



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

.....
Advancement of women in the profession
.....

PROGRESS REPORT



THE LAW SOCIETY
OF NEW SOUTH WALES



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
BACKGROUND	3
PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION	4
TIPS FOR PRACTICES AND PRACTITIONERS FROM ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS	7
STATISTICAL TRENDS FOR WOMEN SOLICITORS	9
PART 1: UPDATED DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS	11
PART 2: UPDATED STATISTICS ON RETENTION AND ATTRITION	15
PART 3: WOMEN SOLICITORS IN LEADERSHIP	23

INTRODUCTION



The Law Society of NSW has a strong history of supporting the advancement and retention of women solicitors in this State. This has been brought to the forefront of our activities over the past three years as we embarked on our flagship thought leadership project on the advancement of women in the profession and worked to implement a series of recommendations intended to have a positive impact on the experiences of women solicitors.

The *Advancement of women in the profession* report was published on 1 December 2011 and set out a range of information about the participation of women solicitors in NSW.

Despite the growing number of female solicitors, feedback from our members across all segments of practice confirmed that women continue to face barriers and impediments in their legal careers.

By drawing on the experiences and suggestions of members, the Law Society developed 12 recommendations for practical initiatives with the aim of supporting women who wish to remain in, return to or advance within the profession. These recommendations were endorsed by the Law Society Council and included a self-imposed requirement to report on progress by 30 June 2013. I am delighted that we have been able to meet that deadline.

This report also contains updated statistics and presents new research on the gender balance of first-time private practice principals and heads of corporate and government legal teams. It is a positive sign that the attrition rate for women is the lowest it has ever been for the profession overall and the lowest in ten years for both women and men in private practice. The number of women becoming private practice partners for the first time is encouraging and the results of a recent survey suggest that women are strongly represented in senior in-house roles. There is, however, still more room for improvement.

I am the third Law Society President to have been involved with this project and the substantial efforts of my predecessors Stuart Westgarth (2011) and Justin Dowd (2012) in driving this program must be acknowledged. I join with them in commending this initiative to both men and women who are interested in a more flexible, more diverse profession at all levels.

All information about the project is available on the Law Society's website at www.lawsociety.com.au/advancementofwomen.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Dobson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Dobson
President

30 June 2013

BACKGROUND

Despite the obvious success of women in all sectors of legal practice, there is wide recognition that barriers or impediments to the advancement of women in the profession continue to exist. In late 2010, the Law Society Council decided that identifying those barriers and developing strategies to address them should become the focus of the Law Society's major thought leadership initiative for 2011.

A crucial element of this project was to speak with Law Society members – both male and female – about their views and experiences. To achieve an in-depth understanding of the issues and possible solutions, the Law Society spoke to members from all segments of practice and from across the State. In total, the Law Society held 12 roundtable discussions over three months tapping into the views of close to 100 members. Hundreds more attended four panel sessions and two launch events, including the launch of the report and recommendations on 1 December 2011.

The Law Society also examined demographic data for NSW solicitors to identify discernible trends about participation by women in the legal profession. In conducting this analysis, it became apparent that the statistics regularly published by the Law Society were unable to provide an indication of rates of retention or attrition for female solicitors. In an attempt to fill this gap, new data was extracted from the Law Society's database with the objective of developing an understanding of the numbers of women practising over time.

The experiences described by many participants reinforced the perception that there are still barriers and impediments to be faced by women solicitors who wish to progress in their careers, and that these are more obvious in private practice than in the corporate and government segments. It became clear during the discussions that not every woman in private practice aspires to partnership and that there are many definitions of success. However, it was also apparent that women lawyers expect to have the same opportunities as men to progress to senior positions should they wish to do so.

Key areas in which roundtable participants identified impediments to the advancement of women included the availability of flexible working arrangements and returning to work after an absence, particularly maternity leave. While most employers have policies for flexible working, difficulties were experienced in translating those policies into appropriate workplace arrangements. Those participants who reported positive experiences suggested that discussion between individuals, supervisors and colleagues, including clients where necessary, can be effective in devising an arrangement which meets the needs of the individual, the work team, the practice and the client.

Returning to work after an absence is a second area where the existence of a policy may not translate to a successful transition back to practice. One strategy identified for improving the experience of women was to maintain a connection with the profession during an absence. It was also suggested that women may benefit from continuing professional development activities which are targeted at those who have been absent from practice and need to catch up on developments.

Mentoring and networking were highlighted in roundtable discussions as key factors in achieving success in the legal profession. It was suggested that women should seek out mentors, sponsors and champions and that practices should consider in-house mentoring schemes. In relation to networking, it was suggested that women need to make this more of a priority in their working lives and that practices should ensure networking opportunities are available during business hours.

The *Advancement of women in the profession* report was published on 1 December 2011. The report concluded with 12 recommendations which outlined further work for the Law Society in supporting and promoting the advancement and retention of women solicitors. The recommendations also proposed further research on the gender breakdown of new partners in private law firms and senior appointments in corporate and government legal teams.

Since publication of the report, the Law Society has been working hard to implement all of the recommendations by our self-imposed deadline of 30 June 2013. This report sets out our progress on implementation to date and also includes new and updated statistics on the participation of women solicitors in NSW.

PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION

Recommendation 1

Publish tips for practitioners and practices arising from roundtable discussions.

Throughout the project, the Law Society has been eager to learn from practitioners' successes as well as the difficulties they have experienced. Roundtable participants discussed many strategies which could assist either individual practitioners or practices and these were included as "tips" in the 2011 report and published in *The Law Society Journal* (reproduced on page 7 of this report).

Recommendation 2

Publish information to assist practitioners and employers who are considering flexible work arrangements including:

- **information on different types of flexible working**
- **tips on developing appropriate arrangements, and**
- **information on the value of flexible working.**

In November 2012 the Law Society released a new resource to help solicitors and their employers capitalise on the benefits of flexible working. The resource draws on the experiences of practitioners and brings together practical tools which may assist them and the practices in which they work. Information is provided on a number of aspects of flexible working including:

- types of flexible working arrangements, such as job-share, compressed work week and remote working
- the value of flexible working in attracting and retaining talent and improving productivity, and
- ways to develop effective flexible working arrangements, with supervisor tips for success and tips for employees.

The resource also includes a sample flexible work proposal/business case and individual flexible work plan, reproduced with the permission of Victorian Women Lawyers.

The resource is available to download on the Law Society website at: www.lawsociety.com.au/advancementofwomen.

Recommendation 3

Host a thought leadership event in 2012 which profiles the advancement of women across the profession including alternative career paths and/or effective flexible work arrangements. Publish case studies following the event.

Two Advancement of Women events were held in 2012. The first was a panel discussion which took place on 18 September and was co-hosted with the Women Lawyers Association of NSW. Facilitated by Justin Dowd, then Law Society President, the guest panelists discussed topics such as flexibility and unconscious bias in the context of their own career paths. We are grateful to our guest panelists: Cecilia Howard (Cecilia Howard Consulting), Sally Macindoe (Partner, Norton Rose Australia and 2011 EOWA Winner Diversity Leader for the Advancement of Women), Jane Seymour (Barrister, 6 & 7 St James Hall Chambers), Anny Slater (Slaters Intellectual Property Lawyers) and Nicole Wilson (Senior Legal Counsel Asia Pacific, Allergan). Information about our guest speakers and their diverse careers is available on the Law Society website at www.lawsociety.com.au/advancementofwomen.

The second event was a luncheon held on 29 November with guest speakers Fiona Craig (Fiona Craig Careers) and Rachel Clements (Centre for Corporate Health). The discussion covered topics including worklife balance and wellbeing for women lawyers. The Law Society's new resource on flexible working was also launched at the event.

Recommendation 4

Develop and deliver a continuing professional development session for practitioners returning to work after parental leave or other absence. Consider how the session could accommodate different areas of practice and levels of experience.

On 1 March 2013 the Law Society hosted a Return to Work workshop designed to provide practical strategies and guidance about the steps practitioners can take to ensure that their return to work after parental leave is successful. The session looked at how to get ready before going on parental leave and provided tips on making a successful return. Further sessions are scheduled throughout 2013.

The Law Society's new online Career Hub also provides practical information for solicitors returning to work after parental leave. Law Society members can access the Career Hub online at www.lawsociety.com.au/CareerHub.

Recommendation 5

Develop an online resource for practitioners who are absent from the profession including information on:

- **CPD opportunities including the return to work program**
- **applying for a new practising certificate**
- **networking events, and**
- **associate membership.**

In February 2013 the Law Society established an online resource which brings together information to assist practitioners during an absence from the profession and when preparing to return to work. It provides information on a variety of topics including associate membership, practising certificates, continuing professional development, networking events, flexible working, staying in touch and support for carers.

The resource is available on the Law Society website at: www.lawsociety.com.au/advancementofwomen. Information on returning to work after parental leave is also available to members through the Career Hub at www.lawsociety.com.au/CareerHub.

Recommendation 6

Review the effectiveness of the Law Society's locum service in providing coverage for absences during parental leave and other breaks, particularly for practitioners in sole practice and small firms.

