

# 2008 Profile of the Solicitors of NSW

7 January 2009





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Prepared for the Law Society of  
NSW

170 Phillip St

Sydney NSW 2000

7 January 2009

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## Snapshot of Solicitors in 2008

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On the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2008:

- 22,105 solicitors held current NSW Practising Certificates
- 9,845 of solicitors in NSW were female (44.5%)
- 12,260 of solicitors in NSW were male (55.5%)
- 15,533 solicitors worked in private practice (70.3%)
- 2,520 solicitors worked in government (11.4%)
- 4,045 solicitors worked in corporations (18.3%)
- 11,696 solicitors worked in the Sydney CBD (52.9%)
- 6,456 solicitors worked in the suburbs of Sydney (29.2%)
- 2,877 solicitors worked in country areas of NSW (13.0%)
- there were 4,410 private law firms
- there were 148 government employers
- there were 1,202 corporate employers
- 24.6% of NSW solicitors in private practice (3,583) worked in firms with 40 or more partners
- 17.6% of solicitors working in private practice (2,555) worked in firms with between 2 and 4 partners
- 38.6% of solicitors in private practice (5,624) worked in sole practitioner firms
- sole practitioner firms constituted 85.4% of all firms
- firms with more than 20 partners constituted 0.5% of all firms
- the average age of NSW solicitors was 41.3 years, with half of the profession (50.1%) aged under 40 years
- 12.4% of solicitors had been admitted for less than one year
- 34.9% of solicitors had been admitted for 5 years or less.

In the twelve months since October 2007:

- the profession grew by 4.0%
- the number of female solicitors increased by 6.1%
- the number of male solicitors increased by 2.4%
- 2,751 solicitors were issued with a Practising Certificate for the first time; 40.3% of these were male and 59.7% were female.

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# 1 Introduction

## The Role of the Law Society

The Law Society of New South Wales is the professional association representing the solicitors of New South Wales. The Law Society has two primary responsibilities: it acts as the licensing and regulatory authority by maintaining professional standards of conduct as well as investigating complaints against solicitors; it also represents the interests of its members. The role of the Society is summarised by the objectives set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association, which include:

- to consider, originate and promote reform and improvements in the law;
- to remedy defects in the administration of justice;
- to make improvements in administration of legal practice;
- to represent generally the views of the profession;
- to preserve its integrity and status;
- to suppress dishonourable conduct or practices; and
- to consider and deal with all matters affecting the professional interests of members of the Society.

The Law Society is governed by an elected Council. The Council provides policy directions for the Law Society. It is assisted by a network of committees made up of volunteers from the profession and the public. Further information about the Law Society can be found on the Law Society's web page at <http://www.lawsociety.com.au>.

## Objectives

The purpose of this report is two-fold:

- to collate and analyse information about the demographic profile of the practising profession in 2008; and
- to identify and monitor any trends in composition and profile by comparing this year's data with information from previous years.

## Methodology

The information contained in this report is obtained from two sources. The first is the *annual census data* drawn from the Law Society's database on 1 October (or nearest working day) each year.

As the profession fluctuates over the course of the year, the Law Society uses October data to measure the profession for the reporting year, since October is the most stable month. While the Law Society has retained the records of solicitors for many years, this report relies on information collected and stored in the Law Society database since 1988. From that year forward, the coding of information has been reliable and consistent. The data used in this report were drawn from the database on 1 October 2008. This information relates only to those solicitors who held a current Practising Certificate on that day. It should be noted here that in 2008 on the day that the data drop occurred, there were 30 Solicitors with Practising Certificates Pending (who had applied for but had not been granted one at that stage). As such they were not included in the Totals for Practising Solicitors. They were however included in the age, active admissions and regional data.

There may be many people in NSW who are working in law-related fields (some of whom hold law qualifications and may have been admitted to practice) who do not need to hold a Practising Certificate. Information about people working in these occupations is not collected or reported by the Law Society. The information contained in this report does not include interstate solicitors practising in New South Wales under the national practising scheme.

The second source of information for this report is the *Annual Practising Certificate Survey* that the Law Society has conducted since 1993/94. Each year, as part of the Practising Certificate renewal process, solicitors are invited to complete a voluntary survey. In addition to collecting a range of demographic

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data, the survey also gathers information about dominant areas of practice, income, hours of work and other issues relevant to the professional lives of solicitors. Response rates to the survey have typically been around 35-50% of all practising solicitors in NSW. Some of the results of these surveys are described in this report. The Practising Certificate survey and the data collected from it are anonymous. The Law Society does not and cannot link the information collected through the surveys to individual solicitors or the organisations for whom they work.

Separate volumes of the Practising Certificate survey reports are available to members of the Law Society on request. Monthly updates on the Law Society's solicitor statistics are published on the Law Society web site at <http://www.lawsociety.com.au>.

## Further information

For further information about this report and other statistical information held by the Law Society please contact:

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## 2 Gender and Growth

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2008 there were 22,105 solicitors with current New South Wales Practising Certificates. Of these, 9,845 (44.5%) were female and 12,260 (55.5%) were male. Figures from 1988 to 2008 for the number of solicitors in NSW by gender are given in Table 2.1.

Since 1988, the profession has grown by 125.4% (from 9,808 to 22,105), with an average annual growth rate of 4.2%. The number of female solicitors rose by 397.5% during the same time period (from 1,979 to 9,845). The number of male solicitors grew by only 56.6% (from 7,829 to 12,260).

The growth rate between 2007 and 2008 was 4.0%, with the number of female solicitors rising by 6.1% and male solicitors by 2.4%. The *average annual* growth rate for female solicitors since 1988 has been 8.4%, and 2.3% for males.

Figure 2.1 compares the number of male and female solicitors since 1988, while Figure 2.2 compares the annual growth rate over the same period.

Table 2.1 – Gender and growth, 1988-2008

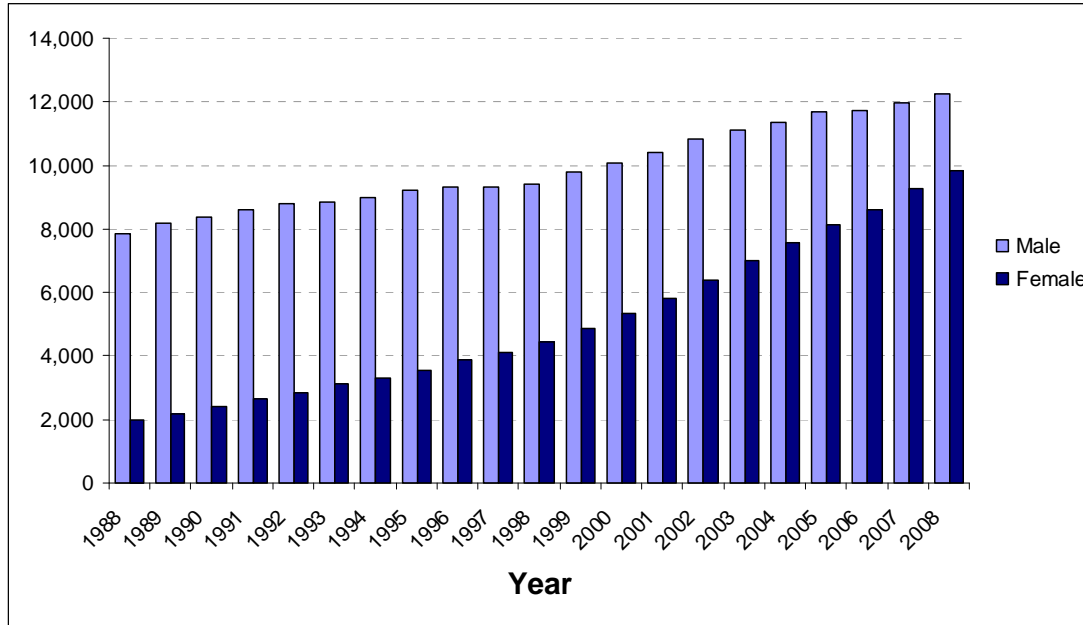
Year	Male		Female		Total
	n	%	n	%	n
1988	7,829	79.8%	1,979	20.2%	9,808
1989	8,197	78.9%	2,196	21.1%	10,393
1990	8,393	77.8%	2,398	22.2%	10,791
1991	8,596	76.5%	2,634	23.5%	11,230
1992	8,801	75.6%	2,837	24.4%	11,638
1993	8,859	74.1%	3,098	25.9%	11,957
1994	8,992	73.2%	3,291	26.8%	12,283
1995	9,243	72.2%	3,554	27.8%	12,797
1996	9,331	70.7%	3,868	29.3%	13,199
1997	9,310	69.4%	4,099	30.6%	13,409
1998	9,414	67.9%	4,457	32.1%	13,871
1999	9,777	66.8%	4,866	33.2%	14,643
2000	10,060	65.4%	5,322	34.6%	15,382
2001	10,417	64.2%	5,803	35.8%	16,220
2002	10,815	62.9%	6,374	37.1%	17,189
2003	11,112	61.4%	6,980	38.6%	18,092
2004	11,368	60.0%	7,566	40.0%	18,934
2005	11,677	58.9%	8,132	41.1%	19,809
2006	11,712	57.6%	8,618	42.4%	20,330



<b>2007</b>	11,974	56.3%	9,281	43.7%	21,255
<b>2008</b>	12,260	55.5%	9,845	44.5%	22,105

