THE LAW SOCIETY
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PROFILE

LAW SOCIETY RESEARCH UPDATE

Statistics as at 1 July 2011

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The following data about practising solicitors was drawn from the Law Society's database on 1 July 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	23606	
Male Solicitors	12723	53.90
Female Solicitors	10883	46.10
City Solicitors	12356	52.34
Suburban Solicitors	7248	30.70
Country Solicitors	3051	12.92
Interstate Solicitors	106	0.45
Overseas Solicitors	845	3.58
Unknown		
Type of Practitioner[1]		
Private Practice	16548	70.10
Government	2726	11.55
Corporate	4329	18.34

Table 2: Years Since Admission[2]	<= 1 Yrs	<= 5 Yrs	<= 10 Yrs	<= 14 Yrs	15+ Years	Unknown	TOTAL
All	10.13	20.01	21.32	11.60	36.94		100.00
Male	7.74	14.72	17.85	11.25	48.44		100.00
Female	12.93	26.20	25.38	12.01	23.49		100.00

Table 3: Age[3]	<=29 Years	30 - 39 Years	40 - 49 Years	50 - 59 Years	60+ Years	Unknown	TOTAL
All	17.89	30.37	22.11	18.61	10.49	0.53	100.00
Male	11.61	24.23	22.93	24.25	16.53	0.46	100.00
Female	25.24	37.54	21.15	12.03	3.44	0.61	100.00

Table 4: Profile of Private Practice[4]	Firms		Solicitors Working in Firms	
Firm Size	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Sole Practitioner	4207	86.62	6364	40.59
2 to 4	542	11.16	2818	17.97
5 to 10	68	1.40	1194	7.62
11 to 20	18	0.37	907	5.79
21 to 39	10	0.21	1074	6.85
40 or more	12	0.25	3321	21.18
Total	4857	100.00	15678	100.00

Table 5: Individual Solicitors in Private Practice						
	Female		**Male**		**All**	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Principal	628	10.16	2494	26.61	3122	20.07
Sole Principal	960	15.53	3175	33.88	4135	26.58
Pending Principal	28	0.45	64	0.68	92	0.59
Non Principal[5]	4567	73.86	3638	38.82	8205	52.75
Total	6183	100.00	9371	100.00	15554	100.00

Table 6: Firm Size	**Female**				**Male**				**All**			
	Principal		**Employee**		**Principal**		**Employee**		**Principal**		**Employee**	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Sole Practitioner	960	60.45	1100	23.94	3175	56.01	1080	29.17	4135	56.98	2180	26.27
2 To 4	236	14.86	796	17.32	1052	18.56	724	19.56	1288	17.75	1520	18.32
5 To 10	77	4.85	427	9.29	357	6.30	317	8.56	434	5.98	744	8.97
11 To 20	55	3.46	338	7.36	218	3.85	278	7.51	273	3.76	616	7.42
21 To 39	61	3.84	461	10.03	227	4.00	305	8.24	288	3.97	766	9.23
40 or more	199	12.53	1473	32.06	640	11.29	998	26.96	839	11.56	2471	29.78
Total	1588	100.00	4595	100.00	5669	100.00	3702	100.00	7257	100.00	8297	100.00

Table 7: Solicitors with No Practising Details	**No.**	**%**
Solicitors with Practising Details	22246	94.24
Solicitors with No Practising Details	1360	5.76
All Solicitors	23606	
Breakdown of Solicitors with No Practising Details		
Male Solicitors	637	2.70
Female Solicitors	723	3.06
City Solicitors	19	0.08
Suburban Solicitors	959	4.06
Country Solicitors	161	0.68
Interstate Solicitors	46	0.19
Overseas Solicitors	175	0.74
Unknown		
Type of Practitioner		
Private Practice	900	3.81
Government	153	0.65
Corporate	304	1.29
Other	3	0.01

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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