

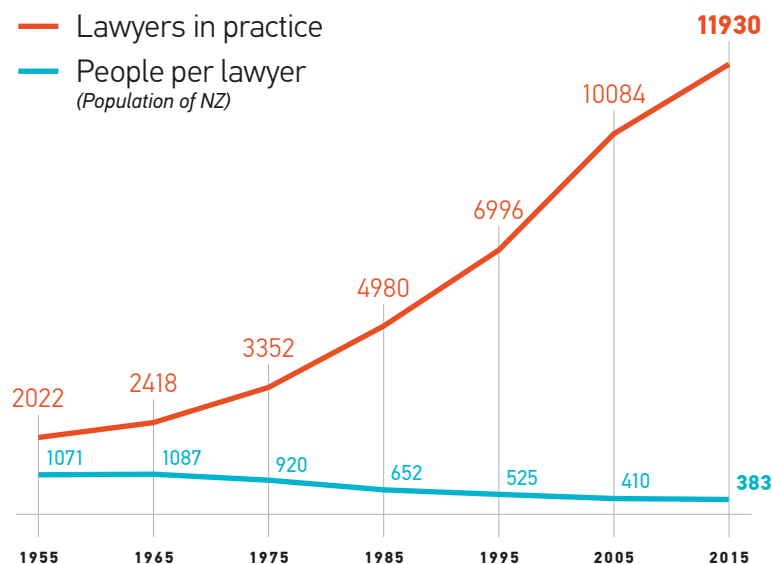
# Snapshot of the Profession

AT 1 FEBRUARY 2015

The information has been prepared from a number of sources, including practising certificates issued by the New Zealand Law Society and held as at 1 February 2015. The intention is to give a picture of the make-up of New Zealand's legal profession at a point in time. The statistics focus on identifying the key elements and trends among the 12,480 people who practise law in New Zealand.

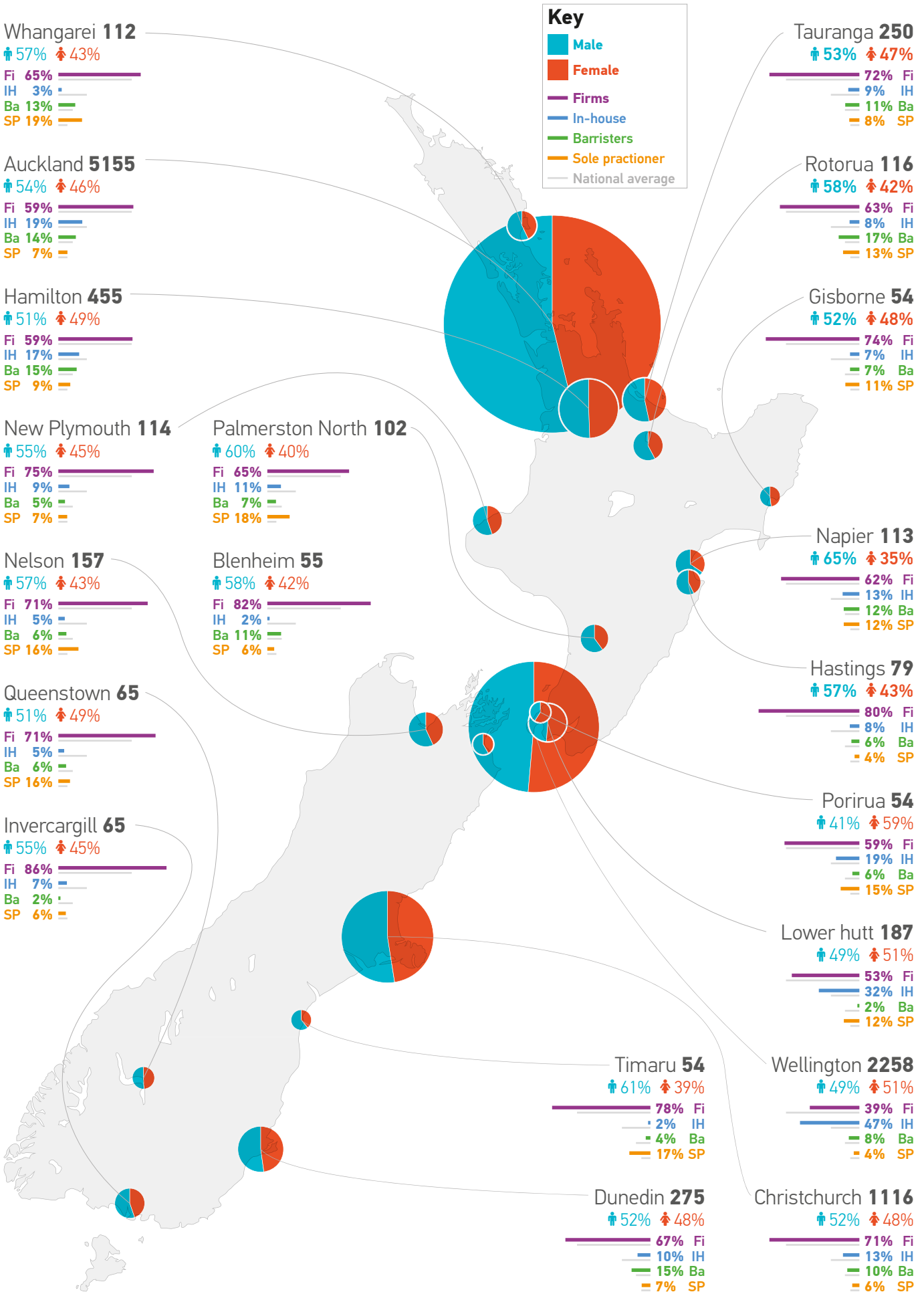
Compiled by **Geoff Adlam**  
Designed by **Andrew Jacombs**

# Practising Certificates on Issue



Just under 12,000 lawyers are practising in New Zealand, with a further 550 based overseas but holding a practising certificate issued by the New Zealand Law Society. Of the New Zealand-based lawyers, 59% practise in law firms with more than one practising certificate. Another 8% are in sole practice (SP), while 21% are in-house lawyers (IHL) employed by an organisation. The remainder are barristers (11%) or not currently working. The table below and graphs on the following page show the 20 centres with 50 or more lawyers.

