THE LAW SOCIETY
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PROFILE

LAW SOCIETY RESEARCH UPDATE

Statistics as at 2 June 2011

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The following data about practising solicitors was drawn from the Law Society's database on 2 June 2011. 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	25037	
Male Solicitors	13329	53.24
Female Solicitors	11708	46.76
City Solicitors	12588	50.28
Suburban Solicitors	8074	32.25
Country Solicitors	3206	12.81
Interstate Solicitors	184	0.73
Overseas Solicitors	984	3.93
Unknown	1	
Type of Practitioner[1]		
Private Practice	17453	69.71
Government	2943	11.75
Corporate	4636	18.52

Table 2: Years Since Admission[2]	<= 1 Yrs	<= 5 Yrs	<= 10 Yrs	<= 14 Yrs	15+ Years	Unknown	TOTAL
All	10.14	20.82	21.56	11.43	36.05		100.00
Male	7.84	15.37	18.04	11.04	47.70		100.00
Female	12.76	27.02	25.56	11.87	22.79		100.00

Table 3: Age[3]	<=29 Years	30 - 39 Years	40 - 49 Years	50 - 59 Years	60+ Years	Unknown	TOTAL
All	18.50	30.85	21.70	18.08	10.34	0.52	100.00
Male	12.17	24.62	22.54	23.84	16.37	0.45	100.00
Female	25.72	37.94	20.74	11.52	3.48	0.61	100.00

Table 4: Profile of Private Practice[4]	Firms		Solicitors Working in Firms	
Firm Size	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Sole Practitioner	4284	86.83	6545	41.11
2 to 4	544	11.03	2834	17.80
5 to 10	69	1.40	1290	8.10
11 to 20	16	0.32	884	5.55
21 to 39	8	0.16	914	5.74
40 or more	13	0.26	3454	21.69
Total	4934	100.00	15921	100.00

Table 5: Individual Solicitors in Private Practice						
	Female		**Male**		**All**	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Principal	626	9.96	2481	26.09	3107	19.67
Sole Principal	980	15.59	3248	34.15	4228	26.76
Pending Principal	25	0.40	42	0.44	67	0.42
Non Principal[5]	4657	74.06	3739	39.32	8396	53.15
Total	6288	100.00	9510	100.00	15798	100.00

Table 6: Firm Size	**Female**				**Male**				**All**			
	Principal		**Employee**		**Principal**		**Employee**		**Principal**		**Employee**	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Sole Practitioner	980	61.02	1149	24.54	3248	56.69	1119	29.60	4228	57.64	2268	26.80
2 To 4	240	14.94	794	16.96	1058	18.47	732	19.36	1298	17.70	1526	18.03
5 To 10	76	4.73	469	10.02	378	6.60	344	9.10	454	6.19	813	9.61
11 To 20	60	3.74	331	7.07	200	3.49	276	7.30	260	3.54	607	7.17
21 To 39	50	3.11	404	8.63	179	3.12	269	7.11	229	3.12	673	7.95
40 or more	200	12.45	1535	32.79	666	11.63	1041	27.53	866	11.81	2576	30.44
Total	1606	100.00	4682	100.00	5729	100.00	3781	100.00	7335	100.00	8463	100.00

Table 7: Solicitors with No Practising Details	**No.**	**%**
Solicitors with Practising Details	22790	91.03
Solicitors with No Practising Details	2247	8.97
All Solicitors	25037	
Breakdown of Solicitors with No Practising Details		
Male Solicitors	994	3.97
Female Solicitors	1253	5.00
City Solicitors	38	0.15
Suburban Solicitors	1604	6.41
Country Solicitors	268	1.07
Interstate Solicitors	101	0.40
Overseas Solicitors	235	0.94
Unknown	1	
Type of Practitioner		
Private Practice	1578	6.30
Government	252	1.01
Corporate	412	1.65
Other	5	0.02

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. On 1 August 2003 the "years since admission" categories were changed. The category '2 -3 years' and '4 – 7 years' were 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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