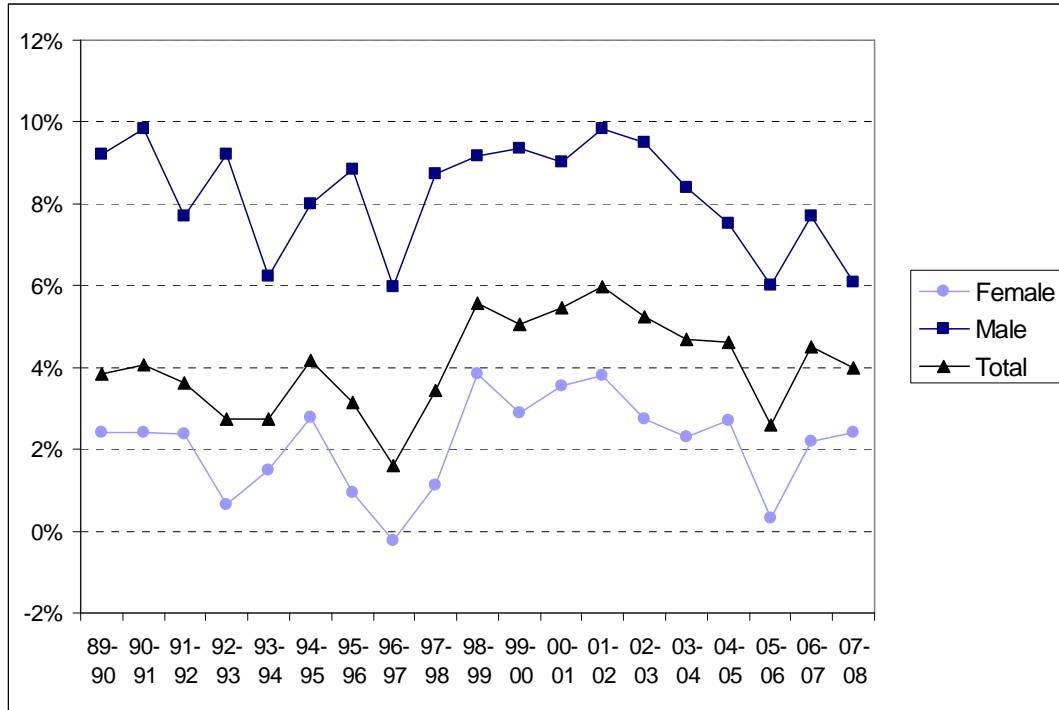
Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008

Figure 2.1 – Number of Solicitors 1988 - 2008



Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008

Figure 2.2 – Annual growth rates, 1988-2008



Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008

### 3 Age

The average age of NSW solicitors in 2008 was 41.3 years. As in previous years, female solicitors tended to be younger than males, with an approximate average age in 2008 of 36.8 years, compared to the male average of 44.8 years.

Half of all solicitors in NSW were aged under 40 years (50.1%).

The largest age group for both female and male solicitors was 30 to 39 years (16.0% of females, 14.1% of males) however there were greater numbers of male solicitors than female solicitors in the age groups 40 to 49, 50 to 59 and over 60. Females outnumbered males among those aged under 25, 25 to 29 and 30 to 34 (see Figure 3.1).

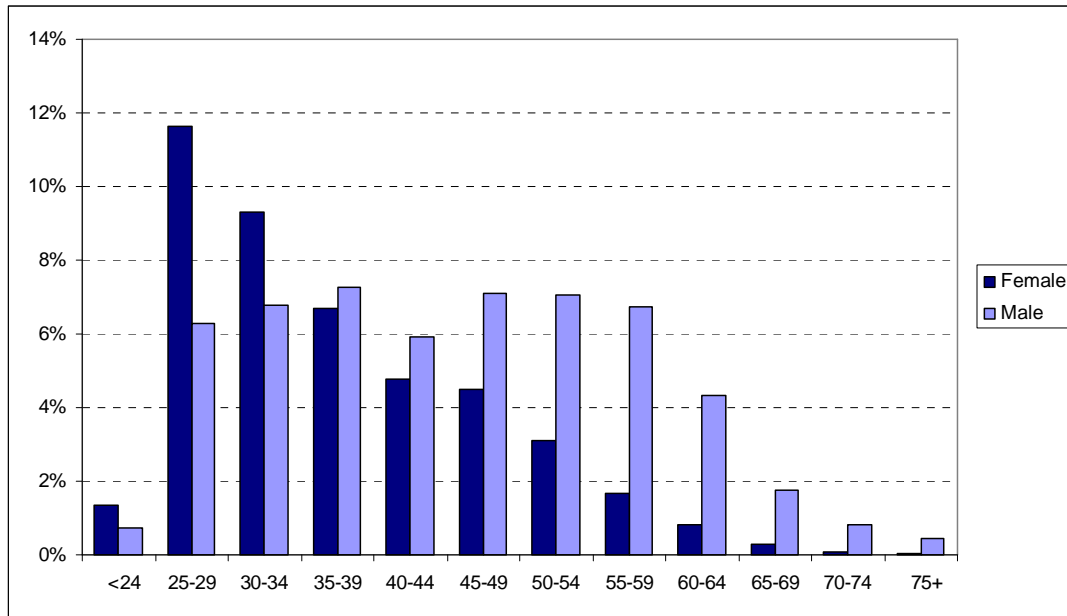
Table 3.1 shows the age profile of solicitors in 2008 by gender.

Table 3.1 – Age profile of solicitors in 2008

Age	Male		Female		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
29 years or less	1549	7.0	2880	13.0	4429	20.0
30-39 years	3112	14.1	3547	16.0	6659	30.1
40-49 years	2885	13.0	2053	9.3	4938	22.3
50-59 years	3056	13.8	1055	4.8	4111	18.6
60-69 years	1343	6.1	240	1.1	1583	7.2
70-74 years	180	0.8	17	0.1	197	0.9
75+	103	0.5	12	0.1	115	0.5
No response	44	0.2	59	0.3	103	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,272</b>	<b>55.4</b>	<b>9,863</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>22,135</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008. Note: The total number of solicitors included in age statistics includes 30 solicitors who had not been granted their Practising Certificate as of yet.

Figure 3.1 – Age profile of solicitors in 2008 by gender



Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008

## 4 Years since Admission

In the year ending 1 October 2008, 2,751 solicitors were issued with a Practising Certificate for the first time. Of these, 40.3% were male and 59.7% were female. This gender difference has increased in recent years (38.9% male and 61.1% female in 2007, 41.5% male and 58.5% female in 2006).

*Years since admission* figures measure the number of years since solicitors were admitted in NSW as at the date on which the data were extracted from the Law Society database (1 October 2008). They do not take account of any breaks in practice when a solicitor may not have renewed a Practising Certificate, nor of solicitors not practising for a period but continuing to hold a Practising Certificate (for example during parental leave or an extended period overseas).

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2008:

- more than a third of the profession (34.9%) had been admitted for 5 years or less;
- over a quarter (28.6%) had been admitted for 6 to 14 years; and
- a third (36.4%) had been admitted for 15 years or more.

Of all solicitors, 54.6% were admitted in the past 10 years.

The changing gender profile of the profession is reflected in the fact that more female solicitors than males were admitted in the past 10 years. Of all female solicitors, 69.0% have been admitted in the last 10 years, while this is true of only 43.1% of all male solicitors. Among those admitted for 11 years or more, 56.9% are male and only 31.0% are female. These findings are summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 – Years since admission in 2008

	Male		Female		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<1 year	1109	9.0	1642	16.6	2751	12.4
1-5 years	2059	16.8	2927	29.7	4986	22.5
6-10 years	2126	17.3	2238	22.7	4364	19.7
11-14 years	1025	8.4	948	9.6	1973	8.9
15+ years	5953	48.5	2108	21.4	8061	36.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,272</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9,863</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>22,135</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008. Note: The total number of solicitors included in age statistics includes 30 solicitors who had not been granted their Practising Certificate as of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008.

## 5 Country of Birth

Country of birth data, accessed on 1 October 2008 shows that the majority of solicitors practising in NSW (74.0%) were born in Australia, with 61.5% born in NSW.

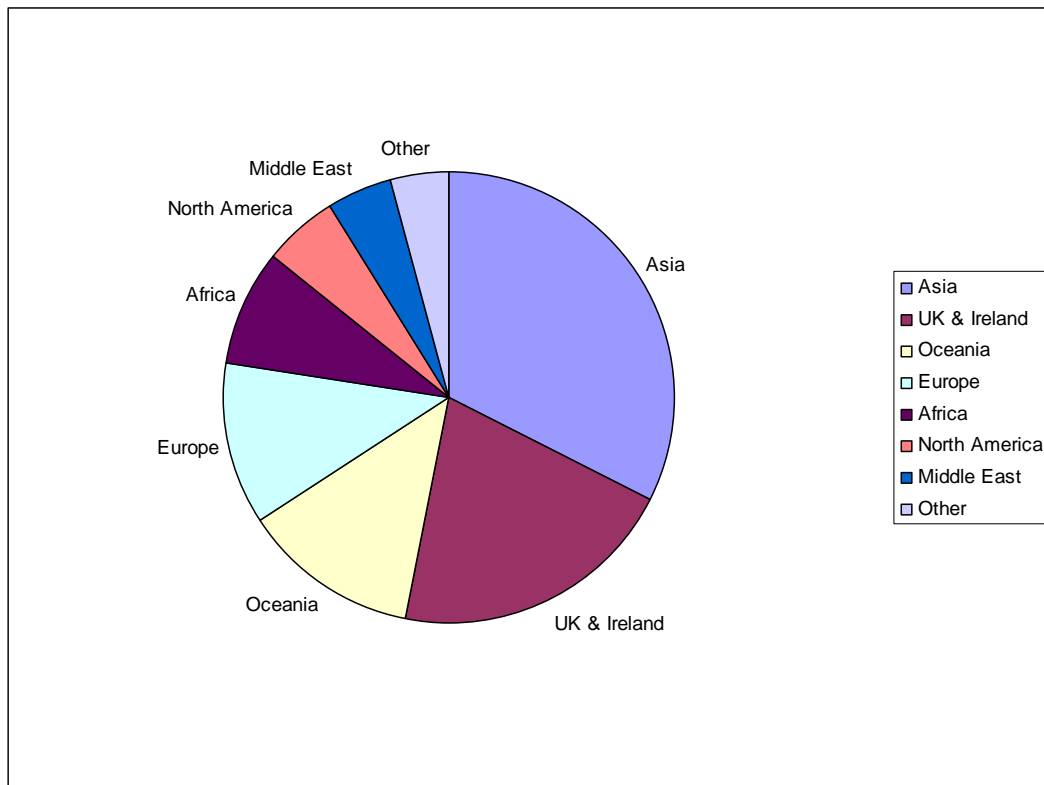
The majority of solicitors born overseas were either from Asian countries (31.8%) or from the UK and Ireland (19.8%). These figures have remained reasonably consistent since 2001, although there continues to be a slight increase in the number of solicitors born in Asian countries (up from 26.8% in 2001) and a decrease in those born in the UK and Ireland (down from 24.7% in 2001). Relevant data are set out in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1.