Centre	Lawyers in firms	In-house Lawyers	Barristers	Sole Practitioners	Unspecified	Total	Male	Female
Auckland	3060	977	714	371	33	5155	2771	2384
Wellington	886	1061	189	101	21	2258	1096	1162
Christchurch	795	145	107	63	6	1116	584	532
Hamilton	267	75	66	43	4	455	230	225
Dunedin	185	28	41	19	2	275	143	132
Tauranga	178	22	28	20	2	250	133	117
Lower Hutt	100	60	3	23	1	187	91	96
Nelson	111	8	10	25	3	157	89	68
Invercargill	101	8	2	7	0	118	65	53
Rotorua	73	9	19	15	0	116	67	49
New Plymouth	86	10	6	8	4	114	63	51
Napier	70	15	14	14	0	113	74	39
Whangarei	73	3	15	21	0	112	64	48
Palmerston North	66	11	7	18	0	102	61	41
Hastings	63	6	5	3	2	79	45	34
Queenstown	50	3	4	6	2	65	33	32
Blenheim	45	1	6	3	0	55	32	23
Gisborne	40	4	4	6	0	54	28	26
Porirua	32	10	3	8	1	54	22	32
Timaru	42	1	2	9	0	54	33	21
Other Centres	665	74	103	161	38	1041	619	422
<b>New Zealand-based</b>	<b>6988</b>	<b>2531</b>	<b>1348</b>	<b>944</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>11930</b>	<b>6343</b>	<b>5427</b>
<b>Overseas</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>262</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7320</b>	<b>2694</b>	<b>1372</b>	<b>966</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>12480</b>	<b>6631</b>	<b>5849</b>

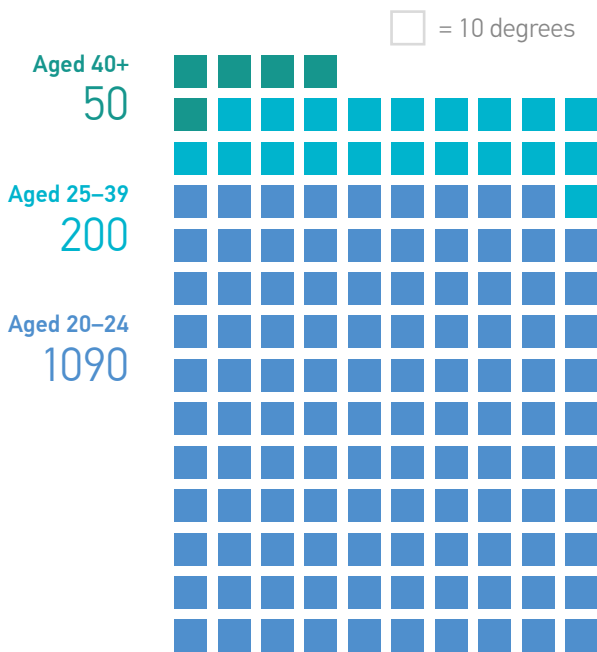


# Admission to the Legal Profession

## University study

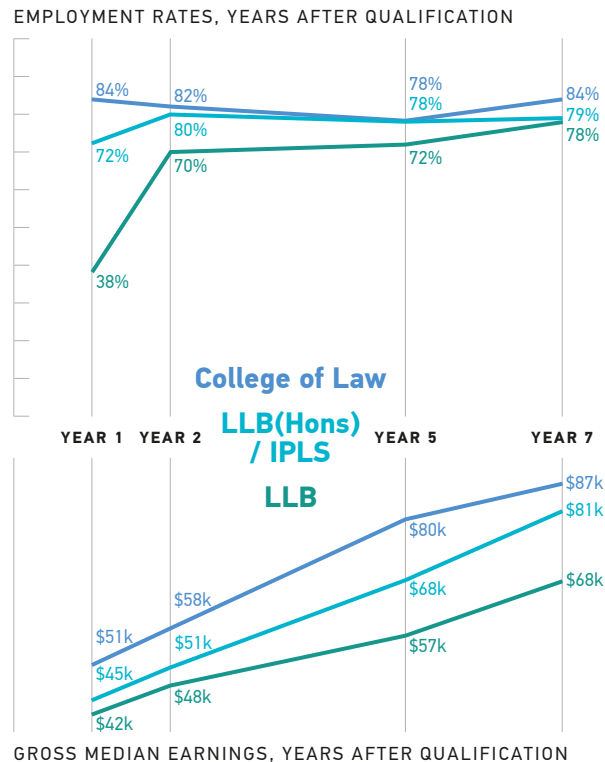
Completion of a law degree is the first major requirement for admission as a barrister and solicitor in New Zealand. Ministry of Education statistics indicate that around 1350 domestic students complete an LLB degree each year. Data for the latest available year, 2012, shows that students completing an LLB tend to be aged under 25, female, and of European ethnicity.

