



In-house legal
salary guide
APAC

2023-2024

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Introduction

APAC's premier In-house legal search and recruitment specialists.

Taylor Root's APAC In-house Legal salary guide provides APAC General Generals and Talent Acquisition teams with a comprehensive analysis benchmarking Junior Counsel, Legal Counsel, Senior Counsel, Head of Legal and Regional General Counsel salaries, bonuses and long-term incentives across the main APAC legal markets of China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Australia.

As APAC's premier In-house legal search and recruitment specialists, Taylor Root prides itself on our deep market knowledge and industry insights.

About our salary guide

Data for this salary guide has been compiled from our database and from recent placements over the past twelve months. As always with our salary guides, there will be outliers at either end of the salary bands due to the vast number of companies from which we have collected data.

If you require bespoke salary advice or benchmarking for you or your team, please get in touch with one of the Taylor Root APAC In-house consultants (details at the back of this guide).



Australian market overview

For many General Counsels in Australia, the quality of talent in the market was of great concern.

The 2023 financial year (FY23) has been somewhat of a roller coaster in Australia, and a very different market compared to that of 12 months ago when the legal industry was witnessing unprecedented growth in hiring and compensation. The demand for exceptional talent did not stop over the preceding financial year but a cautious approach to hiring returned to the market throughout the year with interview processes lengthening and business cases scrutinised. The job market has remained strong but as the number of roles reduced, the competition to retain top talent tapered off as the year progressed reducing replacement headcount and has taken further pressure off the market.

Against this backdrop, and causing further anxiety to General Counsels, corporate law departments continue to face the brunt of pressure points involving cost control and increasing workloads.

For many General Counsels in Australia, the quality of talent in the market was of great concern with a significant increase in lawyers in their roles for 1-3 years, reflective of the historical hiring that took place in 2021/22. This was especially evident in the legal counsel 4-7 PQE cohort where lawyers with pristine track records could receive multiple offers.

Corporate structures and new market entrances continued to fuel the senior end of the market. Regulatory challenges relating to cyberattacks, data security breaches and ESG reporting requirements put further weight on the importance of a strong legal leadership team and assisted with some excellent compensation packages in the market.



Australia in-house legal salaries

Salaries are in AUD and inclusive of superannuation, exclusive of bonus.

Financial markets/investment banking

Job title	Years of experience	Salary range
Junior Legal Counsel	0-2	95,000-135,000
Legal Counsel	3-6	145,000-185,000
Senior Legal Counsel	6+	190,000-225,000
Senior Legal Counsel	10+	225,000-285,000
Senior Legal Counsel	15+	250,000-310,000
Director/Deputy GC		275,000-350,000

Private equity/venture capital

Job title	Years of experience	Salary range
Junior Legal Counsel	0-2	110,000-140,000
Legal Counsel	3-6	155,000-225,000
Senior Legal Counsel	6+	200,000-275,000
Senior Legal Counsel	10+	250,000-285,000
Senior Legal Counsel	15+	285,000-310,000
Director/Deputy GC		275,000-325,000

Funds/investment management

Job title	Years of experience	Salary range
Junior Legal Counsel	0-2	90,000-135,000
Legal Counsel	3-6	145,000-190,000
Senior Legal Counsel	6+	195,000-215,000
Senior Legal Counsel	10+	215,000-250,000
Senior Legal Counsel	15+	230,000-275,000
Director/Deputy GC		250,000-310,000

Insurance/superannuation

Job title	Years of experience	Salary range
Junior Legal Counsel	0-2	85,000-110,000
Legal Counsel	3-6	120,000-160,000
Senior Legal Counsel	6+	165,000-185,000
Senior Legal Counsel	10+	190,000-210,000
Senior Legal Counsel	15+	210,000-275,000
Director/Deputy GC		220,000-285,000

Retail banking and consumer finance

Job title	Years of experience	Salary range
Junior Legal Counsel	0-2	85,000-115,000
Legal Counsel	3-6	125,000-150,000
Senior Legal Counsel	6+	155,000-185,000
Senior Legal Counsel	10+	190,000-225,000
Senior Legal Counsel	15+	200,000-255,000
Director/Deputy GC		250,000-275,000

