

2024-25

Planning SALARY SURVEY

PREPARED BY
LEO LIEMESAK

November 2024



WELCOME

As recruiters working in niche sectors in the development industry, employers often come to us seeking salary information when they want to benchmark their salaries against the broader industry. Whilst we can give anecdotal advice based on recent placements we made and the trends we are seeing from candidates we talk to on a regular basis; we believe that we need some firm data to fall back on.

Furthermore, as we continue to grow and expand our recruitment services in town planning sector nationally, our ability to provide robust advice to our clients is a pillar of our values and we believe that is how our services should be delivered.

I'd like to thank the survey respondents for the time they put aside to provide us with the data that we need to put this report together. We appreciate that it had taken some time away from your busy schedule – so thank you!

We hope that you will find the information in this report useful. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you need any further clarification, or with recruitment in general.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leo Liemesak'.

Leo Liemesak
Associate Director, Planning

SALARIES AT A GLANCE

We asked respondents how much non-management Planners earned against their years of experience in the last financial year.

The results tracked in a straight-line (salary) vs experience (years), allowing us to extrapolate salary against experience which may be helpful to HR Managers for annual salary review discussions.

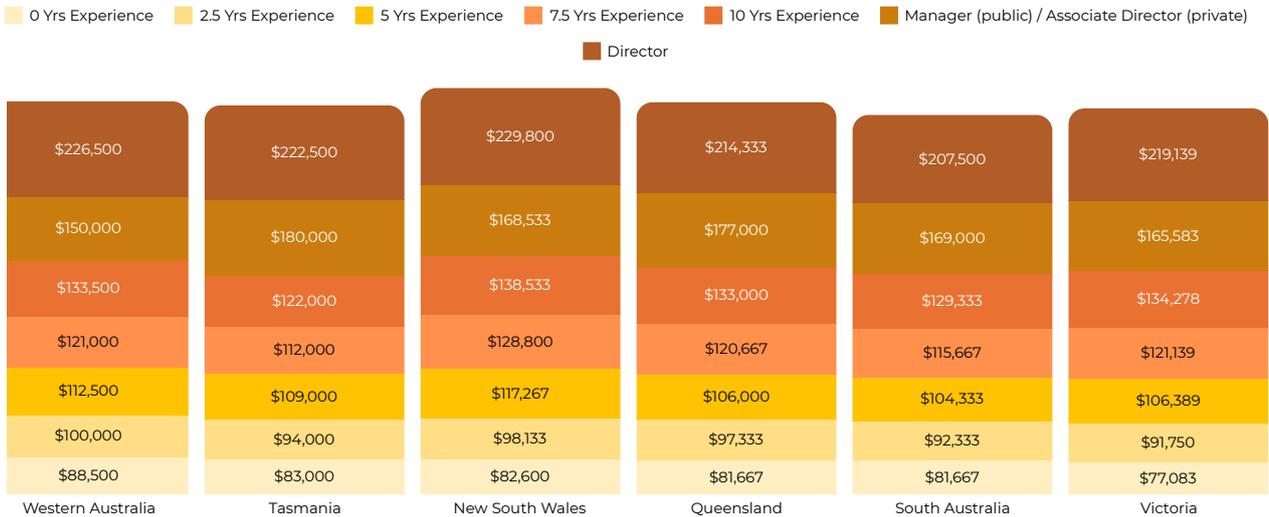


**We have removed all managerial staff and AD/Directors in consulting businesses.*

Planners who held managerial responsibilities earned around **\$185,876** – either as a line manager in the public sector or **Associate Director** in private practice. **Directors**, both in public and private sectors, could expect to earn a salary of **\$251,062 (base + superannuation)**

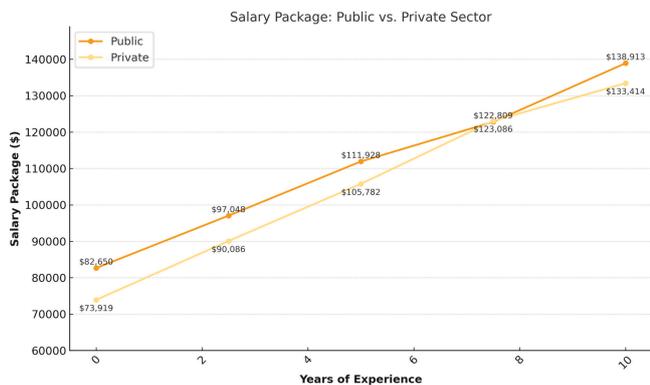
Salaries by State

The data is quite clear when we compare salaries by State, NSW pays a premium compared to others, although most states are within 10% of each other.