The Law Society has undertaken a review of the locum service and is considering how technology could be used to improve the service along with other ways to make it more user-friendly. A revitalised service is expected to be launched in 2014.

Recommendation 7

Investigate options for improving opportunities for mentoring of practitioners at key stages of their careers including by:

- **publishing mentoring materials, and**
- **considering the development of a new mentoring scheme or service for women lawyers.**

In 2012, the Law Society launched a new Women's Mentoring Program for women lawyers who are members of the Law Society and 10-15 years post admission. Interest in the program exceeded expectations and 42 protégés were matched with more senior and experienced mentors. Several events have been held for participants in the program, including a launch event and training sessions for mentors and protégés. Feedback to date has been very positive and applications for the 2013/2014 mentoring program will open later in 2013.

PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION

Recommendation 8

Develop and trial a workshop for women who wish to improve their business development or personal networking skills.

In November 2012 the Law Society and the Women Lawyers Association of NSW hosted two networking workshops for female solicitors and barristers. Guest presenters Katrina Howard (Senior Counsel), and Odette Gourley (partner at Corrs Chambers Westgarth), shared their tips on how to build and enhance business development and technical legal skills.

Recommendation 9

Trial networking events for lawyers to attend with their children, especially practitioners on parental leave.

The Law Society and the Women Lawyers Association of NSW will co-host a Networking with Kids event for lawyers to attend with their children during the mid-year school holidays in July 2013 at the Police and Justice Museum in Sydney.

Recommendation 10

Investigate commissioning further research on gender breakdown of senior legal appointments across all segments.

The Law Society has now completed this research and the findings are published in Part 3 of the statistics section of this report. The research investigates the representation of women amongst first-time principals in private practice and the gender balance of senior appointments in corporate and government legal teams.

The Law Society has also recently published a research report on other aspects of in-house practice, including reasons for moving in-house and perceptions on the accessibility of key workplace elements seen to influence retention and progression in the profession. The report is available to download on the Law Society website at: www.lawsociety.com.au/cs/groups/public/documents/internetcontent/711726.pdf.

Recommendation 11

Publish updated statistics and a progress report on implementation of the recommendations by June 2013.

The publication of this report satisfies the Law Society's self-imposed deadline to provide updated statistics and set out progress on implementation of the recommendations.

Recommendation 12

Conduct an evaluation by the end of 2014.

TIPS FOR PRACTICES AND PRACTITIONERS FROM ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

During the roundtable discussions, participants identified a number of strategies which they had seen work well for individual practitioners or practices. The following tips for practitioners and practices attempt to capture some of that collective wisdom.

Tips for practitioners from roundtable discussions

1. Identify your personal definition of success. Don't judge your own career against others'.
2. Develop a career plan which anticipates major life changes. Don't be worried when you change the plan.
3. Plan ahead for career breaks. Start talking to your employer early on and consider whether specific arrangements should be included in your employment contract.
4. Try to stay in touch with colleagues and clients during an absence from practice. Think about attending CPD.
5. Be prepared to make a business case for flexible working. You are more likely to be successful if there are benefits for your employer as well as for you.
6. Be aware of the impact of flexible working on your colleagues. They are your greatest allies in making it work.
7. Identify a more senior practitioner to approach as a prospective mentor.
8. Look for opportunities to act as a mentor to a more junior practitioner.
9. Consider how networking could be given greater priority in your calendar to assist with developing your career or business development opportunities.
10. Prepare in advance for negotiations relating to promotion and salary.
11. Be brave. Work out what you want and ask for it.

Tips for practices from roundtable discussions

1. Practitioners are more likely to stay with your practice if they know there is a career pathway which matches their goals.
2. Think about the needs of staff returning to work after career breaks including rebuilding their client base or re-skilling.
3. Invite staff on parental or other extended leave to attend CPD and other events.
4. Ensure workplace policies, particularly for flexible working, are capable of implementation in practice. Find ways to make the policy work for individuals.
5. Ensure immediate supervisors do not make practitioners uncomfortable when they need to take sick or carers leave.
6. Make working off-site a practical reality by providing effective access to technology.
7. Don't overestimate the resistance of clients to flexible work arrangements. Talk to them.
8. Consider establishing an in-house mentoring program.
9. Arrange business development networking opportunities during business hours – and with a range of activities suited to both men and women – to accommodate a wider range of practitioners.
10. Be vigilant to avoid the perception that non-performance related factors may affect salary or promotion.
11. To avoid a long hours culture, recognise the work done not the hours spent in the office.

STATISTICAL TRENDS FOR WOMEN SOLICITORS

Introduction

In the 2011 report, the Law Society presented a range of statistics to identify trends about the participation of women solicitors in NSW. Recommendation 11 proposed that these statistics should be updated at the same time as progress was to be reported on implementation of the recommendations. Recommendation 10 also required the Law Society to investigate commissioning further research on the gender breakdown of senior legal appointments across all segments.

The remainder of this report sets out this new and updated information about women solicitors. Part 1 presents updated demographic statistics, Part 2 sets out updated statistics on retention and attrition and finally, Part 3 reports the findings of new research on women solicitors in leadership in all segments of the profession.

Overview of statistics

Updated demographic statistics

- The number of female solicitors has increased much faster than the number of males with women now making up 47% of the practising profession.
- The proportion of women is greater in the corporate and government segments than in private practice.
- Female practitioners outnumber males in younger age groups but are greatly outnumbered in the older age groups.
- Part time working is more common for women than men with one fifth of female survey respondents reporting they worked part time.

Updated statistics on retention and attrition

New findings

- The attrition rate for women solicitors across the whole profession has dropped to the lowest level ever recorded at 29.6%.
- Attrition rates for both women and men in private practice are at 10 year lows.

Overall

- It appears that there is little difference between the rates at which men and women solicitors leave the profession overall. However, analysis of each segment of practice suggests that more young women solicitors are leaving private practice than young men and that some of these women appear to be moving to in-house roles.

Retention

- There is little change over time in the proportion of women compared to men in the legal profession overall. If women were roughly 40% of new solicitors in a particular year, then women are likely to make up roughly 40% of the same group 5, 10 or 15 years later.
- However, in private practice, we can see a decrease over time in the proportion of women compared to men. This decrease largely occurs during the first 5 years of practice and is followed by a long period of relative stability. At between 2 and 6 percentage points, this decrease is less severe than we had originally expected. For example, if women were roughly 40% of new private practitioners in a particular year, then women might make up roughly 35% of the same group 5, 10 or 15 years later.
- The reverse is true for corporate and government practice, where there is generally an increase over time in the proportion of women compared to men.

STATISTICAL TRENDS FOR WOMEN SOLICITORS

Attrition

- For both men and women, there is a substantial drop in the number of individual solicitors holding practising certificates after the first 5 years of practice. This decrease is only slightly greater for women than men for the profession overall.
- However, for private practice, the rate of decrease in the first 5 years is around 7-11 percentage points higher for women than for men. For example, when comparing the number of women in their first 5 years of private practice in 2006 to the number of women in the same group 5 years later, there was a decrease of 50%. The decrease for male private practitioners over the same period was 43%.
- The reverse is true for corporate practice where the number of female corporate practitioners increases after the first 5 years since admission. More recently, there have also been increases in the number of males.
- For government practice, there appears to be a drop-off in the number of both male and female government practitioners after the first 5 years but the rate of decrease is typically lower for women than for men.

New research on women solicitors in leadership

Private practice

- Women made up 23% of all private practice principals in 2012, up from 17% in 2003 and the highest level to date.
- New Law Society statistics show that women made up 41% of all first-time private practice principals in 2012, which means that overall, women became partners at exactly the same rate in which they were represented in the wider private practice population.
- This rate was lower when single partner firms were excluded, so that women comprised 34% of first-time principals in firms with 2 or more partners.

Corporate practice

- According to a survey of corporate solicitor members in late 2012, women comprised 46% of respondents who said they were the most senior lawyer in their organisation. 48% of respondents who identified as the head of their legal team were women.
- Female corporate lawyers were evenly represented in new appointments to head up a legal team reported since 2006. In the last 2 years, the number of women as a proportion of new appointments increased to 56%.

Government practice

- A survey of government solicitor members in late 2012 showed that women made up 40% of respondents who said they were the most senior lawyer in their organisation. Women also comprised 52% of government respondents who identified as the head of their legal team.
- Female government lawyers were more strongly represented in new appointments to head of legal team reported between 1996 and 2005 (54%) and less strongly represented since 2006 (46%).

PART 1

UPDATED DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

The Law Society has stored consistent data about NSW solicitors since the 1980s, including the results of our annual Practising Certificate Survey which started in 1993-1994. The demographic statistics set out below draw on published statistics prepared for the Law Society by Urbis in the annual profile of the solicitors of NSW. While statistics are a useful tool for identifying demographic trends, they do not give us the reasons for those trends or allow us to explore some of the more complicated interactions between factors. They do however give us some important information about the participation of women in the profession.

