

2025 - 2026

Australian Local Government

Remuneration, Gender Statistics and Trend Analysis Report



24th edition

- 204 councils
- Over 13,000 verified roles
- Six council categories
- Gender statistics and remuneration trends
- National statistical insight

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Local Government Remuneration Benchmarking

We will help make sure your remuneration strategies are **on the money.**



Improve staff retention rates



Increase staff engagement



Ensure competitive advantage



Optimise recruitment



For more than 20 years McArthur has undertaken national remuneration surveys for Local Government. These surveys examine emerging trends providing a sound basis for benchmarking decisions by councils.

In order to gain competitive advantage, there is an increasing demand for organisations to conduct broad, in-depth analysis of their overall salary and remuneration strategies, linked to specific position responsibility.

Our consultants have extensive experience in providing relevant and up to date remuneration advice tailored to specific organisational requirements. Our services include:

- Providing an in-depth analysis of individual positions benchmarked against similar positions within comparative sized councils.
- Undertaking work value assessments in line with current remuneration trends.
- Reviewing classification structures and developing appropriate frameworks. While we are renowned for our annual National Remuneration Survey for Local Government, we also have access to public and private sector data.

Contact the McArthur team today and get your remuneration planning underway.



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INTRODUCTION

To our valued Local Government leaders,

The past year continued to test the resilience of the Australian Local Government sector. Cost of living pressures, political uncertainty and increasingly frequent climate related events created a complex operating environment, even as encouraging signs of labour market stabilisation and broader economic improvement began to emerge.

Looking ahead, 2026 will present both new opportunities and heightened challenges within an increasingly volatile global setting. International economic conditions, rapid technological advancement, particularly the acceleration of artificial intelligence, climate impacts and evolving workforce expectations will continue to shape national policy frameworks and funding priorities for Local Government across Australia.

Councils must be prepared for policy decisions shaped not only by domestic priorities, but also by broader global economic, political and social influences.

Against this backdrop, we are pleased to present the **24th edition of the Australian Local Government Remuneration, Gender Statistics and Trend Analysis Report**. Drawing on data from 204 local councils, the 2025/2026 report examines senior officer remuneration (Levels 1 to 4) across six council categories, delivering a comprehensive evidence base to support both strategic and operational decision making.

The report's data driven insights and detailed analysis enable Councils to:

- Establish accurate, market competitive remuneration and recognition frameworks grounded in robust benchmarking
- Strengthen executive and senior talent acquisition outcomes, improving return on investment across recruitment activities
- Develop more effective retention strategies informed by contemporary market intelligence

We sincerely thank all Councils that contributed to this year's research, particularly in a period when competing priorities were understandably significant. Your ongoing participation is essential to maintaining the quality, relevance and integrity of the insights the sector relies upon. As always, all participating Councils will receive a complimentary digital copy of the report.

Our McArthur HR consultants stand ready to support Councils in translating these insights into practical, high impact remuneration and workforce strategies. We welcome the opportunity to work with you to ensure your approach continues to attract, retain and appropriately reward senior talent in an increasingly competitive environment.

We wish you every success in 2026.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Mullins

Chief Executive Officer

The logo for McArthur, featuring the name in a stylized, orange, handwritten-style font.

OVERVIEW

OF THE 2025 / 2026 SURVEY

The 2025 / 2026 National Remuneration Survey for Local Government attracted data from 204 councils nationally covering 13,312 positions across four tiers of management. The size of councils that participated ranged from those with recurrent expenditure budgets exceeding \$650 million to those with budgets of less than \$4 million. Equivalent full-time staff numbers ranged from less than 20 to more than 1,900, and populations from below 300 to over 500,000.

The following table provides a summary of participating councils by category.

Category	Annual Recurrent Expenditure	No. of Councils
Category 1	Greater than \$180 Million	47
Category 2	\$100M - \$180 Million	35
Category 3	\$60M - \$100 Million	29
Category 4	\$30M - \$60 Million	44
Category 5	\$15M - \$30 Million	28
Category 6	Less than \$15 Million	21

The following Table provides a summary of Participating Councils by State and Category.