Construction and infrastructure

Job title	Years of experience	Salary range
Junior Legal Counsel	0-2	95,000-125,000
Legal Counsel	3-6	145,000-200,000
Senior Legal Counsel	6+	200,000-250,000
Senior Legal Counsel	10+	225,000-315,000
Senior Legal Counsel	15+	275,000-320,000
Director/Deputy GC		285,000-350,000

Energy and resources

Job title	Years of experience	Salary range
Junior Legal Counsel	0-2	85,000-125,000
Legal Counsel	3-6	135,000-185,000
Senior Legal Counsel	6+	180,000-240,000
Senior Legal Counsel	10+	225,000-315,000
Senior Legal Counsel	15+	250,000-320,000
Director/Deputy GC		250,000-350,000

Technology

Job title	Years of experience	Salary range
Junior Legal Counsel	0-2	100,000-145,000
Legal Counsel	3-6	145,000-200,000
Senior Legal Counsel	6+	185,000-250,000
Senior Legal Counsel	10+	240,000-300,000
Senior Legal Counsel	15+	250,000-315,000
Director/Deputy GC		285,000-350,000

Healthcare, medical and pharmaceuticals

Job title	Years of experience	Salary range
Junior Legal Counsel	0-2	80,000-125,000
Legal Counsel	3-6	130,000-175,000
Senior Legal Counsel	6+	170,000-235,000
Senior Legal Counsel	10+	195,000-285,000
Senior Legal Counsel	15+	200,000-285,000
Director/Deputy GC		250,000-330,000

FMCG and retail

Job title	Years of experience	Salary range
Junior Legal Counsel	0-2	80,000-115,000
Legal Counsel	3-6	130,000-185,000
Senior Legal Counsel	6+	170,000-225,000
Senior Legal Counsel	10+	195,000-250,000
Senior Legal Counsel	15+	200,000-250,000
Director/Deputy GC		225,000-330,000

Media and entertainment

Job title	Years of experience	Salary range
Junior Legal Counsel	0-2	80,000-125,000
Legal Counsel	3-6	130,000-175,000
Senior Legal Counsel	6+	170,000-225,000
Senior Legal Counsel	10+	195,000-250,000
Senior Legal Counsel	15+	200,000-250,000
Director/Deputy GC		225,000-330,000

Australia General Counsel/Head of Legal salaries

General Counsel/Head of Legal

Level	Base salary range	Variable
Band 1	250,000-350,000	15-50%
Band 2	325,000-400,000	20-50%
Band 3	375,000-500,000	35-75%
Band 4	400,000-750,000	30-100%
Band 5	750,000-1,000,000	50%

Note: Base salary inclusive of superannuation, exclusive of bonus

Singapore market overview

The legal industry saw exceptional growth throughout 2022 as the economy rebound post-pandemic.

Law firms, corporates and financial institutions alike competed for talent in a candidate-driven market. Adding to the woes of hiring managers was unprecedented salary inflation, particularly amongst junior to mid-level candidates.

Significant salary increases that originated in the international law firms had a knock-on effect to regional law firms and companies recruiting for inhouse counsel. Amidst a competitive recruitment landscape, hiring managers had to manage the narrowing salary bands within the legal team while ensuring internal equity amongst legal counsels across various levels of seniority. This remains a challenge as General Counsels must manage the delicate balance of offering competitive salaries to attract talent, whilst putting measures in place to address the potential salary imbalance.

The demand for hybrid working arrangements is a priority for candidates, with 52% of respondents stating that a flexible work from home (WFH) policy is a key consideration when evaluating a job

opportunity. Beyond compensation, companies are offering a wider range of benefits that include remote working and comprehensive health and wellness benefits. General Counsels need to take a multi-faceted approach to retention strategies as well, with an emphasis on employee engagement and satisfaction. Over 33% of lawyers highlight the importance of work-life balance in assessing job satisfaction, with career growth opportunities coming in a close second at 26%.

