

# Profile of the rural resident specialist workforce 2020



## REPORTING RESIDENT SPECIALIST TRENDS

Rural Health West maintains a database of resident specialists who work in rural and remote Western Australia in Modified Monash Model locations (MMM) 2 to 7.

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

Rural Health West's database is updated continuously with intelligence from rural areas and annually through the Rural Health West Resident Specialist Survey. A total of 65 (42.8%) of the 152 recorded rural resident specialists responded to the latest survey in 2020.

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

OF THE  
**152** RECORDED RURAL RESIDENT SPECIALISTS  
**65** RESPONDED TO THE SURVEY  
**42.8%**

## NUMBER AND LOCATION OF RESIDENT SPECIALISTS

At the census date of 30 September 2020, there were 152 resident specialists (excluding specialist registrars) identified as working in rural Western Australia. This compares to 172 in 2015, showing a decline in resident specialist numbers over the past five years.

Seventy-six resident specialists (50%) worked in an MMM 2 location and 54 specialists (35.5%) in an MMM 3 location. There were no resident specialists located in MMM 7 locations.









The following table shows the workforce by region; notably more than half (81 resident specialists or 53.3%) are located in the South West.

Region	N Resident Specialists	%
<b>GOLDFIELDS</b>	4	2.6
<b>GREAT SOUTHERN</b>	24	15.8
<b>KIMBERLEY</b>	13	8.6
<b>MIDWEST</b>	21	13.8
<b>PILBARA</b>	7	4.6
<b>SOUTH WEST</b>	81	53.3
<b>WHEATBELT</b>	2	1.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100</b>

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## AGE AND GENDER

Forty-seven (30.9%) rural resident specialists are female. The average age of rural resident specialists at 30 September 2020 was 51.0 years, with males averaging 51.8 years and females 49.2 years. There is a similar distribution of specialists across all age groups, with the exception of the 25-34 cohort. This is to be expected with most medical practitioners in this age group completing their hospital years and prerequisites before undertaking specialist training.

Specialist Age	All	Female	Male
25-34	5	1 x 	4 x 
35-44	36	15 x 	21 x 
45-54	59	18 x 	41 x 
55+	52	13 x 	39 x 
<b>Average age</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>49.2</b>	<b>51.8</b>
<b>Men</b> (all age groups)	<b>105</b>		
<b>Women</b> (all age groups)	<b>47</b>		

## SPECIALTIES PRACTISED

The 152 recorded rural resident specialists practised across 21 specialties and sub-specialties.



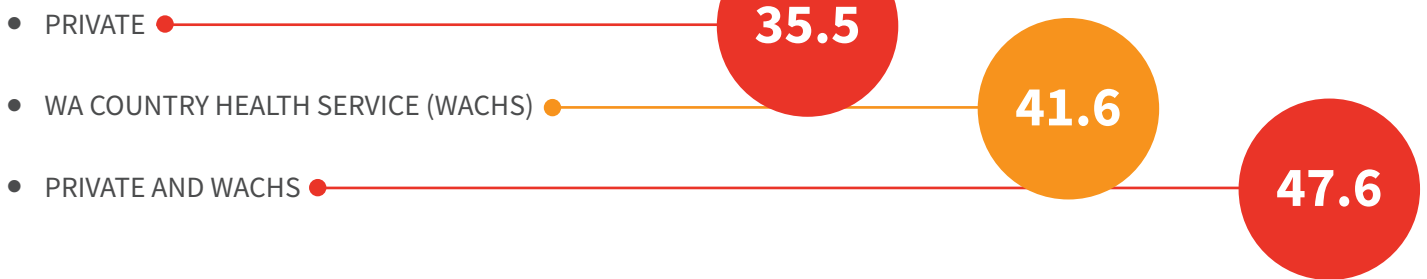
## HOURS WORKED

All 65 specialists who returned their surveys, 42.8% of the rural resident specialist workforce, provided working hours. The average working hours per week was 42.4.

Eleven (16.9%) of respondents worked part-time.

