

Annual Profile of Solicitors in NSW

2025

July 2026

Prepared for: Law Society of New South Wales



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Acknowledgment of Country

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Urbis is committed to incorporating our respect for First Nations cultures, peoples and storytelling in our work across the Country. We are proud to have partnered with Darug Nation artist, **Hayley Pigram**, and to profile her artwork – **Sacred River Dreaming**.



The river is the symbol of the Dreaming and the journey of life. The circles and lines represent people meeting and connections across time and space. When we are working in different places, we can still be connected and work towards the same goal.

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Summary of key findings

Introduction

Each year, the Law Society of NSW compiles a profile of practising solicitors in NSW. This report presents a range of information about the profession in NSW. This includes demographic characteristics and various aspects of working life, such as sector of practice, hours worked per week and income earned.

This is a summary of the 2025 key findings, based on data collected as at 30 June 2025.

Snapshot of solicitors as at 30 June 2025

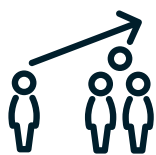
Data from the Law Society of NSW database shows:

Number of Solicitors	Gender
43,619 solicitors had an NSW practising certificate, an increase of 6% year on year.	24,435 (56%) female solicitors 19,184 (44%) male solicitors
Age	Country of Birth
Just under half of all solicitors were 39 years of age or younger (49%). The highest proportion were in the 30–34 years age bracket (17%).	29% of solicitors were born in a country other than Australia. Solicitors were born in over 150 different countries.
Location	Sector
- Half of solicitors worked in Sydney CBD (49%) - A third worked in suburban Sydney (33%) - Just over one in ten worked in regional/rural NSW (11%)	- Over two-thirds of solicitors were working in private practice (69%) - One-fifth were working as corporate legal practitioners (20%) - Around one in nine were working as government legal practitioners (11%)
Years since admission	Private law practices
- More than half of all solicitors had been admitted for 10 or more years (56%) - One-fifth had been admitted for 5–9 years (20%), with a smaller amount admitted for 2–4 years (15%) 10% had been admitted for under 2 years 19% had been admitted for 25 years or more – male solicitors were more likely to have been admitted for more than 25 years	- There are 7,388 private law practices operating in NSW - Over three-fifths of practices had only one solicitor (64%) - Private practices with 200 or more solicitors made up only 0.2% of all law practices in NSW, yet employed a quarter of all non-principal employees in private law practices (25%)

Of solicitors who responded to the 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey:

Areas of practice	Income (gross annual for FY23–24)
- The most common areas of practice were commercial law (30%), corporate law (21%), civil litigation (19%) and conveyancing/real property (18%) - Over the last decade, the conveyancing/real property (–6%), commercial law (–5%), small business (–5%), and wills and estates (–5%) practice areas have had the highest proportional decline.	- The average income across all respondents was \$184,980, an increase of \$5,907 from the previous year - Almost two-fifths were earning between \$100,001–\$200,000 (38%) - Just over a fifth were earning \$100,000 or less (21%), with one in eight earning over \$300,000 (13%)

2025 highlights and trends



The profession continued to grow, with 6% growth from 2024 to 2025 and 4% average growth annually since 1997. Growth since the previous year was largely due to high growth in private practice solicitors (7% growth from last year). However, this may partly reflect changes to the reporting period compared with last year. *



For the ninth consecutive year, female solicitors outnumbered male solicitors. In 2025 there were 5,251 more female solicitors than male and females entered the profession in NSW at a nearly two-to-one ratio relative to males (a rate of 1.93 females to every 1 male).* Despite this, men remained over-represented in the most senior roles across private and corporate settings.**



Nearly half (49%) of all solicitors were under 40 years old, with the age of female solicitors averaging approximately six years younger than their male counterparts.*



The profession was culturally diverse, with 29% of solicitors born overseas* and 23% speaking a language other than English at home.** The composition of overseas-born solicitors has gradually shifted, with declines from the UK and Europe and sustained representation from Asia.



Three-quarters (75%) of solicitors were working full time while 8% reported not currently working as a legal practitioner. More women reported working part time (17% compared to 13% of male solicitors).**



Annual gross income for full-time solicitors varied considerably across sectors, with corporate legal practitioners earning the highest median income, followed by those in non-legal employment.**



Survey respondents reported providing over 62,090 days of pro-bono, unpaid or volunteer legal services to the community in the previous 12 months, 7,000 hours more than in the year prior.**



While overall incomes increased from FY22-23, females reported earning, on average around \$30,054 less than their male counterparts. The gender pay gap remains evident across all practice sectors and age groups, however it is more pronounced among those with more experience and in more senior roles.**

* Data from the Law Society of NSW database. This report uses data as of 30 June 2025 where previous reports have used data from 31 October each year. Therefore, data is reported over the 8 months from 31 October to 30 June, rather than a full 12 months. As such, care should be taken to avoid direct comparisons between the figures reported in this report and previous reports.

** Data from the 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey.

2025 Annual Profile

1 Introduction

1.1 The role of the Law Society

The Law Society of New South Wales (NSW), as the professional association representing the solicitors of NSW, has commissioned this report to provide a profile of the legal profession.

The Law Society has two primary responsibilities: acting as the licensing authority and a co-regulator by maintaining professional standards of conduct, as well as investigating complaints against solicitors; and, representing and providing services to its members. The role of the Law Society of NSW is summarised by the objectives set out in its mission statement, which include to:

- undertake activities and services determined by the needs and welfare of members
- effectively represent the profession at government and community levels
- ensure a competitive national profession
- ensure the community is served by ethical, competent and independent legal practitioners
- ensure the community has reasonable and affordable access to justice
- advocate for ongoing reform of the law and the legal system.

Further information about the Law Society of NSW can be found at lawsociety.com.au.

1.2 Objectives of this report

This report provides a profile of NSW solicitors with practising certificates in 2025, including information on:

- demographics, including age, gender, country of birth and number of years since first admission
- the nature of solicitors' work, including location, sector, areas of law practised, hours worked and annual income.

The report also identifies trends in the profile of solicitors by comparing 2025 information with data from previous years.

1.3 Methodology

The information contained in this report is obtained from two sources:

- annual census data obtained from the Law Society of NSW database
- the 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey.

Annual census data from the Law Society of NSW Database

The Law Society of NSW maintains records of all solicitors who hold a NSW practising certificate. The data used in this report reflects the records of all solicitors who held NSW practising certificates as at 30 June 2025 (see details regarding the change in reporting periods in the section below).

The profession fluctuates over the course of the year, therefore this report uses data as at the end of June which is considered the most stable month. While the Law Society has retained records of solicitors for many years, this report relies on information collected and stored in the Law Society database since 1988. From that year forward, the coding of information has been reliable and consistent.

The Law Society of NSW does not maintain records relating to people who are working in law-related fields in NSW (some of whom hold legal qualifications and may have been admitted to practice) but are not required to hold a practising certificate.

Practising Certificate Survey

The Practising Certificate Survey has been conducted annually by the Law Society of NSW since 1993–94, and in its current form since 2007. Each year, as part of the practising certificate renewal process, solicitors are invited to complete the voluntary survey. The survey gathers additional demographic data, including information about main areas of practice, work hours, and income. A total of 15,464 solicitors responded to the 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey, representing a response rate of 38%.

The Law Society does not, and cannot, link the information collected through the Practising Certificate Survey to individual solicitors or the law practices and organisations in which they work.

Changes to reporting from previous editions

Several changes have been made to this year's Annual Profile report from previous versions. These changes have been made with the intention of enhancing the accuracy, clarity and utility of the report with as minimal difference as possible, so as to allow for comparison with previous versions of the report. Any substantive changes to reporting are flagged throughout the report as footnotes. These include:

- **Change in reporting reference date** – data drawn from the Law Society of NSW database has previously been collected to reflect the status of the profession at the 31st of October each year. This report instead uses data as of the 30th of June 2025, to align with the period of most stability within the profession.
- **Standardised category ordering** – throughout the report and charts, categories are listed in alphabetical order unless there is another applicable logic by which they should appear (e.g. seniority of roles, most common to least common responses). This has meant that unlike in previous reports, gendered data is now ordered as female before male.
- **Revised measure of private practice size & classification** – previous reports have assessed the size of private practice firms by the number of partners/principals. Firm size in this report is instead measured according to the overall number of solicitors within a firm (principals and employee solicitors combined), to account for differences in the ratio of principals and employees across different firms and practice sectors. As a result, some figures in this report are not directly comparable with results published in the 2025–26 Practising Certificate report, which presented firm size using partner/principal-based groupings. The revised measure of private practice size, reflecting overall solicitor numbers within a firm, will be used for the 2026–27 Practising Certificate report. There was also a revised methodology used to classify private practices more accurately.
- **Updated years since admission bands** – the years since admission categories used in this report differ from those applied in previous reports and in the 2025–26 Practising Certificate reporting. The revised bands were introduced to provide greater granularity across early, mid, and late-career stages. Years since admission is counted as full years between a solicitor's admission and 30 June 2025 (not rounded). For example, "two to four years" covers solicitors admitted for at least two full years but less than five. Due to the change in band definitions, some results are not directly comparable with prior editions of the Annual Profile or with 2025–26 Practising Certificate survey outputs that use alternative groupings (for example, "one year or less" or "15 years or more"). The revised, more granular bands will be used for the 2026–27 Practising Certificate report.
- **Updated country and region classifications** – several categories have been updated regarding the country/region of birth of solicitors. 'UK & Ireland' and 'South and Central America' have been renamed to 'Ireland & UK' and 'Central and South America' to comply with alphabetical ordering of categories. 'USA & Canada' has been renamed 'North America' to accommodate the inclusion of Mexico, which has previously been included in 'Central and South America'.

1.4 Further information

For further information about this report, please contact:

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2 Number of solicitors

A total of 43,619 solicitors held a NSW practising certificate as at 30 June 2025, up from 41,304 in October 2024. This represents a 6% growth in the profession, making it the highest growth rate of the profession since 2001–02.¹ Since 1997, the number of solicitors holding a NSW practising certificate has grown by over 30,000, an increase of 225%.

Table 1 – Number of solicitors by gender over time

Year	Female		Male		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
2025	24,435	56%	19,184	44%	43,619
2024	22,992	56%	18,312	44%	41,304
2023	21,991	55%	18,061	45%	40,052
2022	20,785	54%	17,480	46%	38,265
2021	19,917	54%	17,269	46%	37,186
2020	18,809	53%	16,900	47%	35,709
2019	17,909	52%	16,448	48%	34,357
2018	16,797	51%	15,882	49%	32,679
2017	16,043	51%	15,595	49%	31,638
2016	15,065	50%	15,085	50%	30,150
2015	14,230	49%	14,705	51%	28,935
2014	13,371	49%	14,204	52%	27,575
2013	12,633	48%	13,775	52%	26,408
2012	12,030	47%	13,463	53%	25,493
2011	11,431	47%	13,112	53%	24,543
2010	10,915	46%	12,845	54%	23,760
2009	10,347	45%	12,516	55%	22,863
2008	9,845	45%	12,260	56%	22,105
2007	9,281	44%	11,974	56%	21,255
2006	8,618	42%	11,712	58%	20,330
2005	8,132	41%	11,677	59%	19,809
2004	7,566	40%	11,368	60%	18,934
2003	6,980	39%	11,112	61%	18,092
2002	6,374	37%	10,815	63%	17,189
2001	5,803	36%	10,417	64%	16,220
2000	5,322	35%	10,060	65%	15,382
1999	4,866	33%	9,777	67%	14,643
1998	4,457	32%	9,414	68%	13,871
1997	4,099	31%	9,310	69%	13,409

Source: Law Society of NSW database

¹ This report uses data from the Law Society of NSW database as of 30 June 2025 where previous reports have used data from 31 October each year. This means that unlike previous reports the growth rate of 6% is reported over the 8 months from 31 October to 30 June, rather than a full 12 months. As such, care should be taken to avoid direct comparisons between the figures reported in this report and previous reports.

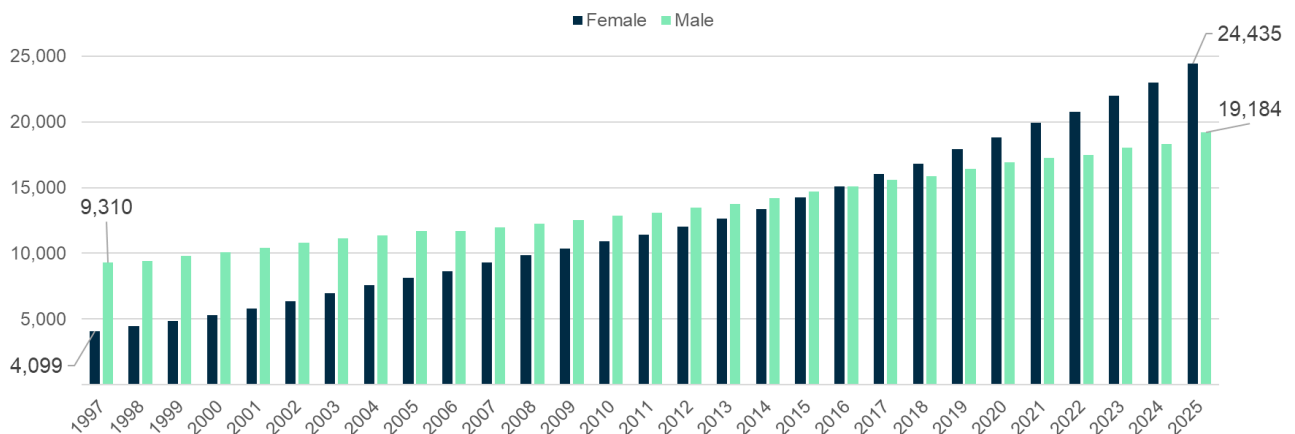
3 Gender

3.1 Gender and growth

In 2025, female solicitors outnumbered male solicitors for the ninth consecutive year. Of all NSW solicitors, 56% were female and 44% were male.

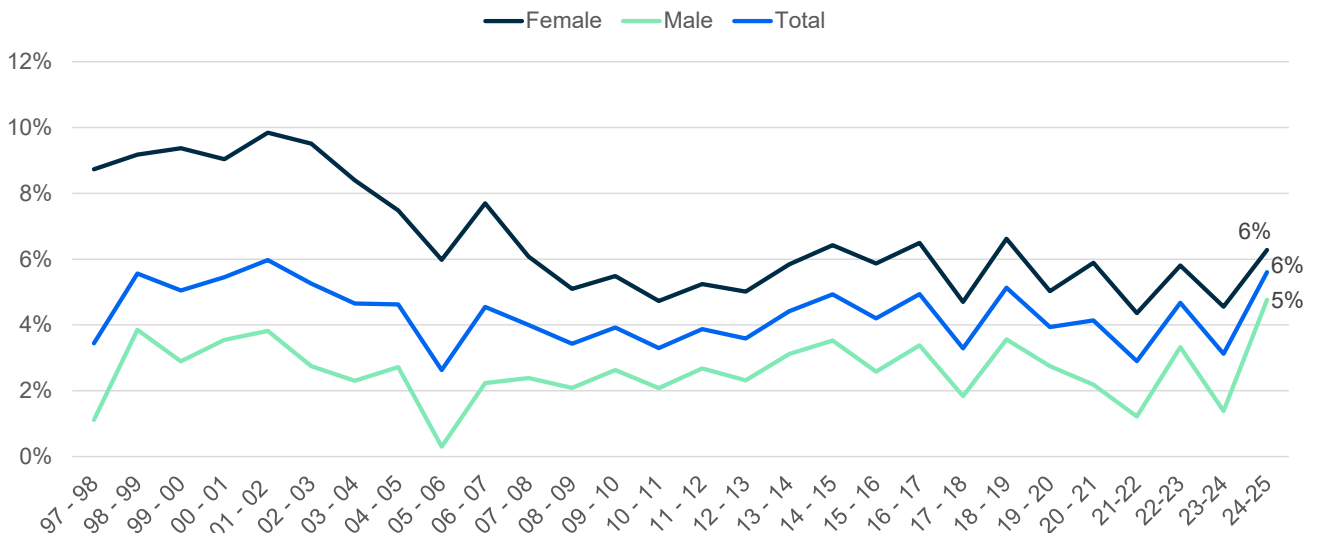
Since 1997, there has been steady growth in the overall number of solicitors; however, the growth rate of female solicitors has been consistently higher than the growth rate of male solicitors.² Over this period, the number of female solicitors has grown almost six-fold (from N=4,099 to N=24,435) while the number of male solicitors has doubled (from N=9,310 to N=19,184). In the 12 months to 30 June 2025, nearly two female practitioners were admitted to the profession for every male practitioner admitted (a ratio of 1.93 to 1).³

Figure 1 - Number of female and male solicitors over time



Source: Law Society of NSW database

Figure 2 - Annual growth rates in the number of female and male solicitors over time²



Source: Law Society of NSW database

² Due to Law Society of NSW database data now being reported as at 30 June rather than 31 October, the growth rate reported for this year is representative of an 8-month, rather than annual, period of time. This may limit the validity of comparison between the most recent growth rate and those from previous years.

³ As defined by the ratio of female and male lawyers recorded as having been admitted for less than 1 year.

3.2 Snapshot of female and male solicitors

Table 2 provides a snapshot of the profile of female and male solicitors. Drawing on data from the Law Society of NSW database, the key differences between genders as at 30 June 2025 are:

- a larger proportion of female solicitors in NSW were working in the corporate and government legal sectors (22% and 14% respectively), compared to male solicitors (17% and 8% respectively). Three in every four male practitioners work in private practice (75%) compared to less than two-thirds of female practitioners (63%).
- a quarter of female solicitors working in private practice were principals of their law practice (25%), compared to almost half of males working in private practice (46%).
- female solicitors had a younger age profile than male solicitors:
 - 21% of females were aged under 30 years, compared to 13% of males
 - More than one-in-four females (28%) had been admitted as a solicitor for four years or less, compared to 21% of males.

Responses to the 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey further revealed that:

- 17% of women reported working part time, compared to 13% of males
- overall, female solicitors reported lower incomes than male solicitors:
 - a greater proportion of female solicitors reported earning less than \$150,000 (47%), compared to male solicitors (41%)
 - nearly one-third of males reported earning more than \$200,000 (32%), compared to one-quarter (24%) of females.

More detailed analysis of results based on gender is provided throughout this report.

Table 2 - Profile of male and female solicitors

	Female	Male	Total
Base	24,435	19,184	43,619
Practice sector			
Private practice	63%	75%	68%
Corporate legal	22%	17%	20%
Government legal	14%	8%	11%
Role within private practice*			
Partner/principal	25%	46%	35%
Employee	75%	54%	65%
Years since admission			
Under two years	11%	8%	10%
Two to four years	17%	13%	15%
Five to nine years	21%	18%	20%
10 to 14 years	15%	13%	14%
15 to 19 years	13%	11%	12%
20 to 24 years	10%	10%	10%
25 years or more	13%	28%	19%

Age

<30 years	21%	13%	17%
30 to 39 years	34%	28%	31%
40 to 49 years	24%	20%	23%
50 to 59 years	13%	17%	15%
60 to 69 years	6%	13%	9%
70+ years	1%	9%	5%

From the 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey	Female	Male	Total
Base	8,222	6,879	15,101
Mode of work**			
Full time	72%	78%	75%
Part time	17%	13%	15%
Not working as a legal practitioner	8%	8%	8%
On leave at time of survey	3%	1%	2%
FY 23/24 Income of full-time and part-time solicitors^			
\$50,000 or less	5%	8%	6%
\$50,001 to \$100,000	17%	14%	15%
\$100,001 to \$150,000	25%	19%	23%
\$150,001 to \$200,000	16%	13%	15%
\$200,001 to \$250,000	9%	9%	9%
\$250,001 to \$300,000	5%	6%	6%
\$300,001 to \$500,000	7%	9%	8%
Over \$500,000	3%	8%	5%
Prefer not to say	12%	14%	13%

Source: Law Society of NSW database as at 30 June 2025 (bases provided at top of table) and 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey.

*Role within private practice figures are from the Law Society of NSW database and include private practitioners only (bases: females n=15,431 males n=14,387, all private practice solicitors n=29,818)

**Figures are from the 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey. Whole profession figures in this table exclude those that selected 'non-binary' (n=37), 'if you wish to specify otherwise' (n=2) or 'prefer not to say' (n=324) for their gender.

^Figures are from the 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey based on data for FY23/24. Bases exclude solicitors on leave or not working at the time of the survey, and whole profession figures in this table exclude those that selected 'non-binary', 'if you wish to specify otherwise' or 'prefer not to say' for their gender.

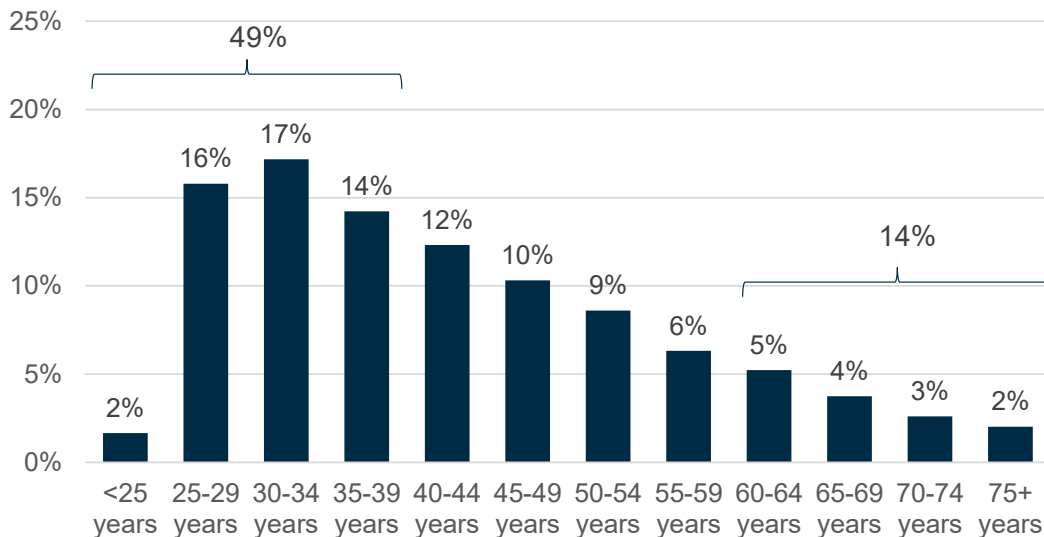
Note: Percentages in further analyses of gender in this report may slightly differ from these figures due to rounding.

4 Age

The average age of all solicitors in NSW as at 30 June 2025 was 42.7 years old, with a median of 40.

Across the whole of the profession, just under half of all solicitors in NSW were aged under 40 years (49%), while 14% of solicitors were aged 60 years or older.

Figure 3 - Age profile of solicitors

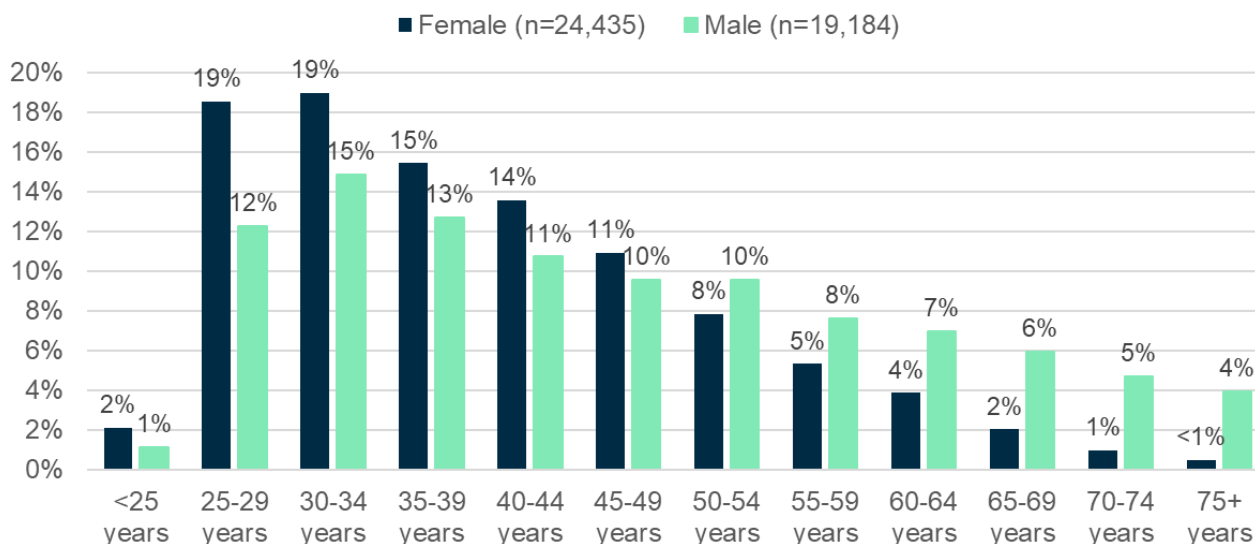


Source: Law Society of NSW database. Base n=43,619

Overall, female solicitors had a younger age profile than male solicitors:

- the average age of female solicitors was 40.0 years, compared to 46.1 years for males⁴
- more than half of female solicitors were aged under 40 years old (55%), compared to two in five male solicitors (41%)
- only 7% of female solicitors were aged 60 years or older, compared to 22% of males.

Figure 4 - Age profile of female and male solicitors



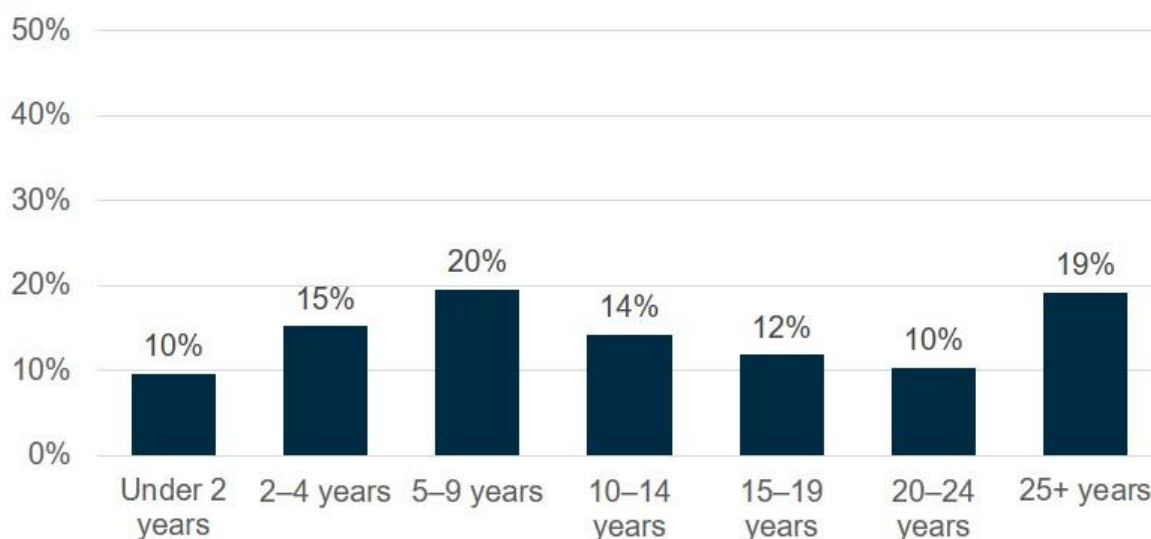
Source: Law Society of NSW database

⁴ Calculated using mid-point of age bands.

5 Years since admission

In 2025, more than half of all NSW solicitors had been admitted for ten years or more (56%), while one-quarter had been admitted within the last four years (25%) as at 30 June 2025.