PART 1: UPDATED DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

Growth in number of women solicitors

As shown in tables 1 and 2, the number of women solicitors continues to grow. In 2012, women comprised 47% (12,030) of all solicitors in NSW, up from 20% (1,979) in 1988. Although women made up a slightly greater proportion of private practice solicitors in 2012 (42% compared to 41% in 2010), they remain more strongly represented in government practice (steady at 63%) and corporate practice (56% in 2012 compared with 54% in 2010).

Age profile of women solicitors

Figure 1 shows the differing age profiles of men and women solicitors in 2010 and 2012. There has been little change since 2010 with women continuing to make up the majority of solicitors aged under 30 (64%) and between 30 and 39 years (58%) in 2012. Men still dominate the older age groups, although the proportion of women has increased to some degree in all categories.

Table 1: Gender of solicitors 1988 - 2012

There has been a 507.9% increase in the number of women since 1988

Year	Male	Female	Total
2012	13,463 (52.8%)	12,030 (47.2%)	25,493
2010	12,845 (54.1%)	10,915 (45.9%)	23,760
2008	12,260 (55.5%)	9,845 (44.5%)	22,105
2003	11,112 (61.4%)	6,980 (38.6%)	18,092
1998	9,414 (67.9%)	4,457 (32.1%)	13,871
1993	8,859 (74.1%)	3,098 (25.9%)	11,957
1988	7,829 (79.8%)	1,979 (20.2%)	9,808

Figure 1: Age profile of solicitors by gender in 2010 and 2012

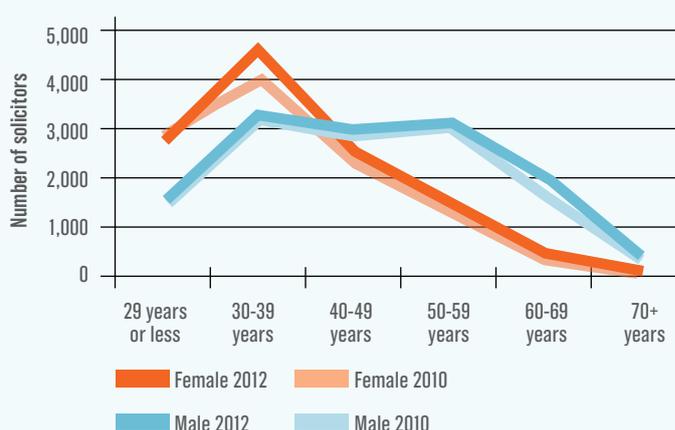


Table 2: Gender of solicitors by employment sector in 2010 and 2012

	Male		Female		Total	
	2010	2012	2010	2012	2010	2012
Private	9,815 (58.9%)	10,258 (57.6%)	6,857 (41.1%)	7,538 (42.4%)	16,672	17,796
Government	1,015 (36.8%)	1,069 (36.8%)	1,745 (63.2%)	1,832 (63.2%)	2,760	2,901
Corporate	2,014 (46.5%)	2,135 (44.5%)	2,313 (53.5%)	2,659 (55.5%)	4,327	4,794

Employment conditions of women

Table 3 shows the estimated income of practitioners working full time in private practice as reported by solicitors who completed the relevant question in the Law Society's Practising Certificate Survey. As in 2010, the results for 2012 indicate that male practitioners, when taken as a group, tend to earn more than female practitioners. The average income for males continues to exceed females at all levels of experience, including from the first year of practice. There has however been some change since 2010, with the gap between male and female incomes becoming narrower for all admission categories. For example, the average income for women admitted 11-15 years was 92% of their male counterparts' in 2012 compared with 83% in 2010. As noted in the 2011 report, care needs to be taken interpreting this data as it cannot distinguish between factors including general and specialist areas of practice and size of firm. Nor does it provide any indication that there is a difference in the income levels of male and female practitioners doing the same work or in the same firm.

Table 4 sets out the number of solicitors working part time as reported by practitioners who completed the relevant questions in the Law Society's Practising Certificate Survey. It is noteworthy that there has been an increase of 34% in the total number of solicitors who reported working part time (up from 1243 in 2010 to 1667 in 2012). In other respects, the 2012 figures are very similar to those reported for 2010. Part time working continues to be more popular with women who made up 67% of solicitors reporting less than full time hours in 2012 (compared with 65% in 2010). There was little change in the proportion of respondents who said they worked part time (21% of female respondents in both 2010 and 2012, compared with 9% of male respondents in 2012 and 10% in 2010). Part time work continues to be more common for respondents over the age of 35. For private practitioners, part time working is most common in small firms (up to 4 partners) or in sole practice.

Table 3: Estimated average income of solicitors in private practice 2010 and 2012

Years since admission	Male		Female	
	2010	2012	2010	2012
< 1 year	\$62,100	\$71,500	\$57,100	\$66,200
2-5 years	\$88,600	\$97,100	\$77,000	\$86,700
6-10 years	\$121,100	\$139,600	\$108,800	\$131,100
11-15 years	\$148,300	\$167,600	\$122,500	\$153,500
16-30 years	\$156,100	\$173,500	\$130,500	\$160,300
30+ years	\$137,900	\$152,700	\$106,600	\$156,600
All	\$130,900	\$144,100	\$101,300	\$113,600

Note: Estimated income is for respondents working full time in private practice. Estimates are of gross income in the previous financial year. Data is only available for practitioners who chose to estimate their income for the 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 Practising Certificate Surveys.

Table 4: Part time working by solicitors in 2010 and 2012

	Male		Female		All solicitors reporting part time working	
	2010	2012	2010	2012	2010	2012
Solicitors working part time	428 (34.4%)	545 (32.7%)	812 (65.3%)	1,111 (66.6%)	1,243	1,667
Average hours worked	20.0	20.9	25.7	26.9	23.9	25.0

Note: Total does not reflect totals of males and females as gender not stated in some cases. Data is only available for practitioners who chose to report part time working for the 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 Practising Certificate Surveys.

PART 2

UPDATED STATISTICS ON RETENTION AND ATTRITION

2012 statistics on age show that women are much more strongly represented in the younger age groups than in the older age groups. While this is an accurate snapshot of the practising population at a single point, these statistics alone cannot tell us what happens to the number of solicitors practising over time. In particular, they cannot tell us whether the under-representation of women amongst older solicitors reflects a smaller number of women entering practice in the past or whether there is a significant drop-off in the number of women solicitors.

For the first time in the 2011 report, the Law Society was able to analyse records from our database to try to create a picture of retention and attrition of female practitioners over time. This exercise revealed some surprising results and has now been updated for the 2 years since the original report was published. The methodology and associated limitations are the same as those set out in the 2011 report. As in the original analysis, these figures record the number of practising certificates issued to women and men at different stages of their careers based on years since they were admitted to practice (in NSW or another jurisdiction). Data for 2013 is provisional and should be regarded as indicative only at this stage.

PART 2: UPDATED STATISTICS ON RETENTION AND ATTRITION

Retention of women solicitors 1984-2013

This section examines data for 1984-2013 broken down into different categories of years since admission to practice. The proportion of women in each admission cohort has been calculated for 5 year periods as they move from newly qualified (admitted 1-5 years) to more senior levels of post qualification experience.

Retention of women solicitors – whole profession

Data for the profession overall, including the 2 additional years now available, continues to indicate that there is **no marked reduction over time in the proportion of each admission category that is comprised by women**. For example, for the 1992 cohort, women made up 39% of practitioners admitted 1-5 years with very little variation over time so that 20 years later 38% of practitioners admitted 21-25 years were women. This trend is repeated for almost all of the cohort groups as set out in table 5 and graphed in figure 2.

Table 5: Retention of women solicitors 1984-2013 – whole profession

Cohort start date	Women as % of all practitioners by years since admission over time					
	At start date	5 yrs after	10 yrs after	15 yrs after	20 yrs after	25 yrs after
	Admitted 1-5 yrs	Admitted 6-10 yrs	Admitted 11-15 yrs	Admitted 16-20 yrs	Admitted 21-25 yrs	Admitted 26-30 yrs
2013	59.2					
2012	59.9					
2011	59.8					
2010	59.6					
2009	59.1					
2008	58.8	57.6				
2007	57.4	55.5				
2006	55.4	54.2				
2005	54.4	52.7				
2004	52.6	51.2				
2003	50.8	49.2	48.6			
2002	50.0	49.3	48.9			
2001	49.0	47.6	47.7			
2000	48.4	47.7	47.3			
1999	48.2	47.2	47.5			
1998	47.4	46.4	47.3	47.2		
1997	46.7	46.0	45.4	44.8		
1996	44.4	45.0	43.6	43.6		
1995	42.1	42.1	40.2	41.7		
1994	41.7	41.0	39.5	40.1		
1993	39.9	39.6	38.5	39.5	39.3	
1992	38.7	37.4	37.6	38.8	38.4	
1991	36.0	34.9	35.5	35.9	36.8	
1990	34.5	34.5	34.4	35.0	35.3	
1989	33.5	31.7	32.4	31.7	32.7	
1988	31.7	29.3	28.8	28.9	29.3	28.6
1987	28.9	26.2	25.7	25.8	25.8	25.6
1986	25.1	24.2	24.0	24.1	23.5	23.6
1985	23.7	22.0	22.3	22.5	21.2	20.6
1984	22.2	20.1	20.4	20.4	19.5	19.4