Table 5.1 – Country of birth from 2001-2008 (as % of total born overseas)

Region	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Asia	26.8	28.3	29.7	31.8	30.1	30.3	31.2	31.8
UK & Ireland	24.7	23.6	23.3	22.0	21.0	20.9	20.3	19.8
Oceania	14.6	14.5	14.1	13.8	12.7	12.8	12.7	12.7
Europe	14.8	14.4	13.0	12.2	11.2	11.3	11.5	11.3
Africa	8.5	8.6	8.7	8.9	8.4	8.5	8.3	8.2
North America	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.9
Middle East	3.9	3.8	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.6
South & Central America	1.3	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.3
Former USSR & Baltic States	0.8	0.8	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.1
Unknown	-	-	-	-	5.1	4.7	4.4	4.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008.

Figure 5.1 – Country of birth for overseas-born solicitors in 2008



Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008. Note: Countries have been classified according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC) (Catalogue reference 1269.0)

## 6 Location

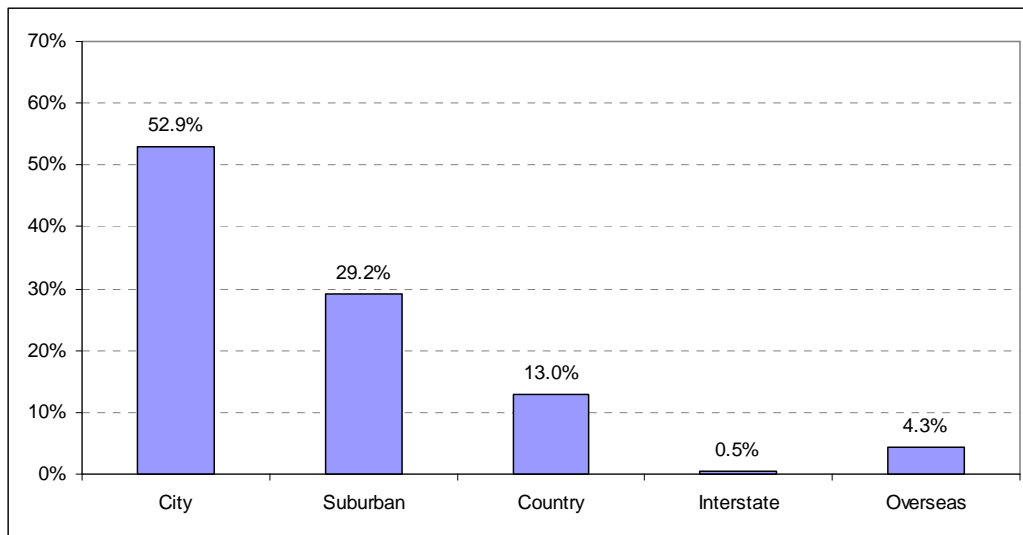
### Location of Workplaces

As at 1 October 2008, over half of the profession (52.9%) were practising within the Sydney CBD.

The proportion of solicitors working in the CBD has increased since 1988 (49.9%), but in the last few years has remained relatively stable. Over the same period there has been a steady decline in the proportion of solicitors practising in rural areas, from 16.7% down to 13.0%.

Figure 6.1 shows the geographical breakdown for practitioners in 2008, while Tables 6.1 and 6.2 provide figures on practitioners' locations from 1988 to 2008.

Figure 6.1 – Geographical profile in 2008



Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008



Table 6.1 – Location of solicitors 1988-2008 (number)

Number							
Year	City	Suburban	Rural	Interstate	Overseas	Unknown	TOTAL
1988	4862	2583	1631	628	45	4	9753
1989	5277	2632	1704	729	49	2	10393
1990	5480	2772	1718	760	57	4	10791
1991	5691	2879	1827	761	70	2	11230
1992	5596	3072	1878	767	323	2	11638
1993	5788	3328	1925	822	94	0	11957
1994	6006	3426	1946	813	90	2	12283
1995	6279	3534	1992	890	102	0	12797
1996	6558	3640	2031	858	112	0	13199
1997	6815	3766	2064	658	106	0	13409
1998	7281	3930	2134	397	128	1	13871
1999	7775	4149	2195	376	148	0	14643
2000	8455	4163	2220	373	170	1	15382
2001	9036	4270	2268	384	261	1	16220
2002	9550	4548	2313	428	338	3	17189
2003	9972	4923	2474	360	363	0	18092
2004	10216	5358	2580	392	386	2	18934
2005	10564	5693	2708	412	432	0	19809
2006	10,862	5,929	2,772	131	633	3	20,330
2007	11,309	6,220	2,822	109	794	1	21,255
<b>2008</b>	<b>11,696</b>	<b>6,456</b>	<b>2,877</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>22,105</b>

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008

Table 6.2 – Location of solicitors 1988-2008 (percentage)

Percentage							
Year	City	Suburban	Rural	Interstate	Overseas	Unknown	TOTAL
1988	49.9	26.5	16.7	6.4	0.5	<0.1	100.0
1989	50.8	25.3	16.4	7.0	0.5	<0.1	100.0
1990	50.8	25.7	15.9	7.0	0.5	<0.1	100.0
1991	50.7	25.6	16.3	6.8	0.6	<0.1	100.0
1992	48.1	26.4	16.1	6.6	2.8	<0.1	100.0
1993	48.4	27.8	16.1	6.9	0.8	0.0	100.0
1994	48.9	27.9	15.8	6.6	0.7	<0.1	100.0
1995	49.1	27.6	15.6	7.0	0.8	0.0	100.0
1996	49.7	27.6	15.4	6.5	0.8	0.0	100.0
1997	50.8	28.1	15.4	4.9	0.8	0.0	100.0
1998	52.5	28.3	15.4	2.9	0.9	<0.1	100.0
1999	53.1	28.3	15.0	2.6	1.0	0.0	100.0
2000	55.0	27.1	14.4	2.4	1.1	<0.1	100.0
2001	55.7	26.3	14.0	2.4	1.6	<0.1	100.0
2002	55.6	26.5	13.5	2.5	2.0	<0.1	100.0
2003	55.1	27.2	13.7	2.0	2.0	0.0	100.0
2004	54.0	28.3	13.6	2.1	2.0	<0.1	100.0
2005	53.3	28.7	13.7	2.1	2.2	<0.1	100.0
2006	53.4	29.2	13.6	0.6	3.1	<0.1	100.0
2007	53.2	29.3	13.3	0.5	3.7	0.0	100.0
<b>2008</b>	<b>52.9</b>	<b>29.2</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008

## Location of Private Law Firms

Since 1997 the Law Society has tracked the location of *private law firms*. The trend for increasing numbers of firms to be located in Sydney's suburbs continues to rise. In 2008, half of all law firms (53.2%) were located in the Sydney suburbs - an increase from 2007 (52.6%) and 2006 (51.8%). Of the remaining firms, just under a quarter (23.2%) were located in the CBD, while 22.6% were in regional and rural NSW. These figures are shown in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 – Location of private firms 1997-2008

		1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>City</b>	n	793	807	828	863	880	895	911	983	1024	1039	1020	<b>1024</b>
	%	24.3	24.2	24.1	24.9	24.7	24.4	24.5	24.2	24.3	24.4	23.7	<b>23.2</b>
<b>Suburban</b>	n	1550	1615	1691	1700	1746	1798	1873	2083	2143	2208	2268	<b>2344</b>
	%	47.6	48.5	49.2	49.1	49.1	49.1	50.3	51.2	50.8	51.8	52.6	<b>53.2</b>
<b>Country</b>	n	747	775	793	784	817	829	852	908	953	963	972	<b>997</b>
	%	22.9	23.3	23.1	22.6	23.0	22.6	22.9	22.3	22.6	22.6	22.6	<b>22.6</b>
<b>Interstate*</b>	n	158	125	115	109	104	118	67	70	76	29	29	<b>25</b>
	%	4.9	3.8	3.3	3.1	2.9	3.2	1.8	1.7	1.8	0.7	0.7	<b>0.6</b>
<b>Overseas</b>	n	9	9	9	6	11	22	21	23	21	20	19	<b>20</b>
	%	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.4	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Unknown</b>	n	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
	%	0.0	0.0	0.0	<0.1	0.0	0.0	<0.1	<0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	n	3257	3331	3436	3463	3558	3662	3725	4068	4217	4259	4308	<b>4410</b>

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008. Note: the decline in interstate firms is due to the introduction of the national Practising Certificate regime and changes to the way interstate firms are coded on the NSW Law Society's data base.

### *Firms with 21-39 partners and 40 or more partners*

Data collected for the 2008/09 Practising Certificate survey provided information on the location of firms with 21 to 39 partners, and with 40+ partners. By contrast with the numbers of smaller firms located in Sydney's suburbs:

- 93.5% of firms with 21-39 partners and 90.0% of firms with 40+ partners, were located in the CBD; and
- 6.7% of firms with more than 40+ partners were located outside of NSW.

These results are almost identical to those from the 2007/08 Practising Certificate survey.

## 7 Employment Sector

The majority of solicitors in NSW (70.3%) continue to work in private practice. Of the other major sectors of the profession, 18.3% are corporate solicitors and 11.4% are government solicitors. Table 7.1 provides a snapshot of NSW solicitors working in the private, government and corporate sectors.