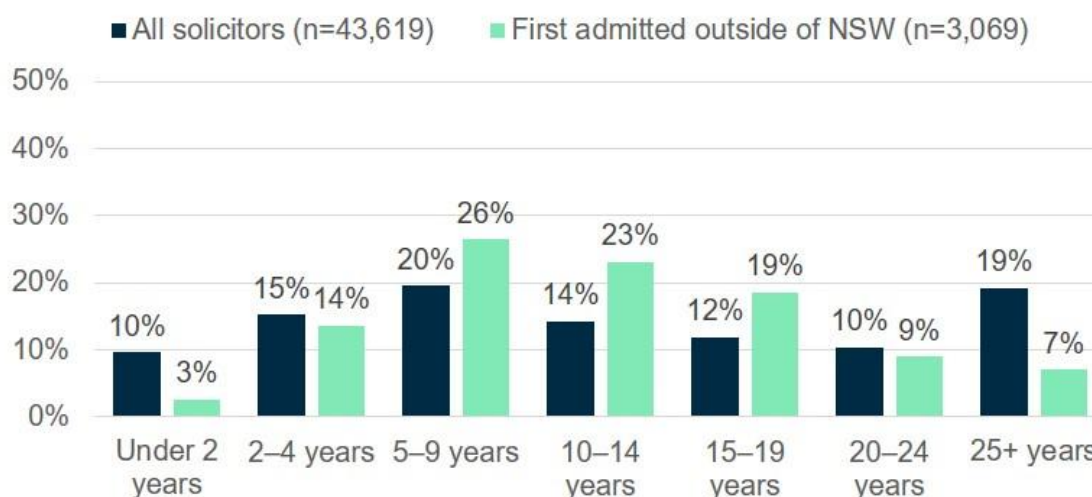
Figure 5 – Years since admission



Source: Law Society of NSW database. Base n=43,619

Of the 43,619 solicitors with a practising certificate in NSW, 7% (or n=3,069) were first admitted as a solicitor outside NSW (including elsewhere in Australia or overseas). When looking at the years since admission of this group, a greater proportion are mid-career practitioners with 49% having been admitted 5–14 years, compared to 34% of the whole profession.

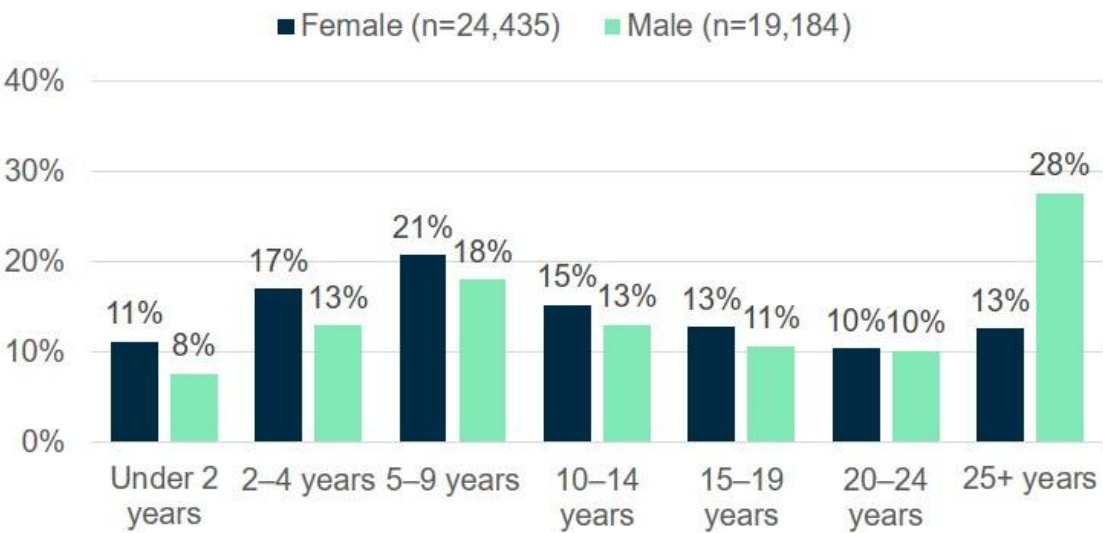
Figure 6 – Years since admission of solicitors who were first admitted outside NSW



Source: Law Society of NSW database

Overall, male solicitors had been admitted in NSW for longer than female solicitors. A higher proportion of males had been admitted for 25 years or more as at 30 June 2025 (28%), compared to 13% of females. This is consistent with the younger age profile of female solicitors compared to males (see Section 4).

Figure 7 - Years since admission of all solicitors by gender



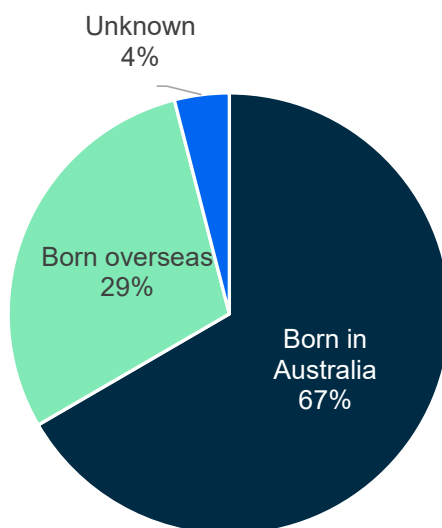
Source: Law Society of NSW database

6 Cultural background

6.1 Country of birth

Around two-thirds of NSW solicitors were born in Australia (67%) and 29% were born overseas. This is in line with recent years and with the general population of NSW (with 2021 census data showing 29% of all people living in NSW were born overseas).⁵

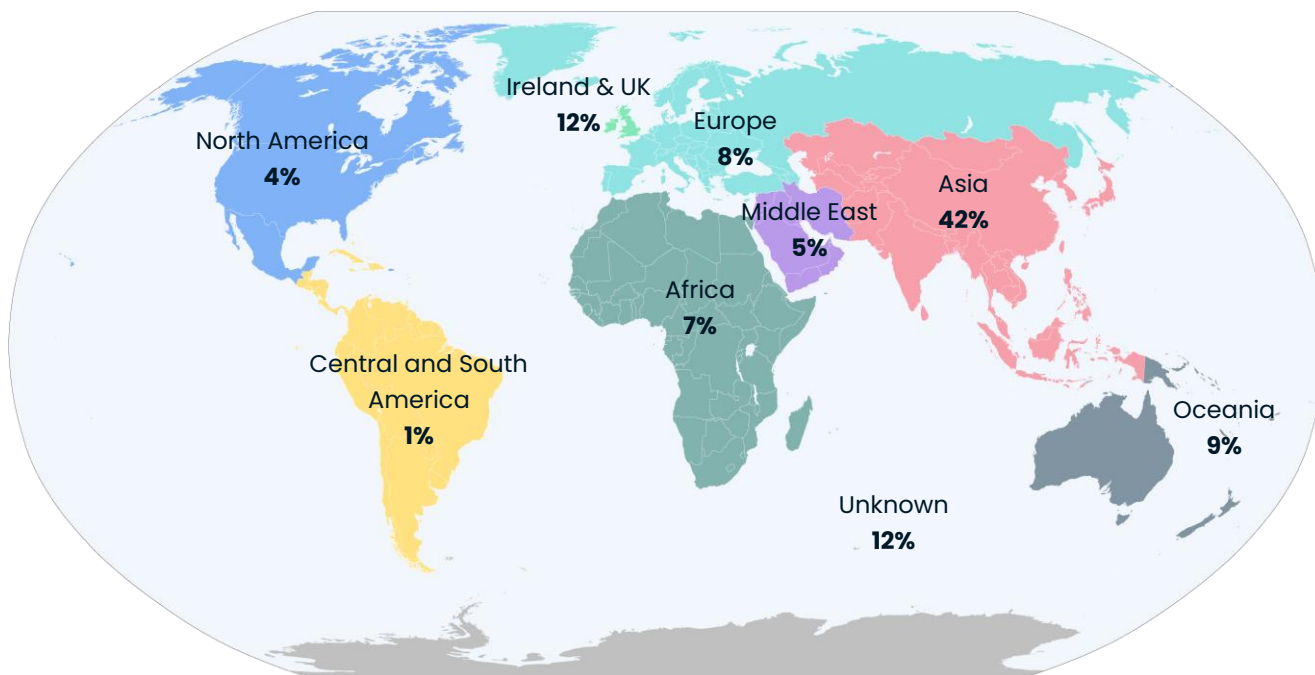
Figure 8 – Proportion of solicitors born in Australia and overseas



Source: Law Society of NSW database. Base n=43,619

Of the 12,814 solicitors born overseas, over two-fifths were born in Asia (42%), followed by 12% born in Ireland and the United Kingdom, 9% in Oceania and 8% in Europe.

Figure 9 – Region of birth of solicitors born overseas

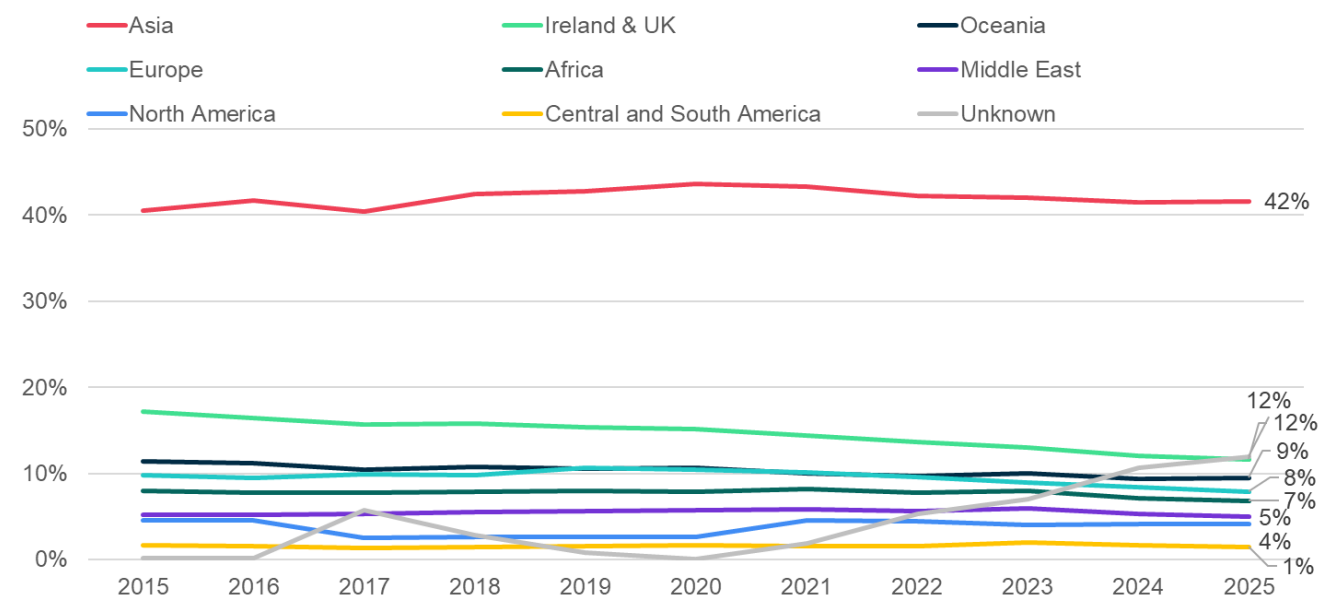


Source: Law Society of NSW database. Base n=14,561 (only those born overseas & unknown).

⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022, June 28). Snapshot of New South Wales. ABS. <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/snapshot-nsw-2021>.

The proportion of solicitors born in the UK and Ireland has decreased by 6% over the past 10 years with small decreases in solicitors born in Oceania (-2%), Europe (-2%) and Africa (-1%). In contrast, the proportion of solicitors born in Asia increased slightly by 1%. The proportion of solicitors born in other regions has remained consistent over time.

Figure 10 - Region of birth of solicitors born overseas over time



Source: Law Society of NSW database

Table 3 - Region of birth of solicitors born overseas 2015 to 2025

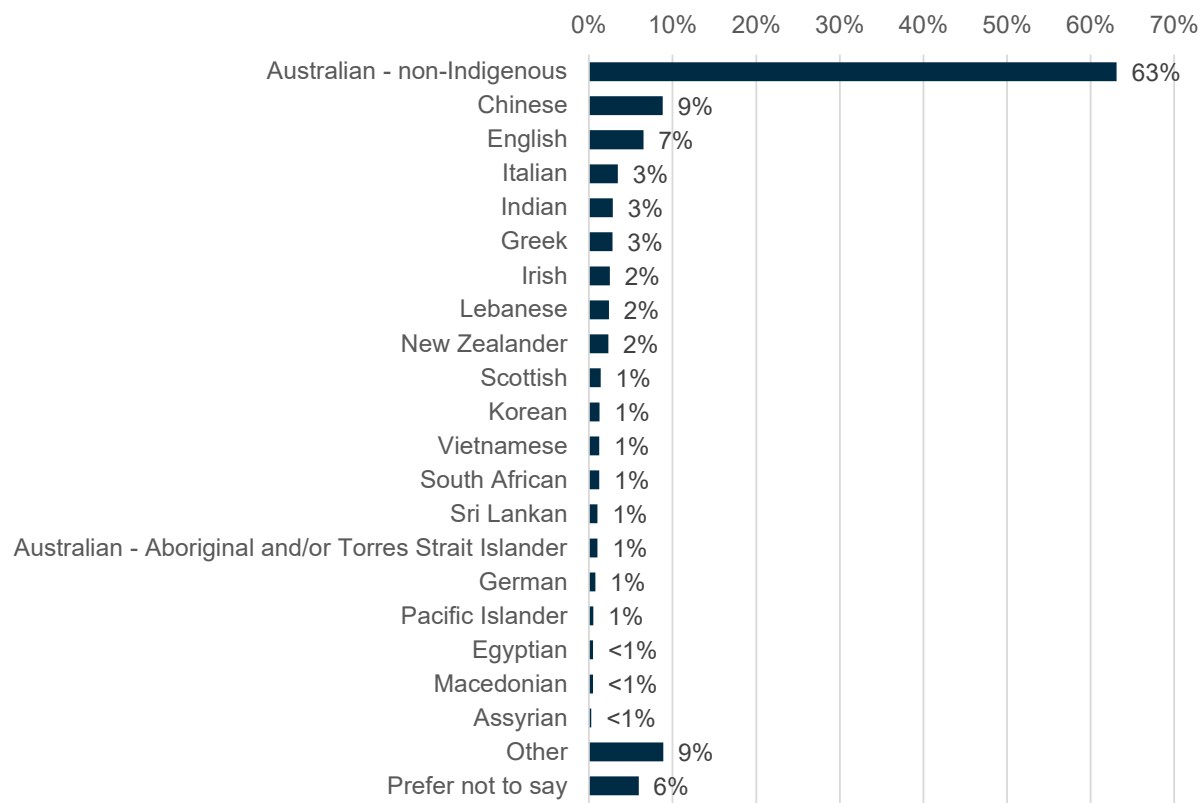
Region	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Change 2015 to 2025
Asia	41%	42%	40%	42%	43%	44%	43%	42%	42%	42%	42%	+1%
UK & Ireland	17%	16%	16%	16%	15%	15%	14%	14%	13%	12%	12%	-6%
Oceania	11%	11%	10%	11%	11%	11%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	-2%
Europe	10%	10%	10%	10%	11%	10%	10%	10%	9%	8%	8%	-2%
Africa	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	7%	7%	-1%
Middle East	5%	5%	5%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	5%	5%	0%
North America	5%	5%	3%	3%	3%	3%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	0%
Central and South America	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	0%
Unknown	<1%	<1%	6%	3%	2%	0%	2%	5%	7%	11%	12%	+12%

Source: Law Society of NSW database

6.2 Cultural background

The 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey asked respondents to provide the ethnic or cultural backgrounds with which they identified. Almost two-thirds identified as Australian (non-Indigenous) (63%), followed by Chinese (9%) and English (7%).

Figure 11 - Cultural background(s)



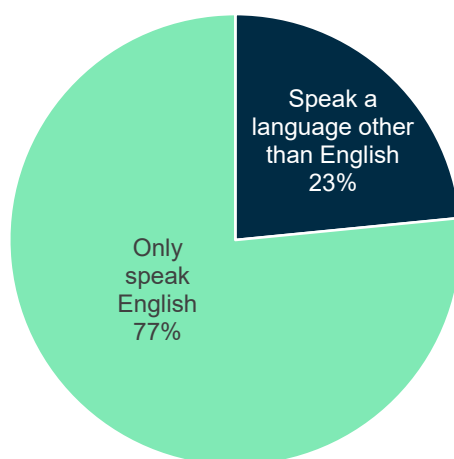
Source: 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=15,464

Note: Respondents could select up to 2 cultural backgrounds, meaning percentages will add up to more than 100%.

6.3 Linguistic diversity

Respondents to the 2025–26 Practising Certificate survey were also asked to indicate whether they speak another language other than English at home. Just under one-quarter of respondents reported speaking another language other than English at home (23%). This is slightly lower than the general NSW population, where 27% speak another language other than English.⁶

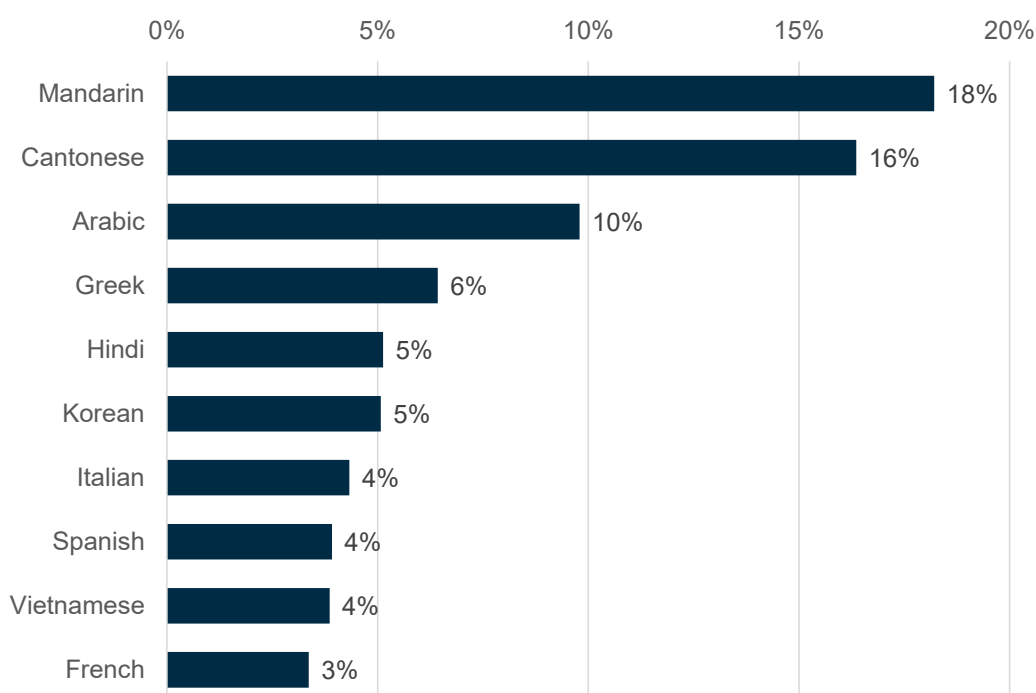
Figure 12 – Language spoken at home



Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=15,464

Of respondents who spoke a language other than English at home, the most commonly reported language was Mandarin (18%), followed by Cantonese (16%), Arabic (10%) and Greek (6%).

Figure 13 – Top 10 languages other than English spoken at home



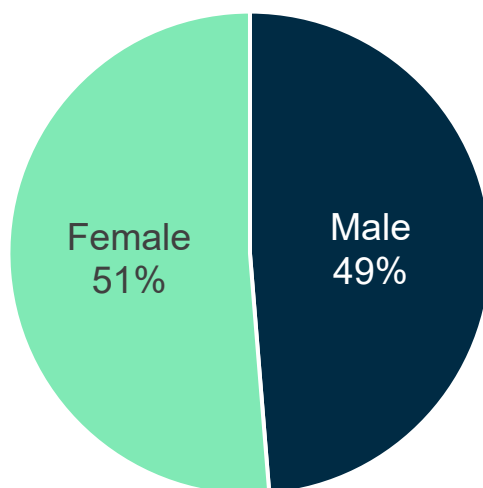
Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=3,625

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). New South Wales 2021 Census Community Profiles. ABS. <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/community-profiles/2021/1>

6.4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status

A total of 351 solicitors identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, representing 0.8% of all solicitors in NSW. The proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander solicitors continued to be much lower than the general NSW population, with the 2021 census reporting 3.4% of all people in NSW identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.⁷ The number of solicitors identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander has decreased by 7% (or 25 practitioners) since this was first reported in 2020. Just over half of all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander solicitors were female (51%).

Figure 14 – Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status by gender



Source: Law Society of NSW database. Base n=351

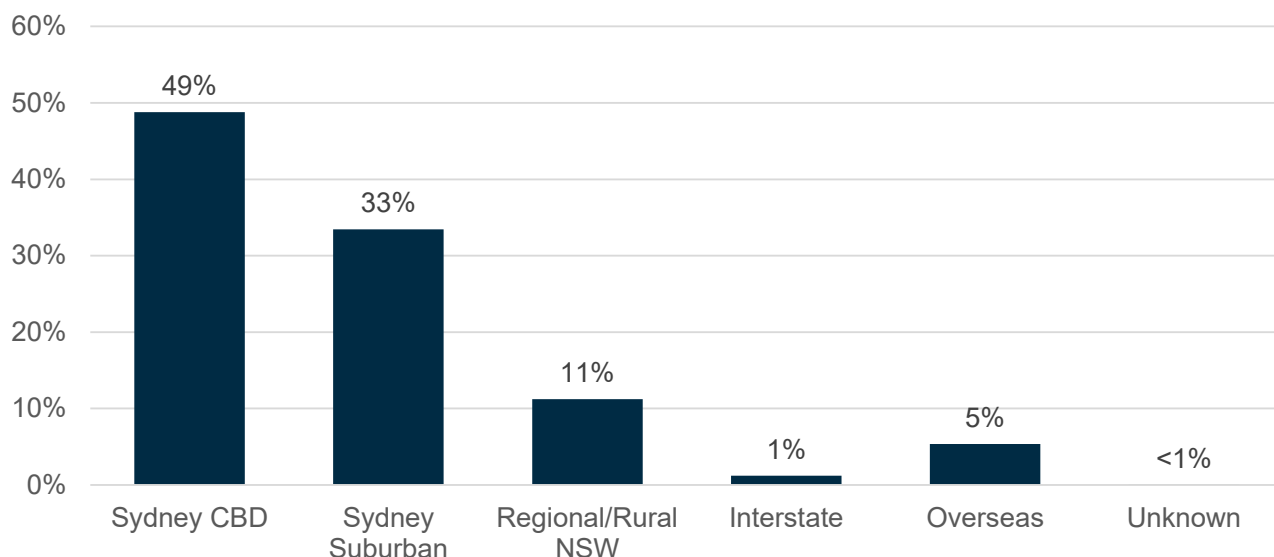
⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). New South Wales: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population summary. ABS. <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/new-south-wales-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-population-summary>

7 Location

7.1 Overview

As at 30 June 2025, nearly half of all solicitors in NSW were working in the Sydney CBD (49%), followed by one-third working in Suburban Sydney (33%). Just over one in ten were working in regional/rural areas of NSW (11%) and 6% were working interstate or overseas.

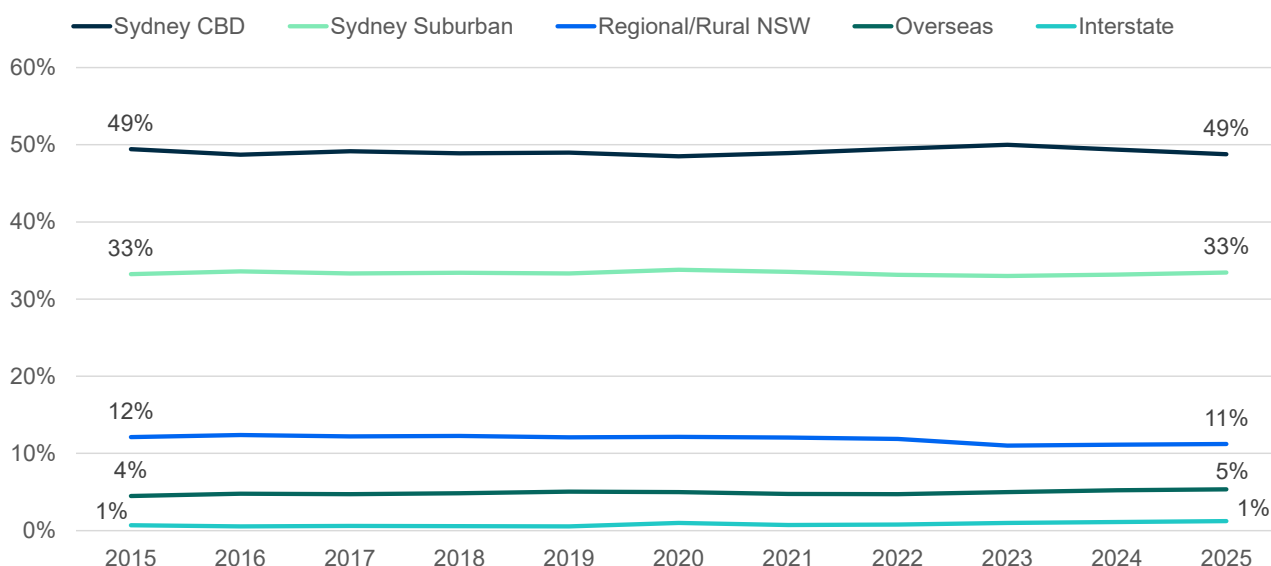
Figure 15 – Employment location



Source: Law Society of NSW database. Base n=43,619. Note: Location categories are defined by the Law Society of NSW using postcode data.

Over the past decade there have been minimal change in the workplace location of solicitors in NSW.

Figure 16 – Employment location over time

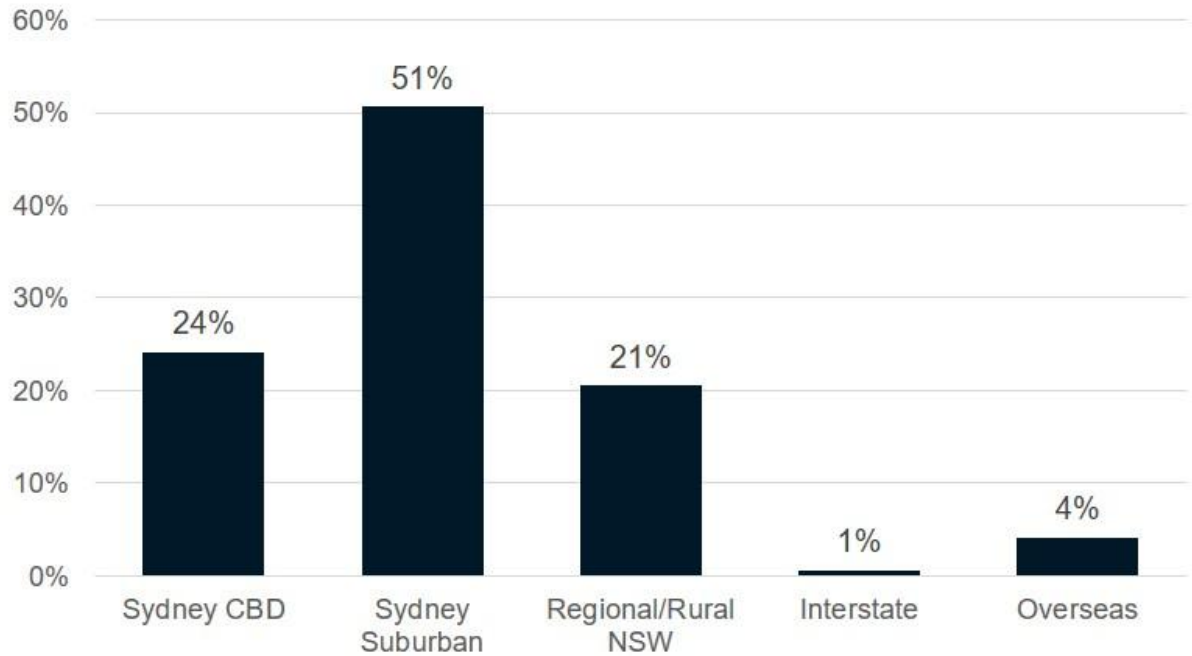


Source: Law Society of NSW database

7.2 Location of private law practices

As at 30 June 2025 there were 7,388 private law practices operating in NSW. Half were located in suburban areas of Sydney (51%) and a quarter in Sydney CBD (24%). A further 21% were based in regional/rural NSW and 5% recorded their main address as interstate or overseas.

