descriptions).

Table 4.1 New Zealand agreement salary summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>New Zealand ($NZ)</th>
<th>New Zealand ($A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>161,304</td>
<td>152,895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest step</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>227,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of steps</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average step</td>
<td>5,246</td>
<td>5,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Zealand has the lowest ratio of bottom to top step indicating the starting salary is relatively small compared to the salary at the top step. It should be noted in comparing the ratios that both the top and bottom salary rates of New Zealand Medical Specialists are well below the levels received by their Australian counterparts. Progression through the salary scale in New Zealand takes 15 years, much longer than the eight to twelve years in Australia. This means that as well as starting much lower, New Zealand Medical Specialists’ pay increases more slowly.

4.2 Leave and hours of work

A normal working week is defined as 40 hours. Leave entitlement is six weeks of annual leave with no limit on accrual. Long service leave of two weeks is available after ten years of service.

4.3 Additional allowances and entitlements

A variety of allowances are available for afterhours work, car parking, and types of leave. There are variations due to the separate arrangements with each District Health Board (DHB).

Five schedules preserve and record a range of entitlements specific to particular DHBs:

1. Availability allowance (formulas for calculating the retainer for being on rostered after-hours call duties, usually paid as a percentage of base salary)
2. Long service leave as above
3. Onerous duties leave
4. Intellectual property rights.

4.3.2 Continuing medical education

Employees are entitled to leave for 10 working days (pro rata for part-time employees) continuing education each calendar year, plus the agreed reasonable travelling time. Additionally, employees...
may incur expenses of up to $16,000 per annum (GST exclusive), and if enrolled in two or more maintenance of professional standards (MOPS) programmes may incur expenses up to an additional $500 per annum (i.e. $16,500).
5 Victoria

AMA Victoria - Victorian Public Health Sector - Medical Specialists Enterprise Agreement 2018-2021 which came into effect on 7 August 2018 and applies until 31 December 2021. The agreement covers full time, fractional and fixed term employment of Medical Specialists in the state of Victoria.

5.1 Salary range and steps

The salary range has nine steps, ranging from $228,850 to $312,800 in 2019.

This agreement includes an initial six percent salary increase which occurred in 2018, with three percent per annum increases every year thereafter. Those already in employment also received a one off lump sum payment of $3,500 (pro-rata based on a fractional allocation of hours).

Table 5.1 Victoria agreement salary summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Victoria ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>228,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest step</td>
<td>312,811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of steps</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average step</td>
<td>9,328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ratio of the top to bottom step is the second lowest of all the jurisdictions examined, indicating a relatively high salary at step one compared to the top step.

5.2 Leave and hours of work

Ordinary hours of work are 38 hours per week. Annual leave for doctors is four weeks, while shift workers are entitled to five weeks of annual leave.

The long service leave entitlement is six months after 15 years of continuous service, then two months of long service leave after each additional five years of continuous service.

5.3 Additional allowances and entitlements

5.3.1 Recall (full time doctors)

When recalled to work outside of normal work time, pay is at an hourly rate of time and a half on weekdays, and double time on weekends or public holidays. Travel time when recalled for work, is compensated at a rate equal to 1/38th of their weekly wage.

5.3.2 Shift penalty payments

Additional pay for shifts worked between 6pm and 7am and on weekends of between 25 and 100 percent of the applicable rate.

5.3.3 Salary sacrifice

Salary sacrifice or salary packaging is available to employees under this agreement.

Salary rates are as at 2019 and do not include future annual increases.
5.3.4 Continuing medical education

Reimbursement for continuing medical education related costs reasonably incurred, up to $27,402 per annum (for the year 2019-20).
6  New South Wales

Staff Specialists (State) Award 2019 agreement is the employment contract for public Medical Specialists in New South Wales. The agreement commenced on 1 July 2019. Staff Specialists must elect one of five possible salary arrangements which have varying entitlements relating to private practice income. For the purpose of comparison this report refers to level one, where a predetermined private practice allowance is paid in lieu of billings from private practice.

The base salary range is from $170,655 to $230,560, plus all Medical Specialists are paid a 17.4 percent special allowance. Those on level one arrangement also receive a private practice allowance of between $40,070 and $54,135 each year. These three components form the minimum income guaranteed under the agreement.