Note: Salaries quoted are base +super only

Public vs Public Sector



Similar to what we have found in previous planning salary surveys, salaries within the public sector pay more for the first seven and a half years, after which the private sector salaries take over.

It is worth noting anecdotally for public sector planners looking to transition into private at that seven

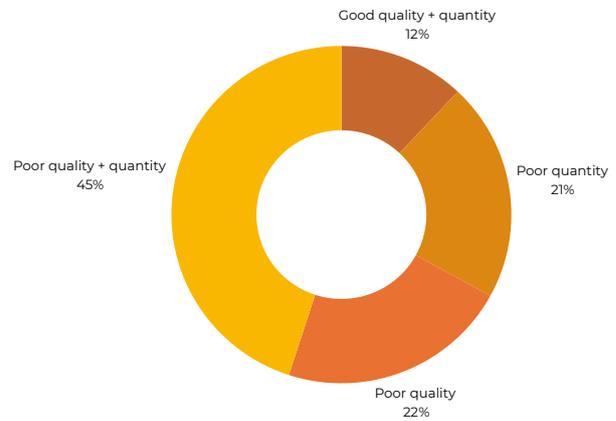
year mark, consultancies will typically pay candidates with no consulting experience the lower end of their band initially (citing a lack of experience in client management for example), which will affect their salary for the first 12 months.

At a managerial level base salaries are marginally higher in the public sector (by around 5%). We would expect that additional income in bonuses and profit share would bring this to parity and probably beyond.

ATTRACTION AND RETENTION

Attraction

The Planning profession continues to struggle attracting talent with 45% of respondents said that they found it hard to attract enough quality and quantity of applications over the last 12 months when advertising for roles. Over 40% said that they struggled to attract either the right quality or enough quantity to run a good recruitment process. Only about 12% respondents felt that there were enough high calibre candidates to make appointments easily.

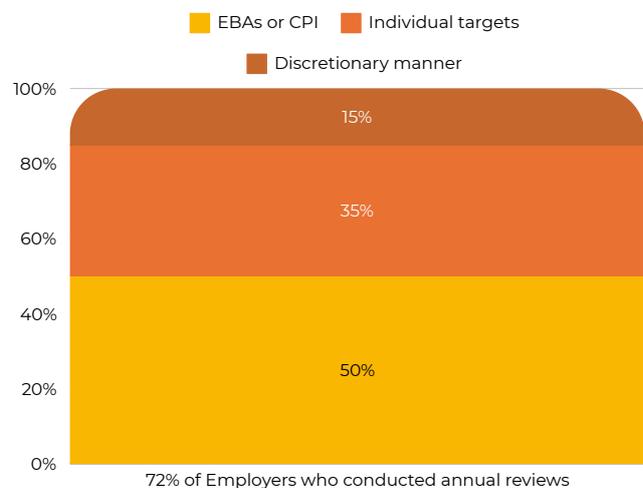


Retention

Over the last 12 months employees had left organisations for a multitude of reasons, with 'career development opportunities' being particularly high in local councils (24.2%). We would suggest that this is primarily due to the structured Banding systems in Councils forcing employees to consider moving organisations to gain promotion rather than staying with their current employer, especially where there are entrenched senior staff.

Salary, while a factor in many people's decision, was particularly prominent in regional councils – where it was the key reason that they lost staff.