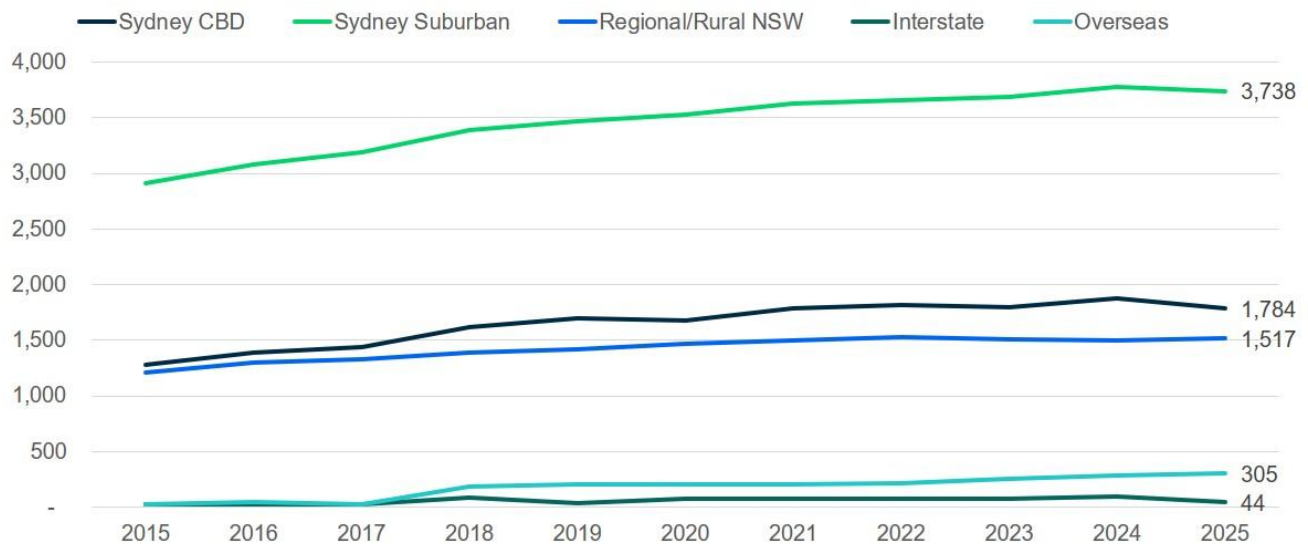
Figure 17 - Location of private law practices



Source: Law Society of NSW database.

The number of private law practices has increased by 35% in the past 10 years. This has been driven by a 40% increase in practices located in Sydney CBD, with those in suburban areas of Sydney and regional or rural NSW increasing by 28% and 25% respectively.

Figure 18 - Location of private law practices over time

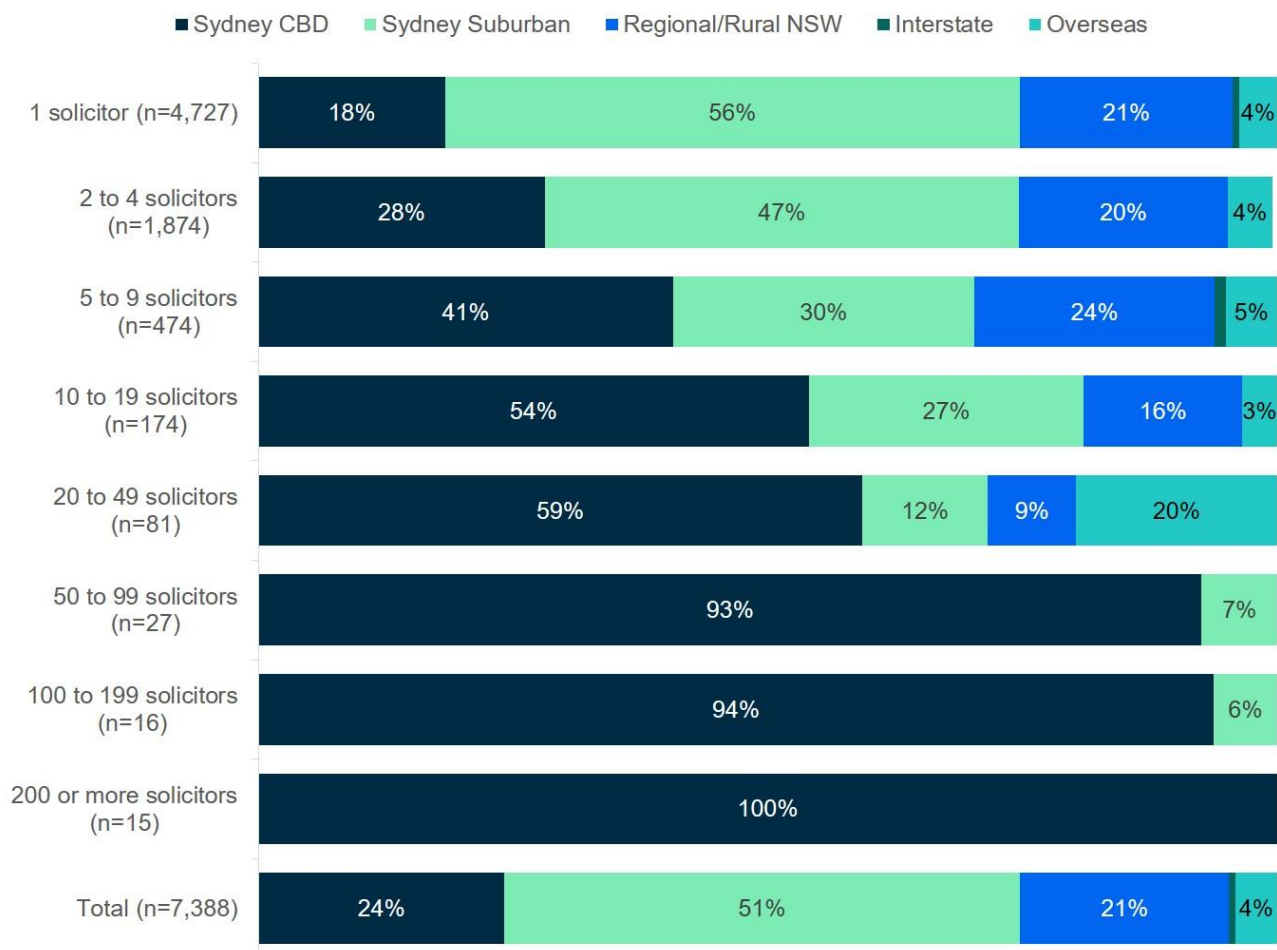


Source: Law Society of NSW database. Note: Location categories are defined by the Law Society of NSW using postcode data. Data from 2018 onwards includes private practice firms with unknown practice size, data from 2017 and prior did not include practices with an unknown practice size.

Note: For this year's report, a revised methodology was used to classify private practices more accurately. The small decrease observed in private practice numbers relative to 2024 in some locations is therefore likely to reflect this classification change, rather than a true decline in the number of private practice firms.

The location of private practices varied by practice size, with smaller law practices predominately located in suburban areas of Sydney, and larger law practices predominately located in Sydney CBD. It should be noted that the base sizes of larger law practices are smaller compared to other practice sizes.

Figure 19 - Location of private law practices by law practice size⁸



Source: Law Society of NSW database. Note: Location categories are defined by the Law Society of NSW using postcode data. Total base (n=7,388) includes private law practices with unknown firm sizes.

⁸ In previous years, this report assessed the size of private practice firms by the number of partners/principals. In this report firm is instead measured according to the overall number of solicitors within a firm (principals and employees combined) to account for differences in the ratio of principals and employees across different firms and practice sectors.

8 Disability and illness

Respondents to the Practising Certificate Survey were asked if they identified as having a disability, long-term illness or mental health condition. A total of 1,724 respondents (11%) identified as having a disability, long-term illness and/or mental health condition.

Of these respondents, 27% reported having a disability (3% of all respondents), 37% reported having a long-term illness (4% of all respondents), and 48% reported having a mental health condition (5% of all respondents).

The majority of respondents reporting they had a disability, long-term illness or mental health condition were:

- female (60%)
- aged over 40 years (58%)
- employed in private practice (53%).

Respondents with a disability, long-term illness or a mental health condition were significantly more likely to be working part-time compared to those that did not report a disability, long-term illness or mental health condition (20% compared to 14%).

In addition, these respondents were significantly more likely to be considering leaving the legal profession, compared to those respondents that did not report a disability, long-term illness or mental health condition, (37% compared to 26%).

There was also a disparity in incomes reported – respondents working full-time and identified as having a disability, long-term illness or mental health condition reported a lower average income (\$177,136 compared with \$201,700 for respondents that did not report having these conditions). Further, those with a disability, long-term illness or mental health condition were significantly more likely to work in community legal (4% compared to 2%) or government legal (18% compared to 12%).

8.1 Disability

3% of respondents reported having a disability. The most common disabilities reported were:

- hearing impairment or deafness (21%)
- spine or nerve injuries and conditions (16%)
- attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (15%) – it should be noted this was also reported by some respondents as a mental health condition (see below)
- vision impairment or blindness (11%).

These respondents most commonly reported their disability had a little (39%) or moderate (35%) impact on their ability to work.

Figure 20 – Impacts of disability on ability to work



Source: 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=454

Respondents were asked to describe these impacts in more detail. The most common impacts of disability on respondents' ability to work included:

- issues with mobility or accessibility
- hearing difficulties
- experiences of pain while working
- reduced ability to concentrate.

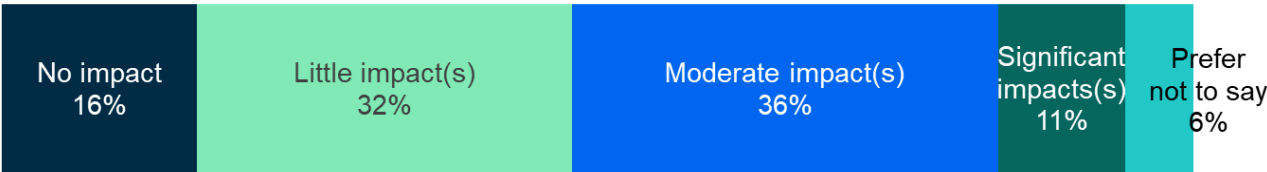
8.2 Long-term illnesses

4% of respondents reported having a long-term illness. The most common illnesses reported were:

- diabetes (23%)
- heart conditions or disease (15%)
- cancer (14%)
- autoimmune diseases (8%)
- inflammatory bowel diseases (8%).

These respondents most commonly reported their long-term illness had moderate (36%) or little (32%) impact on their ability to work.

Figure 21 – Impacts of long-term illness on ability to work



Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=641

The most common impacts of long-term illness on respondents’ ability to work included:

- increased fatigue
- needing more time off from work, or having less time available to work
- experiences of pain while working
- physical impacts, such as issues sitting or walking.

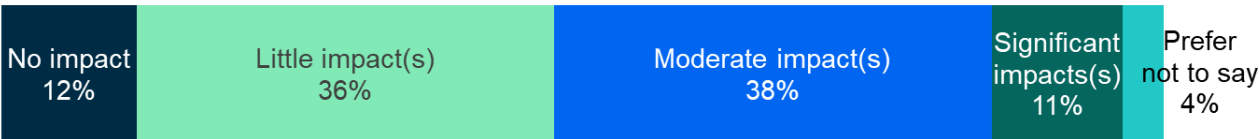
8.3 Mental health conditions

One in twenty respondents (5%) reported having a mental health condition. The most common mental health conditions reported were:

- anxiety (56%)
- depression (47%)
- attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (17%) – it should be noted this was also reported by some respondents as a disability (see above)
- post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (12%).

These respondents most commonly reported their mental health condition had a moderate (38%) or little (36%) impact on their ability to work.

Figure 22 – Impacts of mental health condition on ability to work



Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=825

The most common impacts of mental health conditions on respondents’ ability to work included:

- feelings of burnout, being overworked, anxiety and stress
- reduced ability to concentrate
- issues meeting deadlines and lower productivity
- feelings of low energy or fatigue.

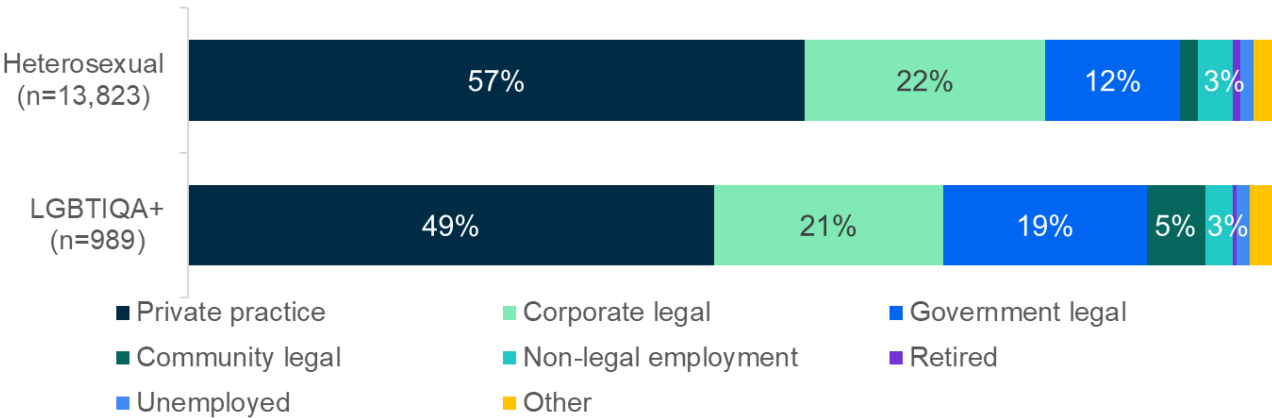
9 Sexual orientation

Respondents to the Practising Certificate Survey were asked if they identified as LGBTIQ+ or otherwise. A total of 989 (6%) respondents identified as LGBTIQ+, 13,823 (89%) as heterosexual and 652 (4%) preferred not to say.

A larger proportion of LGBTIQ+ respondents identified as male (50%) compared to female (46%), while 3% identified as non-binary. On average, LGBTIQ+ respondents were younger (24% were under 30 compared to 14% of heterosexual respondents) and were more recently admitted to the legal profession than heterosexual respondents (12 years compared to 17 years).

There were differences in the representation of practitioners identifying as LGBTIQ+ across practice sectors. Just under one in five LGBTIQ+ respondents were working in the government legal sector (19%) compared to 12% of heterosexual respondents, and there was also slightly higher representation of LGBTIQ+ respondents within the community legal sector (5% compared to 2%). There was a lower proportion of LGBTIQ+ respondents working in private practice (49%) compared to heterosexual respondents (57%).

Figure 23 – Sexual orientation and practice sectors

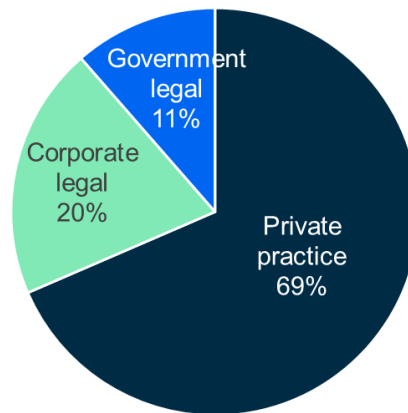


Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey

10 Practice sectors

Over two-thirds of NSW solicitors were working in private practice (69%), and one-fifth were working in the corporate legal sector (20%). The remaining 11% were working in the government legal sector.

Figure 24 – Practice sectors

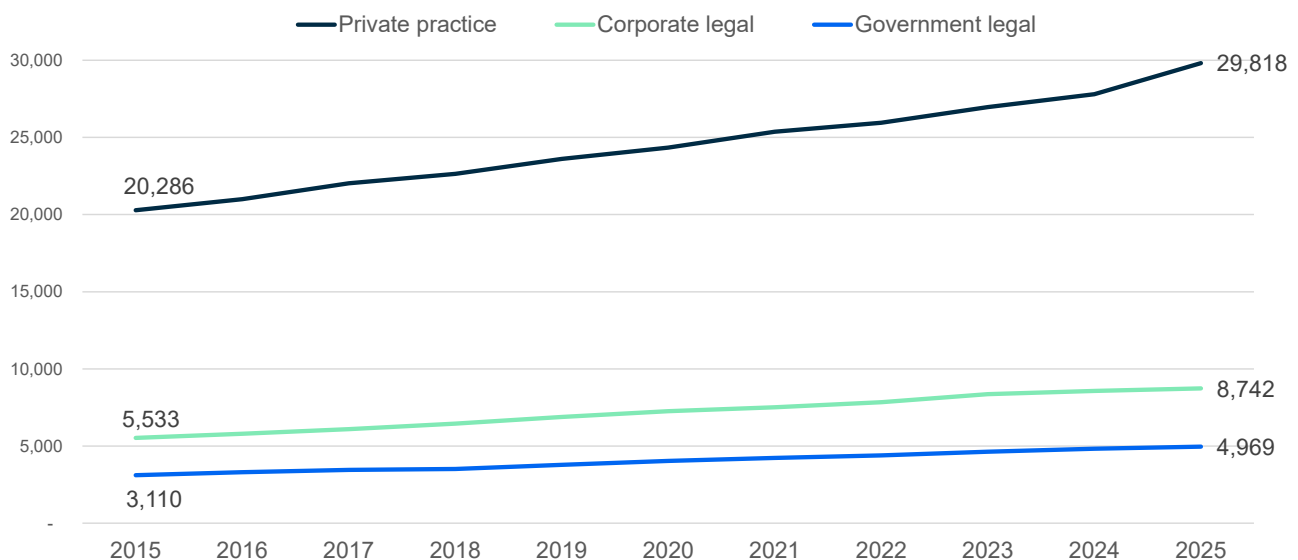


Source: Law Society of NSW database. Base n=43,529 excluding 90 solicitors classified as 'other'.

All three practice sectors have experienced growth since 2015, specifically:⁹

- The number of solicitors in private practice has increased by 47% from October 2015 to June 2025. This amounts to an average annual growth rate of 4% over the ten years, and 7% growth in the 8 months to June 2025.
- The corporate legal sector has grown by 58% from October 2015 to June 2025, with an average annual growth rate of 5% and a 2% growth rate in the 8 months to June 2025.
- The government legal sector has grown by 60% from October 2015 to June 2025, with an average annual growth rate of 5% and a 3% growth rate in the 8 months to June 2025.

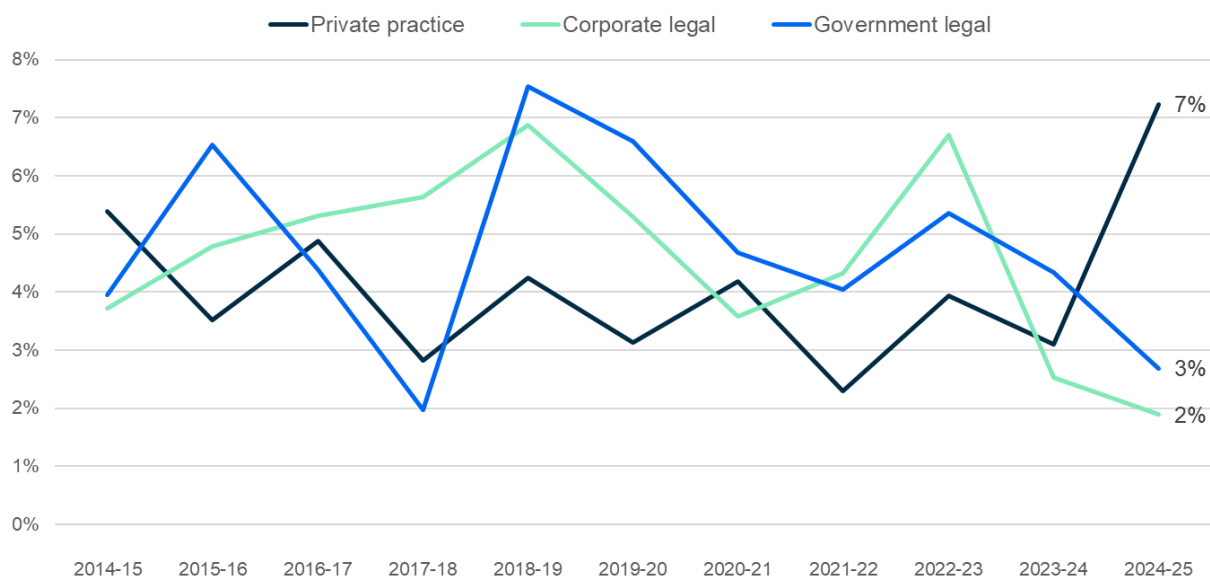
Figure 25 – Number of solicitors in each practice sector over time



Source: Law Society of NSW database

⁹ Due to Law Society of NSW database data now being reported as at 30 June rather than 31 October, the growth rate reported for this year is representative of an 8-month, rather than annual, period of time. This may limit the validity of comparison between the most recent growth rate and those from previous years.

Figure 26 – Annual growth rates of practice sectors over time¹⁰



Source: Law Society of NSW database

The profile of solicitors varied considerably by practice sector, as summarised below.



Gender: In private practice, there was a roughly equal proportion of female and male solicitors (52% and 48% respectively). There was a greater proportion of female solicitors in the government legal sector (70%, compared to 30% of males), and in the corporate legal sector (63%, compared to 37% of males).

Age: There was a larger proportion of solicitors aged 30 years and under in private practice (21%), compared to the government and corporate legal sectors (15% and 6% respectively). At the same time, private practice also had a larger proportion of solicitors aged 60 years and older (16%), compared to the government and corporate legal sectors (9% and 7% respectively).

Years since admission: Private practice had the largest proportion of solicitors who had been admitted more recently, which was consistent with the younger age profile of private practice solicitors. Of those in private practice, 29% were admitted for four years or less, compared to 22% in the government legal sector and 11% in the corporate legal sector. Over half of all solicitors in the corporate legal sector had been admitted for 15 or more years (51%) compared to 40% of private practitioners and 37% in the government legal sector.

Income: Solicitors working in the corporate legal sector who responded to the 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey reported earning higher average incomes than survey respondents working in private practice or the government legal sector. The average income for solicitors working in the corporate legal sector for FY 23-24 was \$235,439, compared to \$194,987 in private practice and \$152,978 in the government legal sector.

¹⁰ Due to Law Society of NSW database data now being reported as at 30 June rather than 31 October, the growth rate reported for this year is representative of an 8-month, rather than annual, period of time. This may limit the validity of comparison between the most recent growth rate and those from previous years.

Table 4 – Profile of solicitors by practice sector

	Private practice	Corporate legal	Government legal
Base	29,818	8,742	4,969
Gender			
Female	52%	63%	70%
Male	48%	37%	30%
Location			
Sydney CBD	50%	44%	49%
Sydney suburban	31%	39%	38%
Regional/Rural NSW	13%	4%	12%
Interstate	1%	2%	1%
Overseas	5%	11%	<1%
Age			
<30 years	21%	6%	15%
30–39 years	30%	34%	36%
40–49 years	19%	34%	25%
50–59 years	14%	19%	14%
60–69 years	10%	6%	8%
70+ years	6%	1%	2%
Years since admission			
Under two years	12%	3%	7%
Two to four years	17%	8%	15%
Five to nine years	19%	19%	24%
10 to 14 years	12%	19%	16%
15 to 19 years	10%	18%	14%
20 to 24 years	9%	16%	10%
25 years or more	21%	17%	13%
From the 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey			
Base	8,663	3,433	2,009
Mode of work*			
Full time	79%	83%	79%
Part time	18%	11%	14%
Not working as a legal practitioner	2%	4%	6%
On leave at time of survey	2%	2%	3%
Income of full-time and part-time solicitors[^]			
\$50,000 or less	8%	1%	1%
\$50,001 to \$100,000	19%	7%	15%
\$100,001 to \$150,000	21%	15%	41%
\$150,001 to \$200,000	13%	16%	25%
\$200,001 to \$250,000	8%	15%	6%
\$250,001 to \$300,000	5%	10%	2%
\$300,001 to \$500,000	7%	14%	2%
Over \$500,000	6%	5%	<1%
Prefer not to say	13%	16%	7%

Sources: Law Society of NSW database (bases provided at top of table, table excludes n=90 solicitors classified as 'other' practice sector) and 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey (excludes n=297 solicitors who identified as working in the community legal sector).

*Figures are from the 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey (bases provided in table)

[^]Figures are from the 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Bases exclude solicitors on leave or not working at the time of the survey.

11 Private practice

11.1 Overview

There were 29,818 solicitors holding a ‘Principal of a Law Practice’ or ‘Employee of a Law Practice’ practising certificate as at 30 June 2025. Of these, 2,704 were not practising as solicitors at that time. The characteristics of solicitors holding these two types of practising certificates are summarised below, and outlined in detail in Table 5.



Gender: There were slightly more females than males (52% and 48% respectively).

Role: A third of private practice solicitors were principals (35%), while 65% were employees.

Location: Half of all private practice solicitors were working in Sydney CBD (50%), and close to one-third were in suburban areas of Sydney (31%).

Years since admission: Two-fifths of private practice solicitors had been admitted for 15 years or more (40%) while over a quarter had been admitted for 4 years or less (29%).

Mode of work: Nearly four-fifths of private practice solicitors who responded to the 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey reported working full time (79%), which is slightly higher than the profession as a whole (75%).

Income: The annual gross income of private practice solicitors who responded to the 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey was higher than that of respondents in the government legal sector, but lower than that of respondents in the corporate legal sector. A quarter of respondents in private practice (27%) reported earning over \$200,000, compared to 44% in corporate legal and 11% in government legal.

Table 5 – Profile of solicitors in private practice

	Solicitors in private practice		Whole profession
	N	%	
Base	29,818	–	43,619
Gender			
Female	15,431	52%	56%
Male	14,387	48%	44%
Role within private practice			
Partner/principal	10,484	35%	–
Employee	19,334	65%	–
Location			
Sydney CBD	14,970	50%	48%
Sydney Suburban	9,294	31%	34%
Regional/Rural NSW	3,929	13%	11%
Interstate	268	1%	1%
Overseas	1,356	5%	6%
Years since admission			
Under two years	3,535	12%	10%
Two to four years	5,183	17%	15%
Five to nine years	5,632	19%	20%

	Solicitors in private practice		Whole profession
	N	%	
10 to 14 years	3,705	12%	14%
15 to 19 years	2,957	10%	12%
20 to 24 years	2,580	9%	10%
25 years or more	6,226	21%	19%
Age			
<30 years	6,325	21%	17%
30 to 39 years	8,931	30%	31%
40 to 49 years	5,601	19%	23%
50 to 59 years	4,135	14%	15%
60 to 69 years	2,994	10%	9%
70+ years	1,832	6%	5%
From 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey			
Base	8,663	–	15,464
Mode of work*			
Full time	6,818	79%	75%
Part time	1,545	18%	15%
Not working as a legal practitioner	161	2%	8%
On leave at time of survey	139	2%	2%
Income of full-time and part-time solicitors^			
\$50,000 or less	631	8%	5%
\$50,001 to \$100,000	1573	19%	16%
\$100,001 to \$150,000	1782	21%	23%
\$150,001 to \$200,000	1069	13%	15%
\$200,001 to \$250,000	693	8%	9%
\$250,001 to \$300,000	423	5%	6%
\$300,001 to \$500,000	600	7%	8%
Over \$500,000	541	6%	5%
Prefer not to say	1051	13%	12%

Source: Law Society of NSW database (base provided at top of table).