**1340** *Bachelors degrees in law completed 2012*  
 ♀ 57% ♂ 43%



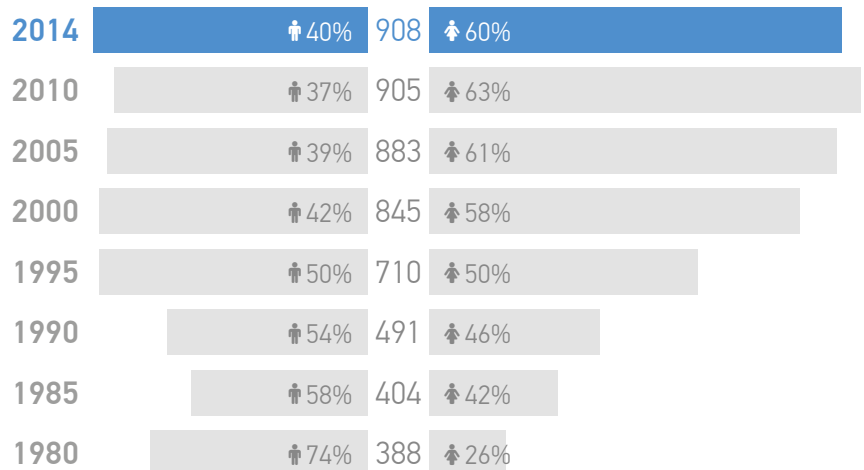
## Earning capacity after admission

Ministry of Education research released in mid-2014 found that only 38% of graduates with an LLB were in employment in their first year after university in the 2012 tax year. Unfortunately the research erroneously gave a different status to completion of the College of Law legal professionals course and the Institute of Legal Professionals course (this has now changed). The research also only applies to “young” graduates (24 and under for LLB).



## Admission as barristers and solicitors

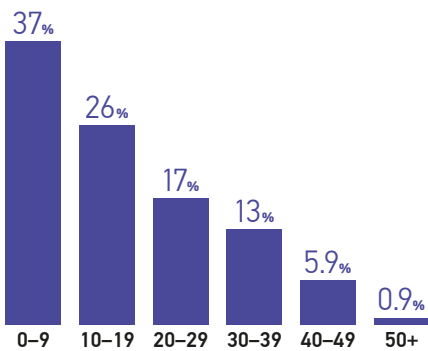
New lawyers are admitted to the legal profession throughout the year. Since the early 1990s the number of women admitted has exceeded the number of men. Comparison of the number of lawyers admitted with the number graduating LLB indicates that around 65% of people who gain a law degree will be admitted to the legal profession.



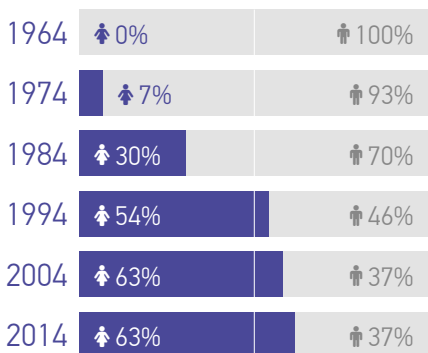
# Retention

The lawyers practising at 1 February 2015 had been in practice for an average of 21.4 years. Analysis of years in practice shows a relatively rapid decline in lawyers who have been in practice for 46 years, indicating that a lot of lawyers retire around the age of 68. Of lawyers currently holding a practising certificate, one was admitted in 1949, one in 1950, one in 1951 and two in 1952. One of the 1952 admittees is a woman; the others are men.

YEARS SINCE ADMISSION



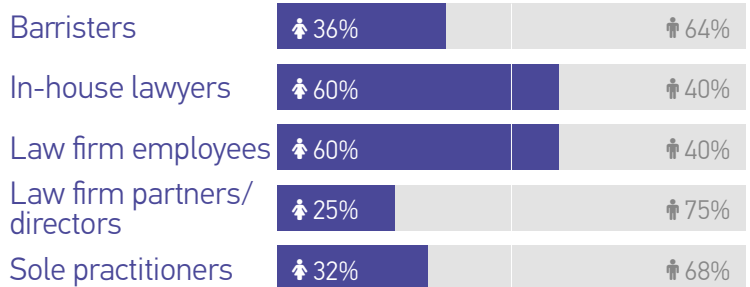
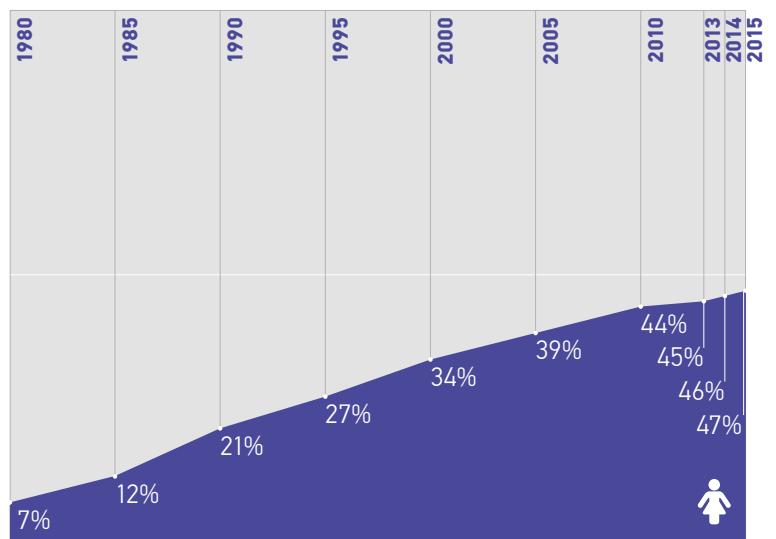
GENDER OF LAWYERS CURRENTLY PRACTISING BY ADMISSION YEAR