Table 7.1 – Solicitors in private, government and corporate practice

	Private (%)	Government (%)	Corporate (%)
<b>Total</b>	70.3 of total	11.4 of total	18.3 of total
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	60.4	39.1	46.9
Female	39.6	61.0	53.1
<b>Level of Employment *</b>			
Full-time	85.6	85.9	85.1
Part-time	13.4	13.6	13.8
Other	0.5	0.2	0.8
<b>Location</b>			
City	52.6	60.7	49.1
Sydney suburbs	29.2	25.5	31.3
Country NSW	15.9	12.2	2.4
Interstate	0.4	1.0	0.7
Overseas	1.8	0.5	16.4
<b>Age</b>			
Under 30	20.8	17.7	18.5
30-39	26.3	29.8	44.9
40-49	21.3	26.5	23.7
50-59	20.3	20.9	10.6
60-69	9.1	4.1	1.6
70+	1.9	0.4	0.2
<b>Years Since Admission</b>			
Less than 1	13.8	9.5	9.0
1-5	20.4	26.7	28.4
6-10	17.2	20.7	28.9
11-14	8.1	10.2	11.3
15 or more	40.7	33.0	22.3
<b>Estimated mean income*</b>			
	\$94,800	\$86,700	\$123,900

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008. \*Data taken from the 2008/9 Practising Certificate Survey. Note: The total number of solicitors included in age and years since admission statistics includes 30 solicitors who had not been granted their Practising Certificate as of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008.

As Table 7.2 indicates, there are variations in terms of gender across the different sectors of the profession. The percentage of females working in the government and corporate sectors is higher than the percentage of males, while males are more strongly represented than women in private practice.

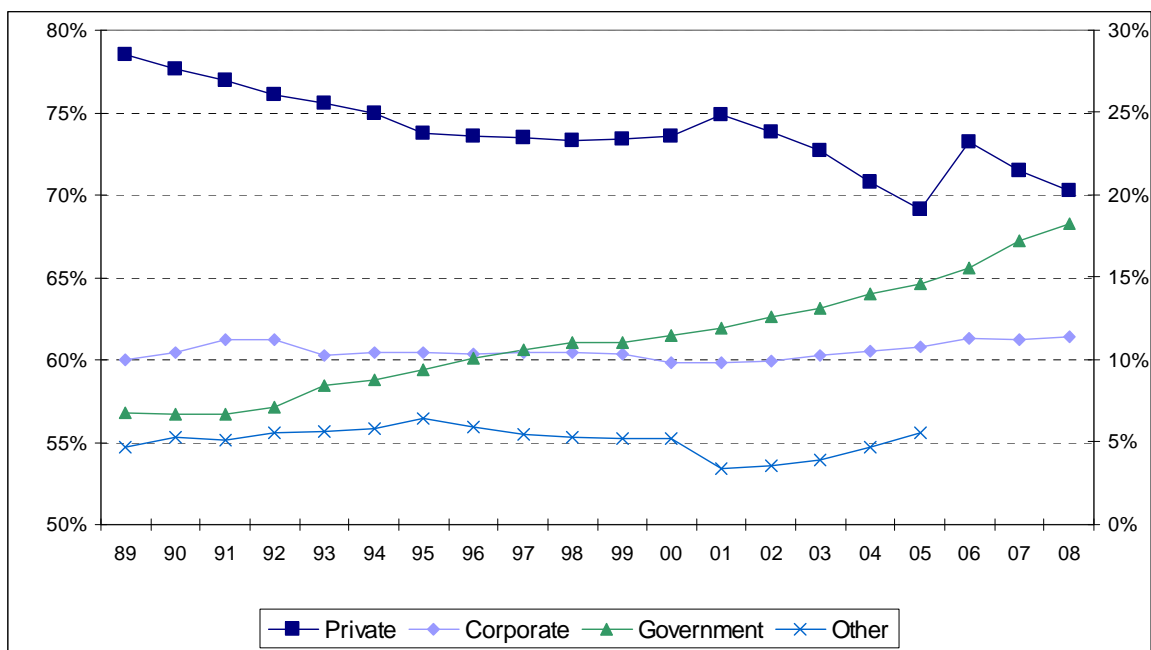
Table 7.2 – Gender by employment sector

Sector	Female		Male		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Private	6158	62.5	9375	76.5	15,533	70.3
Government	1536	15.6	984	8.0	2520	11.4
Corporate	2147	21.8	1898	15.5	4045	18.3
Invalid	4	0.0	3	0.0	7	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,845</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>12,260</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>22,105</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008

The proportion of all solicitors working in private firms has decreased over the period since 1988 (78.1% down to 70.3%), although the actual *number* of solicitors in private practice has increased. Since 1988 there have been large increases in the proportion of solicitors working in the corporate sector (6.7% in 1998, 18.3% 2008), while the proportion of solicitors working in government has remained fairly steady (10.3% in 1998, 11.4% 2008). Figure 7.1 illustrates the proportion of solicitors in each sector since 1988.

Figure 7.1 – Employment in each sector, 1988-2008<sup>1</sup>



Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008

<sup>1</sup> These sectors include those who are unemployed and solicitors with no current practising details. Prior to May 2006 these solicitors were included in the 'Other' category. If a person has a multiple status (ie works for a company or government as well as private practice), it will be the private practice status that is shown in the statistics.

## 8 Diversity in the Profession

### Women

As at October 2008, female solicitors made up 44.5% of the practising profession in NSW. The number of female solicitors entering the profession for the first time continues to increase. In the year ending 1 October 2008, 59.7% of solicitors entering the profession for the first time were women, up from 58.5% in 2007. Table 8.1 provides further details on female solicitors.

Table 8.1 – Female solicitors in 2008

	Female practitioners (n)	Female practitioners (%)	Whole Profession (%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,845</b>	<b>44.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Mode of Employment *</b>			
Full time	-	78.2	84.4
Part time	-	19.8	13.7
Other	-	1.3	1.4
<b>Employment Sector</b>			
Private	6,158	62.5	70.3
Government	1,536	15.6	11.4
Corporate	2,147	21.8	18.3
Other	4	-	-
<b>Private Practitioners</b>			
Partners	598	9.7	19.9
Sole Practitioners	792	12.9	23.7
Employees	4768	77.4	56.4
Total	6158	100.0	100.0
<b>Size of Law Firm</b>			
Sole Practitioner	1691	30.3	38.6
2-4 Partners	830	14.9	17.6
5-10 Partners	487	8.7	8.1
11-20 Partners	348	6.2	5.2
21-39 Partners	408	7.3	5.8
40+ Partners	1816	32.5	24.6
Total	5,580	100.0	100.0
<b>Years since Admission</b>			
< 1 year	1642	16.6	12.4
1-5 years	2927	29.7	22.5
6-10 years	2238	22.7	19.7
11-14 years	948	9.6	8.9
15+ years	2108	21.4	36.4
<b>Age (approximate average)</b>	34.6 years		41.2 years
<b>Estimated mean income*</b>	\$86,800		\$96,900

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008. \*Data taken from the 2008/09 Practising Certificate survey. Note: The total number of solicitors included in years since admission statistics includes 18 solicitors who had not been granted their Practising Certificate as of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008. The approximate average age is based on multiplying the total of each age group with each group's midpoint, which are totalled and then divided by the total number of females. Note this figure is an estimate as assumptions have been made with <24 and >75 age groups.

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## Indigenous Solicitors

In the 2008/09 Practising Certificate survey, 32 solicitors (0.4% of respondents) identified themselves as Aboriginal, and 12 (0.2%) as Torres Strait Islanders. Among the 44 Indigenous respondents:

- 18 were male
- 27 worked in private practice
- 15 were employees
- 4 were partners
- 6 were sole practitioners
- 7 worked in government
- 8 worked in corporate firms.

## 9 Private Practice

As at 1 October 2008, 70.3% of the profession worked in private law firms. This section presents a profile of the profession working in the private sector.

### Individuals

Table 9.1 summarises information about solicitors working in private law firms.

Table 9.1 – Solicitors in private law firms

	Solicitors in Private Practice		Whole Profession
	n	%	%
<b>Total</b>	15,533	70.3	100
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	9375	60.4	55.5
Female	6158	39.6	44.5
<b>Mode of Employment*</b>			
Full time	-	85.6	84.4
Part time	-	13.4	13.7
Other	-	0.5	1.4
<b>Location</b>			
City	8180	52.7	52.9
Suburbs	4539	29.2	29.2
Rural NSW	2471	15.9	13.0
Interstate	60	0.4	0.5
Overseas	282	1.8	4.3
Unknown	1	0.0	0.0
<b>Age</b>			
<29 years	3234	20.8	20.0
30-39 years	4088	26.3	30.1
40-49 years	3311	21.3	22.3
50-59 years	3157	20.3	18.6
60-69 years	1411	9.1	7.2
70-74 years	181	1.2	0.9
75+ years	112	0.7	0.5
N/A	68	0.4	0.5
<b>Years Since Admission</b>			
< 1 year	2145	13.8	12.4
1-5 years	3165	20.3	22.5
6-10 years	2671	17.2	19.7
11-14 years	1257	8.1	8.9
15+ years	6324	40.6	36.4
<b>Estimated mean income*</b>	\$94,800		\$96,900

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008. \* Data taken from the 2008/2009 Practising Certificate Survey. Note: The total number of solicitors included in age and years since admission statistics includes 29 solicitors who had not been granted their Practising Certificate as of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008 not included in the total above.



## Firm Size

In October 2008 there were 4,410 private law firms operating in NSW. The bulk of these (85.4%) were sole practitioner firms (firms with one principal). Of the remainder:

- 538 firms (12.2% of the total) had 2-4 partners
- 68 firms (1.5% of the total) had 5-10 partners
- 16 firms (0.4% of the total) had 11-20 partners
- 9 firms (0.2% of the total) had 21-39 partners
- 13 firms (0.3% of the total) had 40 or more partners.