*Figures are from the 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey (bases provided in table)

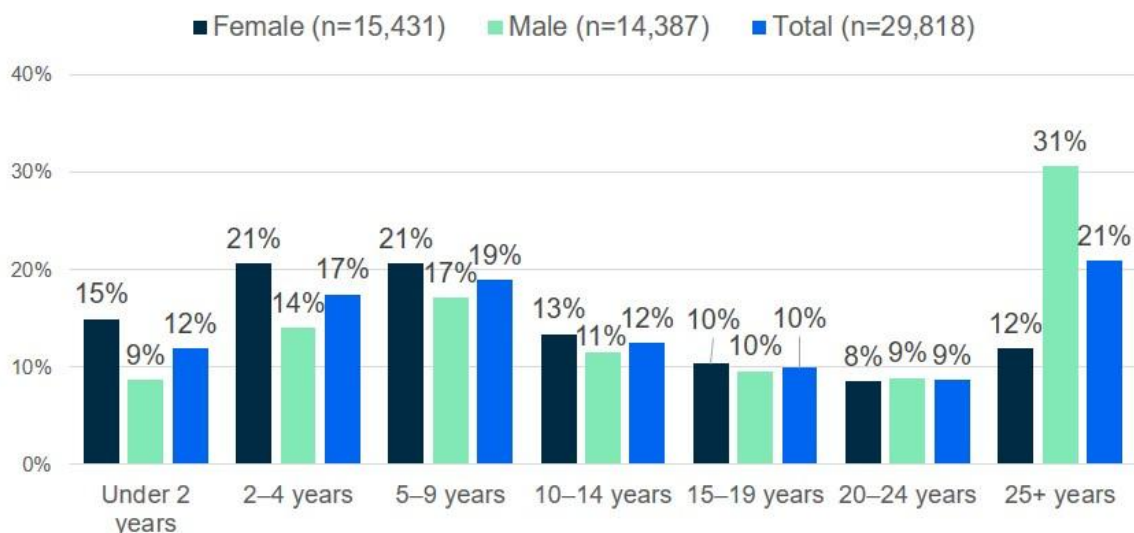
^Figures are from the 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Bases exclude solicitors on leave or not working at the time of the survey.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

11.2 Years since admission

Females in private practice were admitted more recently compared to males. Over one-third of female private practice solicitors had been admitted for 4 years or less (36%), compared to nearly one-quarter of males (23%). Conversely, nearly a third of male private practice solicitors had been admitted for 25 or more years (31%) compared to 12% of females.

Figure 27 - Years since admission of private practice solicitors



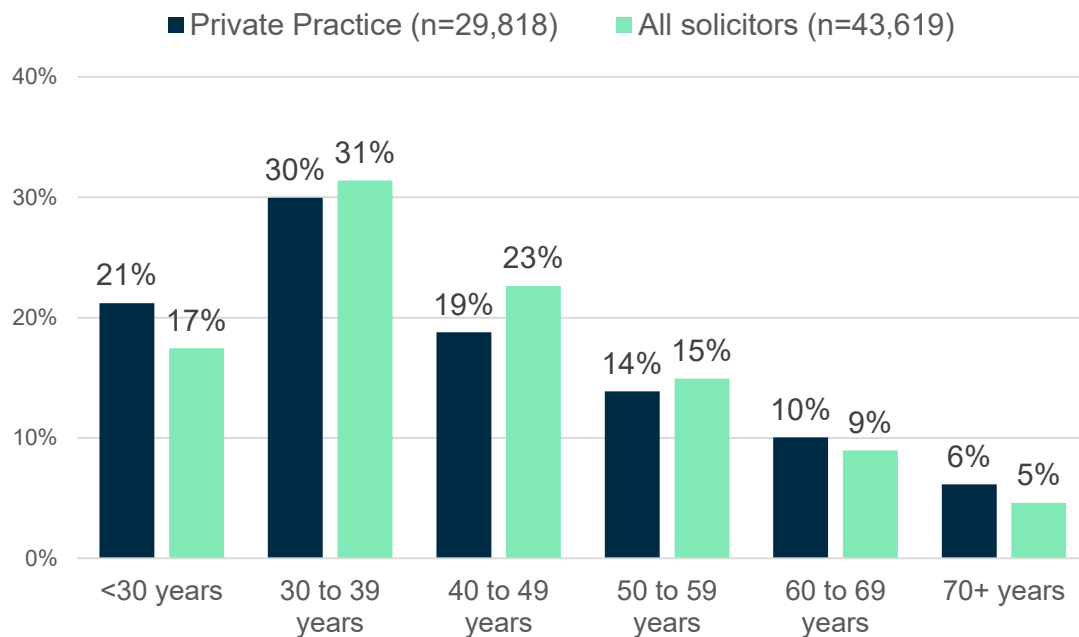
Source: Law Society of NSW database

11.3 Age

The age profile of solicitors in private practice was similar to the profile of all solicitors in NSW. This is not surprising as the majority of solicitors work in private practice. Key differences include:

- a larger proportion of private practice solicitors were aged under 30 years, compared to all solicitors (21% compared to 17%)
- a smaller proportion of private practice solicitors were aged between 30 and 49 years compared to all solicitors (49% compared to 54%).

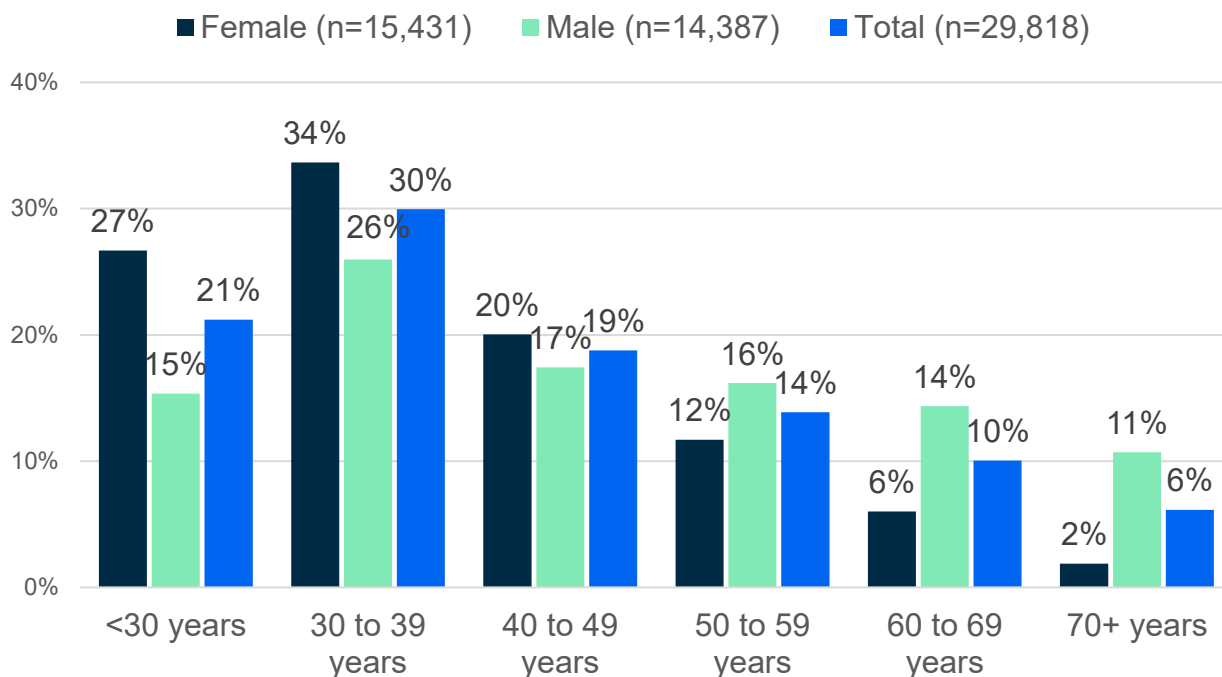
Figure 28 – Age profile of solicitors in private practice vs the whole profession



Source: Law Society of NSW database

Females had a much younger age profile than males. Three-fifths of female solicitors were aged 39 years or younger (60%), compared to two-fifths of male solicitors (41%). Conversely, a quarter of male solicitors were aged 60 years or older (25%), compared to only 8% of female solicitors.

Figure 29 – Age profile of male and female solicitors in private practice



Source: Law Society of NSW database

11.4 Law practice size and role¹¹

As at 30 June 2025, there were 7,388 private practices operating in NSW. These law practices comprised 10,383 principals and 16,731 employee solicitors. Additionally, 101 principals and 2,603 employee solicitors were not currently practising as at 30 June 2025.

The majority of private practices had one solicitor (64%), followed by practices with 2 to 4 solicitors (25%).

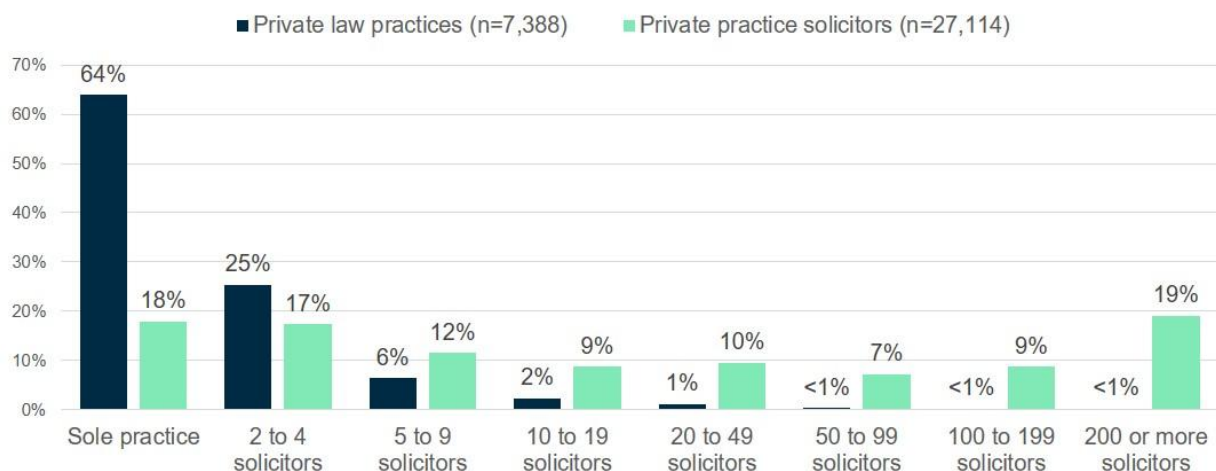
There were 15 private law practices with 200 or more solicitors, accounting for 5,159 solicitors. These firms represent one-quarter of all non-principal solicitors working in private practice (25%). In total, 19% of private practice solicitors were working in 0.2% of all private practices in NSW.

Table 6 – Private practice solicitors by role and size of law practice

Size of law practice (number of solicitors)	Private practices		Solicitors in private practice					
			Principals		Employees		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
200 or more solicitors	15	<1%	1,017	10%	4,142	25%	5,159	19%
100 to 199 solicitors	16	<1%	423	4%	1,923	11%	2,346	9%
50 to 99 solicitors	27	<1%	497	5%	1,449	9%	1,946	7%
20 to 49 solicitors	81	1%	396	4%	2,201	13%	2,597	10%
10 to 19 solicitors	174	2%	490	5%	1,885	11%	2,375	9%
5 to 9 solicitors	474	6%	787	8%	2,343	14%	3,130	12%
2 to 4 solicitors	1,874	25%	2,144	21%	2,552	15%	4,696	17%
1 solicitor	4,727	64%	4,629	45%	236 ¹²	1%	4,865	18%
Not currently practising	-	-	101	-	2,603	-	2,704	-
Total	7,388		10,484		19,334		29,818	

Source: Law Society of NSW database. Note: Percentage calculations exclude the n=2,704 solicitors not currently practising.

Figure 30 – Private legal practitioners by size of law practice



Source: Law Society of NSW database. Note: Percentage calculations exclude the n=2,704 solicitors not currently practising.

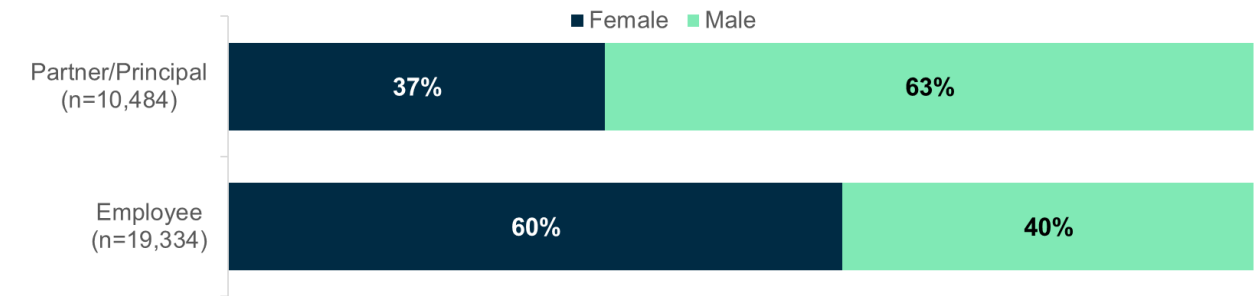
¹¹ In previous years, this report assessed the size of private practice firms by the number of partners/principals. In this report firm is instead measured according to the overall number of solicitors within a firm (principals and employees combined) to account for differences in the ratio of principals and employees across different firms and practice sectors.

¹² The Law Society of NSW database includes some private practices with a single employee solicitor who aren't recorded as a principal.

Gender by role in law practice

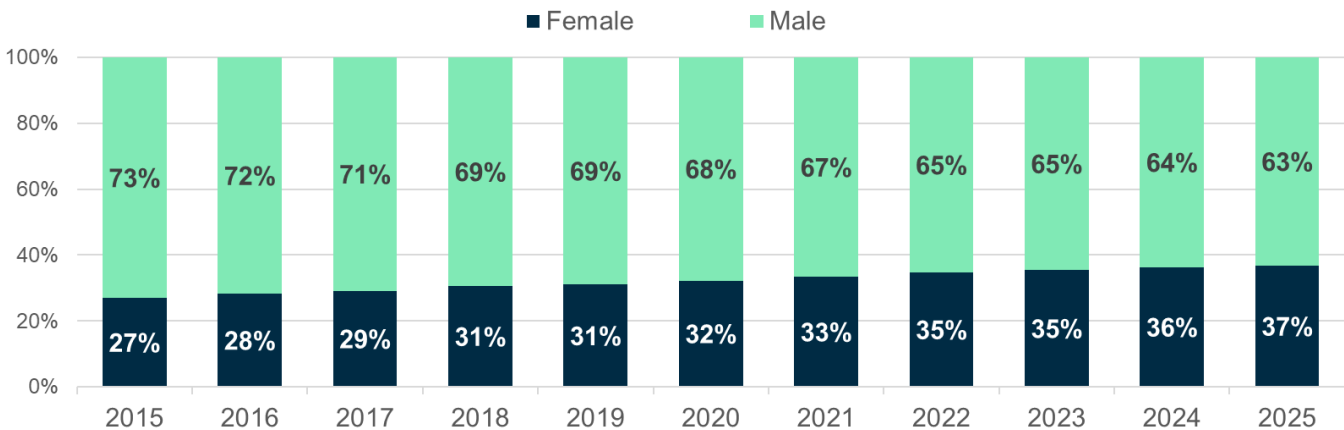
Consistent with previous years, there was a greater proportion of male principals (63%) than females (37%). However, this gap has been gradually decreasing over time, with the representation of female partners/principals increasing from 27% in 2015.

Figure 31 - Gender profile of partners/principals and employee solicitors in private practice



Source: Law Society of NSW database. Note: Includes n=101 principals and n=2,603 employee solicitors not currently practising.

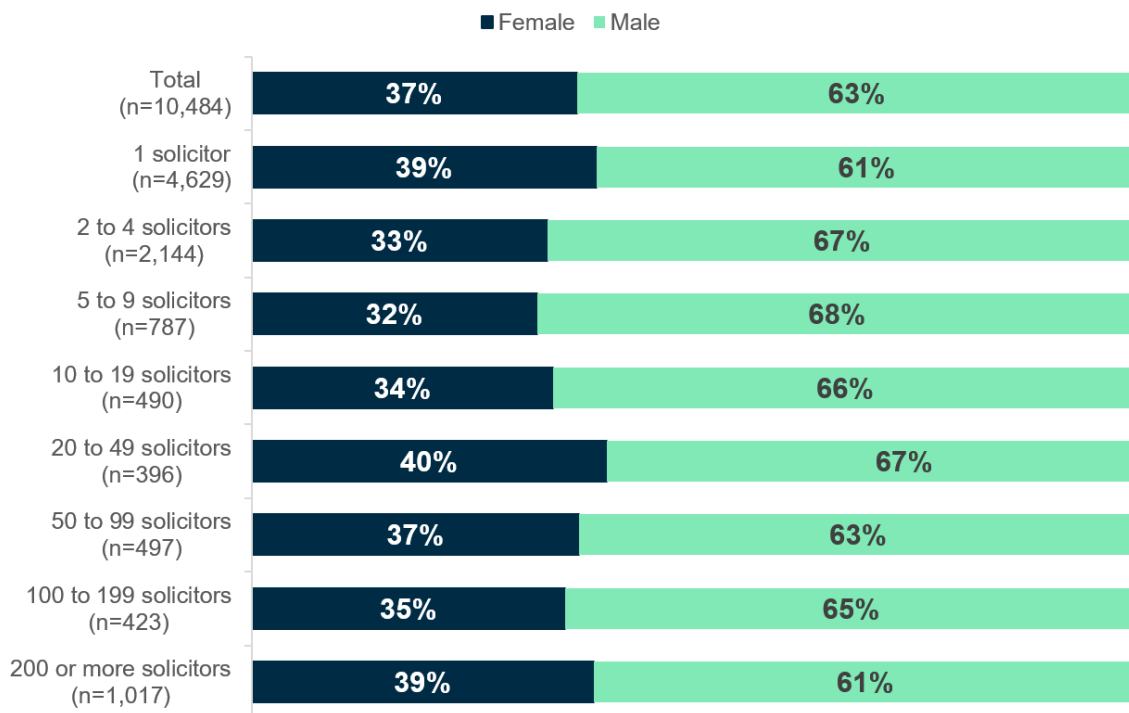
Figure 32 - Partners/principals in private practice by gender over time



Source: Law Society of NSW database.

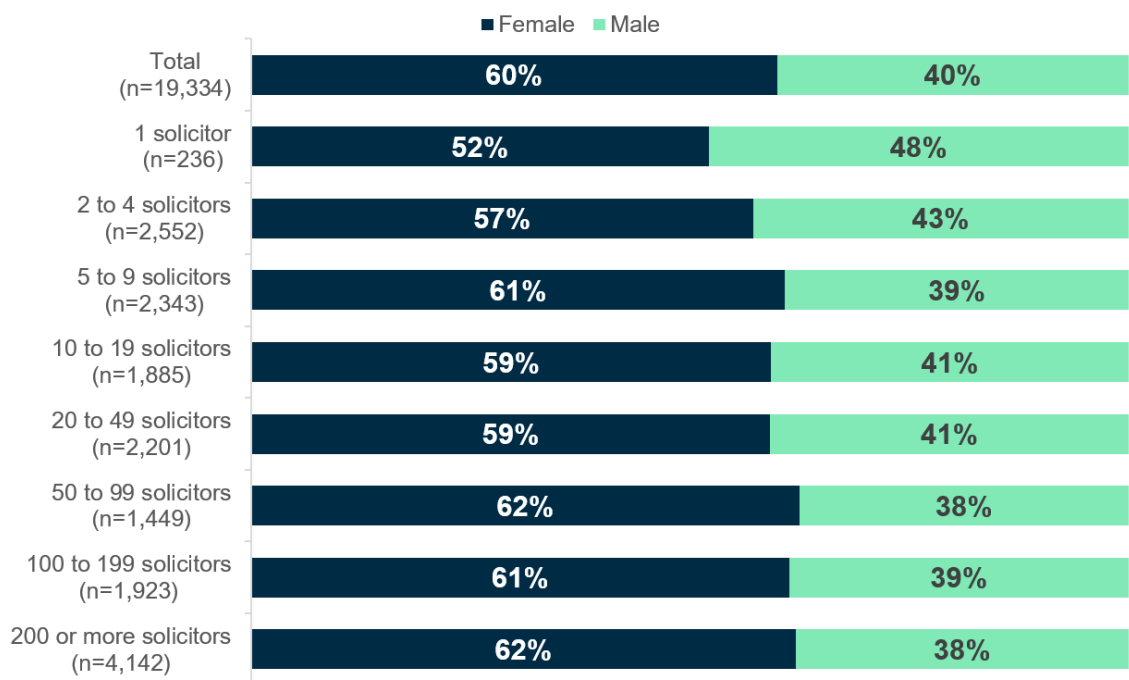
The overrepresentation of males in partner/principal positions is consistent across all practice sizes.

Figure 33 – Gender profile of partners/principals in private practice by law practice size¹³



Source: Law Society of NSW database. Note: Proportions of total practices include n=101 principals not currently practising.

Figure 34 – Gender profile of employee solicitors in private practice by law practice size



Source: Law Society of NSW database. Note: Proportions of total practices include n=2,603 employee solicitors not currently practising.

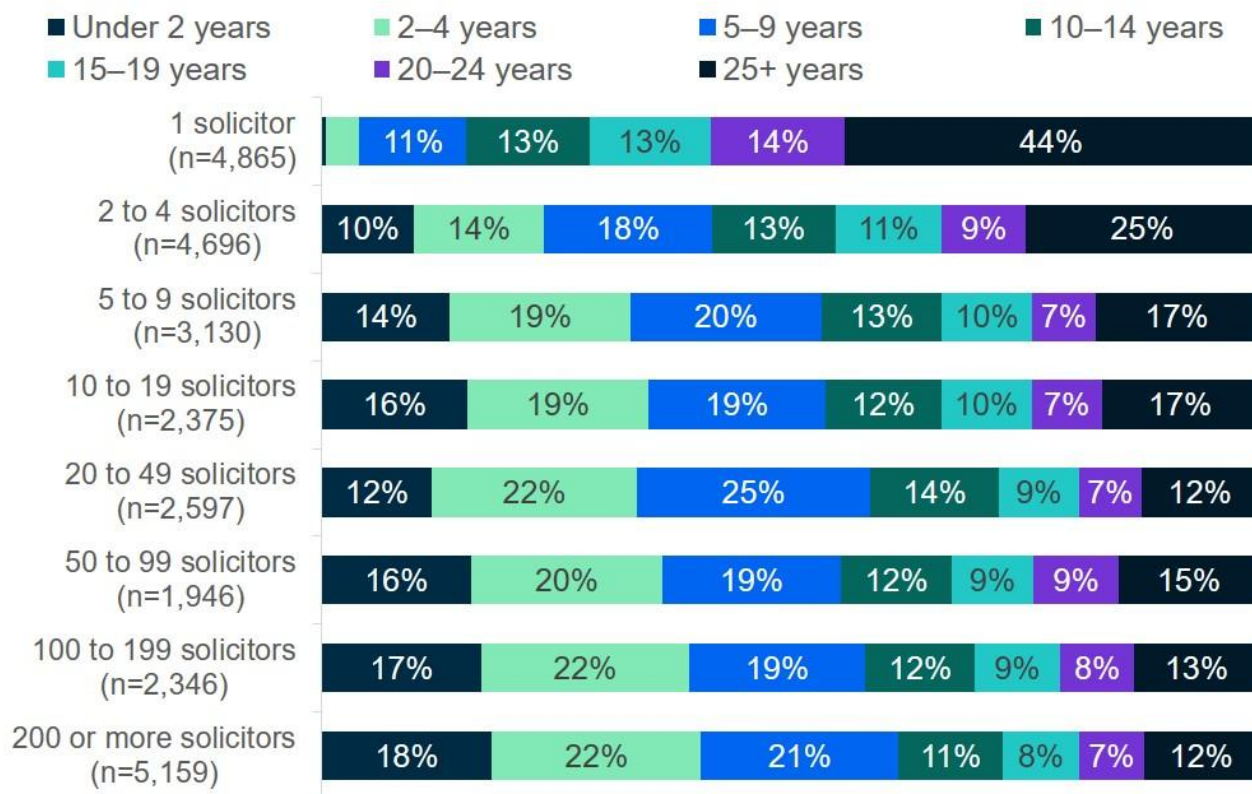
¹³ In previous years, this report assessed the size of private practice firms by the number of partners/principals. In this report firm is instead measured according to the overall number of solicitors within a firm (principals and employees combined) to account for differences in the ratio of principals and employees across different firms and practice sectors.

Years since admission by law practice size¹⁴

Overall, larger law practices had a slightly greater proportion of early career solicitors than smaller law practices. For example, 40% of solicitors in law practices of 200 or more solicitors had been admitted for four years or less as at 30 June 2025, compared to 24% of those in law practices of two to four solicitors.

Around three-quarters (71%) of solicitors working in one solicitor firms had been admitted for 15 years or more as at 30 June 2025, and 44% for 25 years or more.

Figure 35 – Years since admission of solicitors in private practices by law practice size



Source: Law Society of NSW database. Note: Percentage calculations exclude the n=2,704 solicitors not currently practising.

¹⁴ In previous years, this report assessed the size of private practice firms by the number of partners/principals. In this report firm is instead measured according to the overall number of solicitors within a firm (principals and employees combined) to account for differences in the ratio of principals and employees across different firms and practice sectors.

12 The corporate legal sector

There were 8,742 corporate legal practitioners as at 30 June 2025. Of these, 1,089 were not practising as solicitors at that time.



Gender: Almost two-thirds of corporate legal practitioners were female (63%).

Location: Only 4% of corporate legal practitioners were working in regional/rural NSW, compared to 11% of the whole profession. A larger proportion of corporate legal practitioners were working overseas (11%), compared to the whole profession (5%).

Years since admission: Generally, practitioners in the corporate legal sector were more experienced. A smaller proportion of corporate legal practitioners had been admitted for four years or less (11%) compared to 25% for the whole profession. However, a greater proportion had been admitted for 15 years or more (51%), compared to 41% for the whole profession.

Age: A smaller proportion of corporate legal practitioners were aged less than 30 years old (6%), compared to the whole profession (17%). Over two-thirds of corporate legal practitioners were aged between 30 and 49 years (68%), compared to 54% for the whole profession.

Mode of work: A higher proportion of corporate legal practitioners who responded to the 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey reported working full time (83%), compared to the profession as a whole (75%).

Income: Corporate legal practitioners who responded to the 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey generally reported higher incomes, with 29% earning more than \$250,000 compared to only 19% of the whole profession. The lower proportion of early career lawyers in corporate legal roles may have contributed to this (only 12% admitted in the last five years, compared to 27% of the overall profession). While the sector is majority female, the gender pay gap is still evident with 45% of full-time females with 15 years or more experience reporting earning over \$250,000 compared to 53% of their male counterparts.