Medical Specialists advance annually from steps one to five, then remain at step five for a minimum of three years, until they are appointed to Senior Specialist which is step six. Each step also has an increase in the private practice allowance. Both the special allowance and the private practice allowance are included in the figures shown in Table 6.1.  

Staff Specialists who take on managerial responsibility receive managerial allowances depending on their level, these have not been included.

Table 6.1 New South Wales agreement level one salary summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New South Wales ($A)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>240,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest step</td>
<td>324,812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of steps</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average step</td>
<td>14,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ratio of the top to bottom steps of 0.74 is the middle value compared to the other Australian states. However, this salary progression is achieved across only six steps, taking eight years, making it the fastest progression of any state examined.

6.1  Leave and hours of work

A normal working week is defined as 40 hours. Annual leave entitlement is five weeks.

Emergency medicine specialists who work 30 or more Sunday shifts are entitled to an extra week. If less than 30 Sunday shifts have been worked then leave is proportionately calculated on the basis of 40 hours leave for 30 such shifts worked.

Staff Specialists are entitled to long service leave after seven years calculated at the rate of two months on full pay for 10 years served. After 10 years, it is calculated at the rate of five months on full pay for each subsequent 10 years served.

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6 This is both the guaranteed minimum, and maximum possible, income as stated in Appendix C of the Staff Specialists (State) Award 2019.
6.2 Additional allowances and entitlements

If Staff Specialists are required to have a telephone at home for employment purposes, three-quarters of the costs of the telephone will be reimbursed as well as the cost of all work related calls.

Staff Specialists who are employed for emergency medicine undertake shift work, the normal rostered duties hours are paid at ordinary time plus a penalty rate.

6.2.1 Continuing medical education

Full time Staff Specialists are entitled to 25 calendar days of Training, Education and Study Leave (TESL) per year. Funding allocation is determined each year and varies depending on the salary level. The TESL funding entitlement for the 2018/2019 financial year for level 1 staff is $35,000.
7 South Australia

The South Australia Health Salaried Medical Officers Enterprise Agreement 2017 is the employment contract for public Medical Specialists in South Australia. The agreement commenced on 22 December 2017 and applies until 21 December 2020.

7.1 Salary range and steps

Medical Specialist’s base salary rates range from $209,203 to $275,655, plus an attraction and retention allowance. This allowance ranges from 30 percent up to 67 percent for emergency medicine specialists who are unable to work in the private sector. As all specialities receive a minimum of 30 percent it has been added to the base salary below for the purposes of comparison.

The base salaries used for this comparison are from Schedule 1: Salaries for employees with access to the general public sector salary sacrifice scheme. The salary range has nine steps, including the allowance the average salary rate increases by $9,599 at each step. Medical Specialists progress by annual increments based on years of experience to level nine.

Table 7.1 South Australia agreement salary package summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South Australia ($A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest step</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average step</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ratio of the top to bottom step is the second highest of all the jurisdictions examined, indicating a relatively high starting salary compared to the top salary step, though the top step can be achieved in only nine years.

7.2 Leave and hours of work

The agreement has no fixed hours of work.

Employees are entitled to annual leave of 28 days per year, or 35 days per year if rostered or on call over seven days a week.

7.3 Additional allowances and entitlements

In addition to the attraction and retention allowance there are a number of other entitlements in the agreement.

7.3.1 Remote call

Remote call allowances are given to Medical Specialists, the allowance is calculated as a percentage, ranging from five percent to 11.5 percent of the Medical Specialist’s salary.

There are also additional payments for Medical Specialists for recall and immediate recall. The payment depends on the step of the Medical Specialist and the date and time.
7.3.2 Expenses

There is various reimbursement schemes, including reimbursement of reasonable child care costs if an employee is given less than 24 hours’ notice that they need to work outside their usual hours, and for reimbursement of reasonable travel costs.

7.3.3 Continuing medical education

Employees are entitled to 10 days on full pay to undertake education, plus expenses of up to $22,000 per annum.

7.3.4 Managerial allowance

Medical Specialists who take on managerial responsibility receive additional managerial allowances depending on their role. Managerial allowances have four steps which range from $9,110 to $64,219.
8 Queensland

In Queensland the relevant agreement is the Medical Officers’ (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No.5) 2018 which spans the period from 31 May 2019 until 30 June 2021.