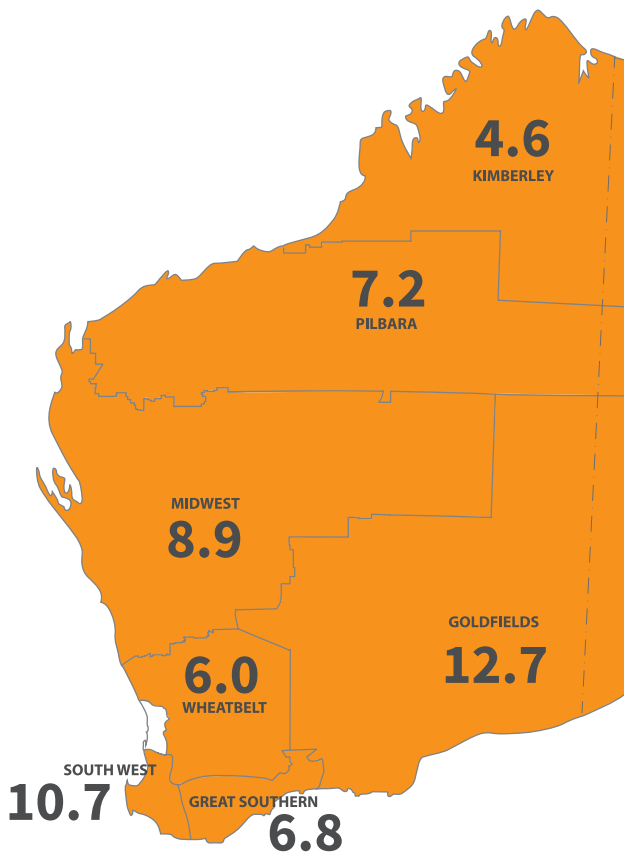
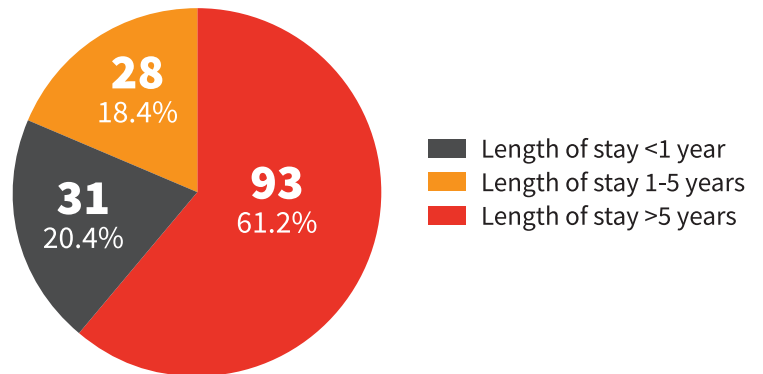
Specialists working in a combined employment type worked more hours on average than those salaried with only one employment type.

### Average hours worked per week by employment type:



## LENGTH OF STAY

The average length of stay for resident specialists in their current practice was 9.2 years. There was a difference between the average length of stay for males (10.1 years) and females (7.0 years).