Table 7 – Profile of corporate legal practitioners

	Corporate legal practitioners		Whole profession
	N	%	
Base	8,742	–	43,619
Gender			
Female	5,472	63%	56%
Male	3,270	37%	44%
Location			
Sydney CBD	3,848	44%	49%
Sydney Suburban	3,370	39%	33%
Regional/Rural NSW	366	4%	11%
Interstate	203	2%	1%
Overseas	955	11%	5%
Years since admission			
Under two years	278	3%	10%
Two to four years	680	8%	15%
Five to nine years	1,681	19%	20%
10 to 14 years	1,695	19%	14%

	Corporate legal practitioners		Whole profession
	N	%	
15 to 19 years	1,532	18%	12%
20 to 24 years	1,400	16%	10%
25 years or more	1,476	17%	19%
Age			
<30 years	504	6%	17%
30 to 39 years	2,947	34%	31%
40 to 49 years	3,008	34%	23%
50 to 59 years	1,669	19%	15%
60 to 69 years	523	6%	9%
70+ years	91	1%	5%
From 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey			
Base	3,433		15,464
Mode of work			
Full time	2,841	83%	75%
Part time	364	11%	15%
Not working as a legal practitioner	153	4%	8%
On leave at time of survey	75	2%	2%
Role within the corporate legal sector*			
Group General counsel	203	6%	–
Head of legal team	347	10%	–
General counsel	373	11%	–
Senior lawyer/Senior legal counsel	1,253	37%	–
Lawyer/Legal counsel	916	27%	–
Graduate lawyer	69	2%	–
Paralegal	9	<1%	–
Other	239	7%	–
Income of full-time and part-time solicitors[^]			
\$50,000 or less	33	1%	5%
\$50,001 to \$100,000	232	7%	16%
\$100,001 to \$150,000	500	16%	23%
\$150,001 to \$200,000	519	16%	15%
\$200,001 to \$250,000	473	15%	9%
\$250,001 to \$300,000	329	10%	6%
\$300,001 to \$500,000	473	14%	8%
Over \$500,000	161	5%	5%
Prefer not to say	495	15%	12%

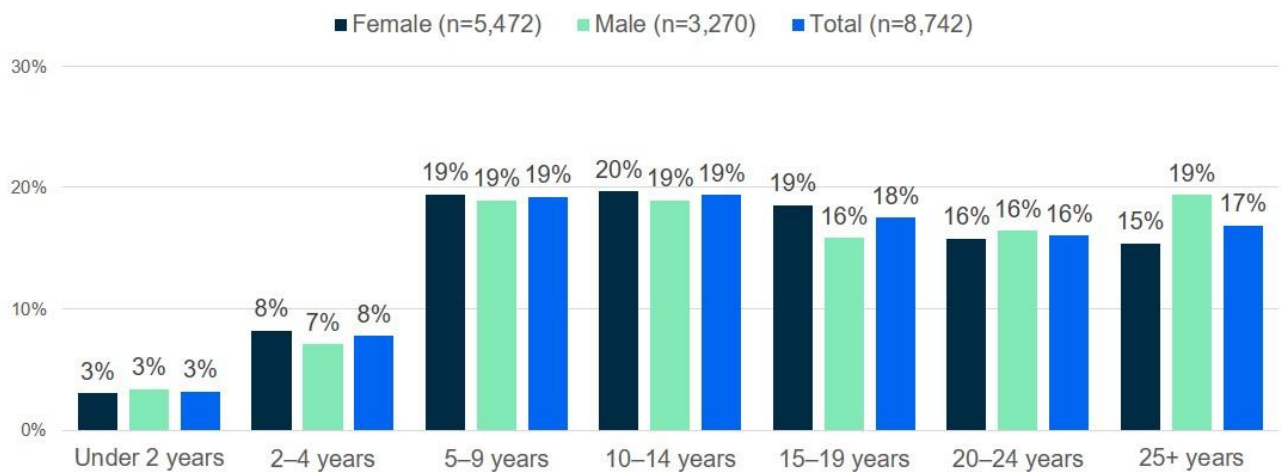
Source: Law Society of NSW database (base provided at top of table) and 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey.

*Base size n=3,409.

[^]Base size n=3,290, whole profession n=14,086 – exclude solicitors on leave or not working at the time of the survey.

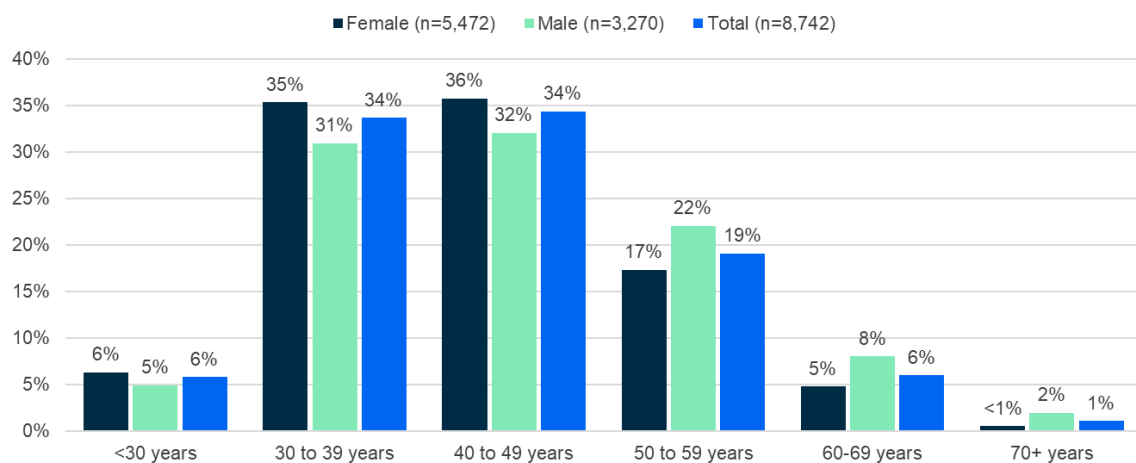
There were no noteworthy gender differences in the years since admission or age profile of those working in the corporate legal sector.

Figure 36 – Years since admission of corporate legal practitioners



Source: Law Society of NSW database. Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

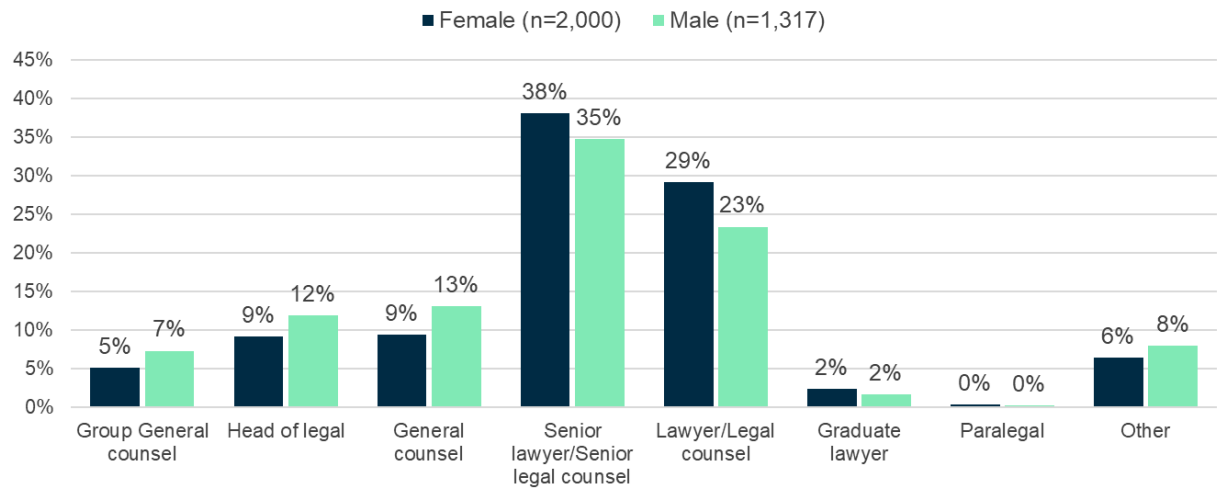
Figure 37 – Age profile of corporate legal practitioners



Source: Law Society of NSW database. Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Despite women making up almost two-thirds of the corporate legal sector, and having a similar proportion of practitioners with 15 or more years since admission, there was a greater proportion of males working in the most senior corporate legal roles, such as group general counsel, general counsel and head of legal, compared to the proportion of female practitioners. Females were overrepresented in senior legal counsel and legal counsel roles.

Figure 38 – Gender of corporate legal practitioners by role



Source: 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey

13 The government legal sector

There were 4,969 government legal practitioners as at 30 June 2025. Of these, 426 were not practising as solicitors at that time.



Gender: More than two-thirds of government legal practitioners were female (70%).

Mode of work: Nearly four-fifths of government legal practitioners who responded to the 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey reported working full time (79%), followed by 14% working part time, reflecting a slightly higher rate of full-time employment compared to the profession as a whole. A small proportion reported not working as a legal practitioner in June 2025 (6%).

Location: Most government legal practitioners were working in Sydney CBD (49%) or in a suburban area of Sydney (38%).

Years since admission: Almost two in five government legal practitioners had been admitted for 15 years or more (37%), which was slightly lower than the whole of the profession (41%).

Age: A slightly smaller proportion of government legal practitioners were aged less than 30 years old (15%), compared to the whole profession (17%). A majority of government legal practitioners were aged between 30 and 49 years (61%), compared to 54% for the whole profession.

Income: Two-fifths of government legal practitioners who responded to the 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey reported earning between \$100,001 to \$150,000 (41%), almost double the proportion relative to the whole profession (23%). Further, a smaller proportion reported earning more than \$250,000 (5%) compared to the whole profession (19%). While heavily female dominated, the gender pay gap still exists within the government legal sector, although to a lesser extent than other sectors. For instance, while 41% of full-time female solicitors in the government legal sector admitted for 15 years or longer earn \$300,000 or more per year, 52% of male solicitors in the same category earn over \$300,000.

Table 8 – Profile of government legal practitioners

	Government legal practitioners		Whole profession
	N	%	
Base	4,969	–	43,619
Gender			
Female	3,474	70%	56%
Male	1,495	30%	44%
Location			
Sydney CBD	2,426	49%	49%
Sydney Suburban	1,870	38%	33%
Regional/Rural NSW	594	12%	11%
Interstate	61	1%	1%
Overseas	18	<1%	5%
Years since admission			
Under two years	363	7%	10%
Two to four years	761	15%	15%
Five to nine years	1,187	24%	20%

10 to 14 years	806	16%	14%
15 to 19 years	676	14%	12%
20 to 24 years	510	10%	10%
25 years or more	666	13%	19%
Age			
<30 years	767	15%	17%
30 to 39 years	1,800	36%	31%
40 to 49 years	1,241	25%	23%
50 to 59 years	694	14%	15%
60 to 69 years	345	8%	9%
70+ years	82	2%	5%
From 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey			
Base	2,009	–	15,464
Mode of work			
Full time	1,581	79%	75%
Part time	273	14%	15%
Not working as a legal practitioner	111	6%	8%
On leave at time of survey	44	3%	2%
Role within the government legal sector*			
Group General counsel	8	<1%	–
Head of legal team	53	3%	
General counsel	63	3%	–
Senior lawyer/Senior legal counsel	924	46%	–
Lawyer/Legal counsel	699	35%	–
Graduate lawyer	27	1%	–
Paralegal	7	<1%	–
Other	208	10%	–
Income of full-time and part-time solicitors^			
\$50,000 or less	18	1%	5%
\$50,001 to \$100,000	272	15%	16%
\$100,001 to \$150,000	760	41%	23%
\$150,001 to \$200,000	472	25%	15%
\$200,001 to \$250,000	117	6%	9%
\$250,001 to \$300,000	42	2%	6%
\$300,001 to \$500,000	46	2%	8%
Over \$500,000	6	<1%	5%
Prefer not to say	121	7%	12%

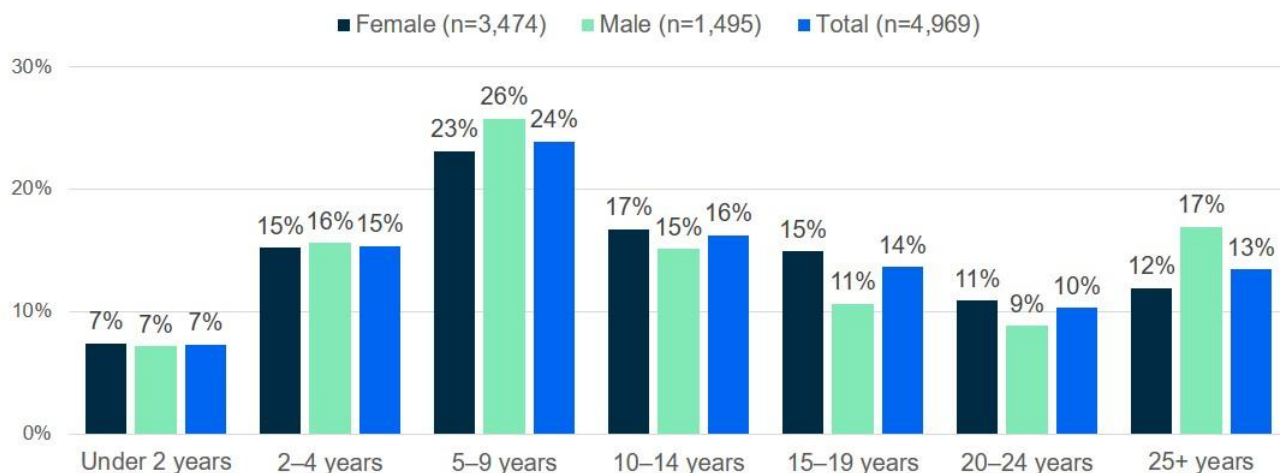
Source: Law Society of NSW database (base provided at top of table) and 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey.

*Base size n=1,989.

^base size n=1,797 whole profession n=14,086 – bases exclude solicitors on leave or not working at the time of the survey.

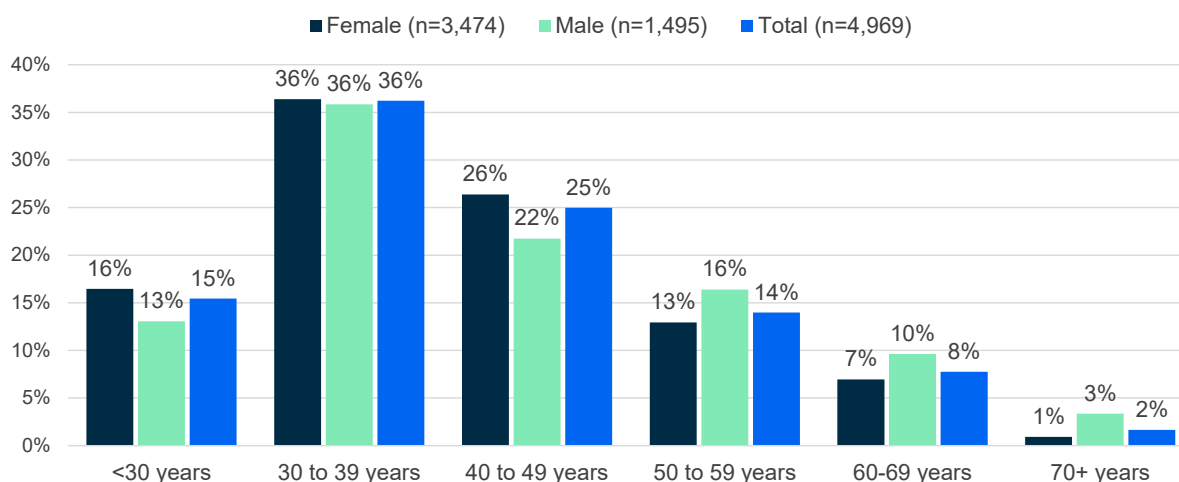
There were no major gender differences in the years since admission, age profile, or roles of those working in the government legal sector, although a higher proportion of male solicitors in government legal had 25 years or more experience (17%), relative to 12% of female solicitors in government legal.

Figure 39 – Years since admission of government legal practitioners



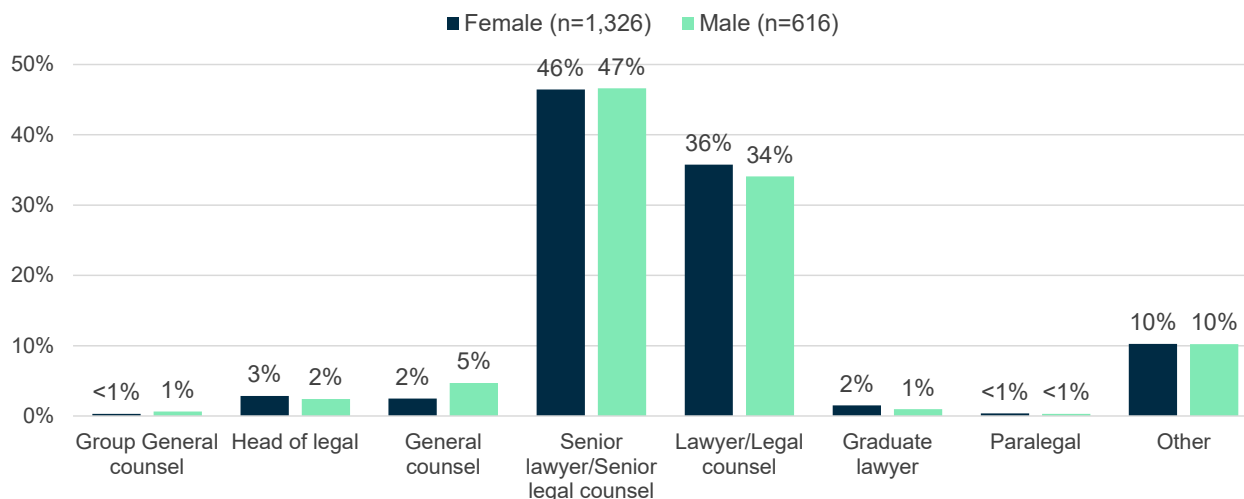
Source: Law Society of NSW database. Note: percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 40 – Age profile of government legal practitioners



Source: Law Society of NSW database. Note: percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 41 – Gender of government legal practitioners by role



Source: Law Society of NSW database

14 Areas of practice

This chapter draws on data from the 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. The survey was completed by 15,464 practitioners, representing 38% of all solicitors who renewed their practising certificate in 2025. Respondents were able to select multiple areas of practice, so proportions reported across this section will not add up to 100%.

14.1 Overview



For 2025–26, the most common areas of practice reported by respondents were:

- Commercial law (30%)
- Corporate law (21%)
- Civil litigation (19%)
- Conveyancing/real property (18%).

Over the past 10 years, the following practice areas have seen the largest decrease:

- Conveyancing/real property (–6%)
- Commercial law (–5%)
- Small business (–5%)
- Wills and estates (–5%).

The general downward trend in the proportion of solicitors identifying different areas of practice suggests that practitioners may be choosing to specialise in one area of practice rather than operating across a number of areas of practice.

14.2 Practice sectors

The main areas of practice varied across practice sectors. Table 9 provides the five most common areas of practice across private practice, and the government and corporate legal sectors.

Table 9 – Five most common areas of practice, by practice sector

Private practice		Corporate legal sector		Government legal sector	
Commercial law	28%	Commercial law	51%	Administrative law	37%
Wills and estates	28%	Corporate law	46%	Criminal law	35%
Conveyancing/Real property	26%	Banking/finance	21%	Civil litigation	17%
Civil litigation	24%	Intellectual property	17%	Commercial law	13%
Litigation – general	19%	Employment/Industrial law	16%	Advocacy	13%

Table 10 provides a breakdown of all areas of practice for respondents to the Practising Certificate Survey across the profession.

Table 10 – Areas of practice 2015/16 to 2025/26

Areas of practice	Areas of practice 2015/16 to 2025/26 (%)											Change (%)	
	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	Change from 24/24 to 25/26	Change from 15/16 to 25/26
Administrative law	10	10	9	8	9	9	9	10	11	11	11	0	+1
Advocacy	8	9	7	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	7	0	-1
Alternative dispute resolution	-	6	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	-1	-
Banking/Finance	11	9	10	10	10	10	11	11	10	10	10	0	-1
Civil litigation	23	24	21	19	19	20	20	21	20	19	19	0	-4
Commercial law	35	32	31	28	30	30	32	32	31	31	30	-1	-5
Competition law	6	5	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	5	4	-1	-2
Construction law	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	6	6	0	-
Conveyancing/ Real property	24	20	22	20	20	19	20	20	20	20	18	-2	-6
Corporate law	25	29	22	20	20	21	22	23	21	22	21	-1	-4
Criminal law	13	14	13	13	13	12	13	13	13	12	12	0	-1
Debts/Insolvency	8	8	7	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0	-2
Elder law	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	3	0	-
Employment/ Industrial law	11	11	9	8	9	10	10	10	10	10	11	+1	0
Environmental law	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	0	+1
Family law	15	18	14	13	13	13	13	14	14	13	13	0	-2
Immigration law	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	0	0
Insurance law	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	7	6	-1	-
Information Technology/ Telecommunications	6	5	5	5	5	5	6	5	5	5	6	+1	0
Intellectual property	9	8	8	7	7	7	8	7	8	8	8	0	-1
Litigation – general	20	20	18	15	15	16	18	18	17	17	16	-1	-4
Personal injury	9	10	8	8	8	8	8	9	8	8	8	0	-1
Planning/Local Government	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	0	0
Small business	10	11	7	6	6	6	6	7	7	6	5	-1	-5
Taxation	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	0	0
Wills and estates	22	26	18	16	17	16	17	18	19	18	17	-1	-5
Other	1	1	8	8	8	8	9	10	7	7	5	-2	+4

Source: 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=15,464. Note: Proportions do not add to 100% due to multiple response options.

14.3 Areas of practice by location

Respondents' main areas of practice also varied depending on their location. Those working in Sydney CBD most commonly reported practising commercial law (29%), corporate law (23%) and civil litigation (21%). This was in contrast to inner and outer regional NSW, where wills and estates (51% and 57%), conveyancing/real property (40% and 53%) and family law (35% and 39%) were the most common areas of practice. The top three areas of practice for each location are highlighted in Table 11.

Table 11 – Main areas of practice by location¹⁵

Area of practice	Sydney CBD (%) n=7,283	Sydney suburban (%) n=3,983	Major cities of NSW (%) n=970	Inner regional NSW (%) n=833	Outer regional NSW (%) n=118
Administrative law	10	12	8	8	3
Advocacy	6	8	9	10	7
Alternative dispute resolution	4	4	4	4	3
Banking/Finance	13	5	3	1	2
Civil litigation	21	18	15	18	14
Commercial law	29	36	25	24	22
Competition law	4	6	2	1	1
Construction law	7	7	6	2	4
Conveyancing/ Real property	11	29	26	40	53
Corporate law	23	20	11	7	11
Criminal law	9	15	21	27	30
Debts/Insolvency	6	7	4	6	2
Elder law	1	4	6	10	8
Employment/ Industrial law	10	12	11	9	5
Environmental law	3	4	4	3	5
Family law	6	20	23	35	39
Immigration law	3	7	2	2	3
Information technology/ Telecommunications	6	7	2	2	1
Insurance law	9	4	3	2	1
Intellectual property	7	12	4	3	3
Litigation – general	18	16	13	12	15
Personal injury	8	7	13	5	3
Planning/Local Government	3	4	6	6	8
Small business	3	9	1	14	13
Taxation	5	3	1	2	2
Wills and estates	7	28	32	51	57
Other	4	7	5	5	4

Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=15,464. Notes: Proportions do not add to 100% due to multiple response options. Remote and Very Remote NSW not included due to small sample size, as well as Undefined postcodes.

¹⁵ The location categories used within the Practising Certificate Survey are different than those used within the Law Society database.

14.4 Areas of practice by private practice size

Using partner/principal-based firm size categories from the 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey, small law practices with one to four principals more commonly offered services in wills and estates, conveyancing/real property, and commercial law. Larger law practices more commonly offered services in commercial law, civil litigation and corporate law. Further detail is provided in Table 12 where substantial differences have been highlighted in bold.

Table 12 – Areas of practice by private practice size

Area of practice	Partners/ principals (%)					
	1 to 4 (%)	5 to 10 (%)	11 to 20 (%)	21 to 39 (%)	40 to 49 (%)	50+ (%)
Administrative law	6	5	6	5	7	7
Advocacy	8	5	5	5	6	4
Alternative dispute resolution	3	3	4	7	7	5
Banking/Finance	4	5	5	4	2	14
Civil litigation	23	27	30	29	39	23
Commercial law	31	28	24	21	16	23
Competition law	1	2	5	3	2	4
Construction law	5	5	7	6	8	9
Conveyancing/Real property	40	18	12	9	7	8
Corporate law	12	15	15	13	9	21
Criminal law	19	6	5	2	2	1
Debts/Insolvency	8	9	7	5	4	5
Elder law	6	3	2	1	2	<1
Employment/Industrial law	8	12	13	11	10	7
Environmental law	2	3	3	4	2	4
Family law	30	17	8	5	2	1
Insurance law	2	6	14	18	26	12
Immigration law	9	5	3	<1	0	1
Information technology/ Telecommunications	2	2	5	3	2	5
Intellectual property	5	7	7	4	5	5
Litigation – general	19	19	19	20	20	19
Personal injury	8	16	20	33	33	9
Planning/Local Government	3	4	3	4	2	4
Small business	14	7	3	2	2	1
Taxation	3	3	4	2	2	5
Wills and estates	45	21	14	6	5	2
Other	4	3	4	3	2	3

Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=8,618 (private practice solicitors only).

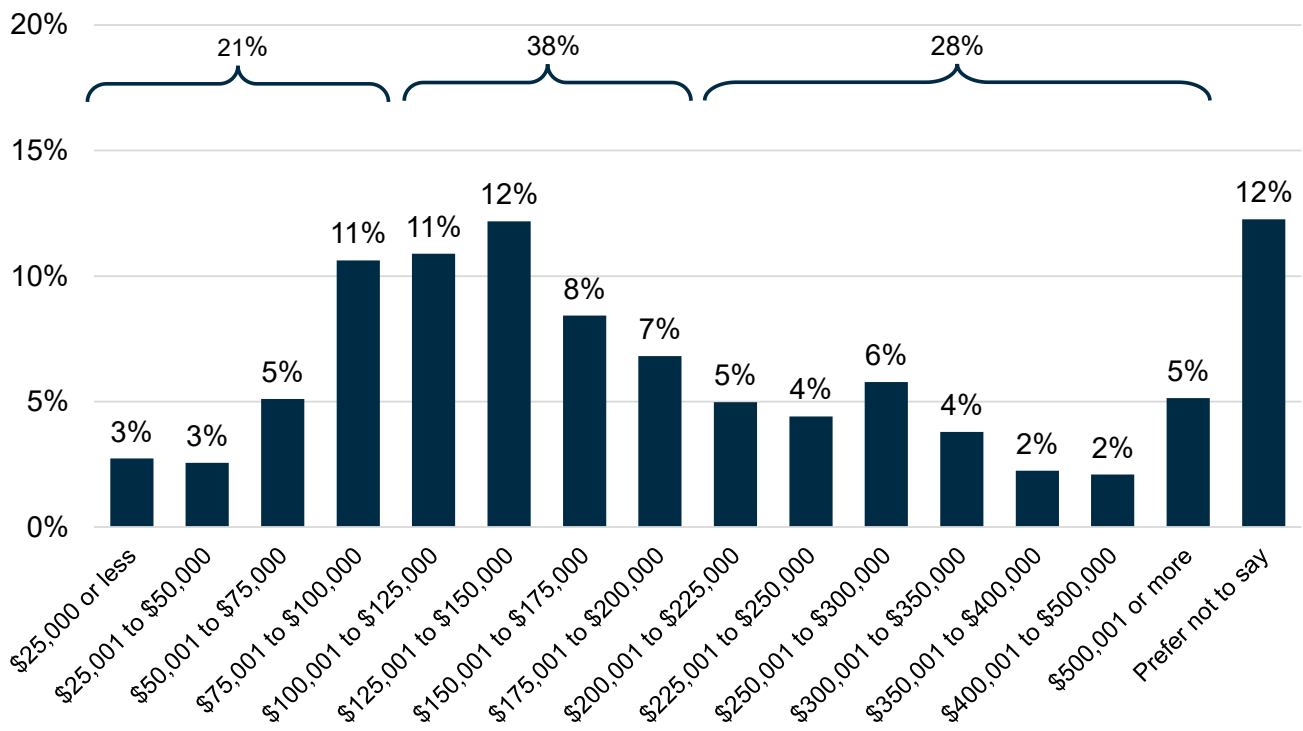
Note: In this table, law practice size is based on the number of partners or principals, consistent with the 2025–26 Practising Certificate report and prior editions of the Annual Profile. Elsewhere in this report, firm size is measured by the total number of solicitors within a practice (principals and employees combined).

