

2001 Profile of the Solicitors of New South Wales

This report collects and analyses information about the demographic profile of the solicitors of New South Wales. Information was drawn from two sources: the annual census data drawn from the Law Society's membership database and the annual practising certificate survey.

Snapshot of Solicitors in 2001

On 2 October 2001 there were:

- 16,220 solicitors holding current NSW practising certificates
- 5,803 female solicitors (35.8%)
- 10,417 male solicitors (64.2%)
- 12,288 lawyers working in private practice (75.8%)
- 1,606 lawyers working in government (9.9%)
- 2,025 solicitors working in corporations (12.5%)
- 55.7% of solicitors were practising in the Sydney CBD
- 26.3% of solicitors were practising in the suburbs of Sydney
- 14.0% of solicitors were practising in rural areas of New South Wales
- 3558 private law firms
- 133 government employers
- 799 corporate employers
- 33.3% of solicitors in private practice were working in firms of 21 or more partners
- 20.8% of solicitors in private practice were working in firms of 2-4 partners
- 33.3% of solicitors in private practice were working in sole practitioner firms
- sole practitioner size firms constituted 80.7% of all firms
- firms of 21 or more partners constituted 0.7% of firms
- 48.1% of solicitors were less than 39 years of age
- 27.8% of solicitors had been admitted for less than 3 years
- 14.3% of solicitors had been admitted for between 4-7 years

In the twelve months since October 2000

- the profession had grown by 5.4%
- the number of female solicitors had increased by 8.6%
- the number of male solicitors had increased by 3.5%
- 3,875 solicitors were issued with a practising certificate for the first time, consisting of 50.2%-women and 49.8% men)

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 and investigating complaints against its members; it also represents the interests of practising solicitors.

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 professional interests of members of the Society.*

The Law Society is governed by an elected Council of 21 members. 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:

- (a) to collect and analyse information about the demographic profile of the practising profession; and
- (b) identify and monitor any trends in this profile by comparing this year's data with information from previous years.

Methodology

The information contained in this report is drawn from two sources. The first is the annual census data which is drawn from the Law Society's membership database on 1 October (or nearest working day) each year. The data used in this report was drawn from the database on Tuesday 2 October 2001. This data relates only to those solicitors who held a current practising certificate on that day. As the membership data fluctuates throughout the year, the Law Society uses the data drawn in October to measure the profession for the reporting year as it 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 membership database since 1988. From this period forward, the coding of information has been reliable and consistent. In some instances only percentages are reported because the numbers are so small that they may reveal the identity of an individual solicitor.

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 practise) 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 solicitors practising under the national practising scheme who are designated as interstate firms and individuals.

The second source of information summarised in this report is drawn from the annual practising certificate surveys 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 information, the survey also gathers information about dominant areas of practice, income, access to and use of technology and other issues relevant to the professional lives of solicitors. Response rates to the survey have averaged at approximately 60%. Some of the results of these surveys are described in this

report. The practising certificate surveys (and the data collected from them) is 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 of these statistics are published on the Law Society web site at <http://www.lawsociety.com.au/about/statistics>.

Further information

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

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Gender and Growth

On 2 October 2001, there were 16,220 solicitors with current New South Wales practising certificates. Of these, there were 5,803 female solicitors and 10,417 male solicitors.

Since 1988, the profession has grown by 65% with an annual average growth rate of 4%.

Within that general pattern of growth, the number of female solicitors has grown by 193% (in contrast to the growth rate for male solicitors of 33%). While the growth rate for women is generally greater than that for male solicitor, in the twelve months since October 2000, the growth rate for male increased from 2.9% to 3.5% in contrast to female solicitors which decreased from 9.4% to 9%.

Table 1: Gender and Growth 1988-2001

Year	Number			Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1988	7829	1979	9808	79.8	20.2	100.0
1989	8197	2196	10393	78.9	21.1	100.0
1990	8393	2398	10791	77.8	22.2	100.0
1991	8596	2634	11230	76.5	23.5	100.0
1992	8801	2837	11638	75.6	24.4	100.0
1993	8859	3098	11957	74.1	25.9	100.0
1994	8992	3291	12283	73.2	26.8	100.0
1995	9243	3554	12797	72.2	27.8	100.0
1996	9331	3868	13199	70.7	29.3	100.0
1997	9310	4099	13409	69.4	30.6	100.0
1998	9,414	4457	13,871	67.9	32.1	100.0
1999	9,777	4866	14,643	66.8	33.2	100.0
2000	10,060	5,322	15,382	65.4	34.6	100.0
2001	10,417	5803	16,220	64.2	35.8	100.0

Age

The average age of solicitors was 40.2 years (last year's average was 41 years). The average age for female solicitors was 35.4 years and male solicitors was 42.9 years.