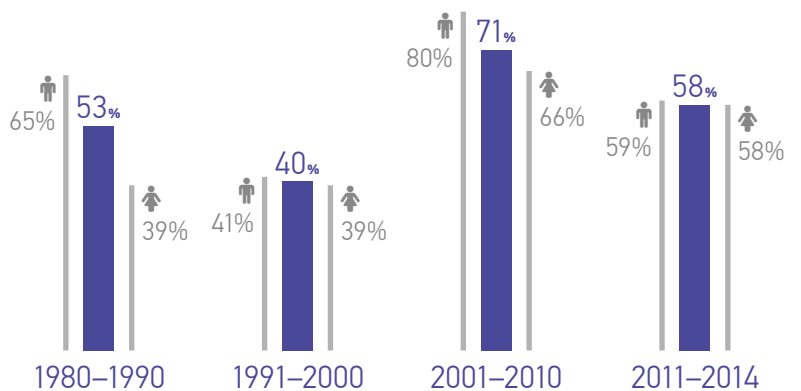
Comparison of the number of lawyers admitted in any particular year with the number still in practice at 1 February 2015 shows a higher retention rate for males. Over the whole period from 1980 (when admission data by gender was first kept) until 2014, 56% of lawyers who were admitted in that time held practising certificates at 1 February 2015.

# Gender

More women than men were first admitted to the legal profession in 1993. Since there has been a dramatic increase in the proportion of women in legal practice. Of the 933 law firms in New Zealand with more than one lawyer, in 263 (28.2%) a majority of practising certificate holders are women. In 147 multi-lawyer firms (15.8%) a majority of partners and directors are women. Further information on gender can be found in other sections of this Snapshot.



PROPORTION OF LAWYERS ADMITTED IN YEAR CURRENTLY PRACTISING



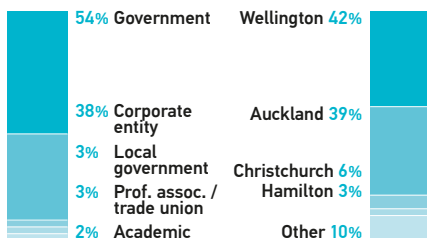
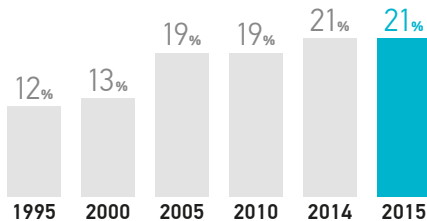
# Types of Practice

## In-house Lawyers

**21%** OF NZ LAWYERS  
**14** YEARS IN PRACTICE ON AVERAGE

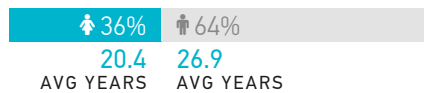


The proportion of lawyers who practise in-house has continued to increase over the last decade. The growth of the Public Defence Service and increased employment in the local government sector are contributing factors.

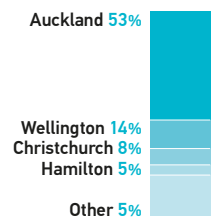
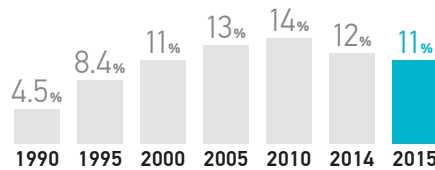