Figure 2: Retention of women solicitors 1984-2013 – whole profession

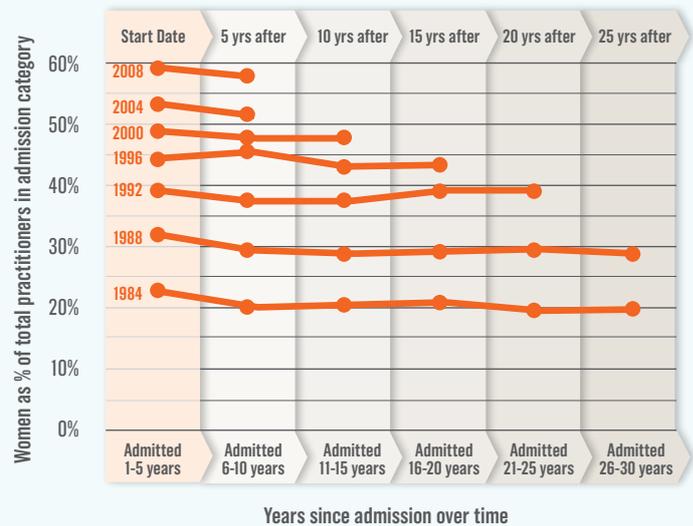


Table 5 notes: This table sets out the number of women holding practising certificates as a percentage of all practitioners in each admission category. For each year in the "cohort start date" column, the "1-5 years" column records the number of women as a percentage of all practitioners admitted 1-5 years as at that date. The figures in the "6-10 years" column show the position 5 years later, that is, 5 years after the year in the "cohort start date" column. At this point, the women admitted for 1-5 years in the starting year will have been admitted for 6-10 years. For the cohort start dates falling between 1984 and 1988 we can repeat this exercise for 6 categories of admission, from 1-5 up to 26-30 years since admission.

To give an example from the table: In 1995, women made up 42.1% of solicitors admitted for 1-5 years. Five years later in 2000, women comprised 42.1% of solicitors admitted for 6-10 years. Ten years later in 2005, 40.2% of solicitors admitted for 11-15 years were women. The final entry in the table shows that in 2013, 15 years after the cohort start date, 41.7% of solicitors admitted for 16-20 years were women.

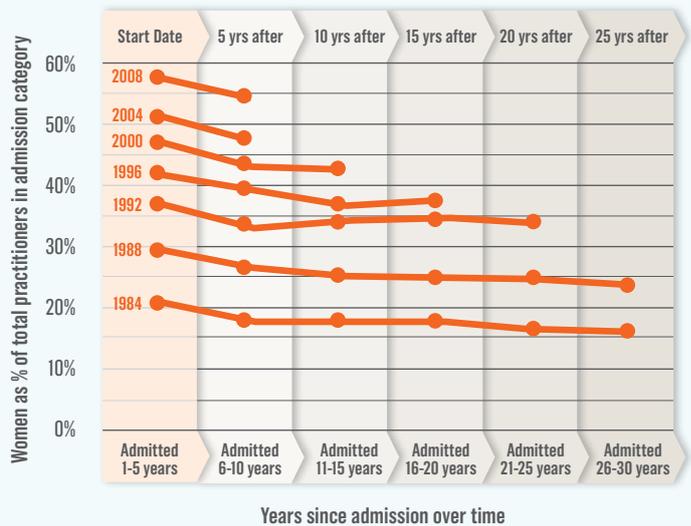
Retention of women solicitors – private practice

Table 6, updated with the 2 new years of data, continues to reveal differences in the retention of women solicitors in private practice and the profession overall. For private practice, there is a discernible decrease between the proportion of women making up the 1-5 year category and the proportion still present in the 6-10 year category 5 years later. At between 2 and 6 percentage points, this decrease continues to be less severe than was originally expected. It is also followed, for most cohorts, by a period of relative stability where the proportion of women tends to decrease (but in some cases increases) by up to around 2 percentage points. This trend is graphed in figure 3.

Table 6: Retention of women solicitors 1984-2013 – private practice

Cohort start date	Women as % of private practitioners by years since admission over time					
	At start date	5 yrs after	10 yrs after	15 yrs after	20 yrs after	25 yrs after
	Admitted 1-5 yrs	Admitted 6-10 yrs	Admitted 11-15 yrs	Admitted 16-20 yrs	Admitted 21-25 yrs	Admitted 26-30 yrs
2013	58.0					
2012	58.4					
2011	58.4					
2010	57.9					
2009	57.6					
2008	57.3	53.6				
2007	55.7	51.2				
2006	53.5	50.1				
2005	52.8	47.9				
2004	51.3	46.9				
2003	49.8	45.2	44.1			
2002	48.9	45.4	43.6			
2001	47.7	43.1	41.8			
2000	46.8	42.6	41.5			
1999	46.3	41.7	41.5			
1998	45.4	40.7	41.4	40.0		
1997	44.3	39.4	39.0	38.1		
1996	41.8	38.9	36.3	37.1		
1995	40.3	36.6	34.2	36.3		
1994	39.7	35.9	33.5	34.8		
1993	37.4	34.6	33.9	34.7	34.0	
1992	36.8	32.6	34.0	34.5	33.4	
1991	34.4	30.8	32.2	32.1	32.7	
1990	33.2	30.1	30.1	30.5	30.5	
1989	31.4	27.8	28.0	27.8	28.4	
1988	29.3	26.2	24.9	24.8	24.5	23.5
1987	27.2	22.5	21.6	21.7	21.3	21.3
1986	23.6	21.3	20.4	19.9	18.8	19.5
1985	22.3	19.4	19.2	19.2	17.5	17.5
1984	20.9	17.2	17.9	17.7	16.2	15.8

Figure 3: Retention of women solicitors 1984-2013 – private practice



PART 2: UPDATED STATISTICS ON RETENTION AND ATTRITION

Retention of women solicitors – corporate and government practice

The position is quite different for corporate and government practice as shown in updated tables 7 and 8. In these segments, there is **no evidence of a drop-off in the proportion of women making up the 1-5 year category and the proportion still present in the 6-10 year category 5 years later**. Indeed, for almost all corporate and government cohorts, there was an increase in the proportion of women present in the 6-10 year category. One likely explanation is that some of the women leaving private practice in the first 5 years since admission are moving in-house. It is difficult to draw further conclusions about these segments as the numbers of practitioners are much smaller than for private practice and the trends less clear.

Table 7: Retention of women solicitors 1984-2013 – corporate practice

Cohort start date	Women as % of corporate practitioners by years since admission over time					
	At start date	5 yrs after	10 yrs after	15 yrs after	20 yrs after	25 yrs after
	Admitted 1-5 yrs	Admitted 6-10 yrs	Admitted 11-15 yrs	Admitted 16-20 yrs	Admitted 21-25 yrs	Admitted 26-30 yrs
2013	60.2					
2012	60.5					
2011	58.4					
2010	58.3					
2009	57.7					
2008	58.1	58.3				
2007	57.0	57.0				
2006	56.5	54.6				
2005	55.8	55.7				
2004	53.5	53.9				
2003	51.6	52.5	53.1			
2002	50.5	52.7	54.9			
2001	49.8	54.7	55.3			
2000	50.9	56.3	54.7			
1999	53.0	58.2	56.4			
1998	52.6	58.9	55.3	58.1		
1997	53.4	61.6	55.4	54.4		
1996	53.3	59.6	57.7	54.6		
1995	49.2	54.8	54.3	50.7		
1994	49.2	52.7	54.9	50.5		
1993	45.2	52.0	50.7	49.9	50.8	
1992	42.0	48.2	46.0	49.3	50.3	
1991	39.0	43.1	42.4	46.2	46.1	
1990	39.6	44.0	43.7	46.1	46.2	
1989	39.7	39.6	40.5	38.6	42.4	
1988	36.3	32.8	39.0	39.8	42.8	43.4
1987	33.3	36.5	36.9	37.3	41.9	36.4
1986	31.8	32.3	34.0	37.8	40.3	35.2
1985	30.1	29.4	33.9	33.9	36.0	34.2
1984	27.3	27.9	30.5	30.2	33.0	34.5

Table 8: Retention of women solicitors 1984-2013 – government practice

Cohort start date	Women as % of government practitioners by years since admission over time					
	At start date	5 yrs after	10 yrs after	15 yrs after	20 yrs after	25 yrs after
	Admitted 1-5 yrs	Admitted 6-10 yrs	Admitted 11-15 yrs	Admitted 16-20 yrs	Admitted 21-25 yrs	Admitted 26-30 yrs
2013	66.5					
2012	69.4					
2011	70.7					
2010	71.5					
2009	70.2					
2008	69.0	73.3				
2007	68.4	71.2				
2006	67.2	71.8				
2005	64.4	68.5				
2004	61.8	67.1				
2003	59.4	63.9	62.7			
2002	59.7	64.0	63.1			
2001	60.3	62.8	63.2			
2000	59.4	63.6	63.3			
1999	58.6	60.5	61.8			
1998	57.9	60.3	64.7	65.8		
1997	57.9	61.0	62.7	64.7		
1996	54.5	58.8	59.5	60.5		
1995	47.3	53.7	51.8	55.1		
1994	47.7	51.1	49.7	51.4		
1993	49.5	48.0	46.6	49.4	51.2	
1992	46.0	47.3	46.1	47.9	50.5	
1991	42.7	46.0	44.3	44.6	48.4	
1990	39.9	49.5	46.6	48.4	51.2	
1989	42.8	47.6	47.4	47.9	50.0	
1988	43.1	46.0	44.0	44.7	47.9	50.5
1987	36.9	43.0	45.5	43.7	44.3	48.5
1986	31.1	38.9	42.7	42.7	42.3	45.8
1985	29.3	35.5	36.1	37.0	35.5	34.6
1984	29.1	34.7	35.1	35.3	33.1	36.8

Attrition of women solicitors 1984-2013

The 2011 report found that while the *proportion* of women solicitors held steady over time, there was a significant drop-off in the actual number of women practising between the 1-5 and 6-10 year admission categories. This trend, however, was also observable for men. This section examines the relative rates at which men and women leave the profession between 1-5 years and 6-10 years since admission for the whole profession and for the private practice, corporate and government segments.