The profession is a relatively young one with half of the profession aged less than 39 years (48%). Thirty percent of the profession is aged between 40 and 49 years while the remainder are more than 50 years of age (22.6%).

Table 2: Age Profile of All Solicitors 2001

Age Band	Male	Female	All
< 29 years	12.4	27.1	17.6
30 – 39 years	25.3	40.1	30.5
40 – 49 years	32.4	23.4	29.2
50 – 59 years	22.0	7.8	16.9
60 + years	8.0	1.6	5.7
Total	100%	100%	100%

Years since admission

Since 1 October 2000, 3,875 solicitors were issued with a practising certificate for the first time, consisting of 50.2% women and 49.8% men.

Years since admission measures the number of years since the solicitor was admitted in New South Wales and the date on which the data was extracted from the membership database (2 October 2001). It does not take account of any breaks in practice when a solicitor may not have renewed a practising certificate or solicitors who may not have practised for a period, but continued to hold a practising certificate, such as during an extended overseas visit or parental leave.

The years since admission profile reflects the age profile of the profession discussed in an earlier section of this report. The average number of years since admission for all solicitors was 12.9 years. However, the averages vary significantly according to gender. The average number of years a female solicitor has been admitted is 7.7 years in contrast to the average for male solicitors which is double that length with an average of 15 years.

In October 2001, less than one third of the profession had been admitted for less than 3 years (27.8%), another third between 4 and 14 years (35.3%) and the final third (36.9%) had been admitted for more than 15 years.

Table 3: Years since Admission 2001

Years since admission	Male	Female	All
Less than 1 year	11.6	21.9	15.3
1 – 3 years	10.1	16.9	12.5
4 – 7 years	11.3	19.7	14.3
8 – 14 years	19.2	21.4	21.0
15+ years	47.8	17.4	36.9
Total	100%	100%	100%

Country of Birth

The majority of New South Wales solicitors were born in that jurisdiction (64.4%) and Australian born solicitors make up 77.5% of all solicitors.

However, the proportion of solicitor born overseas continues to rise. In 2001, 20.7% of practising solicitors were born overseas, compared with 20% last year. In terms of numbers this represents an increase of 8% and solicitors born in Asian countries constitute the single biggest increase of 12.5% followed by the United Kingdom and Ireland at 7.4%.¹

Table 4: Country of Birth 2000 and 2001 (%)

Region	2000	2001
Oceania	13.3	14.6
Middle East	3.8	3.9
North America	5.1	4.5
South and Central America	1.4	1.3
Africa	9.0	8.5
Former USSR and Baltic States	0.9	0.8
Europe	16.5	14.8
Asia	25.9	26.8
UK and Ireland	25.0	24.7
Total	100.0	100.0

Languages

Most New South Wales solicitors speak only English (77%). However, there are at least 74 other languages spoken in 11 major language groupings.² The most commonly identified languages were:

Language:	
French	20.6%
Italian	10.1%
Greek	9.0%
German	9.3%
Cantonese	4.5%
Japanese	3.4%
Mandarin	3.4%

Information about the languages spoken by solicitors is collected at the time the solicitor applied for his or her first practising certificate. Although solicitors are encouraged to keep the Law Society informed of any changes in their membership information, including languages, this data may not always reflect a solicitor's current language skills.

Location

More than half of the profession now practise in the Sydney CBD (55.7%). This is a slight increase from last year (55.0%).

Since 1988, the proportion of solicitors practising in the Sydney CBD has increased by 5.8 percentage points. By comparison, the proportion of solicitors practising in Sydney suburbs has dropped by 0.2 percentage points (26.3% down from 26.5% in 1988), and the proportion of solicitors practising in rural NSW has experienced the most dramatic decline (in proportion terms) from 16.7% in 1988 to 14.0% in 2001. Overall, however, the numbers of solicitors in each geographical zone has increased reflecting the overall growth in the profession. These changes are described in the table on page 15.

Location of Firms

Since 1997, the Law Society has also monitored the location of private law firms (the figures above refer to all solicitors). In 2001, almost half of all law firms (49%) were found in the suburbs of Sydney and a quarter of the remaining firms were found in the city (24.7%) and rural New South Wales (23.9%). The following chart indicates the point change in the percentage of firms in each location.

Employment Sector

The majority of solicitors continue to practise in private practice with solicitors in this category making up more than three quarters of the practising profession (74.9%).

