THE LAW SOCIETY
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PROFILE

Law Society Research Update

Statistics as at 5 January 2010

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The following data about practising solicitors was drawn from the Law Society's database on 5 January 2010. It is a summary of those solicitors who held New South Wales practising certificates as at that date.

Table 1: Practising Solicitors	**No.**	**%**
All Solicitors	23369	
Male Solicitors	12731	54.48
Female Solicitors	10638	45.52
City Solicitors	12044	51.54
Suburban Solicitors	7222	30.90
Country Solicitors	2990	12.79
Interstate Solicitors	128	0.55
Overseas Solicitors	984	4.21
Unknown	1	
Type of Practitioner[1]		
Private Practice	16368	70.04
Government	2760	11.81
Corporate	4238	18.14

Table 2: Years Since Admission[2]	**<= 1 Yrs**	**<= 5 Yrs**	**<= 10 Yrs**	**<= 14 Yrs**	**15+ Years**	**Unknown**	**TOTAL**
All	10.76	21.97	20.54	9.71	37.02		100.00
Male	8.11	16.35	17.40	9.28	48.85		100.00
Female	13.92	28.70	24.29	10.23	22.86		100.00

Table 3: Age[3]	**<=29 Years**	**30 - 39 Years**	**40 - 49 Years**	**50 - 59 Years**	**60+ Years**	**Unknown**	**TOTAL**
All	19.40	30.35	21.89	18.36	9.51	0.49	100.00
Male	12.39	25.14	22.87	24.40	14.80	0.40	100.00
Female	27.78	36.59	20.72	11.14	3.19	0.59	100.00

Table 4: Profile of Private Practice[4]	**Firms**		**Solicitors Working in Firms**	
Firm Size	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Sole Practitioner	3984	85.64	5999	39.34
2 to 4	563	12.10	2748	18.02
5 to 10	65	1.40	1083	7.10
11 to 20	16	0.34	783	5.13
21 or more	11	0.24	1048	6.87

Table 5: Individual Solicitors in Private Practice						
	Female		Male		All	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Principal	617	10.44	2542	27.59	3159	20.88
Sole Principal	873	14.77	3075	33.37	3948	26.10
Pending Principal	11	0.19	26	0.28	37	0.24
Non Principal[5]	4411	74.61	3571	38.76	7982	52.77

Table 6	Female				Male				All			
	Principal		Employee		Principal		Employee		Principal		Employee	
Firm Size	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sole Practitioner	873	58.59	989	22.37	3075	54.74	1010	28.08	3948	55.55	1999	24.93
2 To 4	228	15.30	703	15.90	1103	19.64	687	19.10	1331	18.73	1390	17.33
5 To 10	74	4.97	403	9.11	334	5.95	264	7.34	408	5.74	667	8.32
11 To 20	38	2.55	302	6.83	174	3.10	262	7.28	212	2.98	564	7.03
21 Or More	58	3.89	443	10.02	243	4.33	284	7.90	301	4.24	727	9.07
Totals	219	14.70	1582	35.78	688	12.25	1090	30.30	907	12.76	2672	33.32

Table 7: Solicitors with No Practising Details	No.	%
Solicitors with Practising Details	21725	92.97
Solicitors with No Practising Details	1644	7.04
All Solicitors	23369	
Breakdown of Solicitors with No Practising Details		
Male Solicitors	764	3.27
Female Solicitors	880	3.77
City Solicitors	22	0.09
Suburban Solicitors	1174	5.02
Country Solicitors	190	0.81
Interstate Solicitors	58	0.25
Overseas Solicitors	199	0.85
Unknown	1	
Type of Practitioner		
Private Practice	1174	5.02
Government	182	0.78
Corporate	285	1.22

1. The 'Type of Practitioner' categories include unemployed and solicitors with no current practising details. Prior to May 2006 these solicitors were included in the 'Other' category. Table 7 provides a detailed breakdown of solicitors with no current practising details. If a person has a multiple status (i.e works for a company or government as well as private practice), it will be the private practice status that is shown in the statistics.

2. From 1 August 2003 the "years since admission" categories have been changed. The category 2 -3 years and 4 – 7 years has been replaced with less than 5 years and 6 – 10 years

3. Firm size is measured by the number of partners.

4. The totals for the number of solicitors in Table 4 differ from the totals in Tables 5 and 6, because Table 4 records those solicitors who work in more than one legal practice (that is, several solicitors are counted more than once).

5. Employees are recorded as 'Non-principals' (since the introduction of the Legal Profession Act 2004).

6. Table 7 details the holders of NSW practising certificate who do not have any current practising details recorded on their records. These solicitors may be unemployed, on leave, working overseas or have elected to hold a practising certificate even though they are not practising.

7. There is a decrease in the number of solicitors in July each year. The practising certificate year ends on 30 June and solicitors may elect to let their certificate lapse at this time if they do not need to renew it.

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