Looking ahead into 2023, employers are taking a cautious approach to recruitment given global headwinds and slower growth. While there's been a spotlight on retrenchments and downsizing measures amongst visible players in the technology space, there remains pockets of recruitment across various sectors. This includes demand for in-house talent in sectors including energy and commodities, life sciences, manufacturing, hospitality and travel, financial services, professional services and insurance.



Singapore in-house legal salaries

Salaries are in SGD.

Venture capital/private equity/family office

Years of experience	Salary range
NQ-2	54,000-110,000
3-5	80,000-225,000
6-8	150,000-280,000
9-11+	200,000-330,000
ED+	300,000+

Corporate and investment banking

Years of experience	Salary range
NQ-2	55,000-100,000
3-5	120,000-150,000
6-8	150,000-220,000
9-11+	180,000-255,000
SVP/Director+	250,000+

Private banking

Years of experience	Salary range
3-5	120,000-150,000
6-8	150,000-220,000
9-11	180,000-255,000
SVP/Director+	250,000+

Insurance

Years of experience	Salary range
NQ-2	48,000-80,000
3-5	65,000-150,000
6-8	135,000-220,000
9-11	180,000-255,000
ED+	250,000

Fintech

Years of experience	Salary range
NQ-2	54,000-90,000
3-5	80,000-120,000
6-8	120,000-200,000
9-11+	200,000-300,000
Head of Legal	300,000+

Energy and commodities

Years of experience	Salary range
2-4	80,000-160,000
5-7	150,000-250,000
8-10	180,000-300,000
11-15	220,000-380,000
15+	280,000-400,000+

Shipping, logistics and transportation

Years of experience	Salary range
2-4	70,000-140,000
5-7	140,000-220,000
8-10	160,000-240,000
11-15	200,000-320,000
15+	250,000-350,000+

FMCG and retail

Years of experience	Salary range
2-4	70,000-140,000
5-7	140,000-220,000
8-10	160,000-240,000
11-15	200,000-320,000
15+	250,000-350,000+

Life sciences, medical technology and healthcare

Years of experience	Salary range
2-4	80,000-160,000
3-5	150,000-250,000
6-8	180,000-300,000
9-11	220,000-380,000
15+	280,000-400,000+

Technology, media and telecommunications

Years of experience	Salary range
2-4	80,000-160,000
5-7	140,000-220,000
8-10	180,000-260,000
11-15	200,000-340,000
15+	280,000-400,000+

Real estate

Years of experience	Salary range
2-4	70,000-140,000
5-7	140,000-220,000
8-10	160,000-240,000
11-15	200,000-320,000
15+	250,000-350,000+

Tourism and travel

Years of experience	Salary range
2-4	70,000-140,000
5-7	140,000-220,000
8-10	160,000-240,000
11-15	200,000-320,000
15+	250,000-350,000+

Engineering and manufacturing

Years of experience	Salary range
2-4	70,000-140,000
5-7	140,000-220,000
8-10	160,000-250,000
11-13	200,000-300,000
15+	260,000-350,000+

General Counsel/Head of Legal salaries

Level	Base	Variable
Head of Legal	250,000-350,000	20-30%
Group Head of Legal	300,000-400,000	20-40%
APAC General Counsel	350,000-550,000	30-40%
Chief Legal Officer/Global GC	400,000-800,000	40-50%+



Hong Kong market overview

Despite ongoing challenges posed by the pandemic, rising commodity prices, and supply chain disruptions, Hong Kong's economy is expected to continue its recovery in 2023.

This is due to the lifting of Covid restrictions and the gradual reopening of borders with mainland China. Employers are now implementing expansion plans as sentiment in the market improves.

We have seen a significant increase in demand for technology, media and telecommunications (TMT), finance, data privacy, employment and corporate governance lawyers since the third quarter of 2022. Banks, trading firms, real estate developers, technology and e-commerce companies have resumed hiring in Hong Kong, and this trend is expected to continue in the first half of 2023. Chinese institutions are also likely to ramp up their expansion plans following the reopening of mainland China.