The other major segments in the profession are corporate solicitors who constitute 12.5% and government solicitors who make up 9.9%. The remainder worked in a variety of occupations such as teachers and Clerks of the Local Court (3.4%). As the table below illustrates the profile of the profession varies in terms of gender. For example, almost twice the proportion of female solicitors worked in government compared with their male colleagues. Higher proportions of women were also found in corporate practice.

Table 7: Gender profile of each sector

	Male		Female		All	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Private	8306	79.7	3835	66.1	12141	74.9
Government	793	7.6	798	13.8	1591	9.8
Corporate	1020	9.8	911	15.7	1931	11.9
Other	298	2.9	259	4.5	557	3.4
Total	10417	100.0	5803	100.0	16220	100.0

Since 1988, there has been a steady growth in the number and proportion of solicitors pursuing careers in government and corporate practice.

As can be seen in the chart overleaf the profile of the profession has changed in the following ways since 1988:

- Those in private practice has increased by 59%
- Those in government practice has increased by 58%
- Those in corporate practice has increased by 193%

Diversity in the Profession

There are many ways to measure diversity in the profession. However, this section of the report will focus on women and indigenous solicitors as the Law Society does not retain information about other indicators of diversity such as disability, sexual preference or cultural background.

Women

As reported earlier in this publication, female solicitors now make up 35.8% of the practising profession. In the twelve months in the period ending 1 October 2001, more women than men entered the profession by obtaining their first practising certificate (50.2% and 49.8% respectively). This may be a significant milestone in the gender evolution of the profession. The growth in the number and proportions of women in the profession has been one of the key features of the profession since 1988. Since 1988, the number of women in the profession has grown by 193%. The following snapshot provides a summary of the female members of the legal profession:

Table 8: Profile of Female Solicitors

	Female Solicitors		Whole Profession
	Number	Percentage	Percentage
Female Solicitors	5,803	35.8	16,220
Mode of Employment *			
• Full Time		82.4	89.3
• Part Time		15.9	9.0
• Other		1.6	1.7
Type of Employment:			
• Private	3835	66.1	74.9
• Government	798	13.8	9.8
• Corporate	911	15.7	11.9
• Other	259	4.5	3.4
Profile of Private Practitioners			

• Partners	421	11.0	27.0
• Sole practitioners	506	13.2	19.4
• Employees	2917	75.9	25.8
Size of Law Firm			
• Sole Practitioner	1011	26.3	33.3
• 2 – 4 Partners	626	16.3	20.8
• 5 – 10 Partners	316	8.2	8.9
• 11 – 20 Partners	158	4.1	3.7
• 21 + Partners	1733	45.1	33.3
Age (average)	35.4 years		40.2 years
Years Since Admission (average)	7.7 years		12.9 years
Income * (mean)	\$67,600		\$80,100

* indicates data from the 2001/2002 Practising Certificate Survey.

Indigenous Solicitors

In the 1998/99 and 1999/2000 Practising Certificate Surveys, practitioners were invited to indicate if they were an Aboriginal Australian or a Torres Strait Islander. In the 1999/2000 Practising Certificate Survey, 58 or (0.6) solicitors identified themselves as Aboriginal Australians or Torres Strait Islanders. The following information summarises the responses of these 58 practitioners. These figures should be read with caution as the data is now old and is likely to have been overtaken by developments in the profession in the intervening period. In addition, statistically speaking, the numbers are very small and as such there is a level of risk in terms of relying on them or extrapolating from them.

Location

- 55.2% practised in the city
- 20.7% practised in the suburbs of Sydney
- 10% practised in country NSW

Sector of employment

- 72% practised in the private sector (private law firms)
- 27.6% practised in other legal employment (corporations, government or community legal centres)

Income (for the financial year ending 30 June 1998)

- 34% earned between \$20,001 and \$50,000
- 34% earned between \$50,001 and \$75,000
- 14% earned more than \$75,001

Profile of private practitioners

- 44% practised in firms of 1-4 partners
- 17% practised in firms of more than 20 partners
- the remainder practised in firms of 5-19 partners

Type of private practitioner

- 13.8% were partners
- 25.9% were sole practitioners
- 33% were employed solicitors

Private Practice

Seventy-six percent of the profession worked in private law firms on 2 October 2001. This section will focus on describing the profile of the profession working in this sector.