State	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5	Category 6
New South Wales	9	7	3	9	4	0
Northern Territory	0	1	0	2	1	1
Queensland	13	5	9	5	3	0
South Australia	2	3	3	8	11	11
Tasmania	0	2	2	3	5	3
Victoria	21	12	8	16	3	0
Western Australia	2	5	4	1	1	6

Nationally, remuneration levels varied significantly across the various management levels. The following tables show the range of remuneration paid to four management levels across each of the council categories.

Category 1		Count	Range		Average
Level			High	Low	
1	Chief Executive Officer / General Manager	47	707,500	374,900	479,484
2	Directors / Group Managers	248	690,900	203,100	333,988
3	Managers	1,097	395,200	150,200	228,477
4	Coordinator / Team Leader	4,789	390,900	91,300	147,847

Category 2		Count	Range		Average
Level			High	Low	
1	Chief Executive Officer / General Manager	35	580,000	331,500	408,213
2	Directors / Group Managers	138	400,500	203,000	300,110
3	Managers	585	310,000	135,500	210,054
4	Coordinator / Team Leader	1,965	235,500	82,000	139,886

Category 3		Count	Range		Average
Level			High	Low	
1	Chief Executive Officer / General Manager	29	448,000	308,500	368,948
2	Directors / Group Managers	108	387,500	185,500	260,443
3	Managers	361	280,500	130,000	189,247
4	Coordinator / Team Leader	1,192	262,000	75,500	125,982

OVERVIEW

OF THE 2025 / 2026 SURVEY

Category 4		Count	Range		Average
Level			High	Low	
1	Chief Executive Officer / General Manager	44	396,000	266,000	316,962
2	Directors / Group Managers	135	307,000	171,000	224,289
3	Managers	440	247,500	114,500	162,541
4	Coordinator / Team Leader	1,099	181,500	78,500	112,395

Category 5		Count	Range		Average
Level			High	Low	
1	Chief Executive Officer / General Manager	28	338,500	240,500	283,499
2	Directors / Group Managers	80	293,000	156,000	202,033
3	Managers	213	212,000	92,000	138,674
4	Coordinator / Team Leader	483	197,000	78,000	98,086

Category 6		Count	Range		Average
Level			High	Low	
1	Chief Executive Officer / General Manager	21	300,000	193,000	240,077
2	Directors / Group Managers	45	214,500	130,000	173,640
3	Managers	43	177,500	96,000	125,271
4	Coordinator / Team Leader	87	151,000	72,500	96,760

The analysis of remuneration packages for the current survey period indicates notable variability across all Job Families when compared with previous years.

At the Chief Executive / General Manager level, the overall average increase across all council categories was 3.14%, representing a substantial rise from the previous year's average increase of 1.10%. Over the eight-year period from 2018 to 2025, remuneration for Chief Executive Officers / General Managers increased by 18.16%, equating to an annual average increase of 2.27%.

Positions within larger metropolitan councils (Category 1) and small rural councils (Categories 5 and 6) recorded average increases above the Consumer Price Index (CPI). In contrast, positions in all other council categories experienced less favourable outcomes.

For the second consecutive year, Level 2 positions recorded an average increase above the CPI, with an overall rise of 3.83% across all disciplines. Roles within the Engineering, Regulatory Services and Human Resources Job Families exceeded CPI growth, while positions in Community and Corporate Services recorded marginally lower increases.

Level 3 positions experienced a cumulative increase of 29.36% over the past seven years and recorded an average increase above the CPI in the current year (3.86%). Although Community Services achieved the highest increase in the previous year (5.90%), it was the only discipline at this level to record an increase below the CPI in the current period.

Similarly, level 4 positions recorded a cumulative increase of 24.28% over the past seven years and again achieved an average increase above the CPI across all disciplines in the current year. Consistent with Level 3, Community Services – despite leading the previous year – was the only discipline to record an increase below the CPI in the current period.

Nationally the CPI figure (all groups) for September 2024 to September 2025 was 3.5% as provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.