THE LAW SOCIETY
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PROFILE

Law Society Research Update

Statistics as at 3 March 2010

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The following data about practising solicitors was drawn from the Law Society's database on 3 March 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	23909	
Male Solicitors	12943	54.13
Female Solicitors	10966	45.87
City Solicitors	12259	51.27
Suburban Solicitors	7453	31.17
Country Solicitors	3054	12.77
Interstate Solicitors	135	0.56
Overseas Solicitors	1003	4.20
Unknown	5	0.02
Type of Practitioner[1]		
Private Practice	16792	70.23
Government	2814	11.77
Corporate	4300	17.98

Table 2: Years Since Admission[2]	**<= 1 Yrs**	**<= 5 Yrs**	**<= 10 Yrs**	**<= 14 Yrs**	**15+ Years**	**Unknown**	**TOTAL**
All	10.94	21.97	20.46	10.18	36.45		100.00
Male	8.22	16.39	17.29	9.78	48.32		100.00
Female	14.14	28.55	24.20	10.65	22.45		100.00

Table 3: Age[3]	**<=29 Years**	**30 - 39 Years**	**40 - 49 Years**	**50 - 59 Years**	**60+ Years**	**Unknown**	**TOTAL**
All	19.58	30.56	21.73	18.13	9.52	0.49	100.00
Male	12.57	25.25	22.70	24.21	14.87	0.39	100.00
Female	27.85	36.82	20.59	10.94	3.20	0.59	100.00

Table 4: Profile of Private Practice[4]	**Firms**		**Solicitors Working in Firms**	
Firm Size	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Sole Practitioner	4045	85.81	6138	39.67
2 to 4	565	11.99	2797	18.08
5 to 10	65	1.38	1169	7.55
11 to 20	16	0.34	805	5.20
21 to 39	10	0.21	974	6.29
40 or more	13	0.28	3591	23.21
Total	4714	100.00	15474	100.00

Table 5: Individual Solicitors in Private Practice						
	Female		Male		All	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Principal	613	10.15	2541	27.29	3154	20.55
Sole Principal	880	14.57	3099	33.28	3979	25.92
Pending Principal	24	0.40	47	0.50	71	0.46
Non Principal[5]	4521	74.88	3624	38.92	8145	53.07

Table 6	Female				Male				All			
	Principal		Employee		Principal		Employee		Principal		Employee	
Firm Size	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sole Practitioner	880	58.94	1051	23.12	3099	54.95	1047	28.52	3979	55.78	2098	25.54
2 To 4	225	15.07	730	16.06	1108	19.65	716	19.50	1333	18.69	1446	17.60
5 To 10	76	5.09	442	9.73	338	5.99	305	8.31	414	5.80	747	9.09
11 To 20	44	2.95	321	7.06	180	3.19	253	6.89	224	3.14	574	6.99
21 To 39	51	3.42	413	9.09	226	4.01	264	7.19	277	3.88	677	8.24
40 or more	217	14.53	1588	34.94	689	12.22	1086	29.58	906	12.70	2674	32.55
Total	1493	100.00	4545	100.00	5640	100.00	3671	100.00	7133	100.00	8216	100.00

Table 7: Solicitors with No Practising Details	No.	%
Solicitors with Practising Details	22097	92.42
Solicitors with No Practising Details	1812	7.58
All Solicitors	23909	
Breakdown of Solicitors with No Practising Details		
Male Solicitors	832	3.48
Female Solicitors	980	4.10
City Solicitors	23	0.10
Suburban Solicitors	1303	5.45
Country Solicitors	205	0.86
Interstate Solicitors	63	0.26
Overseas Solicitors	213	0.89
Unknown	5	0.02
Type of Practitioner		
Private Practice	1298	5.43
Government	202	0.84
Corporate	309	1.29

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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