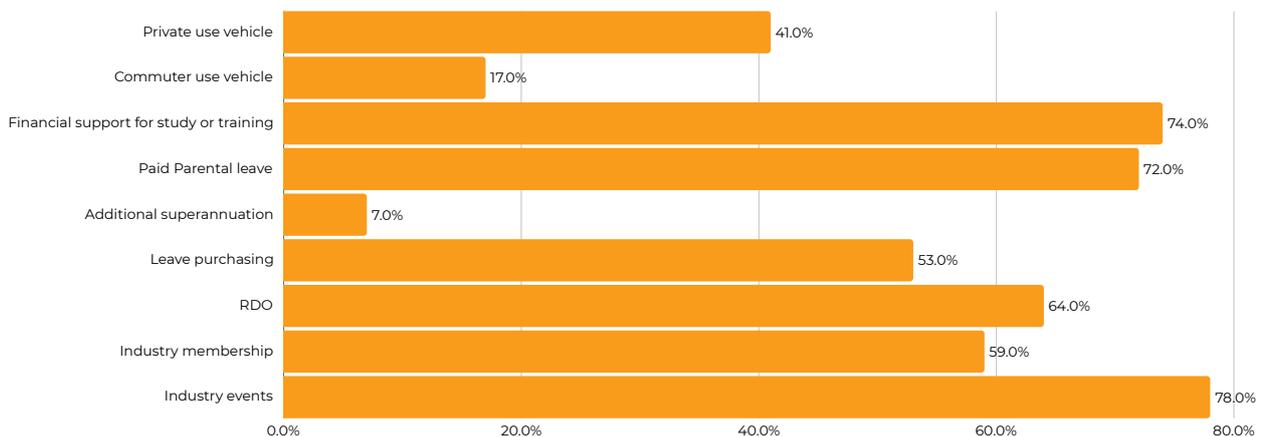
Within the last year, performance reviews brought an average salary increase of 3.4%



Additional Income

Compared to other industries that we have surveyed; planning seems to offer a broad suite of options in addition to salary.

“Employees salary package can include (in addition to salary and super).”



Bonus

Overtime was twice as likely to be reciprocated with time in lieu as opposed to paid overtime.

In general, organisations offered additional income to employees through overtime, bonuses or profit share and paid out an additional 7.2% during last financial year. These can be further split into two main types:

**1-5%
BONUS** 
EARNED IN OVERTIME AND SMALLER
DISCRETIONARY BONUSES

**10-15%
BONUS** 
CONSULTANCIES WITH 5 - 10 STAFF

Profit share amounted to no more than 5% last financial year. We would advise caution in reading too much into this as targets for profit share were hard to reach last year. Furthermore, the salaries data were focused on average across organisations rather than specifically at senior levels who are eligible for profit share schemes.

CULTURE

Employers rated their organisations' stress level at 4.85 out of 10, which would suggest a healthy level overall in the industry. In saying that, we would point out that this exists in a depressed development market. When the sector's activities increase again, we would expect to see this number to rise quickly due to shortage of Planners and the increased workload this will put on the Planning sector.

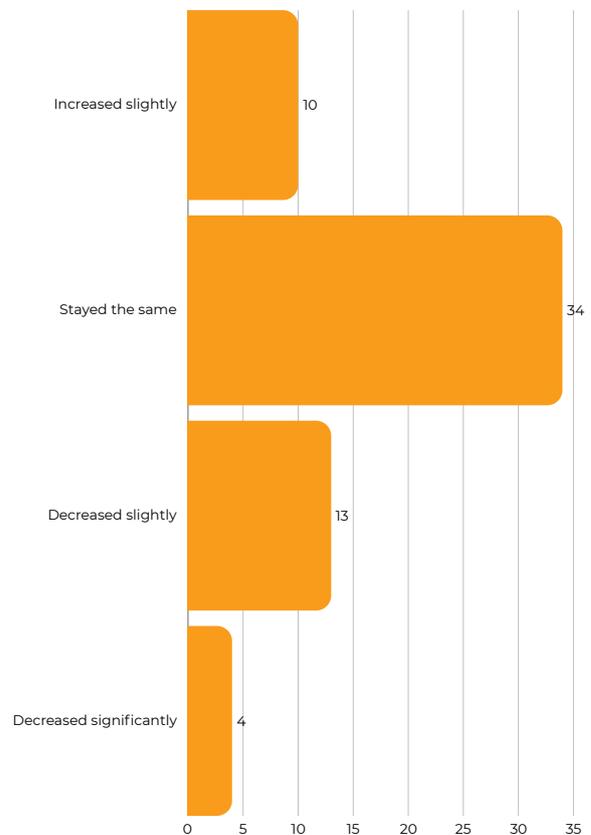
“Close to **80%** of organisations in the sector offered some form of EAP support to their staff”

Working from Home

Over the next 12 months, most organisations seem to be coming back to more of an office-based working arrangement. Hybrid working still applies in most workplaces, however, there is more push for a 1-2 day WFH as apposed to 2-3 days WFH that have been more prevalent over the last 18 months.

Overall, there is a general consensus that the introduction of WFH hasn't majorly impacted productivity; and productivity can be maintained (mainly by a mixture of regular checkins and/or productivity targets).