Attrition of women solicitors – whole profession

The additional data set out in table 9 shows that the attrition rates for both men and women solicitors have simultaneously dropped below 30% for the first time recorded. **At 29.6%, the attrition rate for women is the lowest it has ever been.**

Comparison of the rates over time indicates that with the exception of the 2007 cohort, the attrition rate for the whole profession was only 2-4 percentage points greater for women than for men in cohorts since 1990. The slightly wider gap for the 2007 cohort (at 5.6 percentage points) was in the context of a record low rate for men at 24%. This trend is graphed in figure 4 which also shows a similar *pattern* for the attrition rates of men and women over time.

Table 9: Attrition by gender between 1-5 and 6-10 years since admission – whole profession

FEMALE			MALE		
Cohort start date	5 yrs after	% decrease in number of practitioners	Cohort start date	5 yrs after	% decrease in number of practitioners
Admitted 1-5 yrs	Admitted 6-10 yrs		Admitted 1-5 yrs	Admitted 6-10 yrs	
2008	2013	29.6	2008	2013	26.1
2007	2012	29.6	2007	2012	24.0
2006	2011	34.5	2006	2011	31.5
2005	2010	36.5	2005	2010	32.1
2004	2009	38.0	2004	2009	34.5
2003	2008	39.9	2003	2008	35.9
2002	2007	38.0	2002	2007	36.2
2001	2006	38.4	2001	2006	34.8
2000	2005	38.5	2000	2005	36.7
1999	2004	38.3	1999	2004	35.7
1998	2003	34.6	1998	2003	31.8
1997	2002	36.3	1997	2002	34.3
1996	2001	31.7	1996	2001	33.2
1995	2000	32.3	1995	2000	32.4
1994	1999	33.9	1994	1999	32.1
1993	1998	32.0	1993	1998	31.2
1992	1997	33.2	1992	1997	29.5
1991	1996	31.5	1991	1996	28.3
1990	1995	32.5	1990	1995	32.4
1989	1994	33.1	1989	1994	27.2
1988	1993	32.7	1988	1993	25.0
1987	1992	36.0	1987	1992	26.6
1986	1991	32.9	1986	1991	29.7
1985	1990	35.4	1985	1990	29.2
1984	1989	34.5	1984	1989	25.7

Figure 4: Attrition by gender between 1-5 and 6-10 years since admission – whole profession

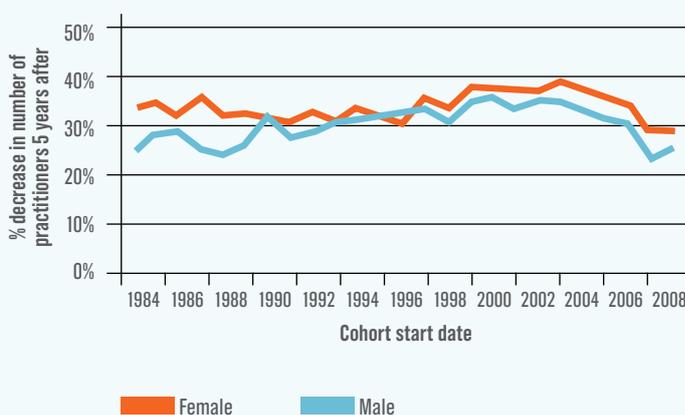


Table 9 Notes: To take an example from table 9: The difference between the number of women solicitors admitted 1-5 years in 2000 and the number admitted 6-10 years 5 years later (in 2005) was 38.5%. Over the same period the number of men had decreased by 36.7%.

PART 2: UPDATED STATISTICS ON RETENTION AND ATTRITION

Attrition of women solicitors – private practice

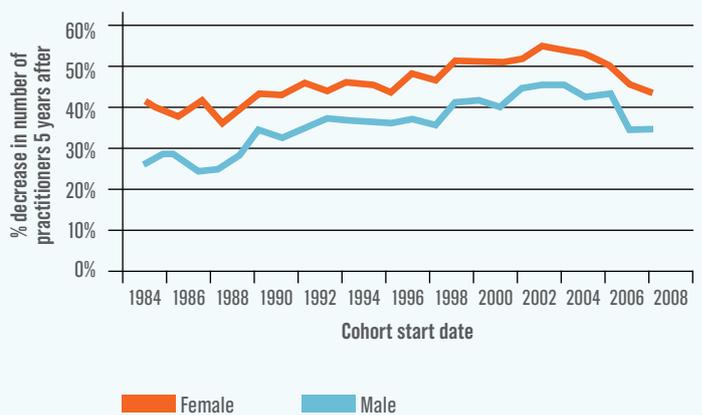
The updated data recorded in table 10 shows that the attrition rate for both men and women in private practice is lower than it has been for the last 10 years.

There continues to be a greater decrease for women than there is for men, although at 7-11 percentage points for cohorts since 1990, this is less than was originally expected. It is therefore evident that a larger proportion of young women are leaving private practice than young men. However, the attrition rate for women is only 7-11 percentage points greater than for men in cohorts since 1990. This trend is graphed in figure 5 below which also shows a very similar pattern for the attrition rates of men and women. Since 1990, the rates are even more strongly associated than for the profession overall (figure 4) and can be seen to rise and fall at roughly the same points in time.

Table 10: Attrition by gender between 1-5 and 6-10 years since admission – private practice

FEMALE			MALE		
Cohort start date	5 yrs after	% decrease in number of practitioners	Cohort start date	5 yrs after	% decrease in number of practitioners
Admitted 1-5 yrs	Admitted 6-10 yrs		Admitted 1-5 yrs	Admitted 6-10 yrs	
2008	2013	43.9	2008	2013	34.8
2007	2012	45.5	2007	2012	34.7
2006	2011	50.4	2006	2011	43.3
2005	2010	53.2	2005	2010	43.0
2004	2009	54.4	2004	2009	45.5
2003	2008	54.8	2003	2008	45.7
2002	2007	51.8	2002	2007	44.5
2001	2006	50.8	2001	2006	40.6
2000	2005	50.7	2000	2005	41.6
1999	2004	50.9	1999	2004	40.9
1998	2003	47.2	1998	2003	36.0
1997	2002	48.5	1997	2002	37.1
1996	2001	43.6	1996	2001	36.5
1995	2000	45.6	1995	2000	36.4
1994	1999	46.2	1994	1999	36.8
1993	1998	44.4	1993	1998	37.3
1992	1997	45.9	1992	1997	34.8
1991	1996	43.1	1991	1996	32.9
1990	1995	43.2	1990	1995	34.4
1989	1994	40.4	1989	1994	28.9
1988	1993	36.0	1988	1993	25.3
1987	1992	41.5	1987	1992	24.9
1986	1991	37.7	1986	1991	28.9
1985	1990	40.6	1985	1990	29.0
1984	1989	41.5	1984	1989	25.8

Figure 5: Attrition by gender between 1-5 and 6-10 years since admission – private practice



Attrition of women solicitors – corporate and government practice

Trends on attrition for corporate and government practice continue to be very different to private practice.

Updated table 11 confirms that for the corporate segment there have been significant increases over 20 years in the number of female corporate practitioners between 1-5 and 6-10 years since admission. There have also been increases in the number of male corporate practitioners in cohorts since 2002.

For government practice, updated table 12 indicates that there is a drop-off in the number of both male and female government practitioners between 1-5 and 6-10 years since admission. However, the rate of decrease is typically much lower for women than for men. It is difficult to draw further conclusions about these segments as the numbers of practitioners are much smaller than for private practice and the trends less clear.

