THE LAW SOCIETY
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PROFILE

Law Society Research Update

Statistics as at 1 July 2010

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The following data about practising solicitors was drawn from the Law Society's database on 1 July 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	22699	
Male Solicitors	12392	54.59
Female Solicitors	10307	45.41
City Solicitors	11902	52.43
Suburban Solicitors	6924	30.50
Country Solicitors	2938	12.94
Interstate Solicitors	94	0.41
Overseas Solicitors	837	3.69
Unknown	4	0.02
Type of Practitioner[1]		
Private Practice	16037	70.65
Government	2634	11.60
Corporate	4024	17.73

Table 2: Years Since Admission[2]	**<= 1 Yrs**	**<= 5 Yrs**	**<= 10 Yrs**	**<= 14 Yrs**	**15+ Years**	**Unknown**	**TOTAL**
All	10.59	20.95	20.62	10.49	37.36		100.00
Male	7.94	15.28	17.52	10.10	49.15		100.00
Female	13.77	27.76	24.34	10.95	23.18		100.00

Table 3: Age[3]	**<=29 Years**	**30 - 39 Years**	**40 - 49 Years**	**50 - 59 Years**	**60+ Years**	**Unknown**	**TOTAL**
All	18.50	30.25	22.06	18.73	9.97	0.49	100.00
Male	11.60	24.94	22.85	24.67	15.52	0.41	100.00
Female	26.80	36.64	21.11	11.58	3.29	0.58	100.00

Table 4: Profile of Private Practice[4]	**Firms**		**Solicitors Working in Firms**	
Firm Size	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Sole Practitioner	4035	86.24	6074	40.06
2 to 4	538	11.50	2757	18.18
5 to 10	68	1.45	1197	7.89
11 to 20	15	0.32	769	5.07
21 to 39	11	0.24	1085	7.16
40 or more	12	0.26	3280	21.63
Total	4679	100.00	15162	100.00

Table 5: Individual Solicitors in Private Practice						
	Female		Male		All	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Principal	600	10.19	2475	27.06	3075	20.45
Sole Principal	872	14.80	3085	33.73	3957	26.32
Pending Principal	40	0.68	53	0.58	93	0.62
Non Principal[5]	4379	74.33	3532	38.62	7911	52.61

Table 6	Female				Male				All			
	Principal		Employee		Principal		Employee		Principal		Employee	
Firm Size	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sole Practitioner	872	59.24	1020	23.08	3085	55.49	1029	28.70	3957	56.27	2049	25.60
2 To 4	220	14.95	750	16.97	1061	19.08	713	19.89	1281	18.22	1463	18.28
5 To 10	75	5.10	435	9.84	360	6.47	319	8.90	435	6.19	754	9.42
11 To 20	45	3.06	305	6.90	175	3.15	237	6.61	220	3.13	542	6.77
21 To 39	61	4.14	460	10.41	244	4.39	300	8.37	305	4.34	760	9.50
40 or more	199	13.52	1449	32.79	635	11.42	987	27.53	834	11.86	2436	30.43
Total	1472	100.00	4419	100.00	5560	100.00	3585	100.00	7032	100.00	8004	100.00

Table 7: Solicitors with No Practising Details	No.	%
Solicitors with Practising Details	21409	94.32
Solicitors with No Practising Details	1290	5.68
All Solicitors	22699	
Breakdown of Solicitors with No Practising Details		
Male Solicitors	614	2.71
Female Solicitors	676	2.98
City Solicitors	22	0.10
Suburban Solicitors	905	3.99
Country Solicitors	156	0.69
Interstate Solicitors	45	0.20
Overseas Solicitors	158	0.70
Unknown	4	0.02
Type of Practitioner		
Private Practice	877	3.86
Government	164	0.72
Corporate	245	1.08

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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