THE LAW SOCIETY
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PROFILE

LAW SOCIETY RESEARCH UPDATE

Statistics as at 1 February 2011

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The following data about practising solicitors was drawn from the Law Society's database on 1 February 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	24350	
Male Solicitors	13078	53.71
Female Solicitors	11272	46.29
City Solicitors	12583	51.68
Suburban Solicitors	7577	31.12
Country Solicitors	3105	12.75
Interstate Solicitors	137	0.56
Overseas Solicitors	947	3.89
Unknown	1	
Type of Practitioner[1]		
Private Practice	17062	70.07
Government	2851	11.71
Corporate	4434	18.21

Table 2: Years Since Admission[2]	<= 1 Yrs	<= 5 Yrs	<= 10 Yrs	<= 14 Yrs	15+ Years	Unknown	TOTAL
All	10.30	21.34	20.80	11.39	36.17		100.00
Male	7.90	15.81	17.47	10.89	47.93		100.00
Female	13.09	27.75	24.67	11.97	22.52		100.00

Table 3: Age[3]	<=29 Years	30 - 39 Years	40 - 49 Years	50 - 59 Years	60+ Years	Unknown	TOTAL
All	18.70	30.67	21.73	18.21	10.18	0.51	100.00
Male	12.05	24.94	22.55	24.03	16.00	0.44	100.00
Female	26.42	37.31	20.79	11.45	3.42	0.60	100.00

Table 4: Profile of Private Practice[4]	Firms		Solicitors Working in Firms	
Firm Size	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Sole Practitioner	4189	86.46	6423	40.36
2 to 4	550	11.35	2865	18.00
5 to 10	66	1.36	1182	7.43
11 to 20	17	0.35	885	5.56
21 to 39	10	0.21	989	6.21
40 or more	13	0.27	3570	22.43
Total	4845	100.00	15914	100.00

Table 5: Individual Solicitors in Private Practice						
	Female		**Male**		**All**	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Principal	624	9.91	2506	26.41	3130	19.83
Sole Principal	949	15.07	3192	33.64	4141	26.23
Pending Principal	20	0.32	37	0.39	57	0.36
Non Principal[5]	4703	74.70	3755	39.57	8458	53.58

Table 6: Firm Size	**Female**				**Male**				**All**			
	Principal		**Employee**		**Principal**		**Employee**		**Principal**		**Employee**	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Sole Practitioner	949	60.33	1138	24.09	3192	56.02	1092	28.80	4141	56.95	2230	26.19
2 To 4	233	14.81	795	16.83	1066	18.71	759	20.02	1299	17.87	1554	18.25
5 To 10	77	4.90	428	9.06	352	6.18	302	7.96	429	5.90	730	8.57
11 To 20	51	3.24	357	7.56	198	3.47	270	7.12	249	3.42	627	7.36
21 To 39	52	3.31	405	8.58	222	3.90	290	7.65	274	3.77	695	8.16
40 or more	211	13.41	1600	33.88	668	11.72	1079	28.45	879	12.09	2679	31.46
Total	1573	100.00	4723	100.00	5698	100.00	3792	100.00	7271	100.00	8515	100.00

Table 7: Solicitors with No Practising Details	**No.**	**%**
Solicitors with Practising Details	22619	92.89
Solicitors with No Practising Details	1731	7.11
All Solicitors	24350	
Breakdown of Solicitors with No Practising Details	783	3.22
Male Solicitors	948	3.89
Female Solicitors		
	30	0.12
City Solicitors	1217	5.00
Suburban Solicitors	188	0.77
Country Solicitors	67	0.28
Interstate Solicitors	228	0.94
Overseas Solicitors	1	
Unknown		
Type of Practitioner	1170	4.80
Private Practice	203	0.83
Government	355	1.46
Corporate	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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