Table 11: Attrition by gender between 1-5 and 6-10 years since admission – corporate practice

FEMALE			MALE		
Cohort start date	5 yrs after	% decrease in number of practitioners	Cohort start date	5 yrs after	% decrease in number of practitioners
Admitted 1-5 yrs	Admitted 6-10 yrs		Admitted 16-20 yrs	Admitted 21-25 yrs	
2008	2013	+7.4	2008	2013	+6.6
2007	2012	+22.6	2007	2012	+22.8
2006	2011	+20.4	2006	2011	+29.9
2005	2010	+26.2	2005	2010	+26.7
2004	2009	+34.5	2004	2009	+32.1
2003	2008	+25.5	2003	2008	+21.1
2002	2007	+20.2	2002	2007	+10.2
2001	2006	+19.1	2001	2006	2.3
2000	2005	+16.8	2000	2005	6.2
1999	2004	+15.2	1999	2004	6.4
1998	2003	+18.6	1998	2003	8.2
1997	2002	+11.1	1997	2002	20.5
1996	2001	+16.9	1996	2001	9.6
1995	2000	+16.8	1995	2000	6.6
1994	1999	+19.7	1994	1999	+3.8
1993	1998	+66.7	1993	1998	+26.8
1992	1997	+73.5	1992	1997	+35.3
1991	1996	+44.5	1991	1996	+22.1
1990	1995	+22.4	1990	1995	+2.3
1989	1994	+9.3	1989	1994	+9.8
1988	1993	20.2	1988	1993	6.9
1987	1992	8.3	1987	1992	20.2
1986	1991	13.3	1986	1991	15.5
1985	1990	19.7	1985	1990	17.0
1984	1989	14.5	1984	1989	17.0

Table 12: Attrition by gender between 1-5 and 6-10 years since admission – government practice

FEMALE			MALE		
Cohort start date	5 yrs after	% decrease in number of practitioners	Cohort start date	5 yrs after	% decrease in number of practitioners
Admitted 1-5 yrs	Admitted 6-10 yrs		Admitted 16-20 yrs	Admitted 21-25 yrs	
2008	2013	6.6	2008	2013	24.2
2007	2012	10.1	2007	2012	21.2
2006	2011	9.0	2006	2011	26.8
2005	2010	9.6	2005	2010	24.6
2004	2009	11.3	2004	2009	29.8
2003	2008	9.2	2003	2008	25.0
2002	2007	2.1	2002	2007	18.6
2001	2006	10.5	2001	2006	19.4
2000	2005	16.0	2000	2005	29.7
1999	2004	14.2	1999	2004	20.7
1998	2003	9.1	1998	2003	17.6
1997	2002	13.0	1997	2002	23.6
1996	2001	12.1	1996	2001	26.3
1995	2000	1.8	1995	2000	24.1
1994	1999	14.5	1994	1999	25.4
1993	1998	27.6	1993	1998	23.3
1992	1997	25.7	1992	1997	29.4
1991	1996	15.2	1991	1996	25.7
1990	1995	8.9	1990	1995	38.4
1989	1994	22.3	1989	1994	35.9
1988	1993	26.0	1988	1993	34.2
1987	1992	26.1	1987	1992	42.6
1986	1991	20.5	1986	1991	43.4
1985	1990	18.1	1985	1990	38.3
1984	1989	9.7	1984	1989	30.4

PART 3

WOMEN SOLICITORS IN LEADERSHIP

Key findings of the 2011 Advancement of Women report included that there had been a rapid increase in the number of women solicitors and there was less difference between attrition rates for men and women than expected. However, despite these positive indications, statistics on the gender of principals in private practice continued to show a much less balanced picture. Although it was clear there had been improvement, it was difficult to quantify as no work had been done to look at the gender balance of new principals over time. The Law Society has now been able to analyse our data to isolate statistics on solicitors who are employed as a partner for the first time.

Apart from the anecdotal feedback received during the 2011 project, the Law Society also had little insight into the gender balance of solicitors across senior in-house roles. Because the licensing regime for corporate and government lawyers does not require it, the Law Society's database does not contain information capable of identifying the solicitors who hold partner-equivalent roles in in-house practice. To increase our understanding, the Law Society commissioned independent research agency Urbis to undertake a survey of members working in corporate and government legal teams.

PART 3: WOMEN SOLICITORS IN LEADERSHIP

Private practice

Data has been extracted from the Law Society database in an attempt to reveal a clearer picture of the gender balance of private practice principals and how it is changing over time. This includes new statistics which isolate the number of practitioners each year who become principals *for the first time*. This allows us to analyse the gender balance of each new cohort of principals and to compare it to the group of all partners and the wider population of private practice solicitors.

These statistics are based on employment records held by the Law Society for private practice solicitors as at 1 October each year. A practitioner will be counted as a “new principal” only in the year in which the individual was first employed as a partner. It should be noted that statistics published by the Law Society are normally based on practising certificates so this new data may not correspond exactly where there is an overlap in reporting. For example, a practitioner may hold a practising certificate but may be unemployed. In that case, the practitioner would not be counted in this new data.

Private practice overall

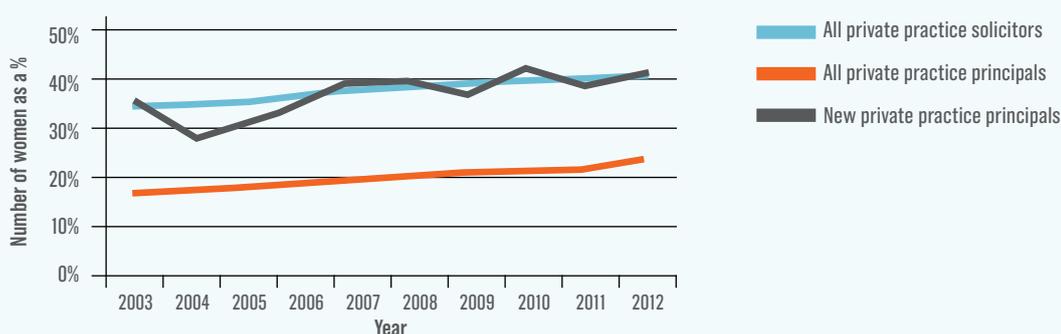
The last decade has seen an increase in the number of women solicitors in private practice from 34% in 2003 to 41% in 2012. This has corresponded with an increase in the number of women as a proportion of all private practice principals, rising from 17% in 2003 to 23% in 2012. However, new Law Society data shows that for *first-time* principals, women are being appointed in the same proportion as they are represented in all firms across the general private practice population. This trend can be seen over the last decade with women making up 41% of new principals in 2012 which is equal to the percentage of women in private practice overall.

These results are set out in table 13 and figure 6 below, which show the change in the number of women as a proportion of all private practice solicitors, all private practice principals and new private practice principals since 2003.

Table 13: Women as a proportion of all private practice solicitors, all private practice principals and new private practice principals 2003-2012

Year	Women as a proportion of all private practice solicitors		Women as a proportion of all private practice principals		Women as a proportion of new private practice principals	
	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number
2012	40.8	6791	23.3	1791	41.2	167
2011	39.9	6351	22.2	1651	38.8	143
2010	39.5	6084	21.5	1554	41.9	140
2009	38.7	5766	20.8	1468	36.8	118
2008	38.2	5548	20.1	1385	39.5	132
2007	37.4	5292	19.5	1329	38.9	119
2006	36.1	4987	18.6	1257	34.0	91
2005	35.0	4881	17.7	1204	30.7	100
2004	34.3	4698	17.2	1154	28.0	95
2003	33.6	4489	16.7	1090	35.0	106

Figure 6: Women as a proportion of all private practice solicitors, all private practice principals and new private practice principals 2003-2012



Firm size

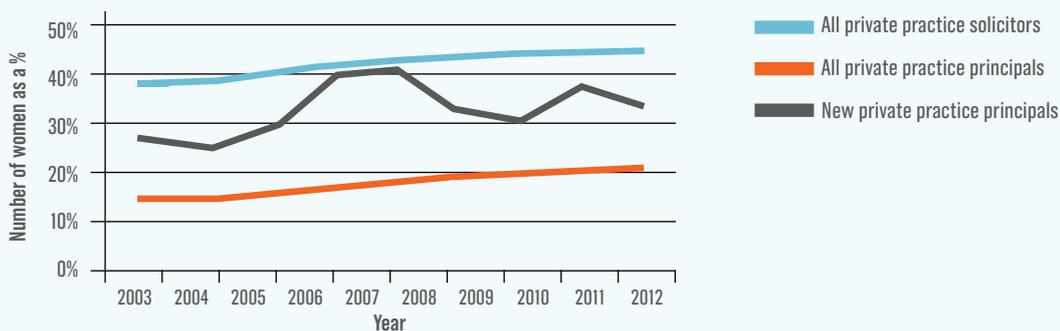
When the data for first-time principals was broken down by size of firm, it became apparent that sole practices were over-represented when compared to firms with 2 or more partners. For example, 248 of 405 (or 61%) of all first-time principals in 2012 were sole practitioners. Interestingly, women were more strongly represented amongst first-time sole practitioners than for other firm sizes, making up 46% of new principals in this category (113 of 248).

