



## FACT SHEET: Profile of the rural resident specialist (non-GP) workforce 2019

### Rural resident specialists

Rural Health West maintains a database of rural resident specialists\* who work in rural\*\* Western Australia (WA) in Modified Monash (MM) 2-7 locations.

Rural Health West defines a rural resident specialist as a non-GP specialist whose primary work location is in a rural area. Doctors who live in Perth or interstate and do sessional work in a rural location are not included in this dataset.

This database is updated continuously with intelligence from rural areas and annually through the rural resident and visiting Specialist Survey. A total of 61 (42.4%) of the recorded rural resident specialists responded to the latest survey in September 2019.

Together with ongoing data collection strategies, Rural Health West can offer contemporary valid evidence about trends in the rural resident specialist workforce.

### Number and location

At the census date of 30 September 2019, there were 144 rural resident specialists (excluding specialist registrars) identified as working in MM 2-7 locations throughout WA. This compares to 155 in 2015, showing a decline in rural resident specialist numbers over the past four years.

There were no rural resident specialists located in an MM 7 location, whereas almost half of the workforce (43.1%) were based in an MM 2 location.

The following table shows the workforce by region:

Region	N rural resident specialists	%
Kimberley	17	11.8%
Pilbara	7	4.9%
Midwest	21	14.6%
Goldfields	7	4.9%
Wheatbelt	6	4.2%
South West	67	46.5%
Great Southern	19	13.2%
Total	144	100.0%

### Age and gender

The average age of rural resident specialists at the census date was 51.4 years. On average, male rural resident specialists are 4.7 years older than female rural resident specialists. There are similar numbers of males in all age groups, with the majority of female specialists aged 25-44 years. 27.8% of the rural resident specialist workforce is female.

Rural resident specialist age	All	Female	Male
25-44	56	23	33
45-54	46	11	35
55+	42	6	36
<b>TOTAL</b> (all age groups)		40	104
Average age	51.4	48	52.7

\* The term 'rural resident specialist' is used to denote non-GP specialists based in a rural location.

\*\* The term 'rural' is used to denote regional, rural and remote locations across WA (MM 2-7 locations).

## Specialties practised

The 144 rural resident specialists practise across 20 specialties. The seven most practised specialties accounted for 70.8% of the rural resident specialist workforce.

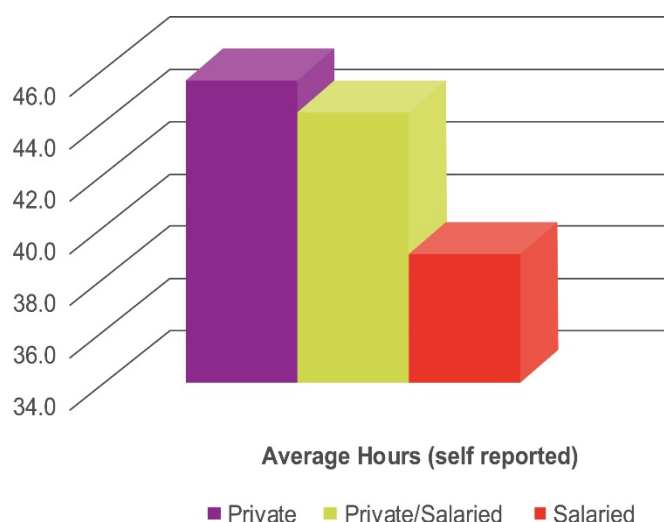
Specialty	N rural resident specialists
General medicine	18
Emergency	17
Paediatrics	15
Anaesthetics	14
Obstetrics/Gynaecology	14
General surgery	12
Psychiatry	12
Ophthalmology	8
Orthopaedic surgery	7
Radiology	7
Public health	4
Cardiology	4
Urology	3
ENT	2
Palliative medicine	2
Dermatology	1
Geriatric medicine	1
Medical oncology	1
Respiratory physician	1
Infectious Disease/Immunology	1
Total	144

## Hours worked

Each of the 61 rural resident specialists who returned their surveys provided information about their working hours. The average working hours per week was 42.3 hours. 21.3% of respondents (13) worked part-time.