## Barristers

**11%** OF NZ LAWYERS  
**24.5** YEARS IN PRACTICE ON AVERAGE

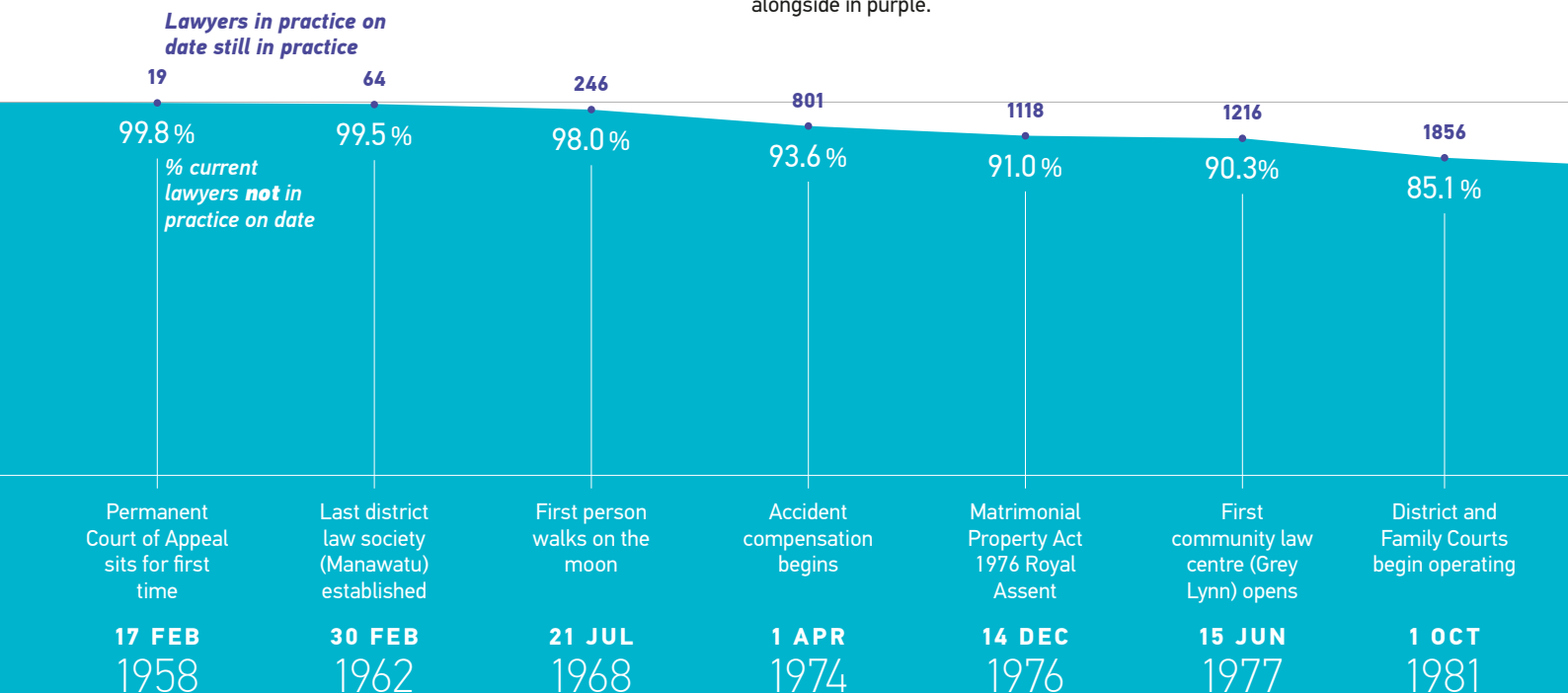


The proportion of lawyers who practise as barristers continues to decline. Changes to legal aid eligibility and stricter regulatory requirements introduced in 2012 are seen as contributing factors.



# Time in practice

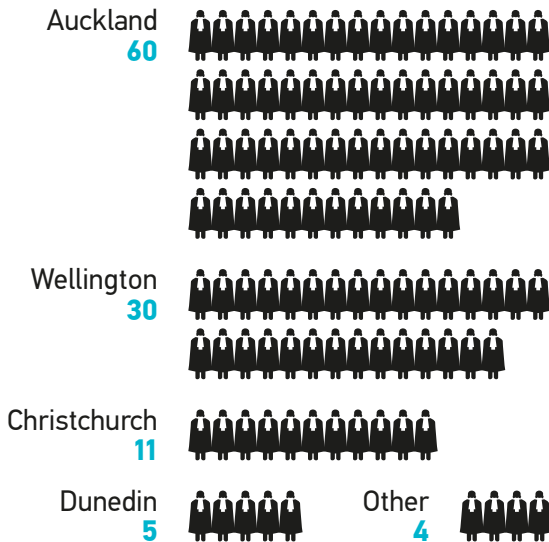
At 1 February 2015, eight lawyers had been in practice for over 60 years, and just under 7% of all lawyers had practised for 40 years or more. At the other end of the spectrum, over half – 51% – of all lawyers began to practise after 1 January 2000. The chart below (continued on the following spread) shows some key events which have impacted on legal practice in New Zealand and the proportion of current lawyers who were **not** practising then. The number of lawyers who were practising then and who are still in practice is shown alongside in purple.



## Queen's Counsel

**8.3%** OF PRACTISING BARRISTERS  
**18%** OF QCS ARE WOMEN

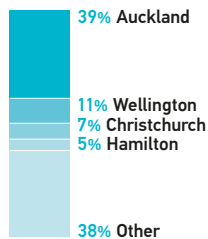
Of the 1348 barristers in practice, 112 are Queen's Counsel. New Zealand Queen's Counsel were appointed for the first time in 1907 and there have been 279 appointments. Applications for the next round of appointments close on 14 March 2015.