It follows that when sole practices are excluded from the data reported above, a slightly different picture emerges. Table 14 and figure 7 below compare the number of women as a proportion of all private practice solicitors, all private practice principals and new private practice principals, but only for firms with 2 or more partners (that is, excluding sole practices). The results show that the proportion of women who are first-time principals (34% in 2012) is less than the representation of women in the general private practice population (45% in 2012). However, it still greatly exceeds the proportion of partners made up by women overall for these firms (21% in 2012). It should be noted that there is greater volatility in the data for new principals when sole practices are excluded which may be a result of the smaller numbers appointed each year.

Table 14: Women as a proportion of private practice solicitors, private practice principals and new private practice principals for firms with 2 or more partners 2003-2012

Start Date	Women as a proportion of all private practice solicitors		Women as a proportion of all private practice principals		Women as a proportion of new private practice principals	
	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number
2012	45.3	4471	21.0	684	34.4	54
2011	44.7	4200	20.4	652	37.4	61
2010	44.4	4063	19.9	623	30.8	37
2009	43.7	3936	19.4	616	32.5	39
2008	43.3	3835	18.6	583	40.6	67
2007	42.3	3640	17.5	557	39.4	61
2006	40.7	3429	16.6	531	28.9	44
2005	39.1	3436	15.2	501	25.2	38
2004	38.1	3352	14.9	499	26.1	43
2003	37.3	3245	14.2	470	27.5	38

Figure 7: Women as a proportion of private practice solicitors, private practice principals and new private practice principals for firms with 2 or more partners 2003-2012



PART 3: WOMEN SOLICITORS IN LEADERSHIP

Age

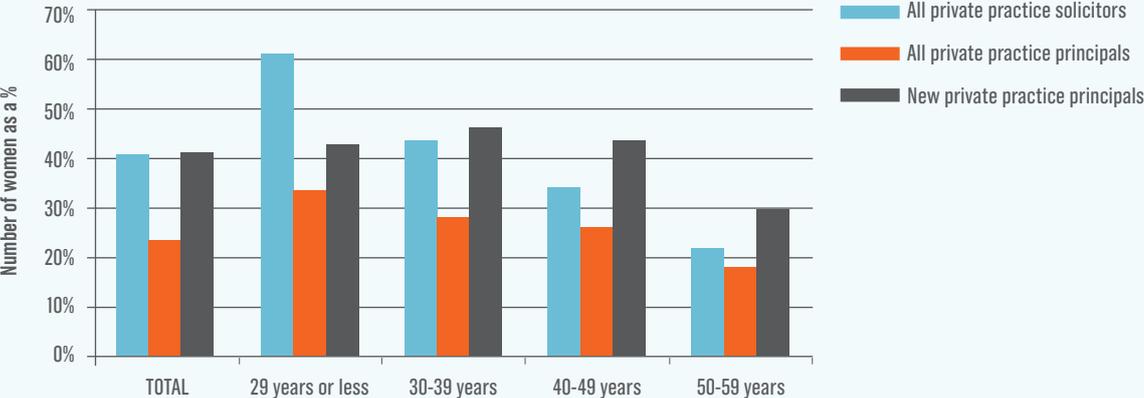
Data for 2012 was broken down by age of solicitor up to 60 years. Of the 405 new principals in 2012, 45% (182) were aged between 30-39 years. A further 28% (112) were aged 40-49 years, meaning that just under three quarters of first-time principals were between 30 and 49 years of age. For both these categories women were more strongly represented amongst new principals than in the general private practice population. Women made up 46% of new principals aged 30-39 years compared with 44% of all private practitioners in this category. Women also comprised 44% of first-time principals aged 40-49 years compared with 34% of all private practitioners of the same age. It was only in the 29 years or less category that women were under-represented amongst new principals. Here they comprised 43% of new principals and 61% of the wider private practice population. However, only around 9% of new principals fell into the 29 years or less age group. These results are set out in table 15 and figure 8 below.

Table 15: Women as a proportion of private practice solicitors, private practice principals and new private practice principals by age group 2012

	Women as a proportion of all private practice solicitors		Women as a proportion of all private practice principals		Women as a proportion of new private practice principals	
	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number
29 years or less	61.3	2767	33.8	93	42.9	15
30-39 years	44.0	2074	28.0	597	46.2	84
40-49 years	34.3	1203	26.1	635	43.8	49
50-59 years	21.7	584	18.1	376	29.6	16

Note: Figures for practitioners aged 60 years and over have been excluded. There are also a small number of records where no age is available.

Figure 8: Women as a proportion of private practice solicitors, private practice principals and new private practice principals by age group 2012



Principal place of practice

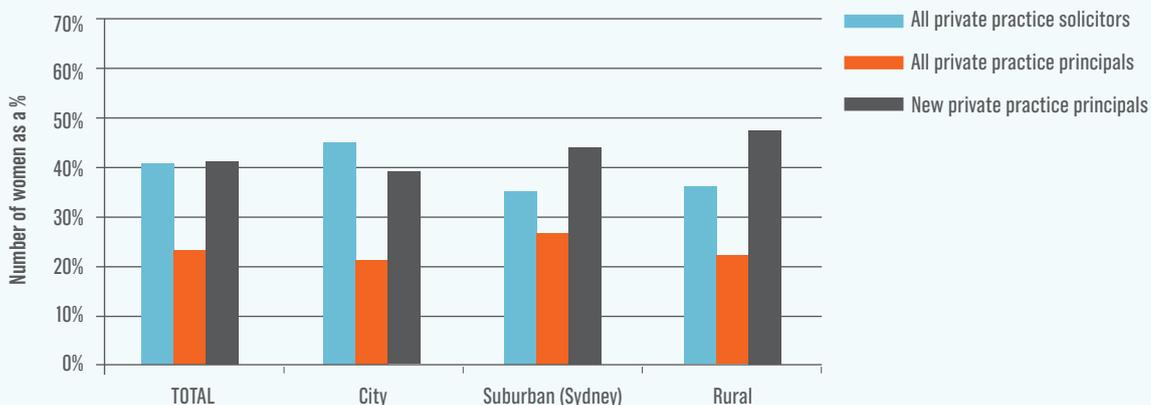
Data for 2012 was also broken down by principal place of practice. As shown in table 16 and figure 9, women were over-represented amongst new principals in rural and suburban practice locations where the proportion of first-time women principals exceeded the proportion of women in the general private practice populations. The converse was true for city practices where women comprised a smaller proportion of new principals than for the wider group of private practitioners. This could be a result of the stronger representation of women amongst first-time sole practitioners as noted above.

Table 16: Women as a proportion of private practice solicitors, private practice principals and new private practice principals by principal place of practice 2012

	Women as a proportion of all private practice solicitors		Women as a proportion of all private practice principals		Women as a proportion of new private practice principals	
	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number
City	45.1	4176	20.9	634	38.5	57
Suburban (Sydney)	35.0	1602	26.5	805	43.9	75
Rural	36.0	909	22.2	327	47.1	33

Note: Figures for interstate and overseas have been excluded.

Figure 9: Women as a proportion of private practice solicitors, private practice principals and new private practice principals by principal place of practice 2012



PART 3: WOMEN SOLICITORS IN LEADERSHIP

In-house practice

To increase our understanding of the gender balance in senior in-house roles, the Law Society commissioned independent research company Urbis to conduct a survey of all corporate and government members employed in a legal capacity. The questionnaire was programmed into an online format and the access link was distributed by the Law Society to solicitor members working in a government or corporate entity (excluding those located overseas). A screening question was included at the start of the questionnaire relating to the main components of the respondent's role and those who specified they did not undertake any "legal" work were exited from the survey.

A total of 5,614 members were sent the access link in September 2012, of whom 775 completed the survey (14% response rate). By analysing the response rate compared with the total number of members who received the survey, Urbis has been able to calculate the level of confidence which applies to the survey results. With the 14% response rate, Urbis has calculated that a sample of this size provides a confidence interval of approximately $\pm 3\%$ at a 95% confidence level. This means that for a given value in the data, we can be 95% confident that the real value in the total population is within $\pm 3\%$ of the survey value. Possibly because our particular survey was primarily seeking information on the gender balance of senior in-house roles, respondents tended to be marginally older and more experienced than the general corporate and government populations. This means we had a representative sample of respondents who said they held a leadership role as reported below.

The core objectives of the research were to examine the gender breakdown of senior solicitors in corporate and government practice and determine trends in the gender profile of new senior appointments over time. As the terminology for a "senior position" in in-house practice is less standard than the equivalent partner/principal role in private practice, two different types of senior role were included in the survey:

1. most senior lawyer working in a legal capacity in the organisation, and
2. head of legal team.

The survey also investigated perceptions on the accessibility of key workplace elements which may influence retention and advancement in the profession including flexible working, mentoring arrangements and opportunities for career progression. This information is published in a separate Law Society report on corporate and government practice which also contains the demographic profile of respondents. The findings published below relate only to the gender balance across senior in-house positions.

Corporate practice

In total, 414 corporate solicitors completed the survey, with 58% female respondents and 42% male. This is comparable with the Law Society’s data for the corporate segment overall which shows that women comprised 56% of NSW corporate lawyers in 2012.