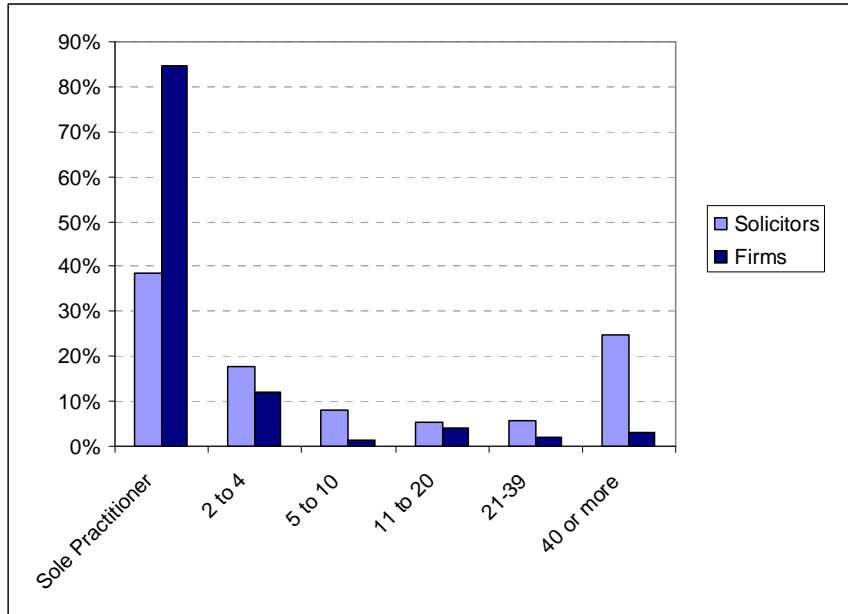
Table 9.2 lists the number of partners and employees in each category of firm, while Figure 9.1 compares the proportion of firms in each category with the proportion of solicitors working for each type of firm.

Table 9.2 – Firm profile 2008

Number of Partners	Firms		Partners		Employees		All Solicitors in Private Practice	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
40 or more	13	0.3	918	13.3	2669	34.2	3583	24.6
21 to 39	9	0.2	259	3.8	597	7.7	851	5.8
11 to 20	16	0.4	228	3.3	538	6.9	762	5.2
5 to 10	68	1.5	438	6.4	744	9.5	1181	8.1
2 to 4	538	12.2	1269	18.5	1328	17.0	2555	17.6
Sole Practitioner	3766	85.4	3766	54.8	1917	24.6	5624	38.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>4410</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6878</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>7793</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14556*</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008. \*This figure does not equate with the total number of private practitioners indicated in Table 9.1 because it is derived from data incorporating solicitors with *dual status* – that is, those with more than one employer. It also includes solicitors working interstate and overseas, as well as those with a pending Practising Certificate, which the figure in Table 9.1 does not.

Figure 9.1 – Firm size vs solicitors in each firm type (percentages)



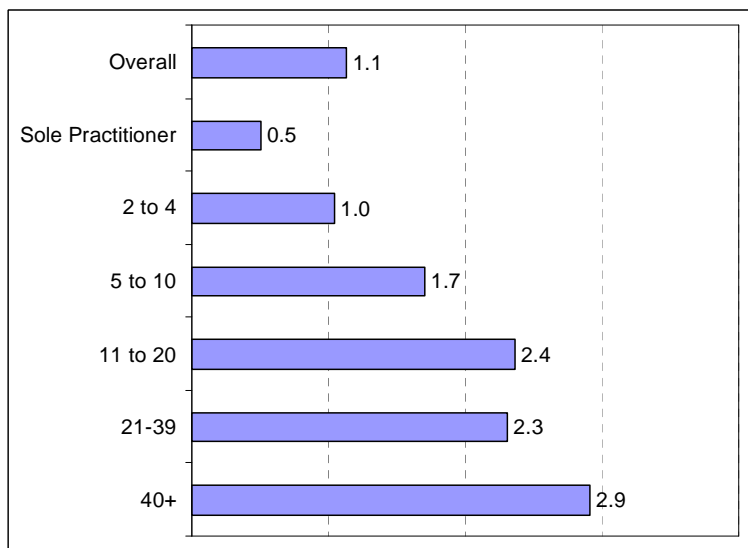
Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008

Since 1988, there has been a marked increase in the number of sole practitioner firms and of firms with 21 or more partners, and a decline in medium sized firms. Since 1988, the total number of firms operating in NSW has increased by 74%.

### Staff to principal ratios

Staff to principal ratios within the private profession vary by size of firm. In firms with a sole practitioner there is a ratio of 0.5 employed solicitors for every principal. Figure 9.2 shows employee/principle ratios for different firm sizes.

Figure 9.2 – Ratio of employed solicitors to principals



Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008

## Gender profile in private firms

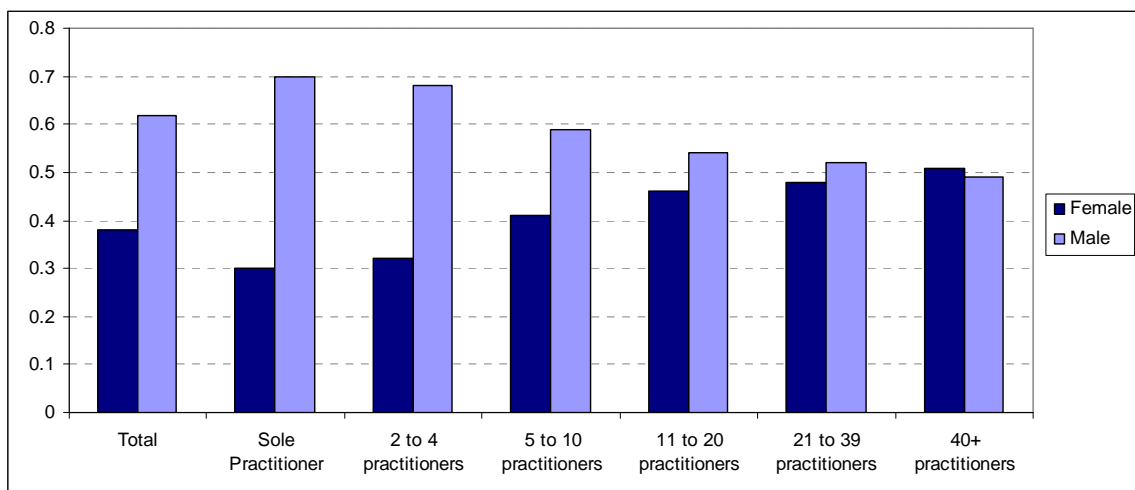
There are significant differences in gender terms among firms of different sizes. Female solicitors are more frequently found in larger firms, whereas male solicitors are strongly represented in smaller firms (or firms with 40 or more partners), as seen below in Table 9.3. Figure 9.3 illustrates the gender breakdown in law firms of different sizes.

Table 9.3 – Gender profile of employees and principals in private firms

		40+ partners	21 to 39 partners	11 to 20 partners	5 to 10 partners	2 to 4 partners	Sole Practitioner	Total
Female	Principal	216	48	43	78	201	804	<b>1390</b> (24.9%)
	Employee	1600	360	305	409	629	887	<b>4190</b> (75.1%)
	Total (n)	1816	408	348	487	830	1691	<b>5580</b>
	% of all females	32.5	7.3	6.2	8.7	14.9	30.3	100
Male	Principal	706	207	185	360	1068	2965	<b>5491</b> (61.2%)
	Employee	1061	236	229	334	657	968	<b>3485</b> (38.8%)
	Total	1767	443	414	694	1725	3933	<b>8976</b>
	% of all males	19.7	4.9	4.6	7.7	19.2	43.8	100

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008. Note data was not provided for sole practitioners which explains a lower number of principals than has been recorded in previous years.

Figure 9.3 – Gender of employees and principals in private law firms



Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008

Data collected for the 2008/09 Practising Certificate indicates that males and females are relatively evenly represented among firms with over 40 partners (52.1% male and 47.9% female for firms 21-39 partners; 49.3% male 50.7% female for firms with 40 or more partners). However, greater numbers of *partners* in these firms are male, and greater numbers of *employees* are female. For instance, over three

quarters (78.7%) of partners in firms with 21 to 39 partners are male, whilst around two thirds (64.9%) of employees are female. Similarly, 71.1% of partners in firms with more than 40 partners are male, and 64.7% of employees are female. Table 9.4 sets out the relevant figures.

Table 9.4 – Gender profile of employees and principals in private firms with 21+ partners (Practising Certificate survey)

		Female	Male	Total
Firms 21-39 partners	Partner	12	48	<b>61</b>
	Employee	100	54	<b>154</b>
	Total of firms 21-39 partners	113	102	<b>216</b>
Firms 40+ partners	Partner	70	175	<b>246</b>
	Employee	665	362	<b>1028</b>
	Total of firms 40+ partners	738	540	<b>1280</b>

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008

## Years since admission

The years since admission profile of solicitors working in private practice varies according to firm size. For example, close to half of those who had been admitted for less than one year (40.6%) worked in firms with 40 or more partners. Conversely, among solicitors admitted for more than 10 years, the largest proportion were sole practitioners. Table 9.5 provides data on years since admission according to firm size.

Table 9.5 – Years since admission in private firms by firm size (%)

Firm Size	< 1 Yr	2- 5 Yrs	6-10 Yrs	11-15 Yrs	15+ Years
40 or more partners	40.6	34.7	30.1	23.7	13.8
21 to 39 partners	6.9	8.3	7.0	5.8	4.4
11 to 20 partners	7.6	7.1	5.4	5.2	3.9
5 to 10 partners	8.1	8.3	8.8	9.5	7.9
2 to 4 partners	15.9	14.8	16.5	15.9	20.2
Sole Practitioner	20.9	27.0	32.2	39.9	49.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

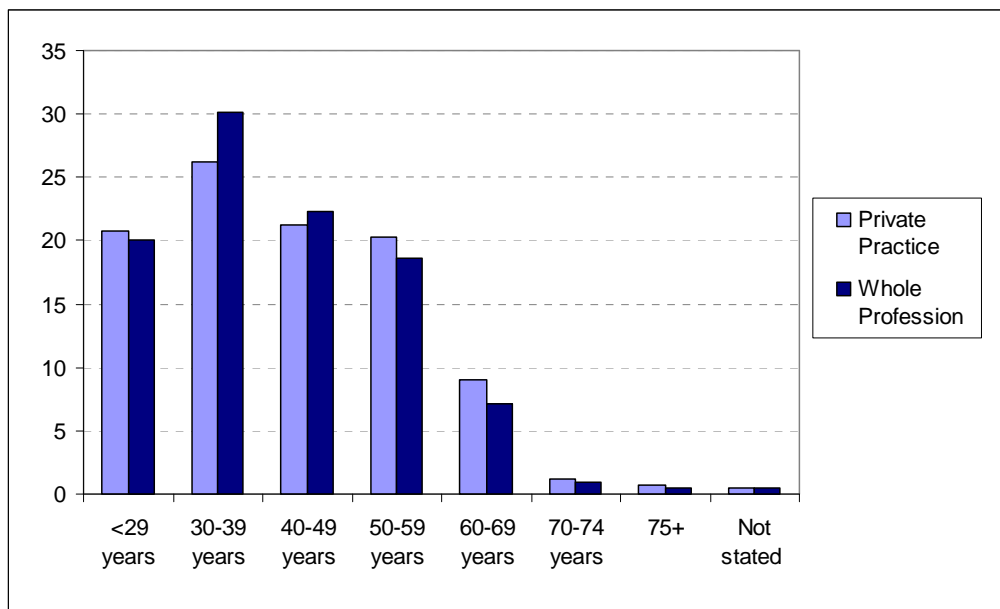
Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008

As would be expected, a similar trend was reflected in data gathered for the 2008/09 Practising Certificate. As in 2007, while there was little variation in years since admission among practitioners in firms of 21 to 39 partners, there was a clear decline in the proportion of practitioners working in firms with more than 40 partners. This was according to years since admission whereby 40.6% had been admitted for less than a year, 34.7% for those admitted for 2 to 5 years, 30.1% for those admitted for 6 to 10 years and 13.8% for those admitted for over 15 years.