“Productivity with WFH policies”



THIS YEAR AND NEXT

Around 10% of organisations decreased in size over the last 12 months, split across both public and private sectors. Around half stayed the same and about a third grew in headcount.

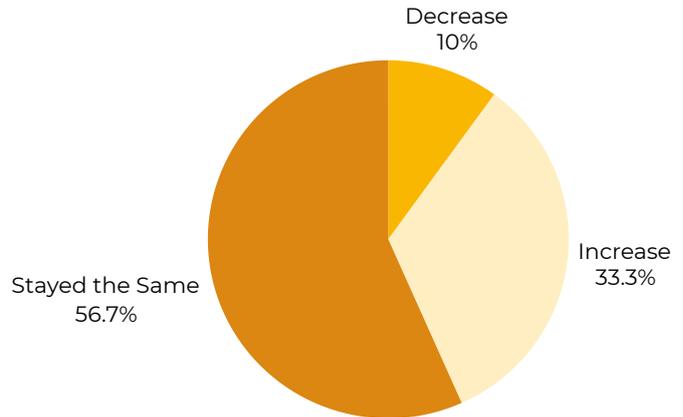
While 10% of organisations have decreased in size is significantly more than what we have seen in recent years, it is still less than what one would expect based on articles one sees from the news about the development sector.

We would suggest that the industry has returned to a 'base level', where Planners are working at capacity rather than being overworked. This is likely to be reflected in the number of applications in a DA/Statutory Planning department within most local councils.

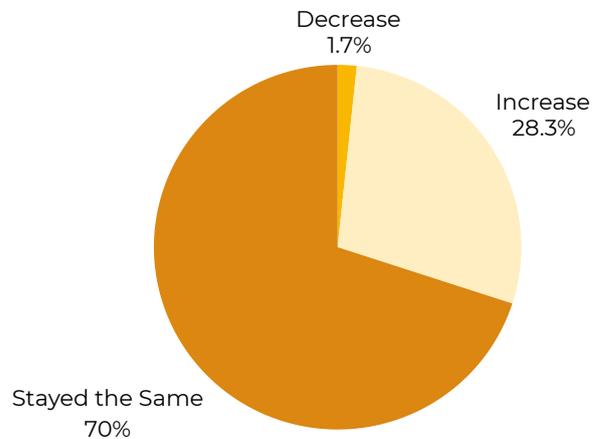
83% of employers would expect to pay a new staff member the same as existing staff, which is different from previous surveys we ran – where employers expected to pay more to bring new staff on board.

In general, organisations were predicting a steady 2025 with around 70% expecting to keep the same headcount.

“Last 12 months, team size...”



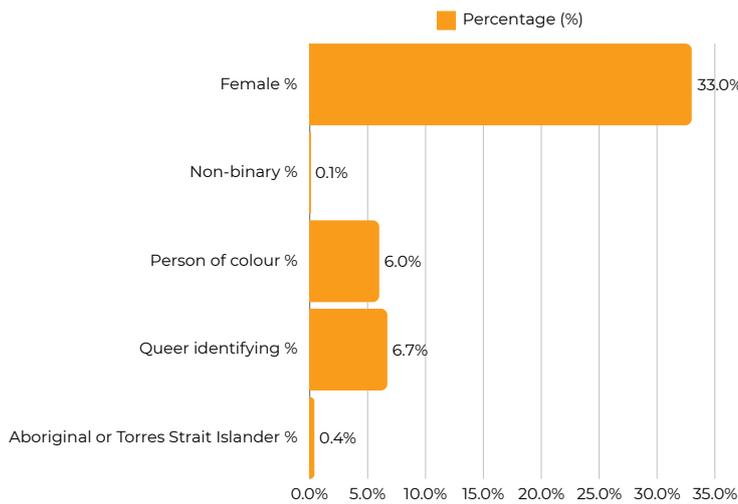
“Next 12 months, team size...”



DIVERSITY

Only 33% of organisations had females in a leadership role, suggesting the industry still has some way to go in achieving equality in the workplace for women.