## Sole practitioners

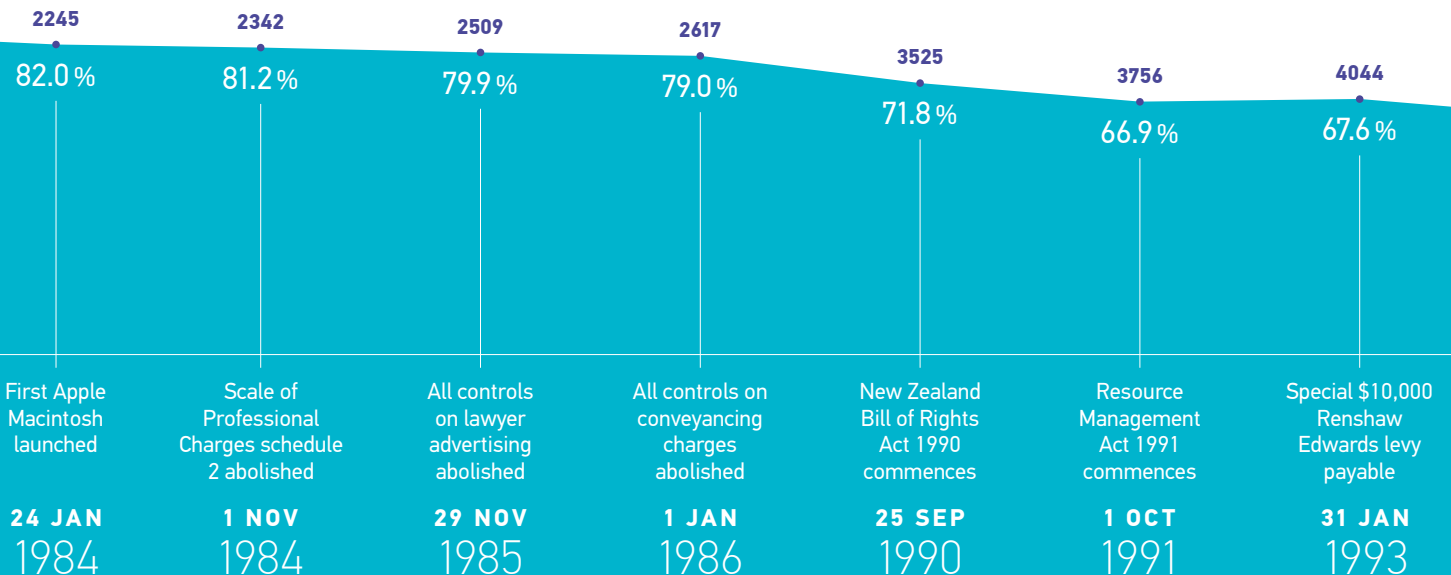
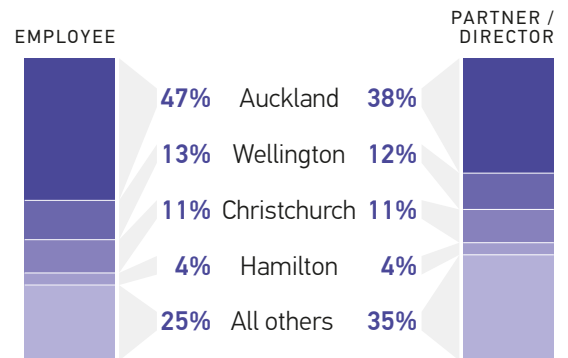
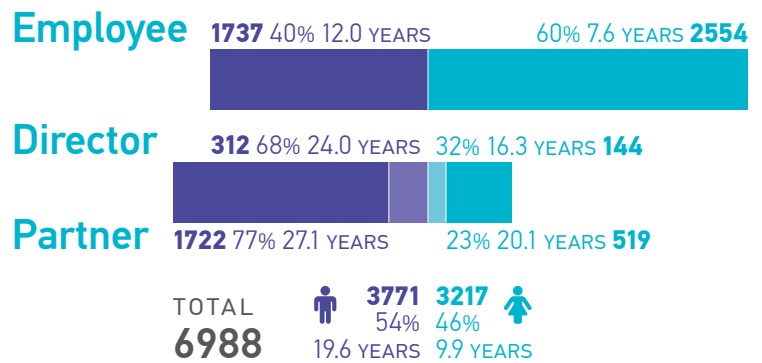
**8%** OF NZ LAWYERS  
**29.3** YEARS IN PRACTICE ON AVERAGE

Firms with a single practising lawyer make up half of all New Zealand law firms.



## Multi-lawyer firms

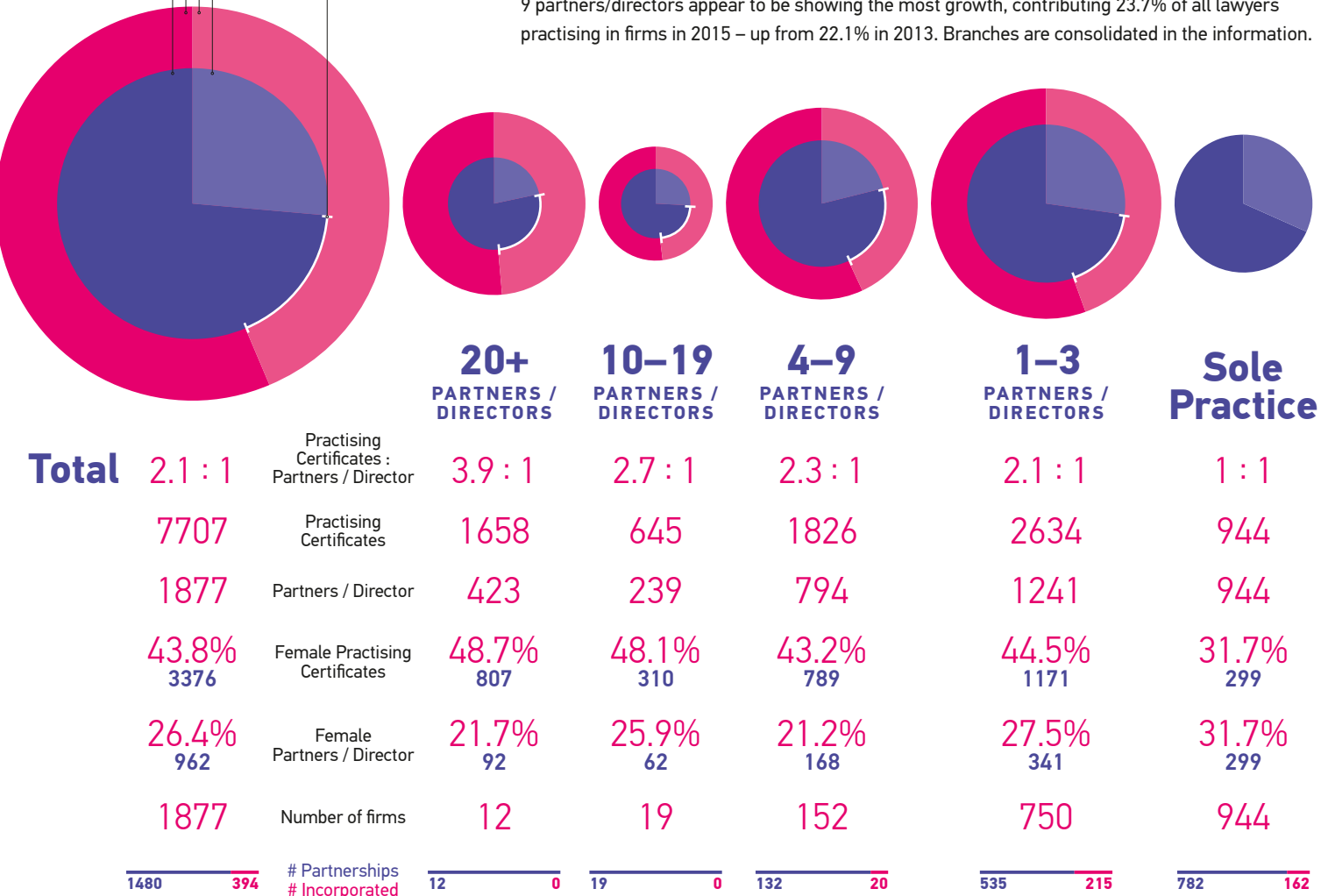
Lawyers practising through a law firm of any size make up 66.5% of NZ lawyers and have an average of 17 years in practice. Half of New Zealand's law firms comprise just one lawyer. Lawyers working in multi-lawyer firms have an average of 15.1 years in practice. Lawyers working in firms are either able to practise on own account, – and thereby able to become partners or directors – or are employees. Just under 40% of lawyers working in multi-lawyer firms are partners or directors. One of the most noticeable aspects of lawyers working in multi-lawyer firms is the big difference in the average number of years in practice between men and women in each of the three roles.