On 2 October 2001, there were 3,558 firms operating in New South Wales. Of these 81% were sole practitioner size firms (firms with one principal). The remainder of the sector consisted of:

- 575 firms of 2 – 4 partners (16.2%)
- 75 firms of 5 – 10 partners (2.1%)

11 firms of 11 – 20 partners (0.3%)

- 24 firms of more than 21 partners (0.7%)

The most dramatic change in the twelve months since the last census is the growth in the number of firms of more than 21 partners which grew by 14.3%. Sole practitioner firms were the only other category to grow during the period at a rate of 3.5%. The number of firms in the categories in between either stayed the same (firms of 5 – 10 partners) or fell (2 – 4 partners by 0.3% and 11 – 20 partners by 28.7%).

Sole practitioner type firms dominate the firm profile, accounting for 80% of firm types and 33.8% of solicitors working in the private profession. The other third of the private profession were working in firms of 21 or more partners (32.9%) with 20.8% working in firms of 2 – 4 partners.

Table 9: Firm Profile 2001

	Firms	Partners	Employees	All
Sole Practitioner	2873 (80.7%)	2873 (46.7%)	1347 (21.3%)	4220 (33.8%)
2 – 4 Partners	575 (16.2%)	1431 (23.3%)	1169 (18.5%)	2600 (20.8%)
5 – 10 Partners	75 (2.1%)	490 (8.0%)	611 (9.7%)	1101 (8.8%)
11 – 20 Partners	11 (0.3%)	158 (2.6%)	294 (4.6%)	452 (3.6%)
21 + Partners	24 (0.7%)	1198 (19.5%)	2908 (45.9%)	4106 (32.9%)
Total	3558	6150	6329	12479

The staff profile within the private profession vary according to the size of the firm. In sole practitioner structured firms there is a lower ratio of employed solicitors to principals (0.5 employed solicitors for every principal). In contrast, in firms of 21 or more partners there is an average of 2.4 employed solicitors for every principal.

Gender Profile of Law Firms

About one quarter of the private profession were working as employed solicitors in firms of 21 or more partners on 2 October 2001 (23.5%). The other major cluster of solicitors were sole principals working in their own firms who accounted for 22.8% of the private profession. However, there were significant differences between the location of male and female solicitors within this sector of the profession. While male solicitors were more frequently found in small firms (36.6% of male solicitors), female solicitors were more frequently found in firms of 21 or more partners (45.1%). The gender profile is illustrated in more detail in the following table and chart:

Table 10: Gender profile of firms

	Female			Male			All		
	Princip al	Employ ee	All	Princip al	Employee	All	Principal	Employee	All
Sole	509	502	1011	2364	723	3087	2873	1225	4098
2-4 Partne	141	482	626	1287	647	1934	1431	1129	2560

rs									
5-10 Partners	49	267	316	441	333	774	490	600	1090
11-20 Partners	19	139	158	139	154	293	158	293	451
21+ Partners	206	1527	1733	992	1364	2356	1198	2891	4089
All	927	2917	3844	5223	3221	8444	6151	6138	12288

From this table it is possible to calculate proportions in several ways. For example, this table illustrates that:

- 54.9% of female principals work in firms of a single partner (sole practitioner)
- 13% of female solicitors in private practice practise as principals in firms of 1 partner (sole practitioner)
- female solicitors constitute 11% of all principals in private practice.

Age Profile of Firms

The age profile of solicitors working in firms reflects the general age profile of the practising profession. Thirty-three percent of solicitors in private practice were less than 39 years of age. Approximately 30% were aged between 40 and 49 years with the remainder over 50 years of age.

Years since admission profile

The years since admission profile of solicitors working in firms mirrors the age profile of the private profession, with some interesting features. For example, almost 60% of solicitors who have been admitted for less than 1 year worked in firms of 21 or more partners. By contrast, 45% of solicitors with more than 15 years of experience worked in sole practitioner size firms. The table and chart below illustrate the profile of firms according to years since admission.

Table 11: Years since admission profile of firms

Firm Size	<= 1 Yrs	<= 3 Yrs	<= 7 Yrs	<= 14 Yrs	15+ Years	TOTAL
21 or more	27.5	18.1	15.4	17.6	21.3	100.0
11 to 20	20.7	16.9	15.1	19.2	28.1	100.0
5 to 10	16.5	12.0	13.7	19.3	38.6	100.0
2 to 4	10.9	9.2	11.8	17.1	51.0	100.0
Sole Practitioner	7.0	7.5	10.5	19.6	55.3	100.0
GRAND TOTAL	16.1	12.2	12.9	18.4	40.4	100.0

Government Solicitors

As at 2 October 2001, there were 1,591 Government solicitors working in 133 organisations.