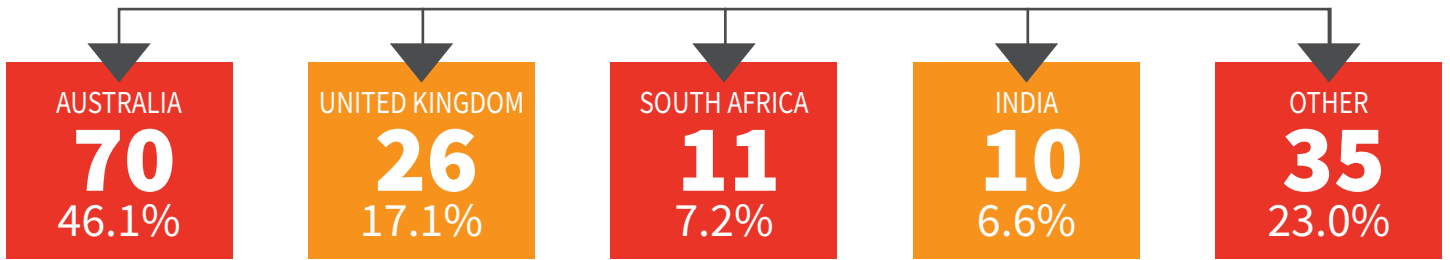


### AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY IN CURRENT PRACTICE (YEARS)

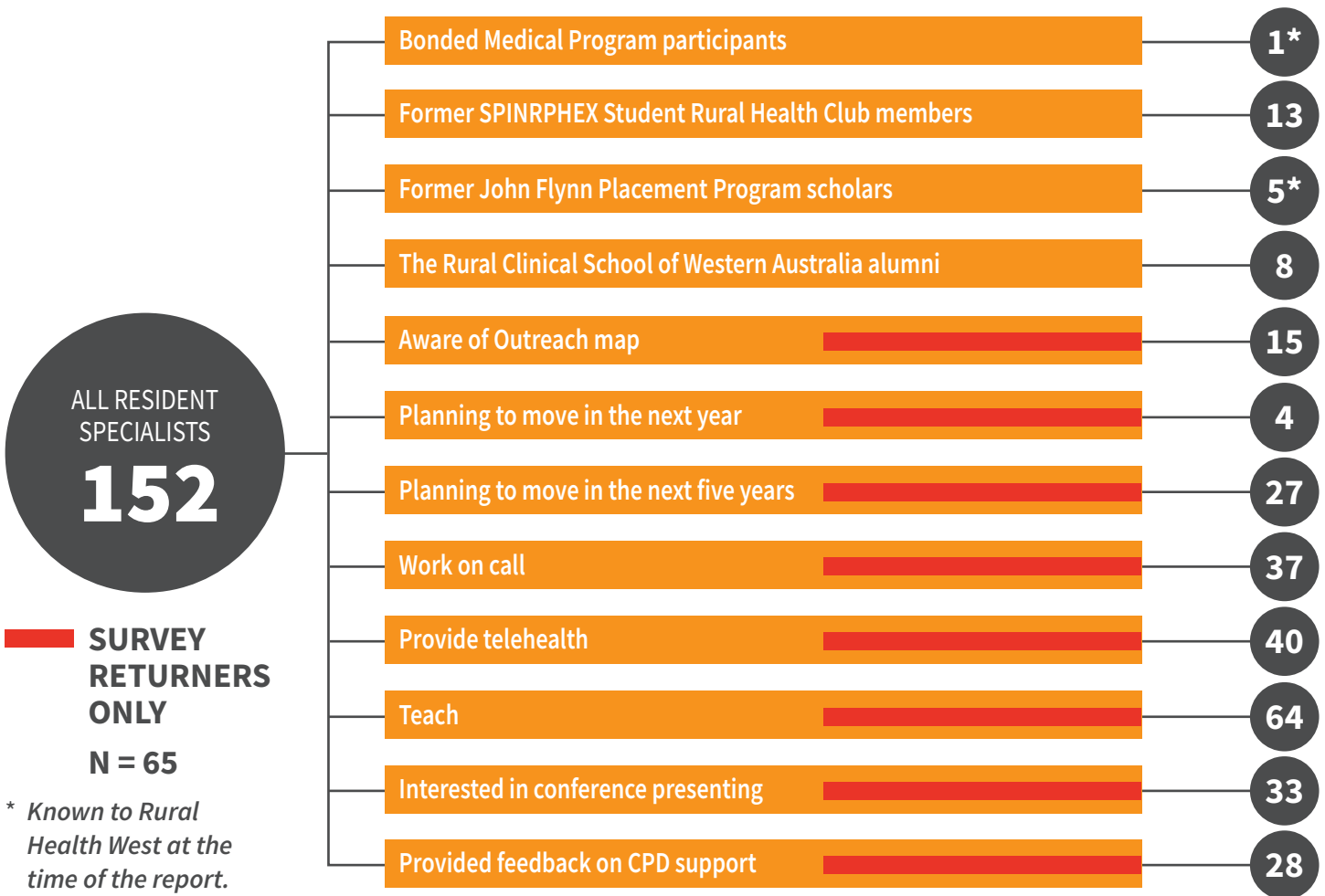
## PRIMARY MEDICAL TRAINING

Of the 152 rural resident specialists, 70 (46.1%) completed their basic medical qualification at an Australian university, of whom 38 trained in Western Australia. Of the 82 (53.9%) who completed their basic medical qualification overseas, doctors from the United Kingdom (26), South Africa (11) and India (10) represent the majority (57.3%).

### Number of specialists by country of basic medical training



## QUICK STATS ON RURAL RESIDENT SPECIALIST WORKFORCE



## VISITING SPECIALISTS

Of the 152 rural resident specialists, 70 (46.1%) visit locations other than their primary practice town. These 70 rural resident specialists visit an average of 2.2 extra locations each, with a range of between 1 and 9 extra locations. Of the 70, 32 visit locations that are funded by the Australian Government Department of Health Outreach programs administered by Rural Health West. As well as having access to resident specialists, patients in rural and remote Western Australia are supported by visiting specialists. Rural Health West has identified 336 specialists who currently provide visiting services to rural and remote locations in Western Australia (including those providing services under the Outreach programs).