## Age Profile

The age profile of solicitors working in private firms is broadly similar to the age profile of the entire profession, although private practitioners tend to be slightly older than those in other sectors. In 2008 more than half of solicitors in private practice (52.5%) were aged over 40, while over a quarter (26.3%) were aged between 30 and 39. The proportion of solicitors over 60 was a little higher in private practice (10.9%) than overall (8.6%). Figure 9.4 shows the age profile of solicitors in private practice compared with the whole profession.

Figure 9.4 – Age profile of solicitors in private practice and the whole profession



Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008

## Age Profile of large firms

Data collected in the 2008/09 Practising Certificate survey, indicate that firms with more than 21 practitioners tend to have younger practitioners. Just over half (51.4%) of practitioners who work in firms with 21 to 39 practitioners, and 60.6% of practitioners who work in firms with over 40 practitioners, were aged under 35. Younger practitioners tend to be employees and older practitioners to be partners in these firms. Among practitioners in firms with 21 to 39 partners, 68.2% of employees were aged under 35 and 72.1% of partners were aged over 40 years. Similarly, in firms with more than 40 partners, 73.5% of employees were aged under 35 years, while 71.5% of partners were aged over 40 years.

## 10 Government Solicitors

As at October 2008, there were 2,520 solicitors in NSW working across 148 government organisations. Information on these solicitors is presented in Table 10.1.

Table 10.1 – Government solicitors in 2008

	Government Solicitors		Whole Profession
	n	%	%
<b>Total</b>	2520	11.4	100
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	984	38.9%	55.5
Female	1536	61.0%	44.5
<b>Level of employment*</b>			
Full time	-	85.9	84.4
Part time	-	13.6	13.7
Other	-	0.2	1.4
<b>Location</b>			
City	1530	60.7	52.9
Suburban	643	25.5	29.2
Rural	308	12.2	13.0
Interstate	26	1.0	0.5
Overseas	13	0.5	4.3
<b>Age</b>			
<29 years	445	17.7	20.0
30-39 years	751	29.8	30.1
40-49 years	669	26.5	22.3
50-59 years	526	20.9	18.6
60-69 years	104	4.1	7.2
70-74 years	9	0.4	0.9
75+ years	2	0.1	0.5
Not stated	15	0.6	0.5
<b>Years since admission</b>			
< 1 year	240	9.5	12.4
1-5 years	672	26.7	22.5
6-10 years	522	20.7	19.7
11-14 years	256	10.2	8.9
15+ years	831	33.0	36.4
<b>Estimated mean income*</b>		\$86,700	\$96,900

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008. \*Data taken from the 2008/09 Practising Certificate survey. Note: The total number of solicitors included in age and years since admission statistics includes 1 solicitor who had not been granted their Practising Certificate as of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008.

Table 10.2 provides details about years since admission for government solicitors in New South Wales, while Table 10.3 provides information on their age profile. Notably, over half (58.5%) of male solicitors working in government were aged between 40 to 60 years of age, whereas female solicitors were skewed towards the *under 40* age group (56.0%).

Table 10.2 – Years since admission profile of government solicitors (%)

Years since admission	Male	Female	All
Less than 1 year	7.2	11.0	9.5
1 to 5 years	20.0	30.9	26.7
6-10 years	17.5	22.8	20.7
11-14 years	9.8	10.4	10.2
15+ years	45.5	24.9	33.0
Total	100	100	100

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008

Table 10.3 – Age profile of government solicitors (%)

Age	Male	Female	All
Under 30 years	10.2	22.5	17.6
30-39 years	24.1	33.5	29.8
40-49 years	27.1	26.2	26.4
50-59 years	31.4	14.1	20.9
60-69 years	6.4	2.7	4.0
70-74 years	0.7	0.1	0.4
75+ years	0.0	0.1	0.1
Not stated	0.2	0.8	0.9
Total	100	100	100

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008

## 11 Corporate Solicitors

As of October 2008 there were 4,045 solicitors working across 1202 organisations. Information on these practitioners is summarised in Table 11.1.

Table 11.1 – Corporate solicitors 2008

	Corporate Solicitors		Whole Profession
	n	%	%
<b>Total</b>	4045	18.3	100
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	1898	46.9	55.5
Female	2147	53.1	44.5
<b>Level of employment*</b>			
Full time	-	85.1	84.5
Part time	-	13.9	13.8
Other	-	0.8	1.4
<b>Location</b>			
City	1986	49.1	52.9
Suburbs	1267	31.3	29.2
Rural NSW	98	2.4	13.0
Interstate	29	0.7	0.5
Overseas	664	16.4	4.3
<b>Age</b>			
<29 years	750	18.5	20.0
30-39 years	1816	44.9	30.1
40-49 years	957	23.7	22.3
50-59 years	428	10.6	18.6
60-69 years	66	1.6	7.2
70-74 years	7	0.2	0.9
75+ years	1	0.0	0.5
Not stated	20	0.5	0.5
<b>Years since admission</b>			
< 1 year	364	9.0	12.4
1-5 years	1148	28.4	22.5
6-10 years	1170	28.9	19.7
11-14 years	459	11.3	8.9
15+ years	904	22.3	36.4
<b>Estimated mean income*</b>	\$123,900		\$96,900

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008. \*Data taken from the 2008/09 Practising Certificate survey



In 2008, just over six out of ten solicitors working in corporate practice (63.4%) were aged under 40, and two-thirds (66.3%) had been admitted for 10 years or less. Table 11.2 provides years since admission information for corporate solicitors, while Table 11.3 gives the age breakdown for this sector of the profession.

Table 11.2 – Years since admission profile of corporate solicitors (%)

Years since admission	Male	Female	Total
Less than 1 year	7.2	10.6	9.0
1-5 years	26.6	29.9	28.4
6-10 years	28.7	29.2	28.9
11-14 years	10.2	12.4	11.3
15+ years	27.3	17.9	22.3
Total	100	100	100

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008

Table 11.3 – Age profile of corporate solicitors (%)

Age	Male	Female	Total
Under 30	13.9	22.6	18.5
30-39	43.6	46.1	44.9
40-49	25.8	21.8	23.7
50-59	13.8	7.8	10.6
60 years or older	2.6	1.2	1.8
Not stated	0.4	0.6	0.5
Total	100	100	100

Source: Law Society Data as at 1 October 2008

## 12 Areas of Practice

Since 1993 the annual Practising Certificate survey has collected information about dominant areas of practice. The survey questionnaire asks solicitors to indicate up to four areas of law in which they spend 25% or more of their time.

The 2008/09 Practising Certificate questionnaire was completed by 7,736 practising solicitors, representing 34% of all NSW practising solicitors as at June 2008.

### Overall

Table 12.1 details the dominant areas of practice as reported by practitioners responding to the Practising Certificate Survey. In the 2008/09 survey, *Commercial Law* (29.3%) and *Conveyancing/Real Property* (28.7%) were the most commonly nominated areas of practice, followed by *Civil Litigation* (22.0%) and *Wills and Estates* (20.9%).

Table 12.1 – Areas of practice 1993/94 – 2008/09

Dominant Areas of Practice (%)	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09
Administrative Law	3.7	4.1	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.9	3.5	5.3	6.0	6.4	6.6	<b>6.7</b>
Advocacy	8.9	12.0	9.5	9.8	9.1	9.1	7.9	7.7	6.6	5.6	6.5	5.8	6.2	5.7	<b>6.6</b>
Banking/Finance	9.3	10.0	9.4	9.8	9.3	8.6	7.9	8.0	8.5	5.6	7.5	7.9	8.1	8.1	<b>8.4</b>
Civil Litigation	29.9	31.0	30.1	31.4	29.3	30.3	27.1	25.9	25.9	18	25.5	25.8	24.4	22.1	<b>22.0</b>
Commercial Law	26.5	30.5	29.3	30.8	31.1	30.8	29.3	29.7	30.9	21.6	31.2	30.9	31.3	28.4	<b>29.3</b>
Corporate Law	12.2	13.4	13.4	13.6	13.8	14.0	13.8	14.0	12.7	9.1	11.6	11.5	12.0	16.6	<b>17.8</b>
Conveyancing/Real Property	38.0	36.1	35.5	34.7	34.8	33.7	32.5	30.1	32.1	22.1	32.2	31.3	30.0	29.0	<b>28.7</b>
Criminal Law	12.7	13.6	13.4	12.6	12.9	12.9	12.5	12.2	12.3	8.5	13.8	13.1	13.4	13.0	<b>13.5</b>
Debts/Insolvency	8.3	9.1	9.0	8.0	7.5	7.8	7.0	5.8	7.6	5.4	7.8	7.6	7.7	7.0	<b>7.4</b>
Employment/Industrial Law	2.5	3.4	4.6	5.2	6.9	6.8	6.8	7.3	8.5	1.5	8.9	9.5	8.7	7.6	<b>7.4</b>
Environmental Law	2.9	3.4	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.2	2.8	2.7	3.0	2.7	2.9	3.3	3.2	3.1	<b>3.3</b>
Family Law	16.6	17.3	16.5	14.8	15.1	15.0	14.2	13.8	15.0	6.2	15.8	16.3	16.1	15.4	<b>15.1</b>
Immigration Law	1.4	1.7	1.6	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.8	2.1	10.2	2.5	2.5	2.8	2.8	<b>2.7</b>
Information technology /Telecommunications	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4.3	<b>4.6</b>
Intellectual Property	4.7	5.6	6.3	6.4	6.8	7.1	7.0	7.1	7.1	5.1	6.7	7.4	7.3	6.9	<b>6.4</b>
Litigation – General	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	18.8	<b>17.4</b>
Personal Injury	18.7	20.7	19.9	21.1	20.4	0.0	18.8	17.8	16.9	10.2	12.1	11.8	10.9	9.6	<b>9.1</b>
Planning/Local Government	3.0	3.8	3.6	3.6	4.1	3.5	3.6	3.5	4.1	3.2	3.8	4.4	4.1	3.8	<b>4.0</b>
Product Liability	1.4	1.8	1.7	2.0	2.2	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.1	1.3	n/a	<b>n/a</b>
Small Business	8.3	10.0	10.4	8.9	9.1	8.9	8.4	8.0	9.9	7.2	10.0	10.5	9.7	8.4	<b>7.8</b>