Table 12: Profile of Government Solicitors

	Government Solicitors		Whole Profession
	Number	Percentage	Percentage
Gender	1,591	9.8	16,220
▪ Male	793	49.8	64.2
▪ Female	798	50.2	35.8
Mode of Employment *			
▪ Full Time		88.0	89.3
▪ Part Time		10.9	9.0
▪ Other		1.1	1.7
Location:			
• City	1347	83.9	55.7
• Suburbs of Sydney	225	14.0	26.3
• Rural NSW	10	0.6	14.0
• Interstate	24	1.5	2.4

Overseas	0	0	1.6
Age			
• < 29 years	153	9.6	17.6
• 30 – 39 years	523	32.8	30.5
• 40 – 49 years	588	36.9	29.2
• 50 – 59 years	245	15.4	16.9
• 60+ years	43	2.7	5.7
Years Since Admission			
• Less than 1 year	187	11.7	15.3
• 1 – 3 years	172	10.8	12.5
• 4 – 7 years	260	16.3	14.3
• 7 – 14 years	523	32.8	21.0
• 15+ years	451	28.3	36.9
Income * (mean)	\$65,700		\$80,100

* indicates data from the 2001/2002 Practising Certificate Survey

Table 13: Years since admission profile

Years since admission (%)	Male	Female	All
Less than 1 year	10.1	13.3	11.7
1 – 3 years	8.2	13.3	10.8
4 – 7 years	13.0	19.7	16.3
8 – 14 years	32.0	33.7	32.8
15+ years	36.7	20.1	28.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 14: Age Profile

Age (%)	Male	Female	All
Less than 29 years	12.5	13.5	9.9
30 – 39 years	6.2	42.2	33.7

40 – 49 years	12.1	33.5	37.9
50 – 59 years	26.0	8.5	15.8
60+ years	12.4	2.2	2.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Corporate Solicitors

As 2 October 2001, there were 2,025 corporate solicitors working in 799 organisations.

Below is a snapshot of corporate solicitors:

Table 15: Profile of Corporate Solicitors

	Corporate Solicitors		Whole Profession
	Number	Percentage	Percentage
Gender	2,025		16,220
• Male	1,114	55.0	64.2
• Female	911	45.0	35.8
Mode of Employment *			
• Full Time		91.2	89.3
• Part Time		8.3	9.0
• Other		0.4	1.7
Location:			
• City	1176	58.1	55.7
• Suburbs of Sydney	736	36.3	26.3
• Rural NSW	93	4.6	14.0
• Interstate	--	0.8	2.4
Overseas	--	0.1	1.6
Age			
• < 29 years	252	13.3	17.6
• 30 – 39 years	840	44.4	30.5
• 40 – 49 years	569	30.3	29.2
• 50 – 59 years	--	10.0	16.9
• 60+ years	--	1.8	5.7

Years Since Admission			
• Less than 1 year	234	12.1	15.3
• 1 – 3 years	274	14.2	12.5
• 4 – 7 years	387	20.0	14.3
• 7 – 14 years	537	27.8	21.0
• 15+ years	499	25.8	36.9
Income * (mean)	\$100,000		\$80,100

* indicates data from the 2001/2002 Practising Certificate Survey

--indicates numbers omitted

Table 16: Years since Admission Profile

Years since admission (%)	Male	Female	All
Less than 1 year	11.0	13.4	12.1
1 – 3 years	14.0	14.4	14.2
4 – 7 years	16.0	24.6	20.0
8 – 14 years	25.0	31.0	27.8
15+ years	34.0	16.7	25.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 17: Age Profile

Age (%)	Male	Female	All
Less than 29 years	12.1	14.6	13.3
30 – 39 years	38.1	51.5	44.4
40 – 49 years	33.9	25.7	30.0
50 – 59 years	13.0	7.7	10.5
60+ years	2.9	0.6	1.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Areas of Practice

Since 1993/94, the Law Society has invited solicitors to indicate up to four areas of law in which they spend 25% or more of their time (dominant areas of practice), through the annual practising certificate survey.

Conveyancing/property continues to be the most frequently nominated area (30.1%), followed by commercial law (29.7%), civil litigation (25.9%), personal injury (17.8%) and wills and estates (16.3%).

The list of the 'top five' areas of practice has remained consistent since the inaugural practising certificate survey in 1993/94, except for 2000/2001 survey in which commercial law and civil litigation were ranked 2 and 3 respectively.

The table overleaf sets out the complete list of areas of practice from 1993/1994 to 2001/2002.