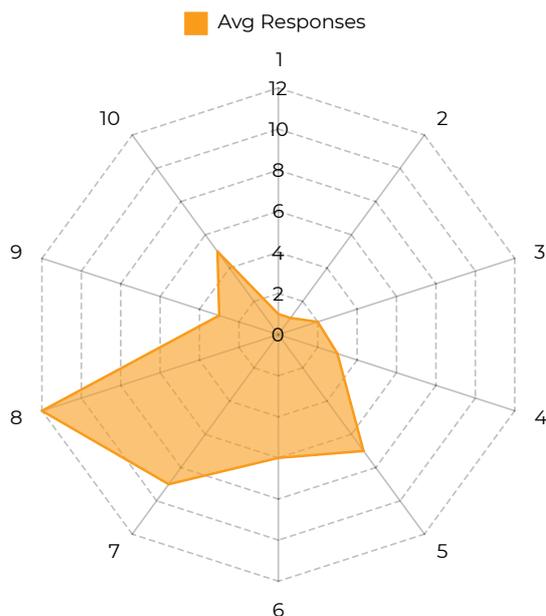
Leadership Roles



On a positive note, 75% of respondents had a Diversity Policy. And these organisations had a higher percentage of leaders from diverse backgrounds compared to the broader industry average.

On average, there were only 6% of organisations that had a Person of Colour (POC) in a leadership role whereas 6.7% of organisations had Queer identifying staff in their leadership team.

“How well do you feel that your company's culture reflect the DE&I policy and statement?”



There is very little information about broader representation of people of colour across the industry – which would suggest that this figure may be very low.

In general respondents felt positively that the organisations DE&I policy was reflected in the culture.

CONCLUSION

Excluding some outlying results, the majority of employers increased salaries by 3.4% which is unsurprisingly lower than in previous years and pointing to the planning profession being at a plateau.

However whilst wage growth in the sector has slowed in our opinion due to a decrease in the development industry, we would suggest that workloads have simply returned to a manageable level rather than the elevated levels of previous years and there seems to be a general sentiment that we have “bottomed out”, employers seem cautious about the rebound in 2025, predicting stability rather than huge growth numbers.

Based on the finite number of planners in the industry though, Planned Resources predict that any increase in activity levels in the sector will quickly put upward pressure on salaries - although the slower rebound is likely to make these increases more tolerable for employers than the post-covid rebound we saw in recent years.

From an Employee Value Proposition perspective, the planning sector fares well. Most employers offer some form of benefits in addition to salary, flexibility whilst reducing in the sector (as it is in most sectors) is still there; and stress within the industry is at a manageable level.

ABOUT PLANNED RESOURCES

Established for 15 years, Planned Resources are a boutique consultancy focused in the Built Environment sectors and staffed by experienced consultants who all have significant tenure within the sectors that we recruit for.

Our mission is to work in an intelligent, mature and mutually respectful way with candidates and clients within markets that we can understand and add value to.

Whether you're an employer looking for your next hire, or looking to commence a long-term strategic partnership with a specialist recruiter within your sector; or if you're a candidate wanting to explore your options we'd love to hear from you.

OUR PLANNING TEAM

Leo Liemesak - Associate Director, Planning

Leo is part of our powerhouse planning team. With a great knowledge of all things recruitment, he previously worked in architecture and design as well as local government desks before joining Planned Resources. Leo now recruits in town planning, covering Melbourne and Victoria working with private and public sector clients and candidates. Leo also gets involved as a guest speaker for events held by Planning Student Associations of Melbourne University, RMIT and other universities.



Cindy Tran - Executive Recruiter and Manager, Planning

Having lived and worked in Southeast Asia, Cindy brings over 6 years of international, cross-border search and selection experience to our team. At Planned Resources, Cindy has been focusing on expanding our footprint interstate, especially into New South Wales and Queensland. Her absolute dedication and laser-sharp focus in market mapping have helped us secure candidates in talent-short markets and deliver on those search assignments that our clients or most other agencies have given up on.



Russell Locke - Director

Originally from the UK, Russell has 25 years' experience in recruitment. His experience includes working with a large multi-national, a boutique consultancy, as well as a start-up. During his time in recruitment he's predominantly recruited within the town planning sector, but has also recruited across architecture, engineering, surveying and broader public sector roles – areas he's developed since he founded Planned Resources in 2010. He trusts team members to develop lasting relationships with candidates and clients in line with the company's values of maturity, intelligence and mutual respect.



CONTACT US

Leo Liemesak

leo.liemesak@plannedresources.com.au

+61 0450 911 172

Cindy Tran

cindy.tran@plannedresources.com.au

+61 0406 849 717

Russell Locke

russell.locke@plannedresources.com.au

+61 0407 111 364

Planned Resources

Level 12/360

Elizabeth St,

Melbourne VIC 3000

(03) 9069 6530 | www.plannedresources.com.au