15 Income

15.1 Overview

The Practising Certificate Survey asks respondents to indicate their gross annual (pre-tax) income for the previous financial year (i.e., FY23/24), by selecting one of 16 income categories. Across full-time and part-time solicitors, the most commonly selected category was \$125,001 to \$150,000 (12%), followed by \$100,001 to \$125,000 (11%), and \$75,000 to \$100,000 (11%). Just under one in eight respondents opted not to report their income range (12%).

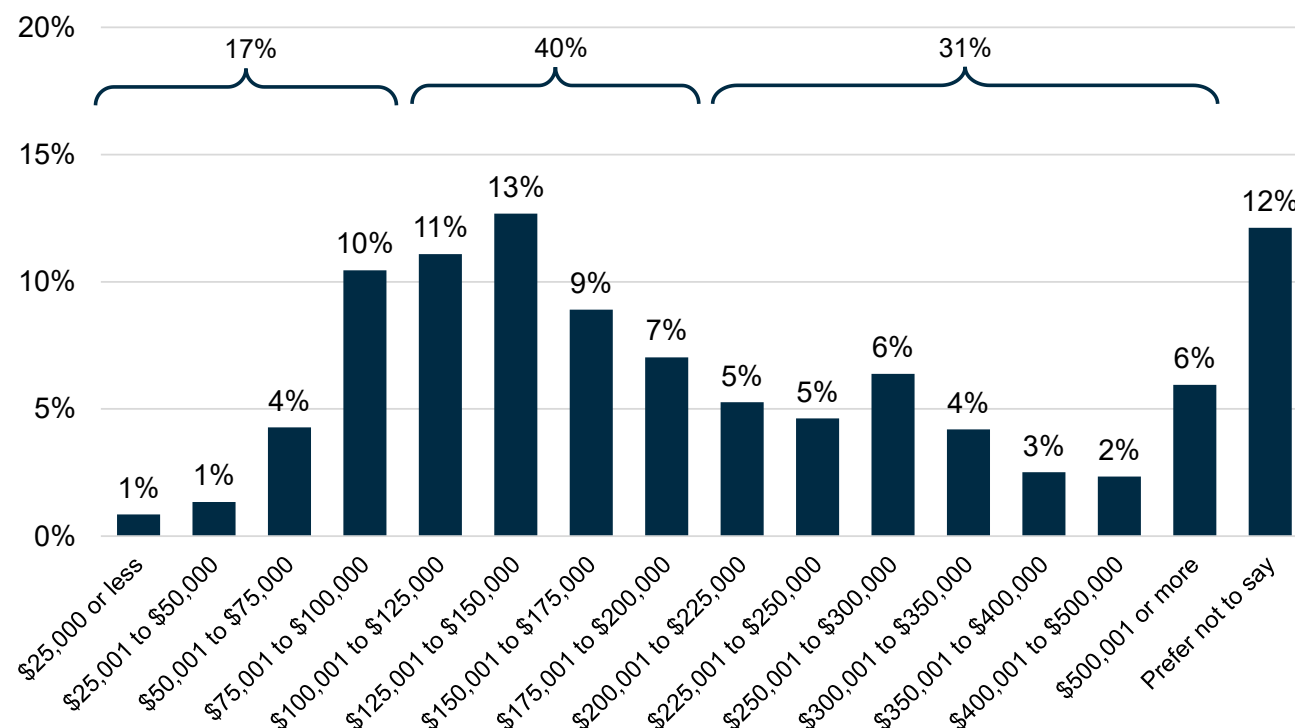
Figure 42 – Annual gross income full-time and part-time solicitors FY24



Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=13,890. Base excludes solicitors on leave or not working at the time of the survey.

The income distribution of full-time solicitors was similar to that of all respondents, with the exception of a smaller proportion of respondents reporting income of \$50,000 or less (2%, compared to 5% across all respondents), and a slightly higher proportion reported incomes of more than \$250,000 (21%, compared to 19% across all respondents).

Figure 43 – Annual gross income full-time solicitors only FY24



Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=11,561. Excludes respondents not working as a legal practitioner or on leave at the time of the survey.

There has been some change in the reported income of solicitors over the past decade. The proportion of solicitors earning \$50,000 or less has decreased from 13% in FY13–14 to 5% in FY23–24. The proportion of solicitors earning more than \$200,000 has increased from 19% in FY13–14 to 28% in FY23–24.

Table 13 – Income distribution of all respondents over time

Income	FY 13–14 (%)	FY 14–15 (%)	FY 15–16 (%)	FY 16–17 (%)	FY 17–18 (%)	FY 18–19 (%)	FY 19–20 (%)	FY 20–21 (%)	FY 21–22 (%)	FY 22–23 (%)	FY 23–24 (%)	Change FY 13–14 to FY 23–24(%)
\$50,000 or less	13	13	10	10	9	9	8	8	6	6	5*	–8
\$50,001 to \$75,000	13	13	12	12	10	10	9	8	7	6	5	–8
\$75,001 to \$100,000	16	15	15	15	15	14	15	14	12	12	11	–5
\$100,001 to \$150,000	20	20	20	21	20	21	21	23	22	23	23	+3
\$150,001 to \$200,000	12	11	11	11	11	11	12	12	13	14	15	+3
More than \$200,000	19	20	17	17	19	19	20	22	27	27	28	+9
I'd prefer not say	6	8	15	15	15	16	14	14	13	12	12	+6

Note: The Practising Certificate Survey asks respondents to record their income from the previous financial year, therefore the current survey captured data on income from the 2023–24 financial year, last year's survey captured data for the 2022–23 financial year, and so on. Findings for FY23–24 includes full-time and part-time solicitors only, n=13,890. This base excludes solicitors (n=1,574) who were not working in the legal profession or were on leave at the time of the survey. Historical findings do not exclude these groups (from FY14–FY21), hence analysis over time may be slightly skewed.

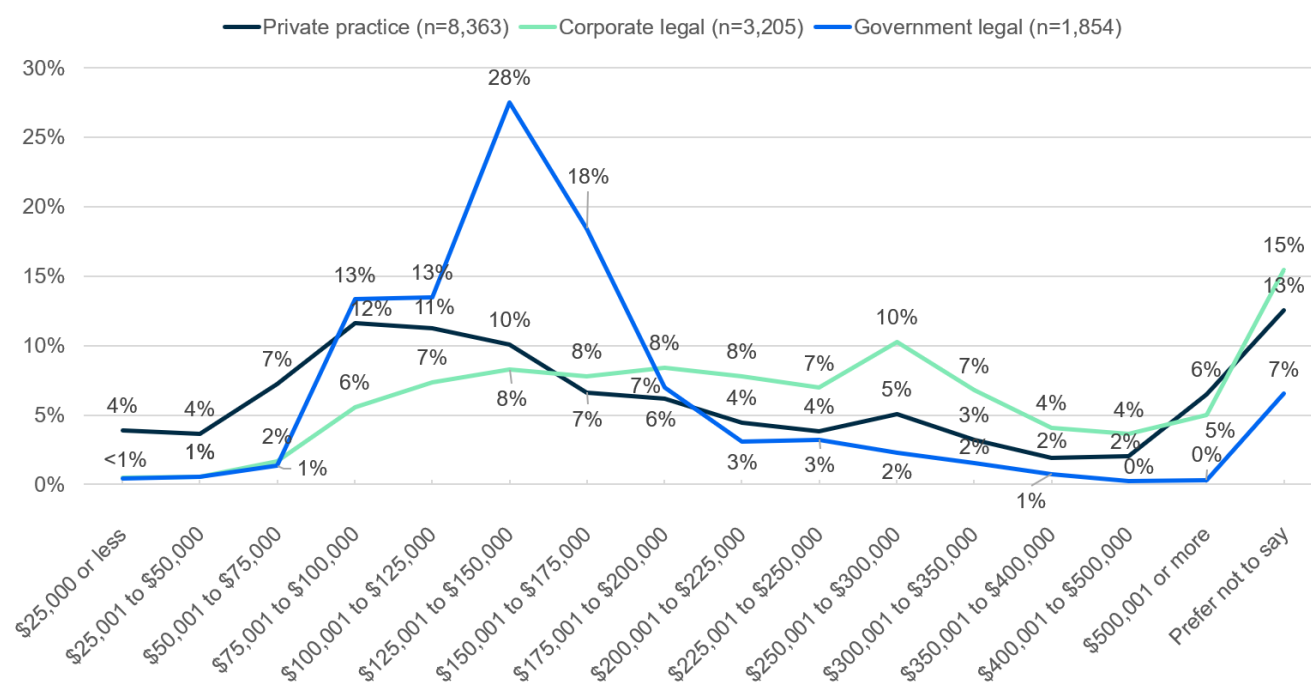
* Data does not match Figure 43 due to rounding.

15.2 Income by practice sector

The distributions of reported incomes in the private, corporate and government legal sectors are provided in Figure 44, and a summary of reported incomes for each sector is provided in Table 14. The large majority of government legal practitioners reported earning between \$75,001 to \$175,000 (73%), while respondents in private practice and corporate legal reported a broader range of incomes.

Corporate legal practitioners tended to report higher incomes than those in other sectors. For instance, 61% of corporate legal practitioners reported incomes of over \$150,000, compared to only 40% of private practice solicitors and 37% of government legal practitioners. Furthermore, almost half of all corporate legal practitioners reported earning over \$200,000 (45%), compared to 27% of private practice solicitors and 11% of government legal practitioners.

Figure 44 – Income distribution by practice sector FY24



Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=13,422. Excludes respondents not working as a legal practitioner or on leave at the time of the survey.

Table 14 – Annual gross income by sector FY24

	Private practice (n=8,363)	Corporate legal (n=3,205)	Government legal (n=1,854)
\$25,000 or less	4%	<1%	<1%
\$25,001 to \$50,000	4%	1%	1%
\$50,001 to \$75,000	7%	2%	1%
\$75,001 to \$100,000	12%	6%	13%
\$100,001 to \$125,000	11%	7%	13%
\$125,001 to \$150,000	10%	8%	28%
\$150,001 to \$175,000	7%	8%	18%
\$175,001 to \$200,000	6%	8%	7%
\$200,001 to \$225,000	4%	8%	3%
\$225,001 to \$250,000	4%	7%	3%
\$250,001 to \$300,000	5%	10%	2%

\$300,001 to \$500,000	7%	14%	2%
Over \$500,000	6%	5%	<1%
Prefer not to say	13%	15%	7%

Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey

Note: Includes full-time and part-time solicitors, excludes solicitors on leave or not working at the time of the survey.

15.3 Income by law practice size, in private practice

The incomes of those working in private practice varied by law practice size. Overall, income was higher for respondents in larger law practices than in smaller law practices. For instance, 35% of respondents in law practices with 50 or more principals reported earning more than \$250,000, compared to only 9% of those in law practices with one to four principals. Conversely, only 6% of respondents in law practices with 50 or more principals reported earning \$100,000 or less, compared to 40% of those in law practices with one to four principals.

Table 15 – Annual gross income in private practice by law practice size FY24

	1 to 4 principals	5 to 10 principals	11 to 20 principals	21 to 39 principals	40 to 49 principals	50+ principals
\$50,000 or less	14%	3%	2%	1%	1%	1%
\$50,001 to \$100,000	26%	23%	18%	15%	11%	5%
\$100,001 to \$150,000	21%	22%	23%	24%	26%	20%
\$150,001 to \$200,000	11%	14%	16%	15%	18%	14%
\$200,001 to \$250,000	6%	10%	12%	8%	10%	11%
\$250,001 to \$300,000	3%	5%	2%	6%	6%	9%
\$300,001 to \$500,000	4%	7%	9%	10%	12%	11%
Over \$500,000	2%	4%	6%	9%	4%	15%
Prefer not to say	12%	11%	12%	11%	12%	14%

Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base private practice solicitors only n=8,618

Note: In this table, law practice size is based on the number of partners or principals, consistent with the 2025–26 Practising Certificate report and prior editions of the Annual Profile. Elsewhere in this report, firm size is measured by the total number of solicitors within a practice (principals and employees combined).

15.4 Income by location

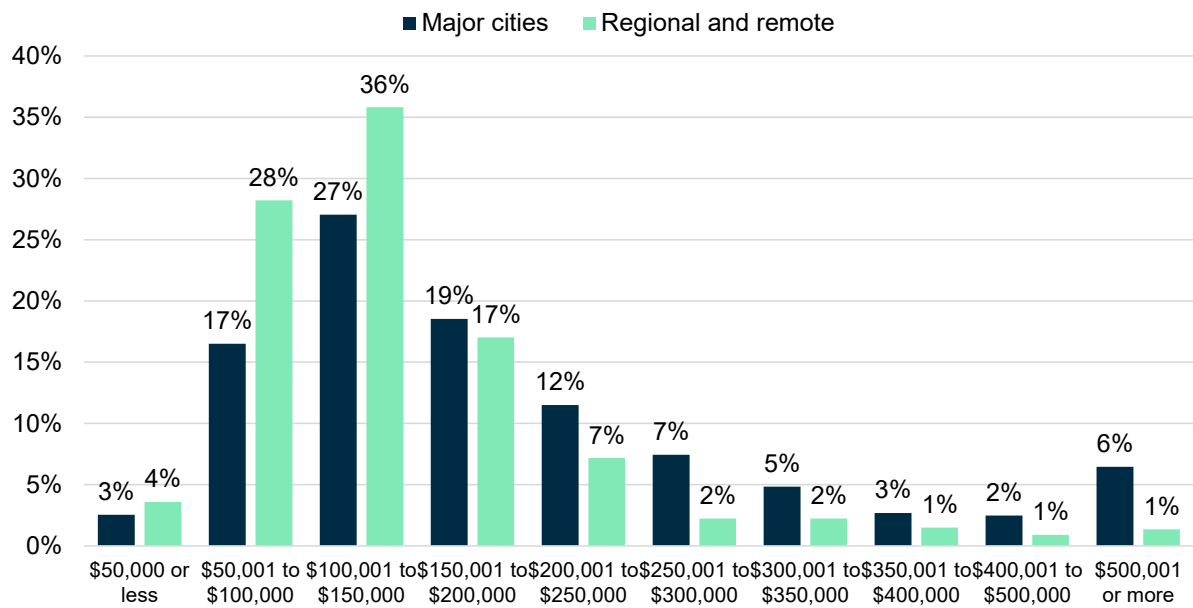
The Practising Certificate Survey asks respondents to provide a postcode for their employer or law practice, which was used to determine their workplace location.¹⁶ The incomes of full-time solicitors vary between the major cities of NSW (which includes all postcodes within Sydney and all major city postcodes recognised by the ABS), and regional and remote NSW (which includes all NSW postcodes classified by the ABS as inner regional, outer regional, remote or very remote).

Full-time solicitors from major cities reported higher incomes, with 24% reporting incomes over \$250,000, compared to 8% for regional and remote solicitors. Almost a third of regional and remote solicitors had

¹⁶ Note: the classification method for respondent workplace location was changed in 2017–18 to better reflect changes in the classification of NSW regions and align the analysis with the regional classifications used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Since the 2017–18 report, data on the regional classification of NSW postcodes was obtained from the ABS, and adjusted to include a division between the Sydney CBD and Sydney suburban.

incomes under \$100,000 (32%), compared to almost a fifth of solicitors from major cities (19%). These findings are likely influenced by a higher proportion of corporate legal firms, and to some extent private practice in major cities compared to regional and remote NSW.

Figure 45 – Annual gross income of full-time solicitors by location FY24



Source: Law Society of NSW database

15.5 Income by gender

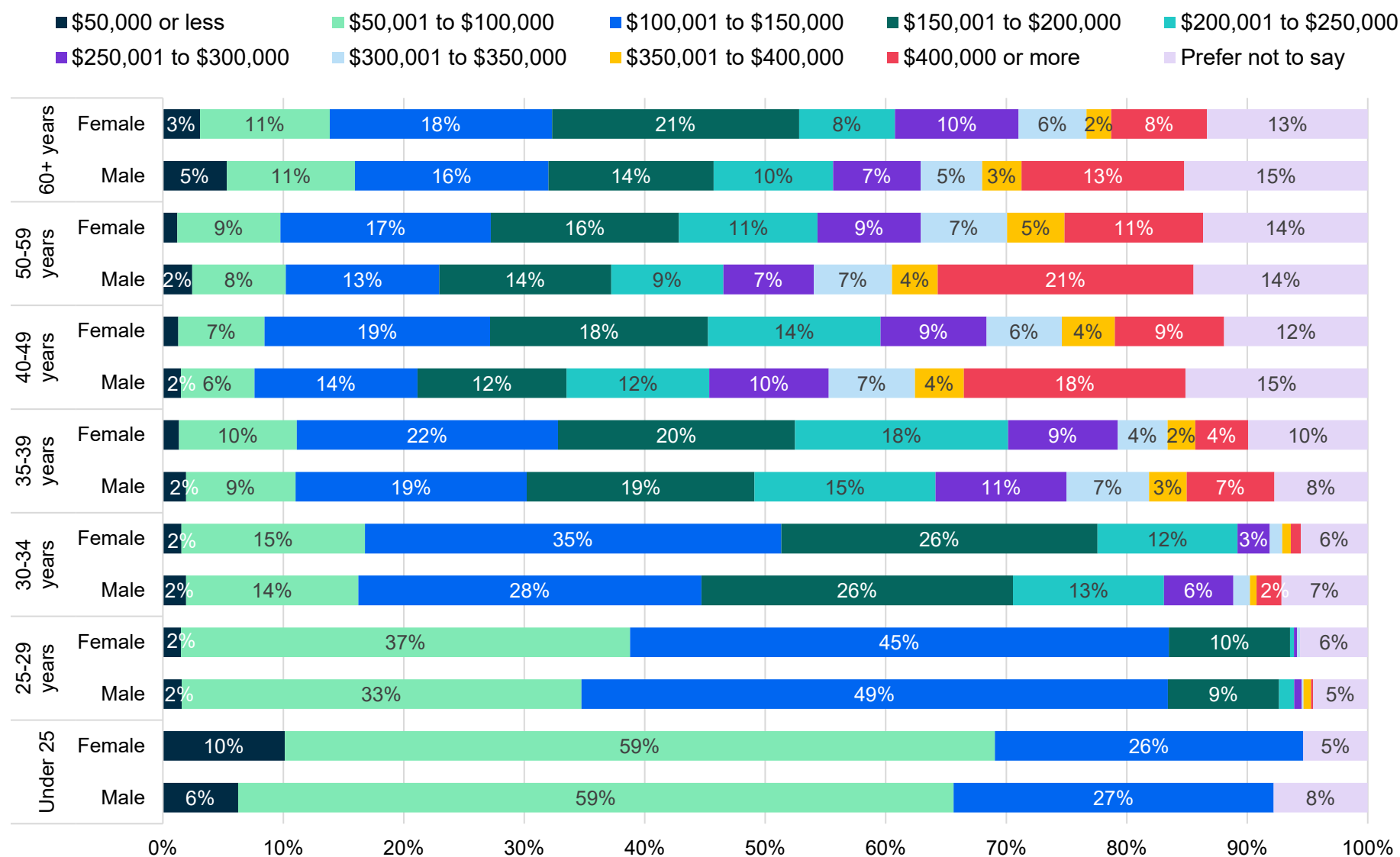
As seen in previous years, full time female solicitors reported earning less than males. This result remains the same regardless of age, years since admission and sector.

Income by gender and age

The gender pay gap is most evident in older age brackets. For those under 25 or aged between 25–29 years, male and female incomes are largely similar. However, for those aged between 40 to 49 years, 40% of male respondents reported incomes of over \$250,000, compared to 29% of female respondents, including twice as many male respondents reporting incomes over \$400,000 (18% compared with 9% for female respondents). A similar gap is seen with respondents aged between 50 and 59, with 39% of male respondents earning over \$250,000 (and 21% over \$400,000) compared with 32% of female respondents.

A full breakdown of reported income ranges is shown in Figure 46 on the following page.

Figure 46 – Annual gross income of full-time solicitors by gender and age FY24

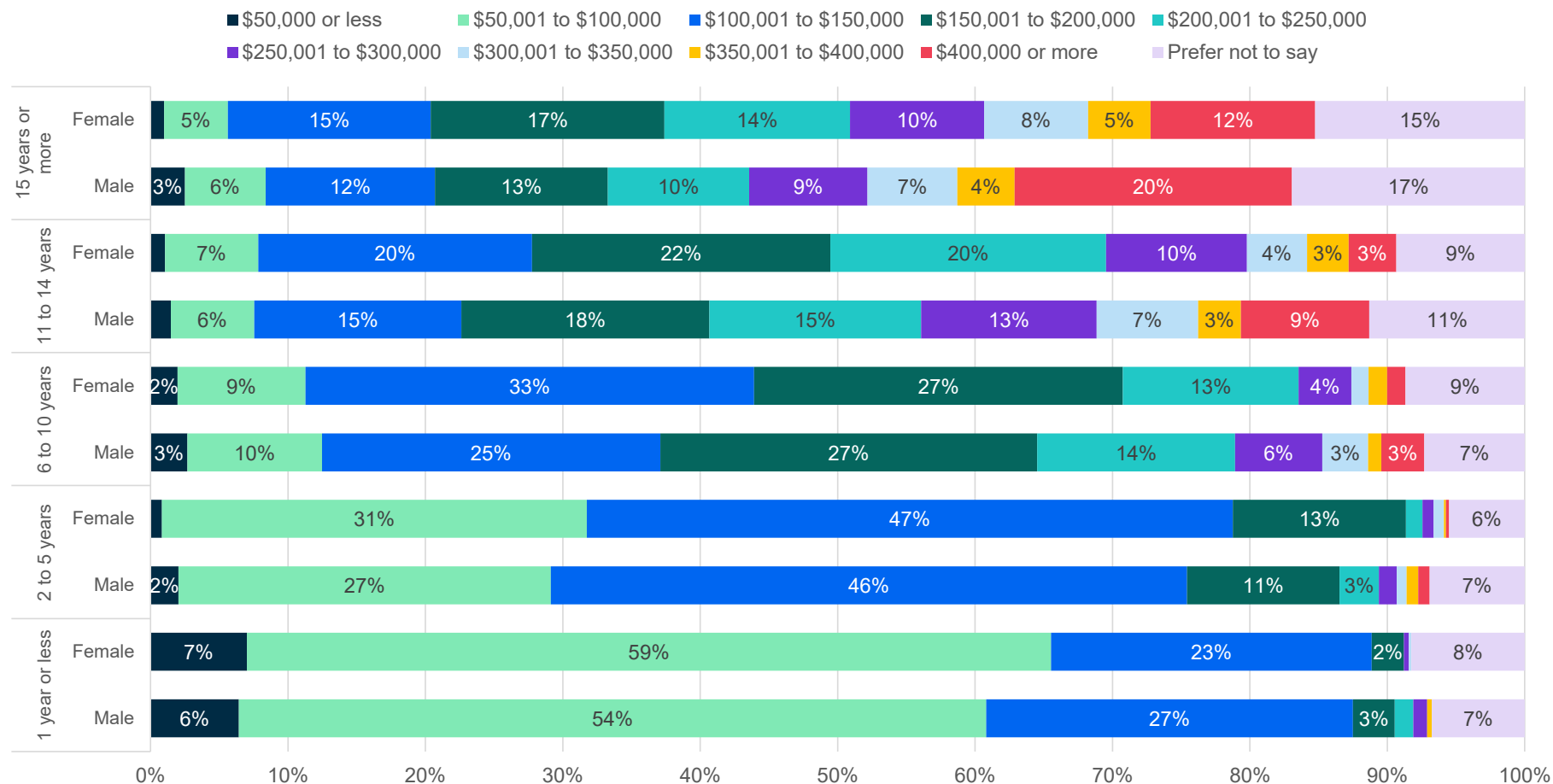


Source: 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=11,296

Income by gender and years since admission across practice sectors

Further analysis of annual gross income by years since admission shows that the gender pay gap is evident regardless of years since admission (i.e. year of admission did not account for the pay gap between men and women). Additional analysis of income and years since admission is provided in Appendix A.

Figure 47 – Annual gross income of full-time solicitors (all practice sectors) by gender and years since admission FY24



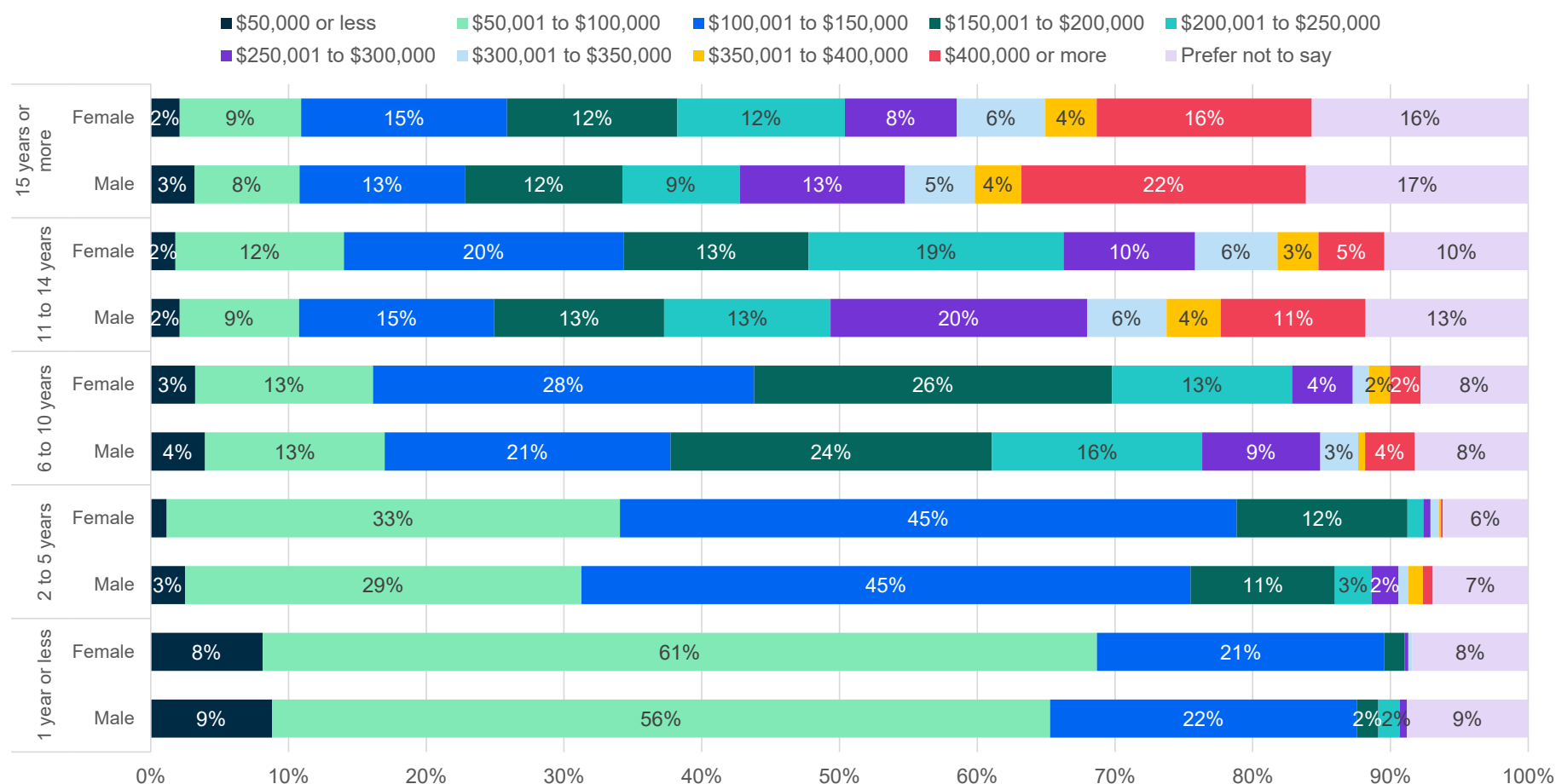
Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=11,296

Note: Years since admission groupings in this figure are based on the groupings used in the 2025–26 Practising Certificate and in prior editions of Annual Profile, and therefore differ from the revised, more granular groupings used elsewhere in this report.

