THE LAW SOCIETY
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PROFILE

LAW SOCIETY RESEARCH UPDATE

Statistics as at 5 March 2012

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The following data about practising solicitors was drawn from the Law Society's database on 5 March 2012. 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	25541	
Male Solicitors	13503	52.87
Female Solicitors	12038	47.13
City Solicitors	13149	51.48
Suburban Solicitors	7960	31.17
Country Solicitors	3229	12.64
Interstate Solicitors	166	0.65
Overseas Solicitors	1035	4.05
Unknown	2	0.01
Type of Practitioner[1]		
Private Practice	17796	69.68
Government	2938	11.50
Corporate	4807	18.82

Table 2: Years Since Admission[2]	<= 1 Yrs	<= 5 Yrs	<= 10 Yrs	<= 14 Yrs	15+ Years	Unknown	TOTAL
All	9.65	20.11	21.89	11.83	36.51		100.00
Male	7.56	15.13	18.02	11.34	47.95		100.00
Female	11.99	25.70	26.24	12.39	23.68		100.00

Table 3: Age[3]	<=29 Years	30 - 39 Years	40 - 49 Years	50 - 59 Years	60+ Years	Unknown	TOTAL
All	17.81	31.25	21.56	18.09	10.78	0.51	100.00
Male	11.78	24.76	22.32	23.57	17.10	0.47	100.00
Female	24.58	38.52	20.70	11.95	3.69	0.56	100.00

Table 4: Profile of Private Practice[4]	Firms		Solicitors Working in Firms	
Firm Size	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Sole Practitioner	4385	86.81	6688	40.47
2 to 4	553	10.95	2933	17.75
5 to 10	70	1.39	1243	7.52
11 to 20	20	0.40	1078	6.52
21 to 39	10	0.20	1015	6.14
40 or more	13	0.26	3568	21.59
Total	5051	100.00	16525	100.00

Table 5: Individual Solicitors in Private Practice						
	Female		Male		All	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Principal	658	9.91	2557	26.25	3215	19.63
Sole Principal	1049	15.80	3278	33.65	4327	26.42
Pending Principal	21	0.32	59	0.61	80	0.49
Non Principal[5]	4910	73.97	3847	39.49	8757	53.46
Total	6638	100.00	9741	100.00	16379	100.00

Table 6: Firm Size	Female				Male				All			
	Principal		Employee		Principal		Employee		Principal		Employee	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sole Practitioner	1049	61.45	1178	23.89	3278	56.18	1132	28.98	4327	57.37	2310	26.14
2 To 4	246	14.41	845	17.14	1051	18.01	773	19.79	1297	17.20	1618	18.31
5 To 10	84	4.92	456	9.25	365	6.26	319	8.17	449	5.95	775	8.77
11 To 20	61	3.57	418	8.48	245	4.20	328	8.40	306	4.06	746	8.44
21 To 39	62	3.63	428	8.68	220	3.77	293	7.50	282	3.74	721	8.16
40 or more	205	12.01	1606	32.57	676	11.59	1061	27.16	881	11.68	2667	30.18
Total	1707	100.00	4931	100.00	5835	100.00	3906	100.00	7542	100.00	8837	100.00

Table 7: Solicitors with No Practising Details	No.	%
Solicitors with Practising Details	23685	92.73
Solicitors with No Practising Details	1856	7.27
All Solicitors	25541	
Breakdown of Solicitors with No Practising Details		
Male Solicitors	850	3.33
Female Solicitors	1006	3.94
City Solicitors	27	0.11
Suburban Solicitors	1307	5.12
Country Solicitors	217	0.85
Interstate Solicitors	72	0.28
Overseas Solicitors	231	0.90
Unknown	2	0.01
Type of Practitioner		
Private Practice	1328	5.20
Government	180	0.70
Corporate	348	1.36
Other	0	0.00

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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