8.1 Salary range and steps

In total this agreement covers 29 levels, but this report is concerned only with levels 18 and above which relate to Staff Specialists. A General Attraction and Retention (GAR) allowance is paid to all Senior Medical Officers, usually at a rate of 50 percent of base salary. General Practitioners receive an allowance of 35 percent of base salary. Given the widespread nature of this payment the 50 percent rate has been added to the base salary for the purpose of fair comparison.

Table 8.1 Queensland agreement salary including GAR summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Queensland ($)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>269,555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest step</td>
<td>375,455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of steps</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average step</td>
<td>8,825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ratio of the top to bottom steps at 0.72 is the lowest of all the Australian states. The effect of this can be illustrated by comparing against South Australia which has a very similar salary at step one but a higher ratio. At the top step Medical Specialists in Queensland are earning $17,000 more than their south Australian colleagues. Note however that the salary scale in Queensland has 12 steps, so achieving the top salary will take three years longer than in South Australia.

8.2 Leave and hours of work

Ordinary hours of work are 40 hours per week.

Annual leave and other leave types were not specified in documents provided for this report. Rather the current agreement states that these are as per existing leave entitlements. No further information was made available.

8.3 Additional allowances and entitlements

8.3.1 On call and recalls

Allowances are paid to compensate for time on call and for recalls. A Senior Medical Officer who is recalled to work is paid a minimum of 2.5 hours at 270 percent of their relevant base rate. For subsequent instances within any period of 24 hours they receive a minimum of 1.5 hours at 270 percent.

Emergency department specialists receive an additional 25 percent of base salary for evening and weekend shift work.
8.3.2 **Compensation for remote locations**

Queensland has an inaccessibility package to compensate for work in remote locations. This is calculated according to a schedule of seven remoteness categories. Compensation ranges from $6,900 to $48,300 per annum depending on the remoteness category.

8.3.3 **Regional and Rural Attraction Allowance**

In addition to the GAR allowance paid to all Specialists, there is a Regional and Rural Attraction Allowance for employees working in specific locations ranging from five to 15 percent of base salary.

8.3.4 **Salary sacrifice**

Employees may sacrifice up to 50 percent of salary, and also where applicable the payments payable via the employer to the employee under the Paid Parental Leave Act 2010. Employees may sacrifice up to 100 percent of their salary for superannuation.

8.3.5 **Continuing medical education**

All Senior Medical Officers receive an annual professional development allowance of $21,000 from 1 July 2019, increasing to $21,500 from 1 July 2020.

Senior Medical Officers accrue 3.6 weeks professional development leave per year for a maximum of 10 years.
Western Australia

Western Australia Health System Medical Practitioners AMA Industrial Agreement 2016 is the employment contract for public Medical Specialists in Western Australia. The agreement commenced on 1 October 2016 and applies until 30 September 2019.

9.1 Salary range and steps

Salaries are set via one of two arrangements, A and B. Under arrangement A, private practice rights are exercised such that all private practice income and other entitlements are assigned to the employer. Under arrangement B employees earn a lower salary, and then also receive income from private practice. This analysis is based on arrangement A as the total income potential of employees from combined public and private work on arrangement B is presumed to be higher. This maintains consistency for comparison across the Australian states.

Medical Specialist’s salary rates range from $295,757 to $384,515. As there are nine steps, the average salary rate increases by $9,862 at each step.

Table 9.1 Western Australia summary arrangement A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Western Australia ($A)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>295,757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest step</td>
<td>384,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of steps</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average step</td>
<td>9,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Western Australia has the highest ratio between the bottom and top salary steps of all the jurisdictions examined. Despite also having the highest top step salary, the ratio is influenced by having a starting salary which is significantly higher than any other area. The high ratio reflects that top and bottom steps are relatively closer together in Western Australia than elsewhere.

9.2 Leave and hours of work

A normal working week is defined as 40 hours. Leave entitlement is 160 hours (four weeks). Employees are entitled to 13 weeks long service leave after 10 years.