Taxation	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.0	3.3	3.5	3.3	3.3	2.4	3.4	3.1	3.5	3.5	<b>3.3</b>
Trade Practices Law	4.0	5.0	5.5	5.7	5.8	6.2	6.0	5.7	6.4	4.7	5.4	5.9	5.5	4.5	<b>5.0</b>
Wills and Estates	13.6	17.8	18.9	17.2	18.6	18.4	16.8	16.3	19.2	13.6	20.4	21.6	21.4	20.5	<b>20.9</b>
Other	9.2	9.0	9.0	9.2	9.7	9.5	8.8	9.9	10.1	6.3	9.0	10.1	10.8	9.4	<b>9.5</b>

Source: 2008-09 Practising Certificate survey.

## Employment Sector

The main areas of practice nominated by solicitors vary according to employment sector. As in the past, there were substantial differences in 2008/09 in the responses of private, government and corporate lawyers. Among corporate lawyers, the areas of practice most often mentioned were *Commercial Law* (56%) and *Corporate Law* (51%). Among government lawyers, the most common areas of practice were *Criminal Law* (41%) and *Administrative Law* (29%). Table 12.2 lists the four most frequently nominated areas for each sector, as indicated by practitioners responding to the 2008/09 Practising Certificate Survey. *Conveyancing/Property* (37%) remains the largest area of practice in the private profession.

Table 12.2 – Main areas of practice by sector (%)

Private		Government		Corporate	
Conveyancing/Property	37%	Criminal Law	41%	Commercial Law	56%
Commercial Law	29%	Administrative Law	29%	Corporate Law	51%
Wills and Estates	28%	Civil Litigation	17%	Banking and Finance	23%
Civil Litigation	26%	Advocacy	16%	Intellectual Property	18%

Source: 2008-09 Practising Certificate survey.

## Firm Size and Location within the private sector

Within the private sector, main areas of practice also varied by size and location of firms. For example, *Conveyancing/Real Property* was much more frequently mentioned by those working in suburban and country practices than those in city practices. This was also true for *Wills and Estates* and *Family Law*. By contrast, the areas of *Commercial Law* and *Civil Litigation* were mentioned more often by city practitioners than those in suburban or country locations.

In firms with fewer than five partners, the areas of practice most commonly reported were *Conveyancing/Real Property* and *Wills and Estates*. In firms with 21 to 39 partners, areas of practice most commonly reported were *Civil Litigation* and *Commercial Law*; in firms with 40 or more, *Commercial Law* and *Corporate Law* were most commonly reported.

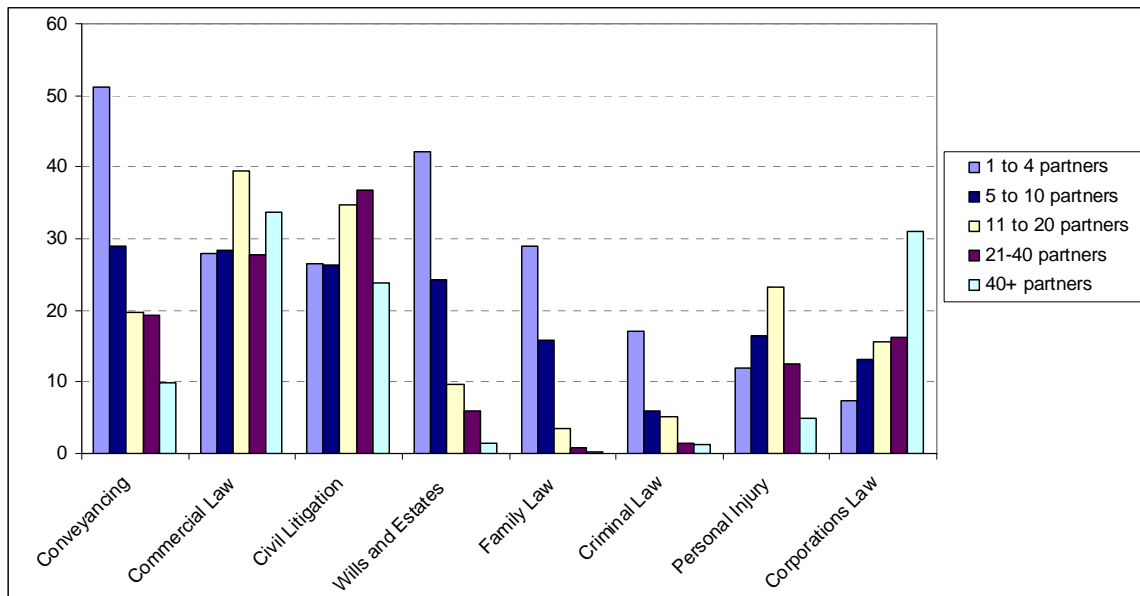
Table 12.3 provides information on selected areas of practice according to firm size and firm location, while Figure 12.1 illustrates differences in areas of practice by size of firm.

Table 12.3 – Some common areas of practice by firm size and location (%)

Area of practice	Number of partners					Practice location			All private practice
	1 to 4	5 to 10	11 to 20	21-39	40+	City	Suburbs	Country	
Conveyancing/ Property	51.2	28.9	19.7	19.4	9.8	20.4	55.2	56.0	28.7
Commercial Law	27.9	28.4	39.4	27.8	33.7	34.2	23.1	22.3	29.3
Civil Litigation	26.5	26.4	34.8	36.7	23.8	29.6	23.9	19.5	22.0
Wills and Estates	42.1	24.2	9.6	6.0	1.4	10.3	44.0	52.6	20.9
Family Law	28.9	15.8	3.5	0.9	0.3	6.6	30.9	34.6	15.1
Criminal Law	17.0	6.0	5.1	1.4	1.3	4.4	18.1	23.2	13.5
Personal Injury	12.0	16.4	23.2	12.5	5.0	9.7	10.2	15.7	9.1
Corporate Law	7.5	13.1	15.7	16.2	31.1	22.1	5.3	3.4	17.8

Source: 2008-09 Practising Certificate survey.

Figure 12.1 – Area of practice by size of firm (%)



Source: 2008-09 Practising Certificate survey.

## 13 Income

### Income Overall

Since 1996, solicitors responding to the annual Practising Certificate survey have been asked to describe their real take-home income (after all expenses but before tax) in the *previous financial year*. Since the 2000/01 survey, the question about income has given respondents the option of recording their approximate income or selecting one of 12 income bands; most respondents have elected to choose an income band. The overall income figures quoted in this section have been estimated by combining these two sets of data together.

The figures for the 2008/09 survey (the latest) refer to the financial year ending 30 June 2007, 2007/08 results refer to the financial year ending in 2006, and so on.

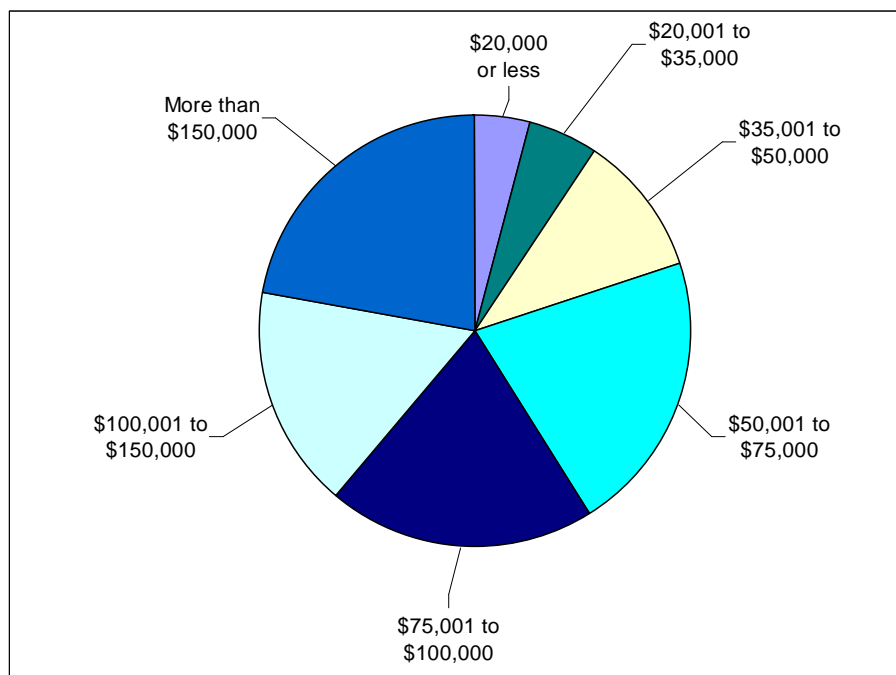
In the survey financial year ending June 2007, the three highest income bands among solicitors in New South Wales were more than \$150,000, \$50,001-\$75,000 and \$75,001 to \$100,000. Table 13.1 compares the proportion of practitioners in each income category over the last six years.