Further analysis shows the gap between male and female respondents is evident across all sectors. Over time, male respondents admitted as a solicitor in the same year as their female counterparts reported earning more than women in all sectors of practice, including in female dominated sectors (the corporate and government legal sectors). In particular, the difference is largest in the corporate sector.

Private practice

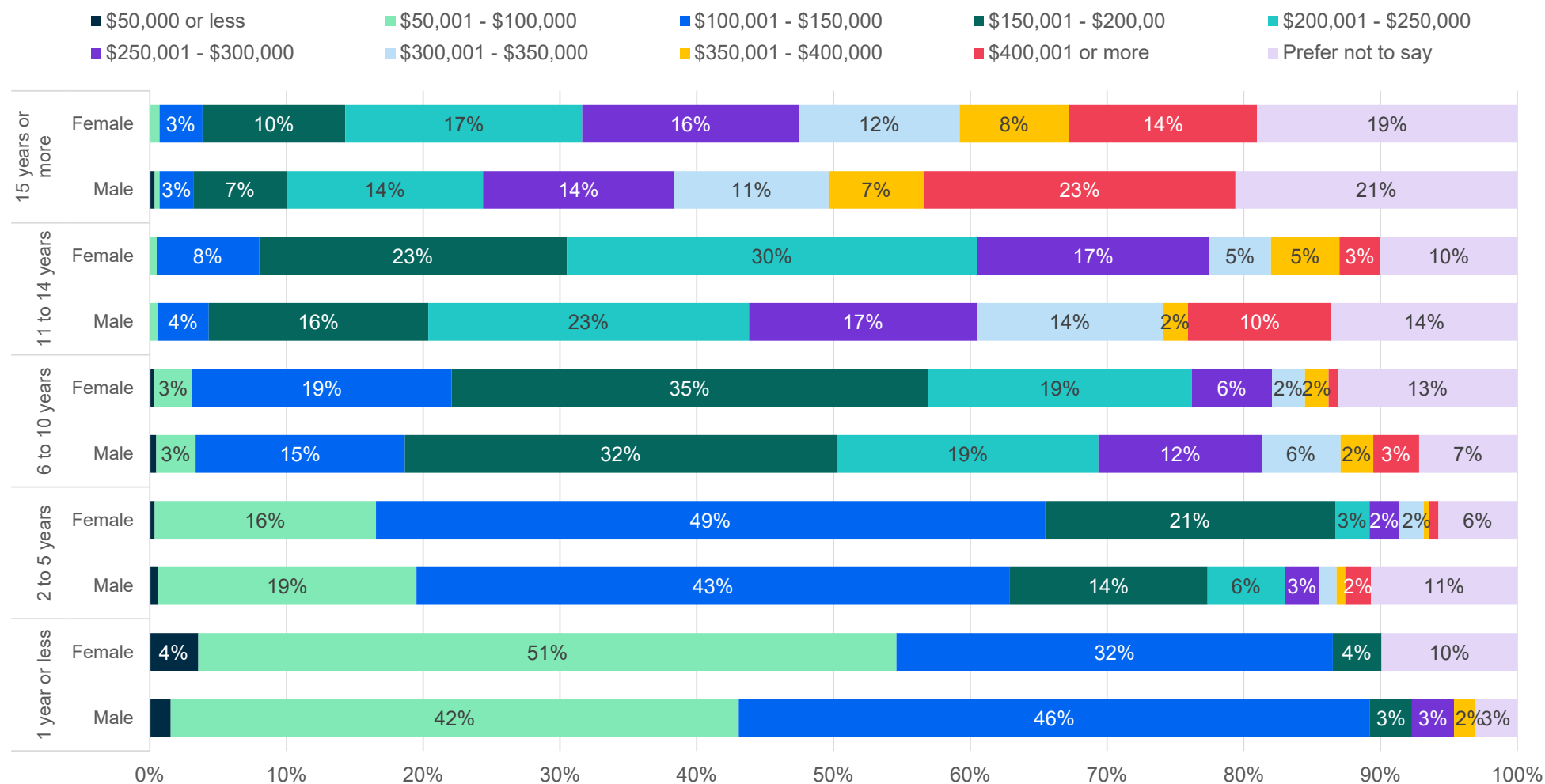
Figure 48 – Annual gross income of full-time private practice solicitors by gender and years since admission FY24



Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=6,673. Note: Years since admission groupings in this figure are based on the groupings used in the 2025–26 Practising Certificate and in prior editions of Annual Profile, and therefore differ from the revised, more granular groupings used elsewhere in this report.

The corporate legal sector

Figure 49 – Annual gross income of full-time corporate legal practitioners by gender and years since admission FY24

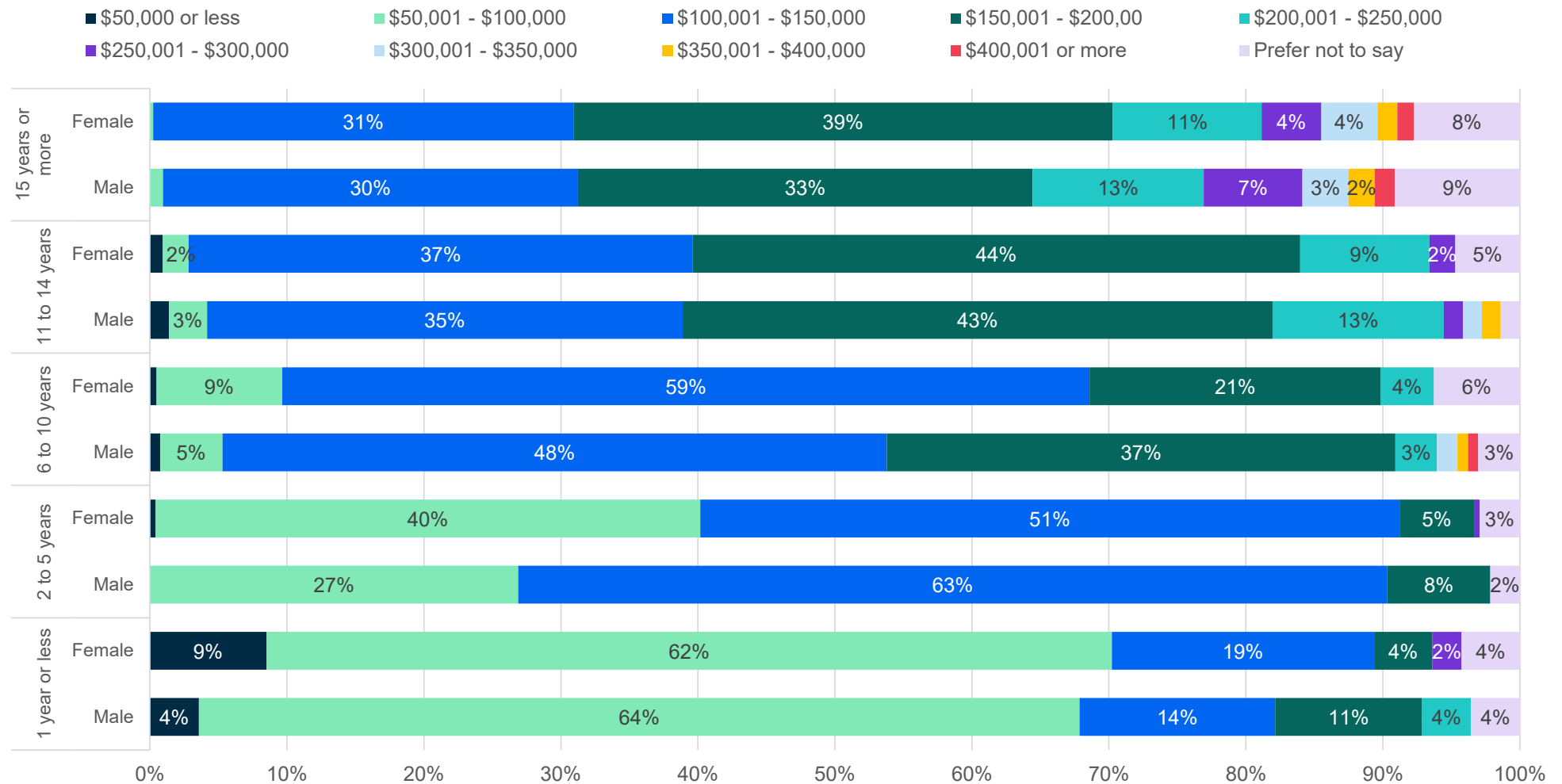


Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=2,761.

Note: Years since admission groupings in this figure are based on the groupings used in the 2025–26 Practising Certificate and in prior editions of Annual Profile, and therefore differ from the revised, more granular groupings used elsewhere in this report.

The government legal sector

Figure 50 – Annual gross income of full-time government legal practitioners by gender and years since admission FY24



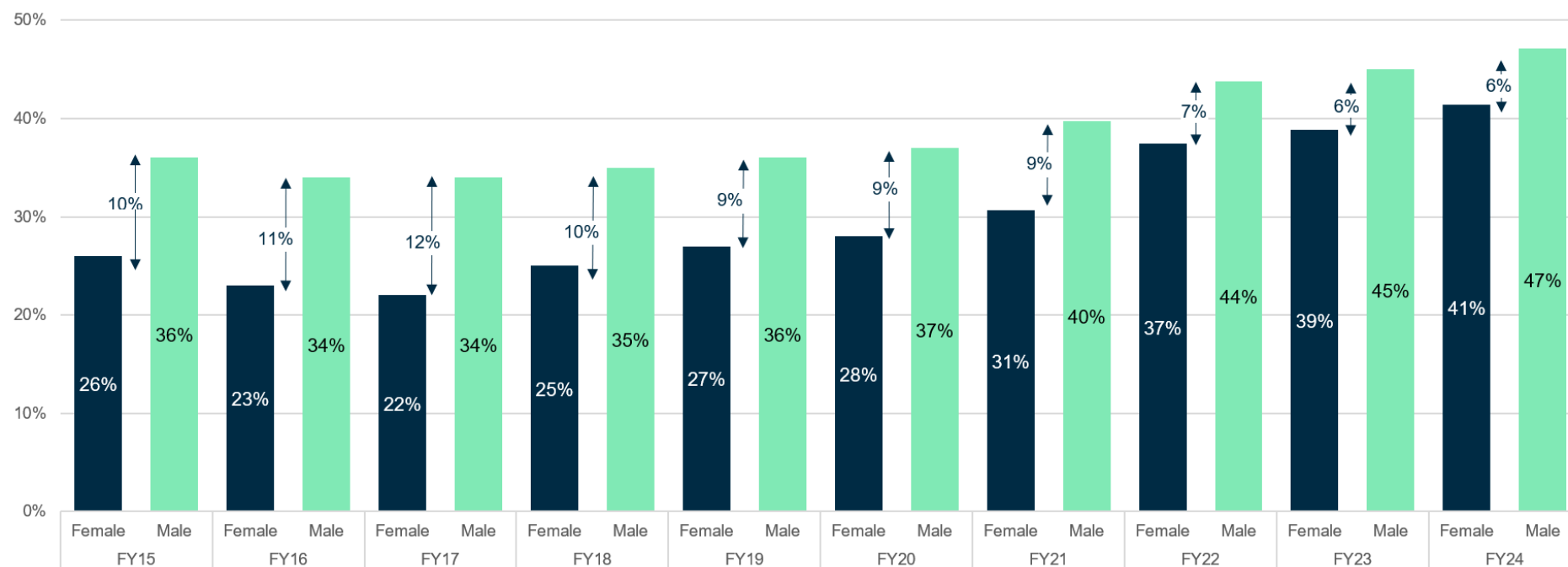
Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=1,546

Note: Years since admission groupings in this figure are based on the groupings used in the 2025–26 Practising Certificate and in prior editions of Annual Profile, and therefore differ from the revised, more granular groupings used elsewhere in this report.

Income by gender over time

There has been some improvement in the reported income of female solicitors over time. Figure 51 shows the proportion of male and female solicitors reporting an income over \$150,000. This shows the difference in the proportion of male and female solicitors is narrowing, and has decreased by four percentage points in the last five years. There has been a large increase in the proportion of solicitors who did not want to state their income, but particularly among male solicitors – 13% of male solicitors did not wish to state their income in FY23/24, compared to 11% of female solicitors, and compared to 3% of male solicitors in FY11/12 – which may be skewing these results.

Figure 51 – Solicitors reporting gross income over \$150,000 by gender FY15 to FY24



Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base: FY24 includes full-time and part-time solicitors only n=13,587, excludes solicitors on leave or not working at the time of the survey. The bases for FY12–FY20 do not exclude these solicitors. There has been a large increase in the proportion of male solicitors who did not want to state their income (3% in FY11/12 compared to 13% in FY23/24), which may also be impacting results.

16 Work status and hours worked

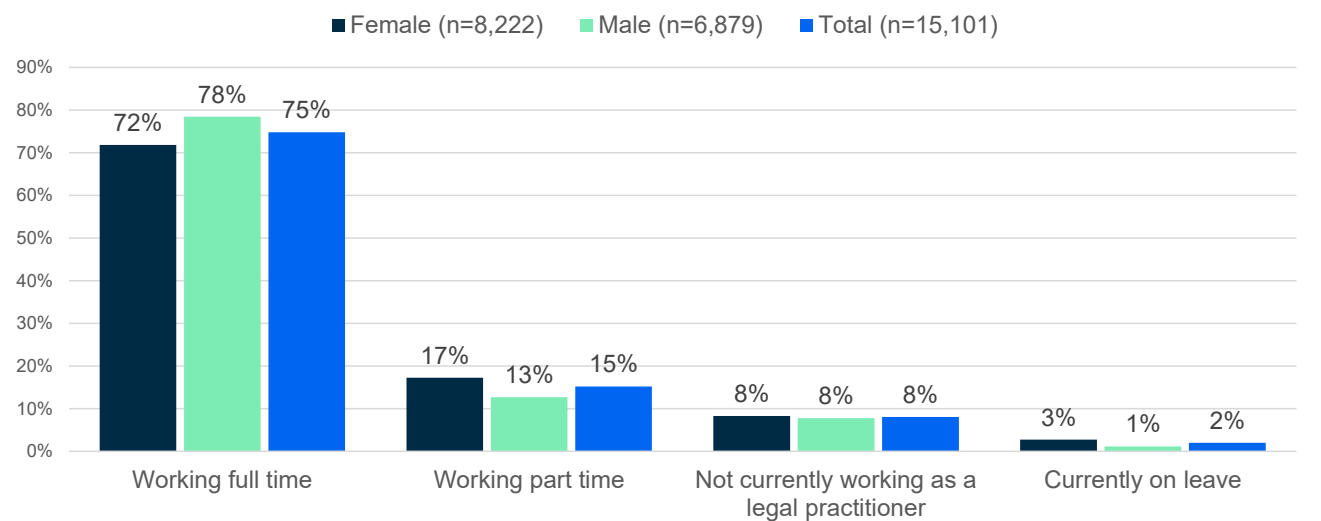
The Practising Certificate Survey collects data on whether respondents work full time or part time, work outside the legal profession, or are not employed at the time of the survey.¹⁷ It also captures information on the number of hours worked per week, as reported by respondents.

16.1 Overview

Three-quarters of respondents to the 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey reported working full time in the legal profession (75%), 15% were working part time, and 8% were working outside the legal profession. The remaining 2% were on leave or unemployed at the time of the survey.

More male respondents were working full time (78%) than females (72%), while more female respondents were working part time (17%) than males (13%).

Figure 52 - Mode of work by gender

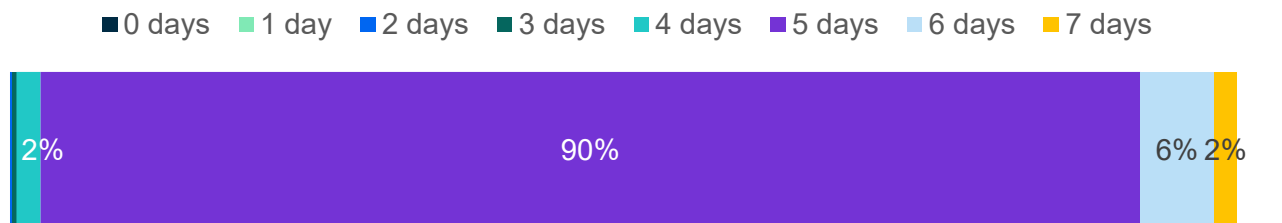


Source: 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey. Excludes those that that selected 'non-binary', 'if you wish to specify otherwise' or 'prefer not to say' for their gender.

16.2 Full-time work

The majority of respondents who indicated they were working full time reported working five days per week (90%). A small proportion reported working six days per week (6%). On average, full-time respondents were working 46 hours per week.

Figure 53 - Number of days per week worked by full-time solicitors

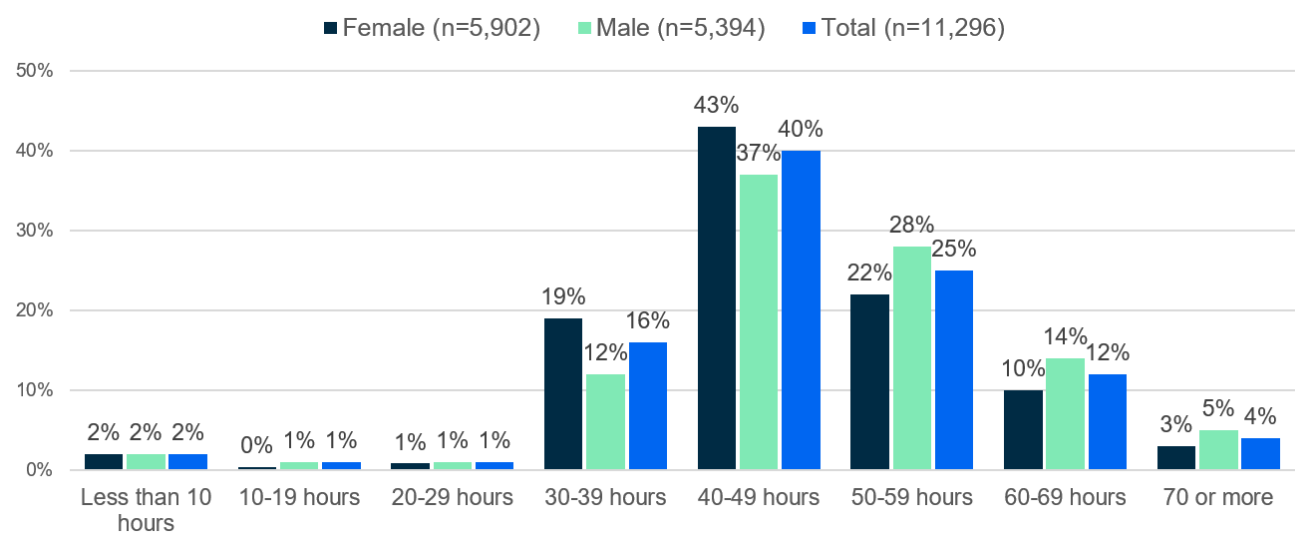


Source: 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=11,561

¹⁷ Work status is analysed based on self-reported status rather than a calculation of hours worked

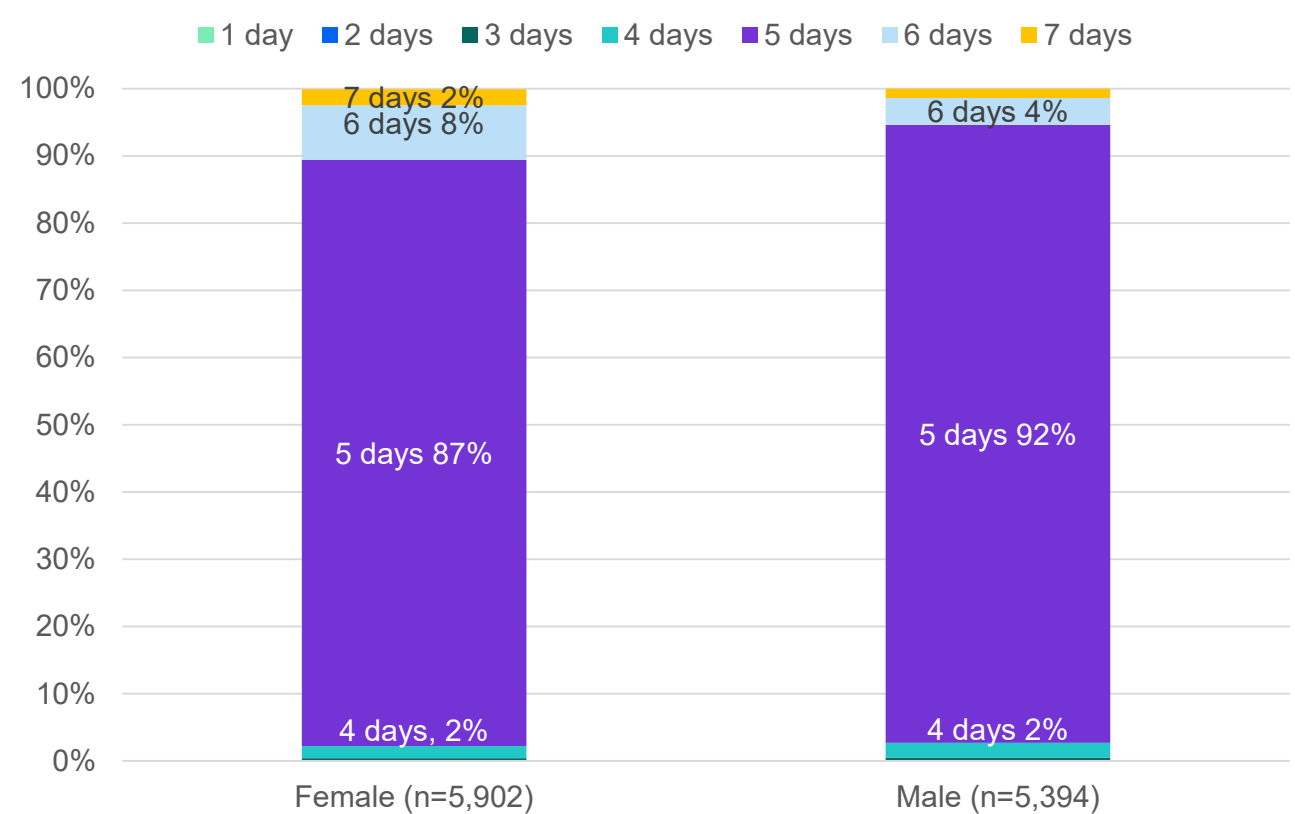
On average, the hours worked by male respondents were slightly higher than those of females (47 hours compared to 45 hours). A greater proportion of male respondents reported working six days in a normal work week (8% of males, compared to 4% of females).

Figure 54 - Average number of hours worked per week by full-time solicitors



Source: 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey

Figure 55 - Average number of days worked per week by full-time solicitors by gender

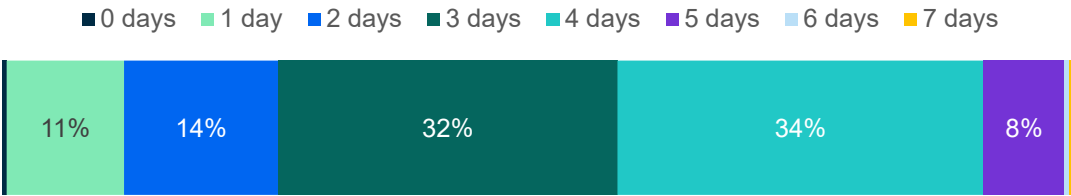


Source: 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=11,296. Excludes those that that selected 'non-binary', 'if you wish to specify otherwise' or 'prefer not to say' for their gender.

16.3 Part-time work

Of all the respondents to the 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey, 15% reported working part time. Part-time solicitors most commonly worked four (34%) or three (32%) days per week. A quarter of part-time solicitors worked one or two days per week (25%), while 8% reported working five days per week.

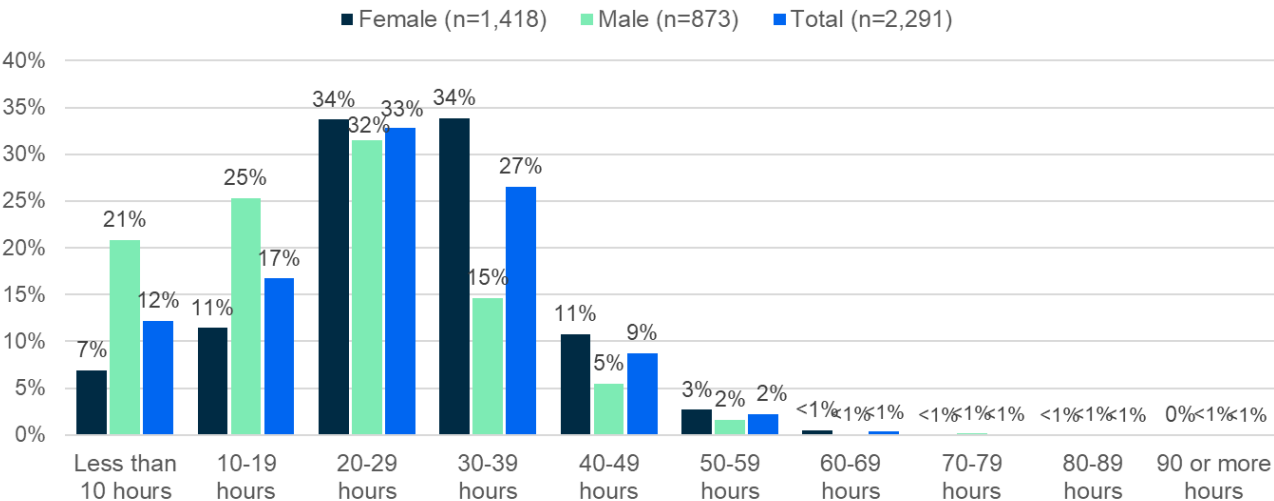
Figure 56 - Average number of days worked per week by part-time solicitors



Source: 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=2,329

Part-time solicitors worked 24 hours per week on average. Females reported working more hours per week (27 hours) than males (20 hours).