Most senior lawyer

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they were the most senior lawyer working in a legal capacity in their organisation. Of the 414 corporate solicitors completing the survey, 151 (36%) specified that they were the most senior lawyer. Of those 151, 46% were female and 54% were male. Consistent with anecdotal feedback, these figures suggest that the representation of women amongst the most senior corporate solicitor roles is much closer to their representation in the general corporate lawyer population than for private practice.

Head of legal team

Respondents who indicated they were not the most senior lawyer in their organisation were then asked to specify whether they were the head of their legal team (noting there may be more than one legal team within an organisation). Of the 414 corporate solicitors completing the survey, 40 (10%) specified they were the head of their legal team. 48% of those 40 were female. While this comprises a smaller sample size than for the most senior lawyer reported above, these results are consistent with the proposition that women are represented in higher numbers in senior corporate lawyer roles than in private practice.

Figure 10: Gender breakdown of senior positions in corporate legal teams



Note: Totals may exceed 100% due to rounding.

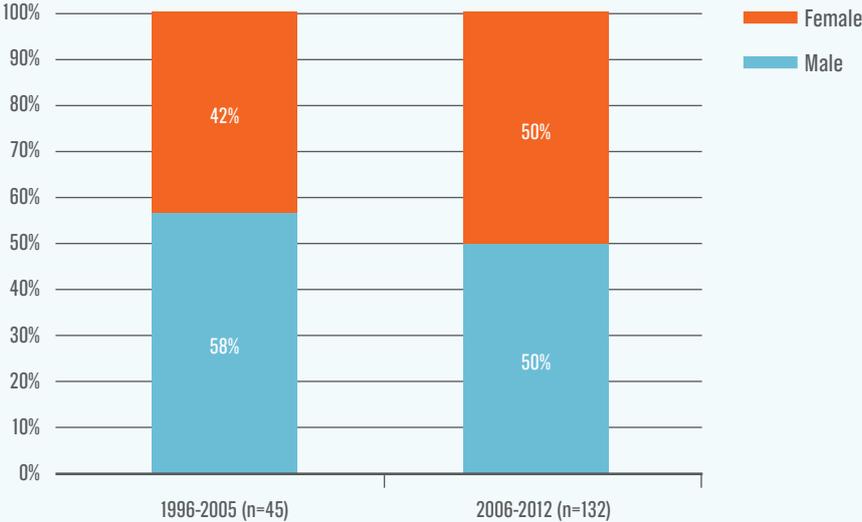
PART 3: WOMEN SOLICITORS IN LEADERSHIP

New senior appointments

Corporate most senior lawyer respondents were asked to specify how long they had held their current position so that we could determine the year they were appointed to that role. The results show that since 2006, women corporate lawyers have been evenly represented in appointments to positions which are the most senior legal role in an organisation (comprising 49% of the 89 appointments reported between 2006 and 2010 and 51% of the 35 appointments in 2011 and 2012).

All most senior lawyer and head of legal team respondents were also asked to indicate how long it was since they were first appointed to a senior legal position (head of legal team). This allows us to examine the gender balance for new appointments to senior corporate positions over time. As shown in figure 11, female respondents were evenly represented in new senior appointments since 2006 (50% female, 50% male). Women were even more strongly represented in the 25 new appointments reported by respondents for the last 2 years (56% female, 44% male).

Figure 11: Year first appointed head of corporate legal team by gender



Government practice

In total, 347 government solicitors completed the survey, with 59% female respondents and 41% male. This is comparable with the Law Society’s data for the government segment overall which shows that women comprised 63% of NSW government lawyers in 2012.

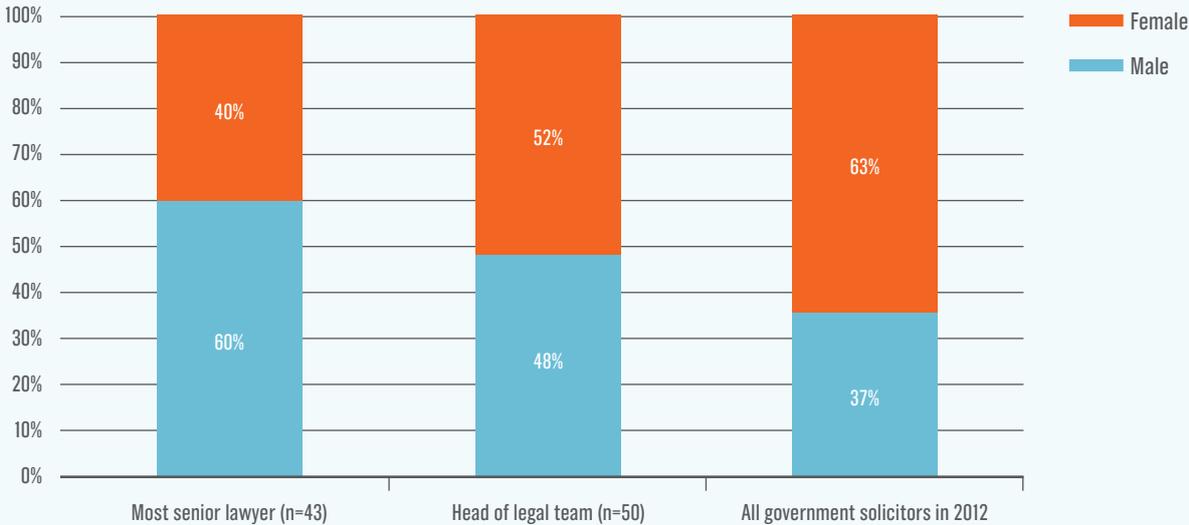
Most senior lawyer

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they were the most senior lawyer working in a legal capacity in their organisation. Of the 347 government solicitors completing the survey, 43 (12%) specified that they were the most senior lawyer. Of those 43, 40% were female and 60% were male. Consistent with anecdotal feedback, these figures suggest that there are more women represented at the highest level in government practice than in private practice.

Head of legal team

Respondents who indicated they were not the most senior lawyer in their organisation were then asked to specify whether they were the head of their legal team (noting there may be more than one legal team within an organisation). Of the 347 government solicitors completing the survey, 50 (14%) specified they were the head of their legal team. Of those 50, 52% were female and 48% were male. Compared to the findings for the most senior lawyer above, this shows that women are more evenly represented amongst heads of government legal teams in a ratio which is closer to their representation in the general government lawyer population. Consistent with anecdotal feedback, this is also a much higher rate than for principals in private practice.

Figure 12: Gender breakdown of senior positions in government legal teams



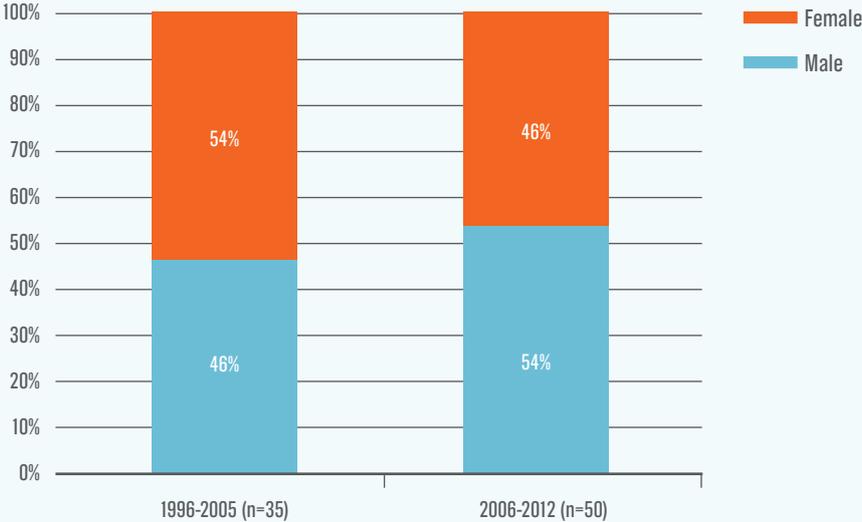
PART 3: WOMEN SOLICITORS IN LEADERSHIP

New senior appointments

Government most senior lawyer respondents were asked to specify how long they had held their current position so that we could determine the year they were appointed to that role. The results show that women comprised 37% of the 27 appointments reported since 2006.

All most senior lawyer and head of legal team respondents were also asked to indicate how long it was since they were first appointed to a senior legal position (head of legal team). This allows us to examine the gender balance for new appointments to senior government positions over time. As shown in figure 13, female respondents were more strongly represented in new appointments between 1996 and 2005 (54% female, 46% male), and less strongly represented in new appointments since 2006 (46% female, 54% male).

Figure 13: Year first appointed head of government legal team by gender



Special thanks to: Heather Moore (author of this report).

Disclaimer: This publication provides general information of an introductory nature and is not intended and should not be relied upon as a substitute for legal or other professional advice. While every care has been taken in the production of this publication, no legal responsibility or liability is accepted, warranted or implied by the authors or the Law Society of New South Wales and any liability is hereby expressly disclaimed.

© 2013 The Law Society of New South Wales, ACN 000 000 699, ABN 98 696 304 966.
Except as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth), no part of this publication may be reproduced without the specific written permission of the Law Society of New South Wales.