Over the nine year period during which this data has been collected the changes from year to year are difficult to detect. However, if a comparison is made between 1993/94 and the most recent survey year, the changes are more apparent. Over this period, there has been a steady decline in the proportion of solicitors who nominate conveyancing/real property as a dominant area of practice (a fall of 6.7 percentage points). Other areas that have declined in this period included:

- Civil litigation (-5.7 points)
- Advocacy (-4.4 points)
- Debts/Insolvency (-3.4 points)
- Family Law (-1.4 points)
- Banking/Finance (-1.2 points)

In the same period, however, there are clear patterns of growth in other areas of practice.

These include:

- Employment and Industrial Relations Law (+5.9 points)
- Criminal Law (+4.7 points)
- Commercial Law (+4.1 points)
- Intellectual Property (+3.9 points)
- Corporations Law (+3.6 points)

Table 18: Areas of Practice 1993/1994 to 2001/2002

Dominant Areas of Practice	1993/1994	1994/1995	1995/1996	1996/1997	1997/1998	1998/1999	1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002
Administrative Law	n/a	3.7	4.1	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.4	4.3	4.5
Advocacy	12.1	8.9	12.0	9.5	9.8	9.1	9.1	7.9	7.7
Banking/Finance	9.2	9.3	10.0	9.4	9.8	9.3	8.6	7.9	8.0
Civil Litigation	31.6	29.9	31.0	30.1	31.4	29.3	30.3	27.1	25.9
Commercial Law	25.6	26.5	30.5	29.3	30.8	31.1	30.8	29.3	29.7
Corporations Law	10.4	12.2	13.4	13.4	13.6	13.8	14	13.8	14.0
Conveyancing/Real Property	36.8	38.0	36.1	35.5	34.7	34.0	33.7	32.5	30.1
Criminal Law	7.5	12.7	13.6	13.4	12.6	12.9	12.9	12.5	12.2
Debts/Insolvency	9.2	8.3	9.1	9	8	7.5	7.8	7	5.8
Environmental Law	1.9	2.9	3.4	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.2	2.8	2.7
Family Law	15.2	16.6	17.3	16.5	14.8	15.1	15	14.2	13.8
Immigration Law	0.8	1.4	1.7	1.6	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.8
Industrial Relations Law	1.4	2.5	3.4	4.6	5.2	6.9	6.8	6.8	7.3
Intellectual Property	3.2	4.7	5.6	6.3	6.4	6.8	7.1	7	7.1

Dominant Areas of Practice	1993/1994	1994/1995	1995/1996	1996/1997	1997/1998	1998/1999	1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002
Personal Injury	15.7	18.7	20.7	19.9	21.1	20.4	20	18.8	17.8
Planning/Local Government	2.4	3	3.8	3.6	3.6	4.1	3.5	3.6	3.5
Product Liability	1	1.4	1.8	1.7	2	2.2	2	1.8	1.7
Small Business	6.4	8.3	10.0	10.4	8.9	9.1	8.9	8.4	8.0
Taxation	2.6	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3	3.3	3.5	3.3
Trade Practices Law	2.4	4	5.0	5.5	5.7	5.8	6.2	6	5.7
Wills and Estates	11.9	13.6	17.8	18.9	17.2	18.6	18.4	16.8	16.3
Other	4.5	9.2	9.0	9	9.2	9.7	9.5	8.8	9.9

Employment Sector

As would be expected the areas of practice nominated by solicitors varies significantly according to the employment sector in which they worked (that is, private, corporate or government). The table below depicts the most frequently nominated areas for each sector (as indicated in the 2001/2002 Practising Certificate Survey).

Table 19: Areas of Practice by Sector

Private		Government		Corporate	
Area	%	Area	%	Area	%
Conveyancing	36.7	Criminal Law	42.9	Commercial Law	55.7
Commercial Law	30.0	Administrative Law	23.3	Corporations Law	37.2
Civil Litigation	29.4	Civil Litigation	16.8	Banking/Finance	24.8
Personal Injury	21.5	Other	13.0	Intellectual Property	21.0
Wills and Estates	20.4	Advocacy	12.9	Trade Practices Law	19.4

Family	16.0	Commercial Law	9.5	Employment and Industrial Relations Law	13.5
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Size of Firm

Not unsurprisingly, the areas of practice undertaken by solicitors in private practice also vary according to the size of the law firm. The variety of work also reflects the size of the firm. As shown in the chart below, solicitors in the smallest law firms (firms of 1 – 4 partners), were more likely to nominate more areas as dominant areas of practice than solicitors in large firms who dominant areas of practice were more often focussed on commercial law and corporations law.