Table 13.1 – Reported income for the past seven financial years

	Income 2000/2001 (%)	Income 2001/2002 (%)*	Income 2002/2003 (%)	Income 2003/2004 (%)	Income 2004/2005 (%)	Income 2005/2006 (%)	Income 2006/2007 (%)
\$20,000 or less	4	4	4	4	5	4	4
\$20,001 to \$35,000	6	6	6	6	5	5	5
\$35,001 to \$50,000	15	14	14	14	12	11	10
\$50,001 to \$75,000	23	23	21	21	21	21	20
\$75,001 to \$100,000	16	17	18	17	18	18	19
\$100,001 to \$150,000	14	14	14	15	14	16	16
More than \$150,000	15	9	17	17	18	19	21
Non response	7	13	6	6	7	6	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 2008-09 Practising Certificate survey.

Figure 13.1 – Reported income for financial year ending June 2007 (all solicitors)



Source: 2008-09 Practising Certificate survey.

## Employment sector

The Practising Certificate survey reveals differences in solicitors' incomes according to the sector in which they work. The growth in estimated mean incomes has slowed since 2007/08. As in previous years, *corporate solicitors* earned more in the financial year for 2006/07 than their colleagues in other sectors, reporting an estimated mean income of \$123,900. This compares with an estimated mean income of \$94,800 among *private practitioners*, and \$86,700 among *government solicitors*. For practitioners working in *community legal centres*, estimated mean income was \$58,100, and for those in *non-legal employment* it was \$85,800.

Table 13.2 presents estimated mean incomes for each sector over the last four years, while Table 13.3 sets out the reported income bands for each employment sector, as reported by respondents to the 2008/09 Practising Certificate survey.

Table 13.2 – Mean income by sector 2002/03-2008/09

Sector	2002/03 (fin year ending '01)	2003/04 (fin year ending '02)	2004/05 (fin year ending '03)	2005/06 (fin year ending '04)	2006/07 (fin year ending '05)	2007/08 (fin year ending '06)	2008/09 (fin year ending '07)
Private	\$82,600	\$77,400	\$84,900	\$85,600	\$84,900	\$92,800	\$94,800
Corporate	\$105,100	\$101,300	\$109,000	\$109,000	\$110,300	\$124,300	\$123,900
Government	\$67,800	\$68,400	\$72,200	\$74,700	\$79,600	\$83,600	\$86,700

Source: 2008-09 Practising Certificate survey.

Table 13.3 – Reported income bands by employment sector (%)

	Employment sector					All respondents
	Private practice	Corporate	Government	Community Legal Centres	Non-legal	
\$20,000 or less	4.5	1.3	1.4	11.7	8.3	4.0
\$20,001 to \$35,000	5.6	1.6	2.3	8.0	6.1	4.7
\$35,001 to \$50,000	11.5	4.3	7.8	18.2	11.5	10.2
\$50,001 to \$75,000	20.7	10.3	25.8	40.1	17.8	19.9
\$75,001 to \$100,000	16.8	17.8	37.3	7.3	17.2	19.1
\$100,001 to \$150,000	15.1	23.1	16.2	4.4	15.0	16.0
More than \$150,000	20.6	37.0	6.3	2.9	13.4	20.6
Not stated	5.1	4.5	2.9	7.3	10.8	5.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Estimated mean income (\$K)</b>	<b>\$94.8</b>	<b>\$123.9</b>	<b>\$86.7</b>	<b>\$58.1</b>	<b>\$85.8</b>	<b>\$96.9</b>

Source: 2008-09 Practising Certificate survey.

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## Private Practice

In the 2008/09 Practising Certificate survey, solicitors working in *city firms* tended to report higher incomes than those in *suburban* or *country firms*. The estimated mean income of solicitors in city firms was \$106,000, compared with \$80,100 for solicitors in suburban firms and \$83,100 for those in country areas.

The estimated mean income was lower for solicitors working in smaller firms than their counterparts in larger firms. The estimated mean income reported by solicitors for each firm size were as follows:

1-4 partners:	\$83,500
5-10 partners:	\$107,300
11-20 partners:	\$100,700
21-39 partners:	\$111,800
40 or more partners:	\$114,500

## Gender

As in past years, male respondents reported higher incomes than females overall. For example, 43.4% of all men, but only 25.6% of women, reported incomes over \$100,000; meanwhile, 25.0% of all women, compared with 19.3% of men, reported incomes of \$50,000 or less.

Comparing male and female salaries, however, is complicated by the fact that men and women are not equally distributed across the main employment sectors. As reported earlier, female practitioners tend to be younger and more recently admitted than males, and relatively more female practitioners work part-time.

One way to more meaningfully assess income parity between the genders is to compare the reported incomes of *full-time private practitioners* by *years since admission*. As Table 13.4 shows, male incomes are still consistently higher than female incomes, even compensating for such differences. For example, the estimated mean income of male solicitors admitted for less than one year was \$53,500, compared to \$51,500 for females. For those admitted for between 1 and 5 years the average income was \$72,300 for males and \$65,200 for females.



Table 13.4 – Income of respondents working in private practice by gender and years since admission (%)  
(full time and part time)

	All		30 + years		16 to 30 years		11 to 15 years		6 to 10 years		1 to 5 years		< 1 years	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
\$20,000 or less	4.8	4.7	5.5	15.6	3.1	6.3	1.7	2.8	4.5	2.4	5.1	3.2	10.2	10.0
\$20,001-\$35,000	5.0	6.2	5.7	7.8	3.0	7.3	2.8	7.3	5.1	3.4	7.2	5.6	11.8	13.0
\$35,001-\$50,000	9.5	14.1	7.5	14.1	7.5	8.8	7.3	7.8	7.5	8.3	17.9	21.0	22.8	24.7
\$50,000-\$75,000	16.6	26.3	13.0	15.6	11.2	14.6	12.8	19.6	18.4	21.5	31.5	39.5	37.0	33.0
\$75,001-\$100,000	15.8	18.3	16.6	18.8	14.4	16.3	15.2	18.2	18.0	24.3	18.6	20.5	7.1	3.5
\$100,001-\$150,000	16.2	13.8	17.8	7.8	17.6	22.9	21.5	17.1	20.9	21.7	5.8	4.9	2.4	3.5
More than \$150,000	27.2	11.8	27.0	17.2	39.2	22.1	33.9	22.3	21.4	12.8	8.1	1.8	1.6	1.3
Not stated	5.4	4.8	7.0	3.1	4.0	2.9	4.8	4.9	4.3	5.7	5.8	3.4	7.1	11.3
<b>Estimated mean income (\$K)</b>	<b>103.9</b>	<b>82.9</b>	<b>105.1</b>	<b>79.6</b>	<b>119.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>117.3</b>	<b>102.6</b>	<b>100.4</b>	<b>94.7</b>	<b>72.3</b>	<b>65.2</b>	<b>53.5</b>	<b>51.5</b>

## 14 Hours of Work

The survey asked whether respondents worked full time or part time, with part time work defined in the survey as 'less than 35 hours a week'.

Overall, 84.4% of the 2008/09 Practising Certificate respondents said that they worked full time and 13.7% said that they worked part time (with 1.9% not answering).

### Part Time Work

In the 2008/09 survey, 20% of female respondents, compared with 9% of male respondents, said they worked part time. Part time work was more common among respondents over the age of 35, with 19% of 35-39 year olds, 18% of those aged 40 to 49 and 16% for those aged over 50 years and working part time.

The percentage of practitioners working part time was similar among respondents working in private firms and among those in non-private practice (13.4% private practice, 14.2% non-private practice). Among respondents employed in Community Legal Centres, 19.7% reported working part time.

Within private law firms, part time work was most common among respondents in firms with up to four partners; 15.5% of these solicitors worked part time, as against 10.4% in firms with 11 or more partners. Among sole practitioners, 15.9% reported working part time.

Table 14.1 details the usual hours of work reported by solicitors working part time. Over a third of these respondents (39.0%) reported working between 16 and 25 hours per week.

There was almost no difference in the average number of hours worked per week by practitioners in part time employment (24.1 hours) in 2008 compared to those who worked part time in 2007. As in previous years, the average for males (22.4 hours) was lower than for females (25.8 hours).

Table 14.1 – Hours worked each week by solicitors working part time

	Males		Females		All respondents	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1-10 hours	44	13.0	34	4.8	78	7.4
11-15 hours	30	9.0	54	7.6	84	8.0
16-20 hours	80	23.5	99	13.9	179	17.0
21-25 hours	50	14.7	183	25.6	233	22.0
26-29 hours	70	20.6	201	28.2	271	25.7
30+ hours	42	12.4	118	16.5	160	15.2
Not stated	24	7.1	25	3.5	49	4.6
Total	340	100	714	100	1,054	100
<b>Mean hours</b>	<b>22.38</b>	-	<b>24.83</b>	-	<b>24.06</b>	-

### Full Time Work

Some 89.8% of male respondents and 78.2% of female respondents reported working full time.

The average hours worked per week reported by full time workers was 48.8 hours (50.1 for males, 47.2 for females). Private practitioners and corporate lawyers reported working very similar number of hours a week (46.4 and 46.2 hours respectively), whereas government lawyers worked 40.8 hours.

The average number of full time hours reported in the Practising Certificate survey has steadily declined over recent years. Whilst last year's survey saw a slight rise (the average number of hours reported by full time practitioners was 49.2 compared to 49.0 in 2006/07), this dropped in 2008 to 48.8 hours for full time solicitors (see Table 14.2).

Table 14.2 – Average working week of full time solicitors by gender 1999/00-2008/09

	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Total</b>
1999/2000	51.6	49.0	50.8
2000/2001	52.1	49.2	51.2
2001/2002	51.9	49.1	50.9
2002/2003	51.8	48.9	50.7
2003/2004	50.9	48.1	49.8
2004/2005	50.3	47.9	49.3
2005/2006	50.3	47.2	49.0
2006/2007	50.3	47.0	49.0
2007/2008	50.5	47.6	49.2
2008/2009	50.1	47.2	48.8