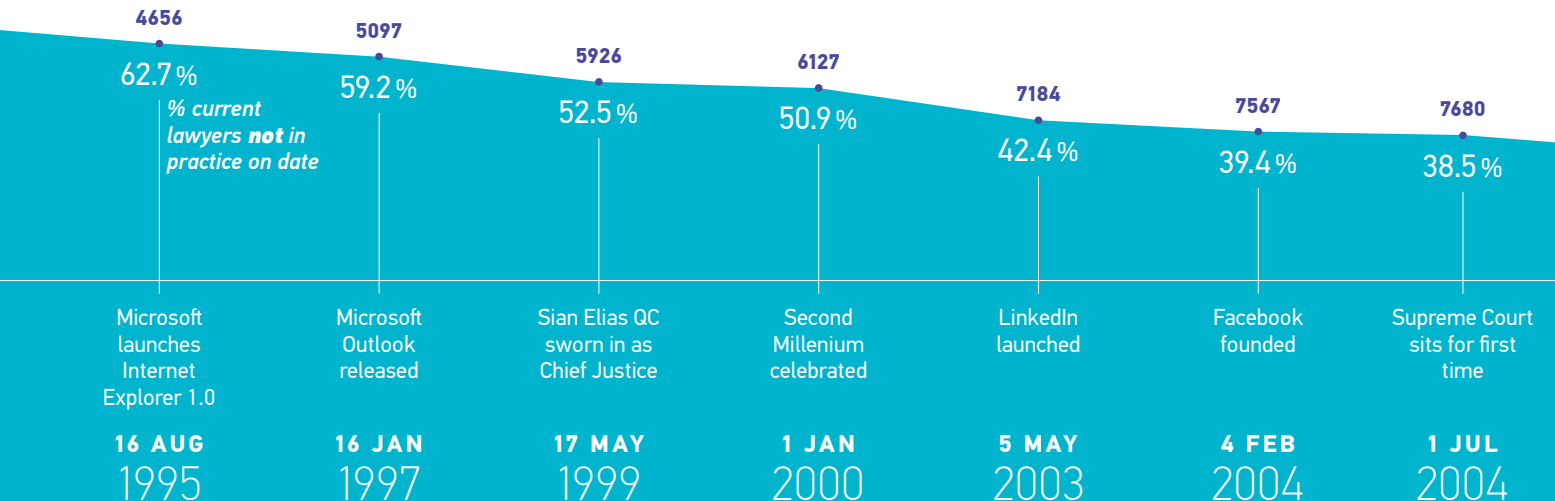
# Law firm size

New Zealand's law firms are generally small enterprises, with 86% of all firms having 5 or fewer practising certificate holders. The number of law firms is increasing each year. Firms with 4 to 9 partners/directors appear to be showing the most growth, contributing 23.7% of all lawyers practising in firms in 2015 – up from 22.1% in 2013. Branches are consolidated in the information.

Male Partners / Director  
 Male Practising Certificates  
 Female Practising Certificates  
 Female Partners / Director  
 Δ Female % Practising Certificates & % Female Partners / Director