Income

Each year since the 1996/97 Practising Certificate Survey, solicitors have been asked to describe “their real take-home income (i.e. after all expenses but before income tax)”. In 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 surveys the question about income was asked in two alternate forms: one option invited respondents to write their approximate income, while the other asked them to select one of twelve income bands. Most respondents elected to indicate an income band. The overall income figures in this section have been obtained by adding both sets of data together. The figures for the 2000/2001 survey refer to the financial year ending 30 June 1999 and the figures for the 2001/2002 survey refer to the financial year ending 30 June 2000.

There appears to have been slight improvement in the income of solicitors in the twelve month period since the 2000/2001 practising certificate survey, indicated by the slight increase in the proportion of solicitors in the higher income brackets of \$75,000 and above. However, it is not possible on the basis of the information available to the Law Society whether individual incomes have kept pace with inflation. Overall, the mean income for all survey respondents increased from \$76,000 in 2000/2001 to \$80,100 in 2001/2002.

A comparison of the 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 appears in the table below:

Table 20: Income for 2000/2001 and 2001/2002

Income Band	2000/2001	2001/2002
\$20,000 or less	5%	4%
\$20,001 to \$35,000	9%	7%
\$35,001 to \$50,000	18%	17%
\$50,001 to \$75,000	23%	23%
\$75,001 to \$100,000	13%	15%
\$100,001 to \$150,000	11%	12%
More than \$150,000	12%	14%

Type of Employment

The surveys reveal a differences between the incomes earned by solicitors according to the sector in which they worked. Solicitors in corporate practice tend to earn more than their colleagues in private and government practice with a mean income of \$100,000 compared with \$80,100 and \$65,700 respectively.

The table below summarises the mean income for the last two years:

Table 21: Income by Sector

	2000/2001	2001/2002
Private	\$75,700	\$80,100
Corporate	\$96,100	\$100,000
Government	\$63,600	\$65,700

The table below sets out the income bands for each sector:

Table 22: Income bands for each sector

Percent	Private	Government	Corporate	CLC	Non-Legal
\$20,000 or less	4.5	0.7	2.0	12.1	8.312.
\$20,001 to \$35,000	7.7	2.5	5.0	12.1	5.6
\$35,001 to \$50,000	17.3	10.5	17.4	43.1	16.7
\$50,001 to \$75,000	21.0	17.6	48.4	20.7	18.9
\$75,001 to \$100,000	14.4	17.4	16.5	1.7	13.3
\$100,001 to \$150,000	12.3	23.4	4.9	0.9	12.2
More than \$150,000	8.0	6.1	4.1	6.9	10.6
Mean ('\$000)	80.1	100.0	65.7	46.5	79.3

Private Practice

The profile of the income earned by those working in private practice reveals that almost 35% of solicitors in firms of 1-4 partners earned less than \$50,000 in the financial year ending 30 June 2000. This represents an improvement over the last two years, when the percentage in this income band were 38.8% (2000/2001) and 39.9% (1999/2000). The chart below illustrates the income for the firm size groupings for 2001/2002.

The mean income for solicitors in each firm size was as follows:

1 – 4 Partners	\$72,000
5 – 10 Partners	\$88,300
11 – 20 Partners	\$89,000
20 or more Partners	\$92,500

Gender

“As in past years, male respondents reported higher incomes than females overall. For example, 33% of men, but only 15% of women, reported incomes over \$100,000; 37% of all women, compared with 23% of men, reported incomes of \$50,000 or less.” [M]ales reported higher incomes than females in all three sectors. Among corporate lawyers, for example, 56% of males and 34% of females reported earning over \$100,000. Among government lawyers, 35% of females and 15% of males reported earning \$50,000 or less.”³

The following figure illustrates the incomes of male and female solicitors across all employment sectors (and including those solicitors working on a part-time basis): The mean income for male solicitors (across all sectors) was \$87,700. The mean income for female solicitors was \$67,600.

The gender difference in income is evident throughout all stages of the profession when income is analysed according to years since admission. The following table and graph illustrate the mean income for female and male solicitors in full time private practice:

Table 23: Income by Gender

	Male	Female
Less than 1 year	\$47,800	\$39,400
1 – 5 years	\$58,900	\$54,000
6 – 10 years	\$84,500	\$79,000
11 – 15 years	\$91,900	\$87,500
16 – 30 years	\$95,300	\$87,200
30+ years	\$86,400	\$76,500

There appears to have been a general improvement in the income of solicitors since data collection commenced in the 1996/97 Practising Certificate Survey. Each year, fewer solicitors reported incomes less than \$50,000 and more reported incomes greater than \$75,000. However, as noted earlier in this section, the data does not permit an assessment as to whether the individual incomes earned by solicitors is keeping pace with inflation, practice costs and so on.