As we adjust to the “new normal” in the workplace, the effects of the pandemic are becoming more

apparent. “Work flexibility” is now a top consideration for legal professionals when evaluating job offers, alongside factors such as career progression, compensation and international exposure.

Employers who can offer flexibility have an advantage in the candidate driven market. Financial institutions and international law firms tend to be more open to hybrid work models, while local conglomerates prefer in office work. Candidates prefer employers to be transparent about working arrangements.

Overall, Hong Kong's legal landscape has undergone fundamental changes due to technology adoption and hybrid work models. The job market will remain competitive as employers compete for top legal talent in the year ahead.



Hong Kong in-house legal salaries

Salaries are in HKD.

Banking and financial services

Years of experience	Salary range
1-2	700,000-1,105,000
3-4	900,000-1,300,000
5-6	1,200,000-1,700,000
7-8	1,440,000-1,920,000
9-10	1,650,000-2,100,000
10+	1,800,000+
Head of Legal/Director	2,200,000+
Chief Legal Officer	2,600,000+

Corporate and commercial

Years of experience	Salary range
1-2	600,000-840,000
3-4	660,000-960,000
5-6	780,000-1,320,000
7-8	1,000,000-1,500,000
9-10	1,100,000-1,700,000
10+	1,300,000+
Head of Legal/Director	1,500,000+
Chief Legal Officer	1,800,000+

Mainland China market overview

With the lifting of Covid restrictions and government support and incentives, China's economic growth in 2023 is expected to be led by several key industries - tourism, new energy vehicles, online shopping, software development and healthcare.

This will lead to an increase in legal hiring needs. However, geopolitical issues have affected the technology sector, with the strategic importance of semiconductors leading to less legal hiring in this industry and heightened scrutiny of deals in 2022. This has also led to less legal hiring by private equity and venture capital funds, who are looking to reduce their exposure to Chinese assets and are turning to other Southeast Asian countries to invest their capital.

Antitrust has been a particular focus in China, with the anti-monopoly law strengthened in June 2022 to grant new powers to the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR). As a result, we have seen an increase in legal and compliance positions created

in this area in the second half of 2022 and expect this trend to continue in 2023.

Candidates are more motivated to seek better roles externally, but they are still cautious about making a move. The rate of turning down new offers or taking counter offers to stay has increased by 50%, and we foresee the rate to remain the same in 2023.

The cost of hiring senior legal talents in China continues to increase and companies are expected to offer a salary increase of 15% to 30% with additional cash or non-cash benefits to attract competitive candidates in the market.



Mainland China in-house legal salaries

Salaries are in RMB and are listed as a package, which includes both base salary and bonus

Banking and financial services

Years of experience	Salary range (RMB)
NQ	120,000-150,000
1-2	150,000-200,000
3-4	170,000-300,000
5-6	250,000-500,000
7-8	450,000-800,000
9-10	600,000-1,200,000
10+	700,000-1,500,000
Head of Legal/Director	800,000-3,500,000

Commerce and industry

Years of experience	Salary range (RMB)
NQ	120,000-150,000
1-2	130,000-180,000
3-4	150,000-300,000
5-6	250,000-500,000
7-8	400,000-800,000
9-10	600,000-1,200,000
10+	700,000-1,500,000
Head of Legal/Director	900,000-3,500,000

Meet the team

Contact one of our expert consultants – they have an extensive understanding of every global market that we cover.

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About Taylor Root

We are a global legal, risk and compliance search and recruitment consultancy and have been a market leader for more than 30 years.

We help global law firms and businesses to build and expand their legal, risk, compliance and corporate governance functions. Whether you're hiring your first In-house Counsel, expanding your associate team in a certain practice area or expanding your risk department internationally, we partner with businesses at every step of your journey.

Our services include contingent and retained search, permanent, temporary and interim recruitment as well as consultancy solutions.

Wherever we operate we have made an impact, from Düsseldorf to Dubai, New York to Shanghai or Milan to Melbourne. From pioneering specialist recruitment in particular locations, to shaping how our clients have approached hiring, our influence is evident everywhere.

Today, we have 16 international offices - a truly global network of search and recruitment experts. Put simply, no one can match our global reach, or our history.