Figure 57 - Average number of hours worked per week by part-time solicitors



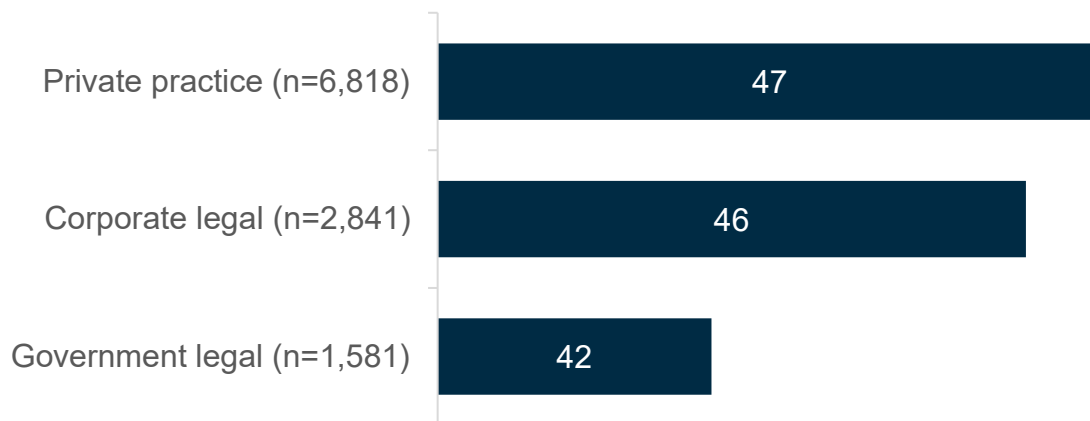
Source: 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey. Excludes those that that selected 'non-binary', 'if you wish to specify otherwise' or 'prefer not to say' for their gender.

16.4 Work hours by practice sector

Full-time work

Across all full-time solicitors, those working in private practice reported the highest average hours, at 47 hours per week. This was followed by those in the corporate legal sector, who reported an average of 46 hours per week, and finally government legal with 42 hours worked in an average week.

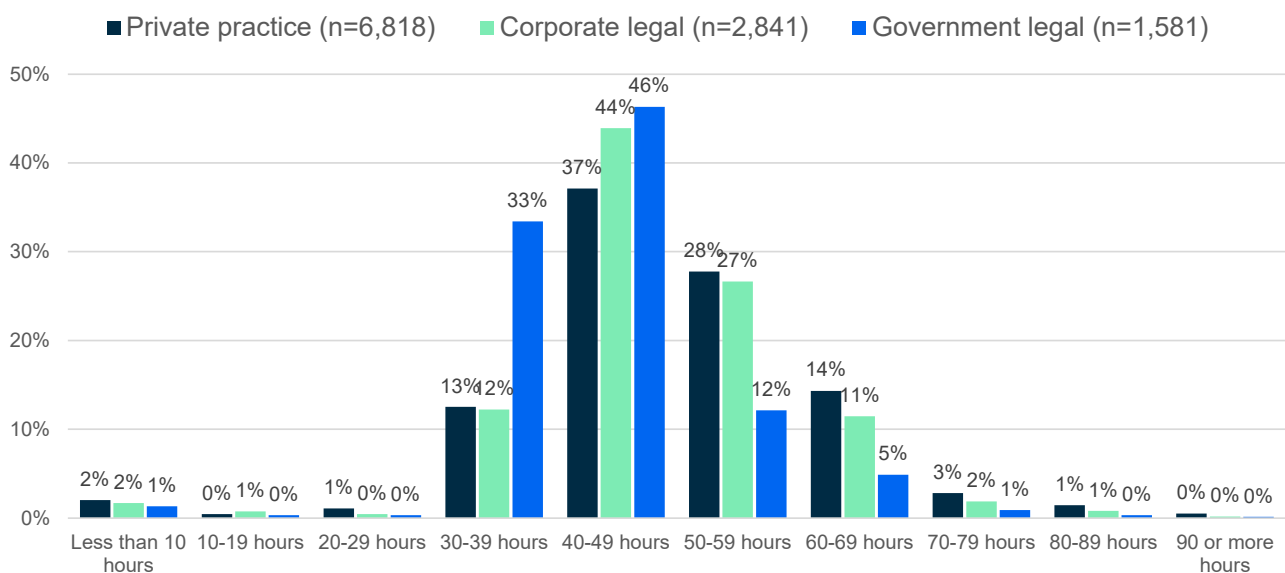
Figure 58 - Average hours worked per week by practice sector (full-time workers)



Source: 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey

Larger proportions of respondents working full time in private practice and the corporate legal sector reported working longer hours compared to those in the government legal sector. For example, approximately half of those in private practice (47%) and the corporate legal sector (44%) reported working 50 or more hours per week, compared to only 18% of those in the government legal sector.

Figure 59 - Number of hours worked per week by practice sector (full-time workers)

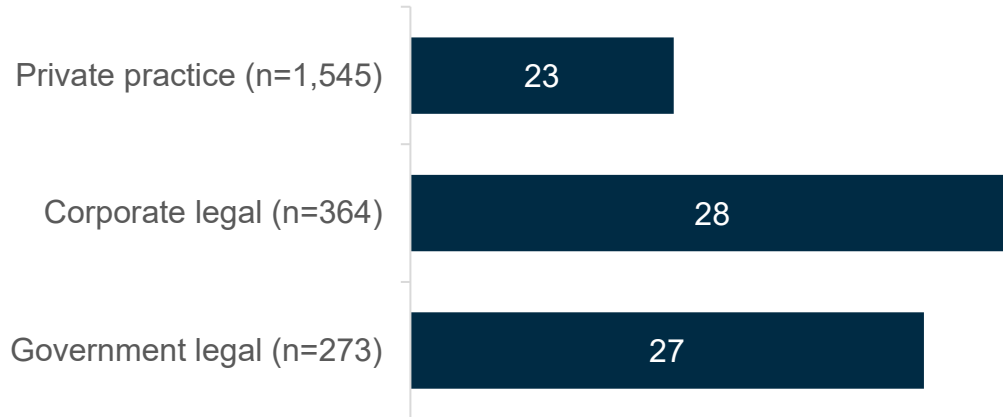


Source: 2025-26 Practising Certificate Survey

Part-time work

Across part-time solicitors, those working in the corporate legal sector reported working the highest average hours, at 28 hours per week. This was followed by those working in the government legal sector, who reported an average of 27 hours per week. Respondents working in private practice reported an average of 23 hours per week.

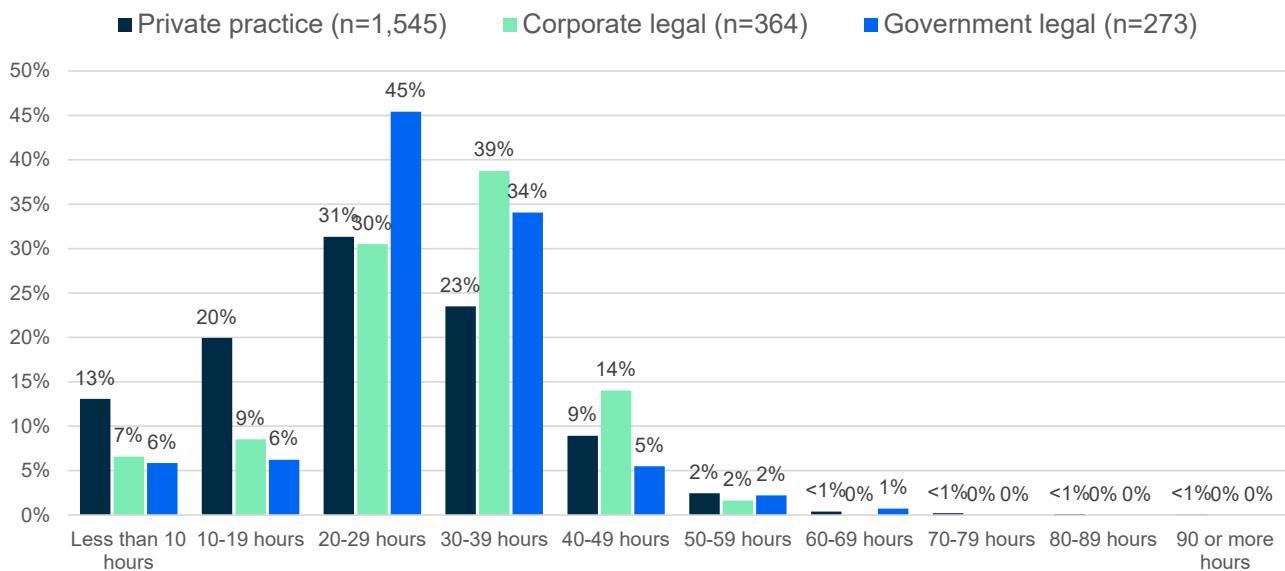
Figure 60 – Average hours worked per week by practice sector (part-time workers)



Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey

Larger proportions of respondents working part time in the corporate legal sector and private practice reported working longer hours compared to those in the government legal sector. For example, 16% of those in the corporate legal sector and 12% of those in private practice reported working 40 or more hours per week, compared to only 8% of those in the government legal sector.

Figure 61 – Number of hours worked per week by practice sector (part-time workers)



Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey

17 Pro-bono and other unpaid work

The Practising Certificate Survey collects data on pro-bono and other unpaid work. In the 2025–26 Survey, two-fifths of respondents (40%) reported conducting pro-bono, unpaid or voluntary work as a legal practitioner in the previous year. This is consistent with the proportion reported in 2024–25 (40% also). On average, they reported having provided 75 hours of service across the previous financial year, which equates to approximately 10 working days.¹⁸ This is slightly higher than last year, where respondents that had performed pro-bono, unpaid or voluntary work reported having provided 66 hours (equivalent to approximately 9 working days).

Across all respondents, 465,678 hours (equivalent to approximately 62,090 working days) were reported to have been donated in the 12 months prior to the survey.

In addition to pro-bono work, just over one-third of respondents (37%) reported providing unpaid help, support or care to friends, family, neighbours or others in the year prior to the survey. These respondents, on average, provided 237 hours of unpaid support during that period, an increase from last year's survey which recorded an average of 218 hours, and the report prior which recorded an average of 207 hours.

¹⁸ Based on a 7.5 hour work day.

Disclaimer

This report is dated 31 July 2026 and incorporates information and events up to that date only and excludes any information arising, or event occurring, after that date which may affect the validity of Urbis Ltd (**Urbis**) opinion in this report. Urbis prepared this report on the instructions, and for the benefit only, of Law Society of New South Wales (**Instructing Party**) for the purpose of Annual Profile (**Purpose**) and not for any other purpose or use. To the extent permitted by applicable law, Urbis expressly disclaims all liability, whether direct or indirect, to the Instructing Party which relies or purports to rely on this report for any purpose other than the Purpose, and to any other person which relies or purports to rely on this report for any purpose whatsoever (including the Purpose).

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All surveys, forecasts, projections and recommendations contained in or associated with this report are made in good faith and on the basis of information supplied to Urbis at the date of this report, and upon which Urbis relied. Achievement of the projections and budgets set out in this report will depend, among other things, on the actions of others over which Urbis has no control.

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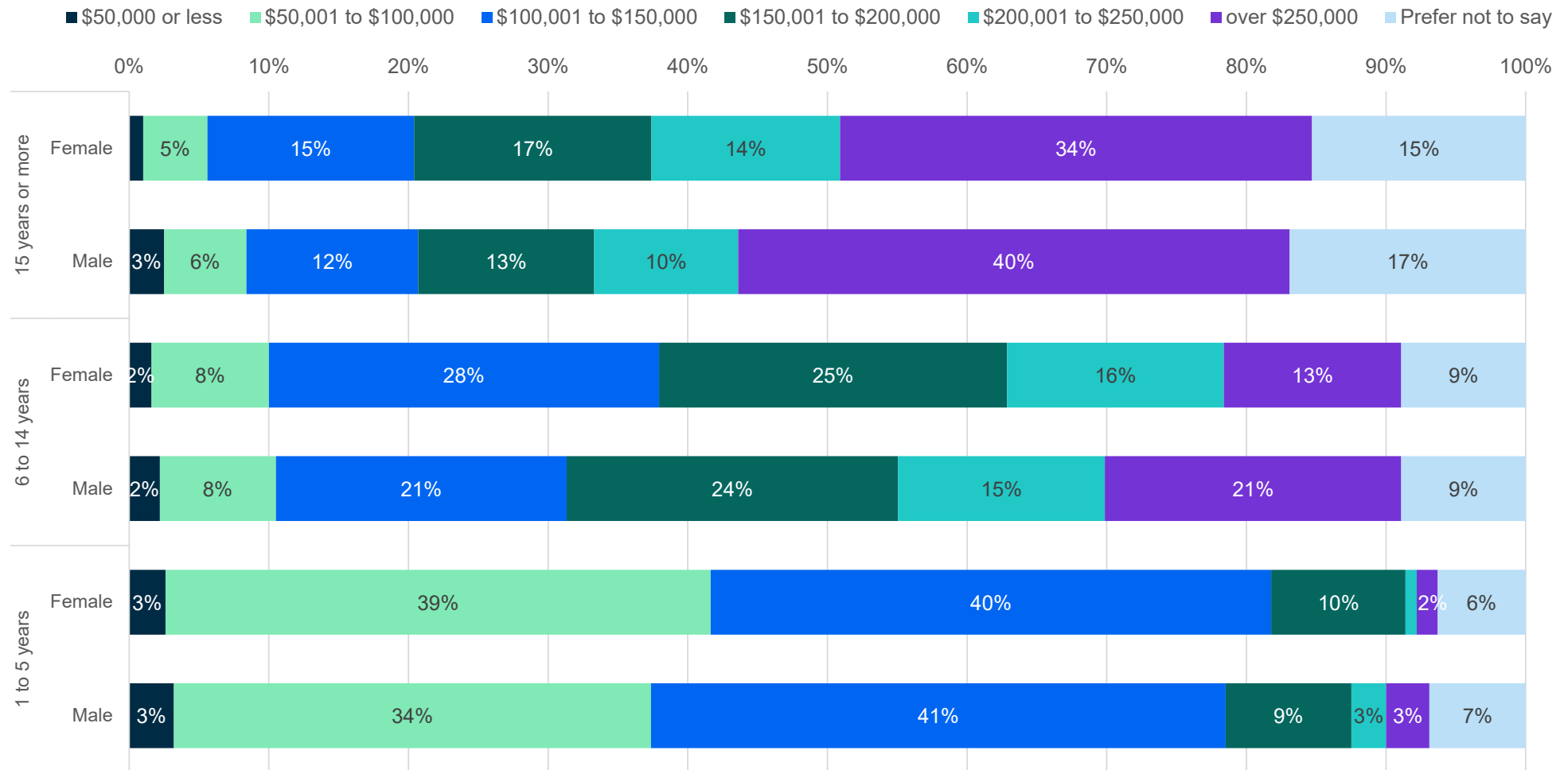
Whilst Urbis has made all reasonable inquiries it believes necessary in preparing this report, it is not responsible for determining the completeness or accuracy of information provided to it. Urbis (including its officers and personnel) is not liable for any errors or omissions, including in information provided by the Instructing Party or another person or upon which Urbis relies, provided that such errors or omissions are not made by Urbis recklessly or in bad faith.

This report has been prepared with due care and diligence by Urbis and the statements and opinions given by Urbis in this report are given in good faith and in the reasonable belief that they are correct and not misleading, subject to the limitations above.

Appendix A : Income by gender – additional analysis

All practice sectors – years since admission

Figure 62 – Annual gross income of full-time solicitors by gender and years since admission FY24

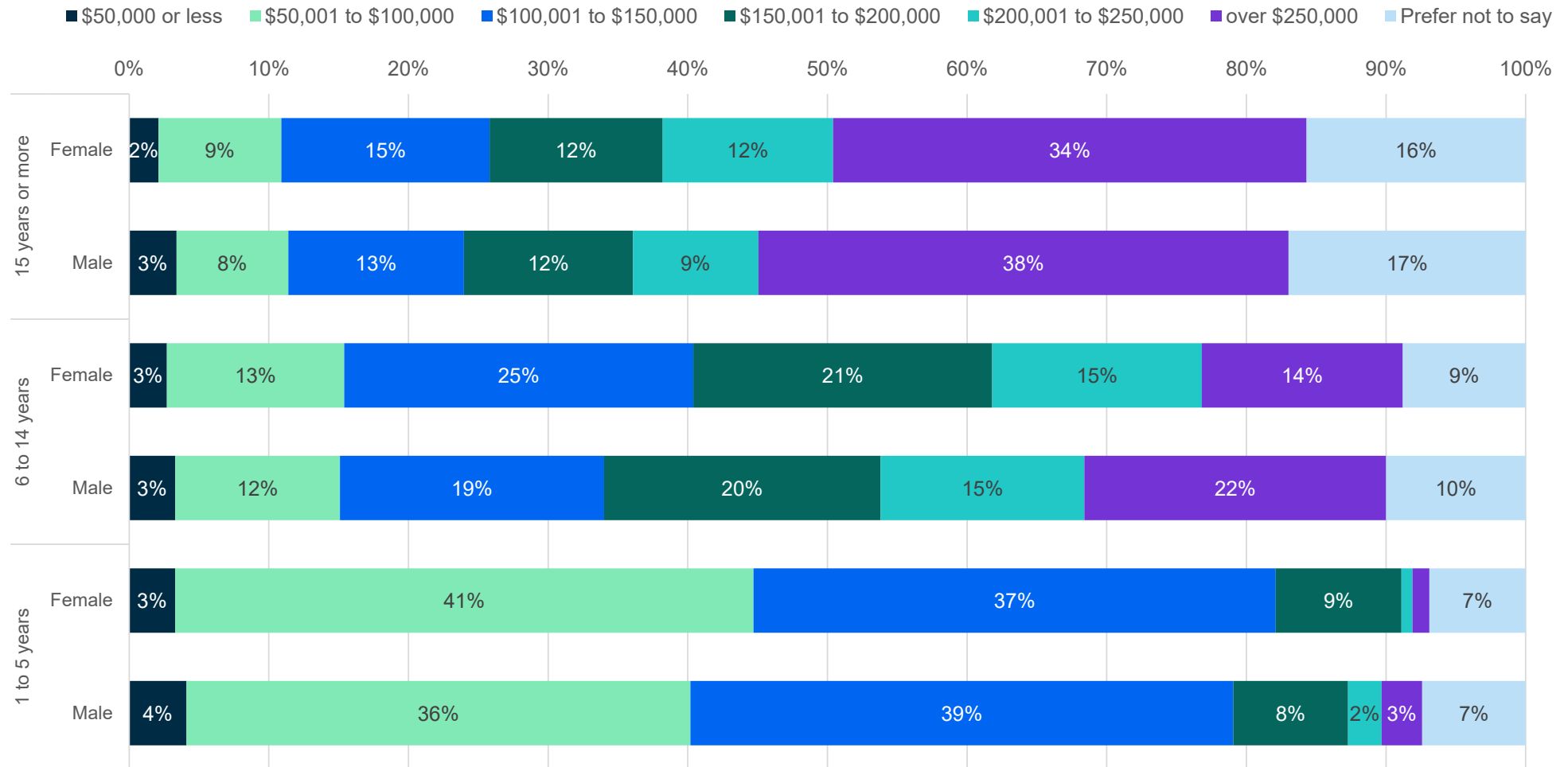


Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=11,296

Note: Years since admission groupings in this figure are based on the groupings used in the 2025–26 Practising Certificate and in prior editions of Annual Profile, and therefore differ from the revised, more granular groupings used elsewhere in this report.

Private practice – years since admission

Figure 63 – Annual gross income of full-time private practice solicitors by gender and years since admission FY24

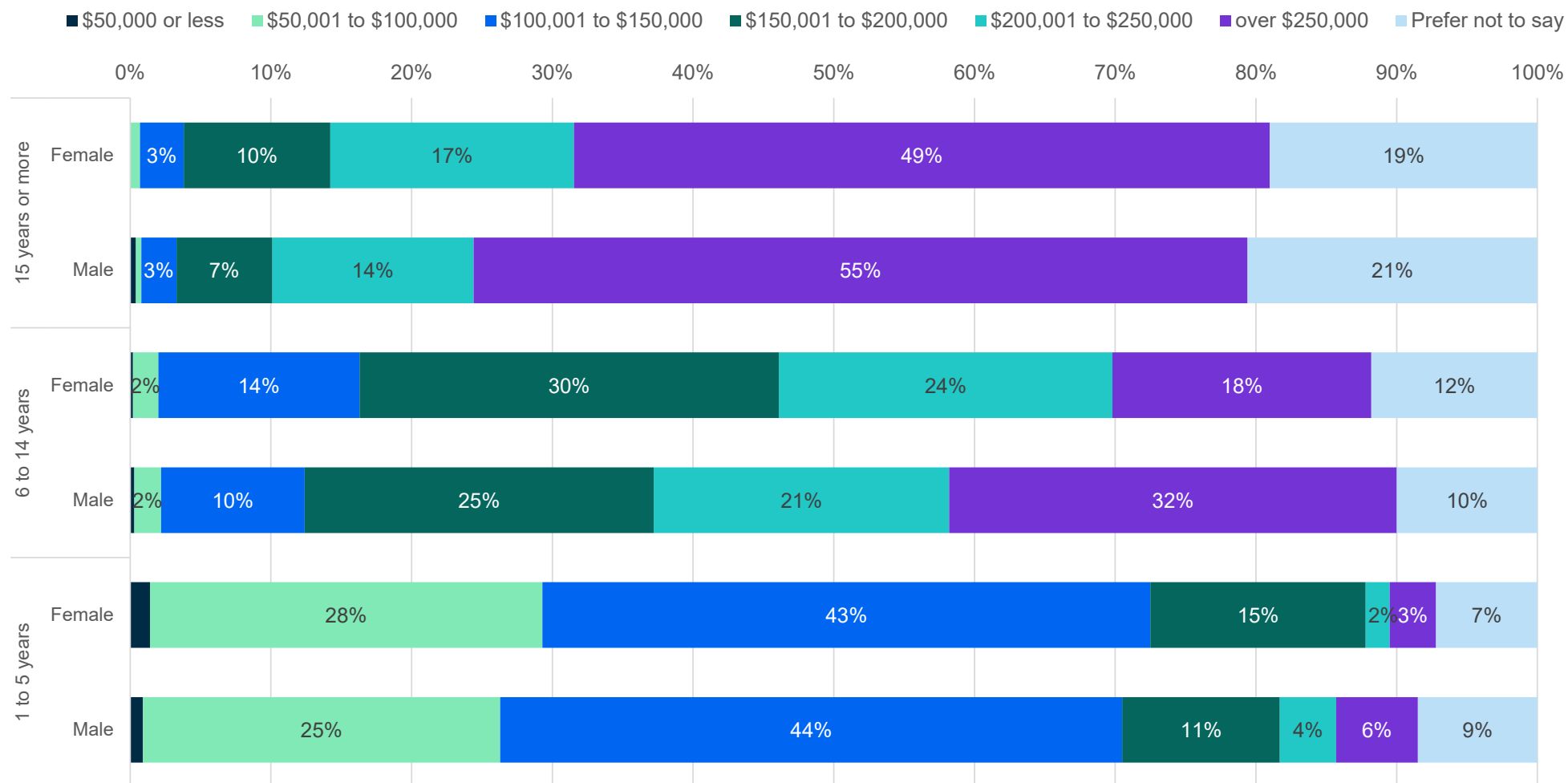


Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=6,673

Note: Years since admission groupings in this figure are based on the groupings used in the 2025–26 Practising Certificate and in prior editions of Annual Profile, and therefore differ from the revised, more granular groupings used elsewhere in this report.

The corporate legal sector – years since admission

Figure 64 – Annual gross income of full-time corporate legal practitioners by gender and years since admission FY24

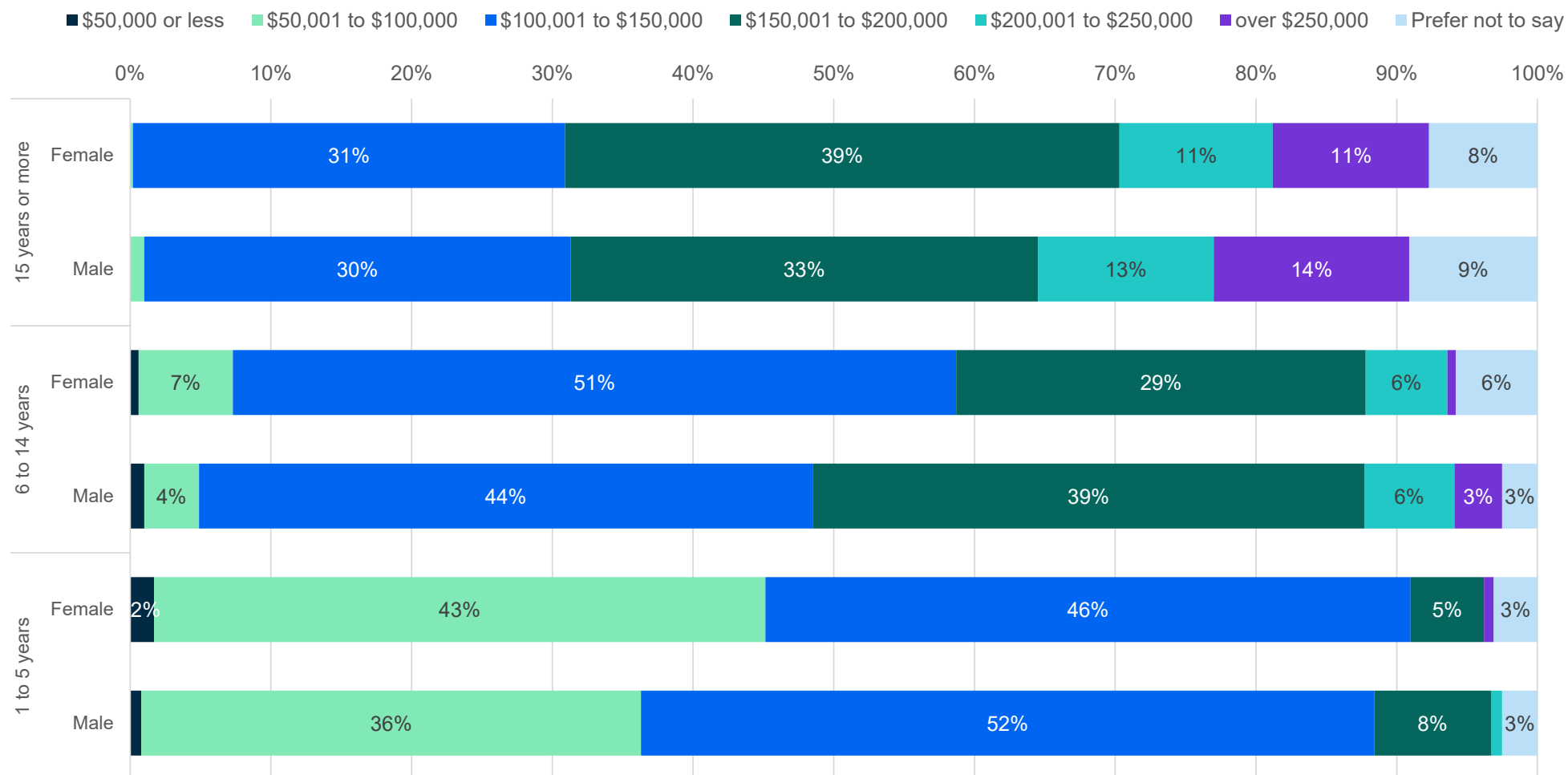


Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=2,761

Note: Years since admission groupings in this figure are based on the groupings used in the 2025–26 Practising Certificate and in prior editions of Annual Profile, and therefore differ from the revised, more granular groupings used elsewhere in this report.

The government legal sector – years since admission

Figure 65 – Annual gross income of full-time government legal practitioners by gender and years since admission FY24



Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base n=1,837

Note: Years since admission groupings in this figure are based on the groupings used in the 2025–26 Practising Certificate and in prior editions of Annual Profile, and therefore differ from the revised, more granular groupings used elsewhere in this report.

Income over time by gender

Figure 66 – Annual gross income of full-time and part-time solicitors by gender FY12 to FY24



Source: 2025–26 Practising Certificate Survey. Base: FY24 includes full-time and part-time solicitors only n=13,168, excludes solicitors on leave or not working at the time of the survey. The bases for FY12–FY20 does not exclude these solicitors, hence analysis may be slightly skewed.



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