Areas of Practice

The data collected from the Practising Certificate Survey also allows an analysis of the areas of practice undertaken by solicitors in each income band. This information is set out in the table below. There are several interesting features of this table. First, conveyancing/real property is a core area of practice across all income bands, although reliance on this area of practice occurs more frequently for solicitors earning less than \$50,000. Second, the proportion of solicitors nominating commercial law as an area of practice increases with income levels reaching a peak for those earning more than \$150,000 at 41.1%.

Table 24: Income and Areas of Practice

Income	Areas of Practice	%
Less than \$20,000	Conveyancing/Real Property	47.4
	Wills and Estates	29.4
	Family Law	24.6
\$20,001 to \$35,000	Conveyancing/Real Property	41.7
	Civil Litigation	29.2
	Family Law	27.5
\$35,001 to \$50,000	Conveyancing/Real Property	30.7
	Civil Litigation	28.5
	Commercial Law	23.4
\$50,001 to \$75,000	Conveyancing/Real Property	27.4
	Civil Litigation	27.0
	Commercial Law	24.1
\$75,001 to \$100,000	Commercial Law	32.5
	Conveyancing/Real Property	29.8
	Civil Litigation	26.4
\$100,001 to \$150,000	Commercial Law	39.3
	Conveyancing/Real Property	30.8
	Civil Litigation	27.5
More than \$150,000	Commercial Law	41.6
	Conveyancing/Real Property	21.9
	Civil Litigation	21.2

Remuneration and Work Conditions Survey

This year, the Law Society also launched in the inaugural Remuneration and Work Conditions Survey. The survey had the following objectives:

1. To gather information on remuneration packages and work conditions of employed solicitors working in private, corporate and government practice throughout New South Wales
2. To publish this information in a form that will assist employers and employees to make decisions about remuneration.
3. To provide information about the remuneration and work conditions of employed solicitors to assist the Law Society to develop policy and members services

The survey contained five sections examining a range of remuneration and workplace policies and practices. These sections were:

- General demographic information
- Income and benefits
- Workspace and workplace policies
- Professional development and supervision; and
- Career satisfaction and career plans

Some information from that survey is reported here, however, the complete report is available only to Law Society members. The report can be obtained by completing the order form on the Law Society's web site at

http://lawsociety.com.au/forms/about/remuneration_survey_order_form.html

Internet and Email

Over the last 6 years, the profession has rapidly adopted the internet. In 1996/97 (when the question was first posed), only 36% of the profession had access. In the most recent survey, this proportion had risen to 96.4%, with almost 100% take up rates in the corporate and government sector.

Table 25: Internet Access (by Size of Firm and Location)

Size of firm	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002
1-4	35.6	40.0	69.2	83.4	90.5	94.9
5-10	56.7	66.0	88.6	94.5	98.4	98.6
11-20	82.0	83.6	95.9	98.0	99.2	99.4
21+	83.9	82.3	95.3	98.3	98.7	99.7
Location						
Location	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002
City	62.7	68.5	87.8	92.8	96.4	98
Suburbs	32.3	36.3	62.3	79.6	88.5	93.5
Rural	43.7	40.4	72.4	82.7	91.4	96.5

The profession uses the internet for electronic mail (87%), legal research (82%), web browsing (57%) and discussion groups (5%).

Email is now prevalent throughout the legal profession. Ninety-three percent of respondents to the 2001/2002 Practising Certificate Survey reported that they had email at work. Groups with lower access to email at work included:

- Older practitioners – those over 50 years of age (86.3%)
- Suburban practitioners (87.4%)
- Rural NSW-not including major towns (88.1%)
- Firms of 1 – 4 partners (89%)
- Sole practitioners (81%)
- Those earning less than \$35,000 (84%)

Generally, however, the usage of email at work is consistently high throughout the profession as shown in the following table:

Sector	% (yes)
Private	92.8
Corporate	99.0
Government	96.9
City	96.5
Suburban	87.4
Country	88.1

Conclusion

It is appropriate to conclude this report with a discussion about technology, as it appears to be the only characteristic that is shared by all New South Wales solicitors. As this report shows, the solicitors of New South Wales are a large, diverse and dynamic profession.

¹ Countries have been classified according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics *Australian Standard Classification of Countries for Social Statistics* (Catalogue reference 1269.0)

² The languages have been classified according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics *Australian Standard Classification of Languages* (Catalogue reference 1267.0)

³ Urbis Keys Young *Law Society Practising Certificate Survey 2001-02* 2 October 2001 p. 16