An analysis of hours by region was not done due to the small sample size in some regions.

Figure 1 – Average hours worked per week by employment type



## Length of stay

Length of stay average for the total workforce (144 rural resident specialists) was 9.7 years at their current employer/location. This is 1.7 years longer than in 2015. There was a difference between the average length of stay for males (10.4 years) and females (7.9 years).

Length of stay <1 yr	12 (8.3%)
Length of stay 1-5 yrs	25 (17.4%)
Length of stay >5 yrs	107 (74.3%)

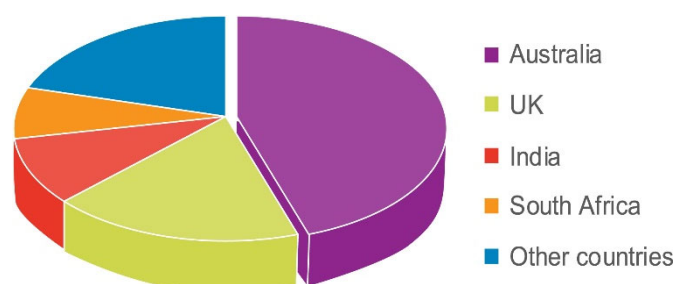
Region	Average length of stay in current practice (years)
Kimberley	4.2
Pilbara	9.6
Midwest	9.7
Goldfields	8.5
Wheatbelt	2.1
South West	12.2
Great Southern	8.9

## Where rural resident specialists trained

Sixty-five (45.1%) completed their basic medical qualification at an Australian university. This shows an increasing proportion of Australian-trained rural resident specialists working in rural WA than in 2014, when 38.2% of the rural resident specialist workforce was Australian-trained. Thirty-seven rural resident specialists trained in WA.

Most of the 79 overseas-trained rural resident specialists gained their basic medical qualification in the United Kingdom, India or South Africa (62%).

Figure 2 – N of rural resident specialists by country of basic medical qualification



## Rural resident specialist sessions per year by region and specialty

Specialty	Kimberley	Pilbara	Midwest	Goldfields	Wheatbelt	South West	Great Southern	Total sessions
Anaesthetics		1	5			16	3	25
Cardiology					5	8		13
Dermatology						1	1	2
Emergency	1	1	1	1		10	9	23
ENT		1				6		7
General medicine	27	2	8	6	1	9	3	56
General surgery	3		7	1	1	22	4	38
Geriatric medicine						1		1
Infectious disease/ Immunology							3	3
Medical oncology						1		1
Obstetrics/ Gynaecology	8	6	2			16	4	36
Ophthalmology	2		7	1	1	21	4	36
Orthopaedic surgery	3		3			15		21
Paediatrics	21	6	10	8	2	13		60
Palliative medicine						2	4	6
Psychiatry	10			1	5	1	8	25
Public health		6	3	1	1	1		12
Radiology			3			3	4	10
Respiratory physician					1		4	5
Urology						12		12
Total	75	23	49	19	17	158	51	392

## Rural resident specialists who provide visiting services

Seventy-two (50.0%) rural resident specialists deliver services in locations in addition to their primary practice town. These rural resident specialists visit an average of 2.4 locations each, with some rural residents specialists visiting up to 12 additional locations.

Thirty-four of these rural resident specialists visit locations funded by the Australian Government Department of Health through the Rural Health West Outreach program.

## Metropolitan-based visiting specialists

As well as having access to rural resident specialists, patients in rural WA are supported by visiting specialists from the Perth metropolitan area.

Rural Health West has identified 326 specialists who currently provide visiting services to rural locations in WA. These visiting specialists include those providing services under the Rural Health West Outreach program.

## Other Fact Sheets

Other health workforce annual fact sheets can be found on our website at

[www.ruralhealthwest.com.au/workforcedata](http://www.ruralhealthwest.com.au/workforcedata)

