PROFILE

LAW SOCIETY RESEARCH UPDATE

Statistics as at 1 May 2012

THE LAW SOCIETY
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The following data about practising solicitors was drawn from the Law Society's database on 1 May 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	25973	
Male Solicitors	13655	52.57
Female Solicitors	12318	47.43
City Solicitors	13198	50.81
Suburban Solicitors	8239	31.72
Country Solicitors	3294	12.68
Interstate Solicitors	189	0.73
Overseas Solicitors	1051	4.05
Unknown	2	0.01
Type of Practitioner[1]		
Private Practice	18112	69.73
Government	2981	11.48
Corporate	4880	18.79

Table 2: Years Since Admission[2]	<= 1 Yrs	<= 5 Yrs	<= 10 Yrs	<= 14 Yrs	15+ Years	Unknown	TOTAL
All	9.97	20.06	21.78	11.87	36.32		100.00
Male	7.72	15.21	17.87	11.44	47.76		100.00
Female	12.46	25.44	26.12	12.34	23.63		100.00

Table 3: Age[3]	<=29 Years	30 - 39 Years	40 - 49 Years	50 - 59 Years	60+ Years	Unknown	TOTAL
All	17.94	31.22	21.56	17.90	10.86	0.52	100.00
Male	11.89	24.78	22.30	23.24	17.31	0.48	100.00
Female	24.64	38.36	20.73	11.98	3.72	0.57	100.00

Table 4: Profile of Private Practice[4]	Firms		Solicitors Working in Firms	
Firm Size	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Sole Practitioner	4437	87.03	6769	40.89
2 to 4	551	10.81	2950	17.82
5 to 10	65	1.28	1122	6.78
11 to 20	21	0.41	1013	6.12
21 to 39	11	0.22	1170	7.07
40 or more	13	0.26	3531	21.33
Total	5098	100.00	16555	100.00

Table 5: Individual Solicitors in Private Practice						
	Female		Male		All	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Principal	651	9.77	2541	26.07	3192	19.45
Sole Principal	1071	16.07	3314	34.00	4385	26.72
Pending Principal	18	0.27	49	0.50	67	0.41
Non Principal[5]	4923	73.89	3844	39.43	8767	53.42
Total	6663	100.00	9748	100.00	16411	100.00

Table 6: Firm Size	Female				Male				All			
	Principal		Employee		Principal		Employee		Principal		Employee	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sole Practitioner	1071	62.20	1210	24.49	3314	56.60	1126	28.92	4385	57.87	2336	26.44
2 To 4	248	14.40	855	17.30	1046	17.87	782	20.09	1294	17.08	1637	18.53
5 To 10	76	4.41	404	8.18	336	5.74	289	7.42	412	5.44	693	7.84
11 To 20	61	3.54	394	7.97	249	4.25	290	7.45	310	4.09	684	7.74
21 To 39	65	3.77	497	10.06	239	4.08	349	8.96	304	4.01	846	9.58
40 or more	201	11.67	1581	32.00	671	11.46	1057	27.15	872	11.51	2638	29.86
Total	1722	100.00	4941	100.00	5855	100.00	3893	100.00	7577	100.00	8834	100.00

Table 7: Solicitors with No Practising Details	No.	%
Solicitors with Practising Details	23844	91.80
Solicitors with No Practising Details	2129	8.20
All Solicitors	25973	
Breakdown of Solicitors with No Practising Details		
Male Solicitors	970	3.73
Female Solicitors	1159	4.46
City Solicitors	27	0.10
Suburban Solicitors	1515	5.83
Country Solicitors	253	0.97
Interstate Solicitors	86	0.33
Overseas Solicitors	246	0.95
Unknown	2	0.01
Type of Practitioner		
Private Practice	1582	6.09
Government	185	0.71
Corporate	362	1.39
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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