The Law Society
of New South Wales
ACN 000 000 699

PROFILE

Law Society Research Update

Statistics as at 5 January 2009

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The following data about practising solicitors was drawn from the Law Society's database on 5 January 2009. 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	22645	
Male Solicitors	12469	55.06
Female Solicitors	10176	44.94
City Solicitors	11862	52.38
Suburban Solicitors	6686	29.53
Country Solicitors	2917	12.88
Interstate Solicitors	166	0.73
Overseas Solicitors	1010	4.46
Unknown	4	0.02
Type of Practitioner[1]		
Private Practice	15919	70.30
Government	2571	11.35
Corporate	4129	18.23

Table 2: Years Since Admission[2]	**<= 1 Yrs**	**<= 5 Yrs**	**<= 10 Yrs**	**<= 14 Yrs**	**15+ Years**	**Unknown**	**TOTAL**
All	11.89	22.82	19.89	8.99	36.41		100.00
Male	8.79	16.86	17.36	8.51	48.48		100.00
Female	15.68	30.11	22.99	9.58	21.65		100.00

Table 3: Age[3]	**<=29 Years**	**30 - 39 Years**	**40 - 49 Years**	**50 - 59 Years**	**60+ Years**	**Unknown**	**TOTAL**
All	20.30	30.09	22.01	18.40	8.72	0.48	100.00
Male	12.89	25.32	23.14	24.71	13.58	0.37	100.00
Female	29.36	35.93	20.63	10.70	2.77	0.62	100.00

Table 4: Profile of Private Practice[4]	**Firms**		**Solicitors Working in Firms**	
Firm Size	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Sole Practitioner	3797	85.56	5747	38.47
2 to 4	535	12.06	2626	17.58
5 to 10	67	1.51	1155	7.73
11 to 20	16	0.36	761	5.09
21 or more	23	0.52	4650	31.13

Table 5: Individual Solicitors in Private Practice						
	Female		Male		All	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Principal	594	10.33	2531	27.86	3125	21.06
Sole Principal	802	13.94	2962	32.61	3764	25.37
Pending Principal	11	0.19	26	0.29	37	0.25
Non Principal[5]	4346	75.54	3565	39.24	7911	53.32

Table 6	Female				Male				All			
	Principal		Employee		Principal		Employee		Principal		Employee	
Firm Size	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sole Practitioner	802	57.45	933	21.41	2962	53.92	999	27.82	3764	54.64	1932	24.31
2 To 4	202	14.47	643	14.76	1061	19.32	679	18.91	1263	18.33	1322	16.63
5 To 10	76	5.44	399	9.16	353	6.43	326	9.08	429	6.23	725	9.12
11 To 20	43	3.08	302	6.93	185	3.37	229	6.38	228	3.31	531	6.68
21 Or More	273	19.56	2080	47.74	932	16.97	1358	37.82	1205	17.49	3438	43.26
Totals	1396	100.00	4357	100.00	5493	100.00	3591	100.00	6889	100.00	7948	100.00

Table 7: Solicitors with No Practising Details	No.	%
Solicitors with Practising Details	21192	93.58
Solicitors with No Practising Details	1453	6.42
All Solicitors	22645	
Breakdown of Solicitors with No Practising Details		
Male Solicitors	689	3.04
Female Solicitors	764	3.37
City Solicitors	18	0.08
Suburban Solicitors	964	4.26
Country Solicitors	180	0.79
Interstate Solicitors	58	0.26
Overseas Solicitors	230	1.02
Unknown	3	0.01
Type of Practitioner		
Private Practice	1008	4.45
Government	144	0.64
Corporate	275	1.21

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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