9.3 Additional allowances and entitlements

9.3.1 Overtime penalty rates

Medical Specialists can earn penalty rates for working shift, weekend and public holidays. Depending on the day and time worked, the Medical Specialist is paid a penalty, which is a percentage of the base salary. Paid hours in any two week pay cycle in excess of 80 hours are paid at the rate of 150 percent of the practitioner’s base ordinary rate of pay. Paid hours in any two week pay cycle in excess of 120 hours are paid at the rate of 200 percent of the practitioner’s base ordinary rate of pay.

Medical Specialists are remunerated for being on call at a rate of $22.39 per hour.
9.3.2 Continuing medical education

Employees are entitled to a maximum of three weeks paid professional development leave, during each year of continuous service with any employer. An additional five weeks paid leave for the purpose of overseas training, education and study may be taken after each five years continuous service.

9.3.3 Management allowance

Medical Specialists are compensated for holding a head of department role. Head of Department Annual Allowance Calculation is based on the number of staff under direct supervision and control. If the number of staff under direct supervision and control is:

- 1-4 the allowance is $9,245 per annum
- 5-9 the allowance is $16,435 per annum
- 10-20 the allowance is $30,296 per annum
- Over 20, the allowance is $48,786 per annum.
10 References


Association of Salaried Medical Specialists, Multi Employer Collective Agreement for ASMS Members Employed by New Zealand District Health Boards, 2017.

Association of Salaried Medical Specialists, Interim Status Report: Australian Medical Specialist Labour Market, 2010.


Government of South Australia, South Australia Health Salaried Medical Officers Enterprise Agreement, 2017.

Industrial Relations Commission Of New South Wales, Staff Specialists (State) Award, 2019.

Medical Officers’ (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No. 5), 2018.

New South Wales Health Information Bulletin, Salary Increases Staff Specialists NSW Public Health System – Staff Specialists (State) Award, 2019.


Western Australia Health System, Medical Practitioners, AMA Industrial Agreement, 2016.

### Non-salary allowances and entitlements summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
<th>New South Wales</th>
<th>South Australia</th>
<th>Queensland</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>Western Aus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Normal hours</strong></td>
<td>40 hours</td>
<td>40 hours</td>
<td>No fixed hours</td>
<td>40 hours</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>40 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual leave</strong></td>
<td>Six weeks</td>
<td>Five weeks</td>
<td>Four weeks</td>
<td>Information unavailable</td>
<td>Four weeks</td>
<td>160 hours/Four weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provisions for shift employees</strong></td>
<td>Extra leave</td>
<td>Extra leave and penalty rates</td>
<td>Additional one week of leave</td>
<td>Penalty rates</td>
<td>Additional one week of leave</td>
<td>Penalty rates from 20 to 150 percent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long service leave</strong></td>
<td>Two weeks after ten years service, recognition of service commenced from 3 July 2017.</td>
<td>After seven years service, rate of two months on full pay for 10 years served. After 10 years, five months on full pay for each subsequent 10 years served.</td>
<td>Information unavailable</td>
<td>Information unavailable</td>
<td>Six months after 15 years of continuous service, then two months of long service leave after each additional five years of continuous service.</td>
<td>13 weeks after 10 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuing medical education</strong></td>
<td>10 working days per year plus up to $15,165 ($16,000 NZD) expenses. Additional $500 if two or more MOPS programmes.</td>
<td>25 days and funding of $35,000 for Level 1 staff</td>
<td>10 days on full pay plus expenses of up to $22,000.</td>
<td>3.6 weeks per year for a maximum of 10 years. Annual allowance ($21,000 in 2019).</td>
<td>Reasonably incurred costs up to $27,402 per annum.</td>
<td>Three weeks per year, plus additional five weeks after five years service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notes and other benefits</strong></td>
<td>Paid parental leave over and above the government contribution.</td>
<td>Five possible salary arrangements. Salary sacrifice can be up to 100 percent</td>
<td>Minimum eight consecutive hours off duty between shifts. Allowances for attraction and retention.</td>
<td>Inaccessibility compensation - seven categories of remoteness. Allowances for attraction and retention.</td>
<td>Extra pay at penalty rates for time travelling and hours worked if recalled.</td>
<td>Travel allowance for call-backs and travel between sites. Meal allowances for when 10 hours or more is worked.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>