## Lawyers in practice on date still in practice

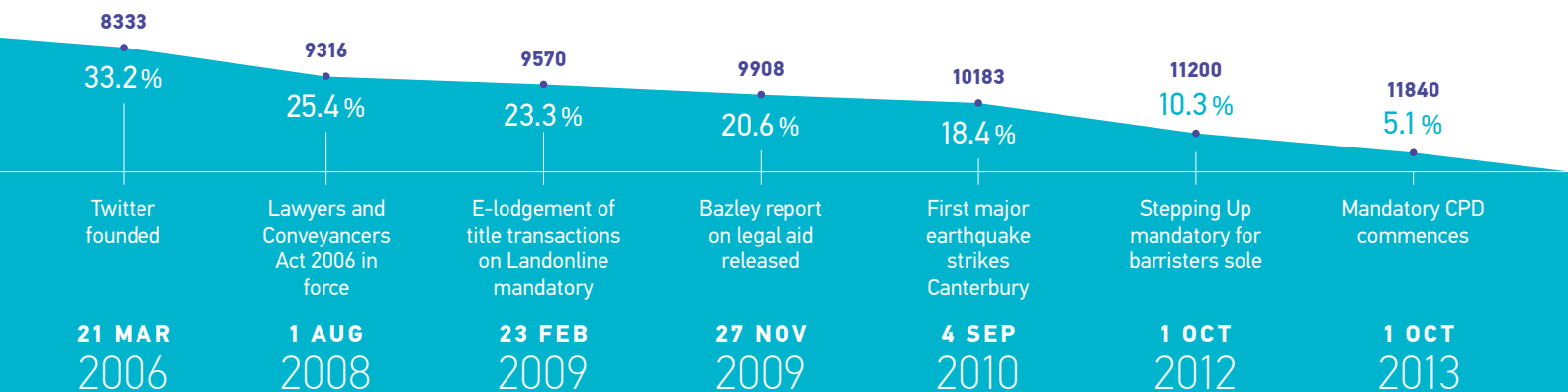
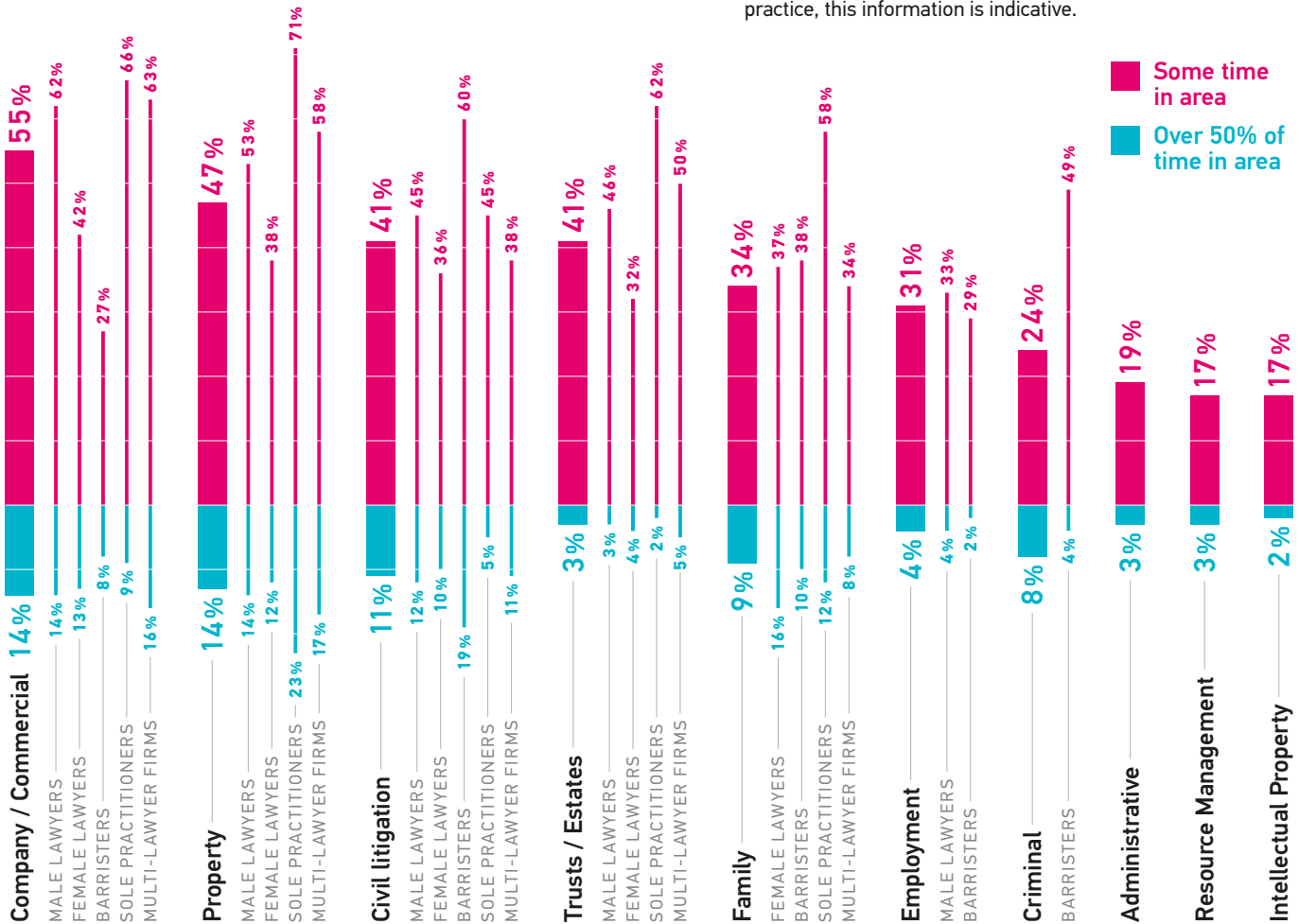




# Areas of Practice

The overall top 10 areas of practice are graphed, with comparison to the top 5 areas of practice of male and female lawyers, barristers, sole practitioners, and lawyers from multi-lawyer firms.

Lawyers are asked to provide information to the Law Society on the areas in which they practise by estimating the proportion of their time spent in each of 23 areas of practice. The information below shows the proportion of lawyers who spend at least some of their time practising in an area of law, and the proportion who spend over half their time in one area. Because not all lawyers provide information on their areas of practice, this information is indicative.



# Location



Highest proportion of lawyers

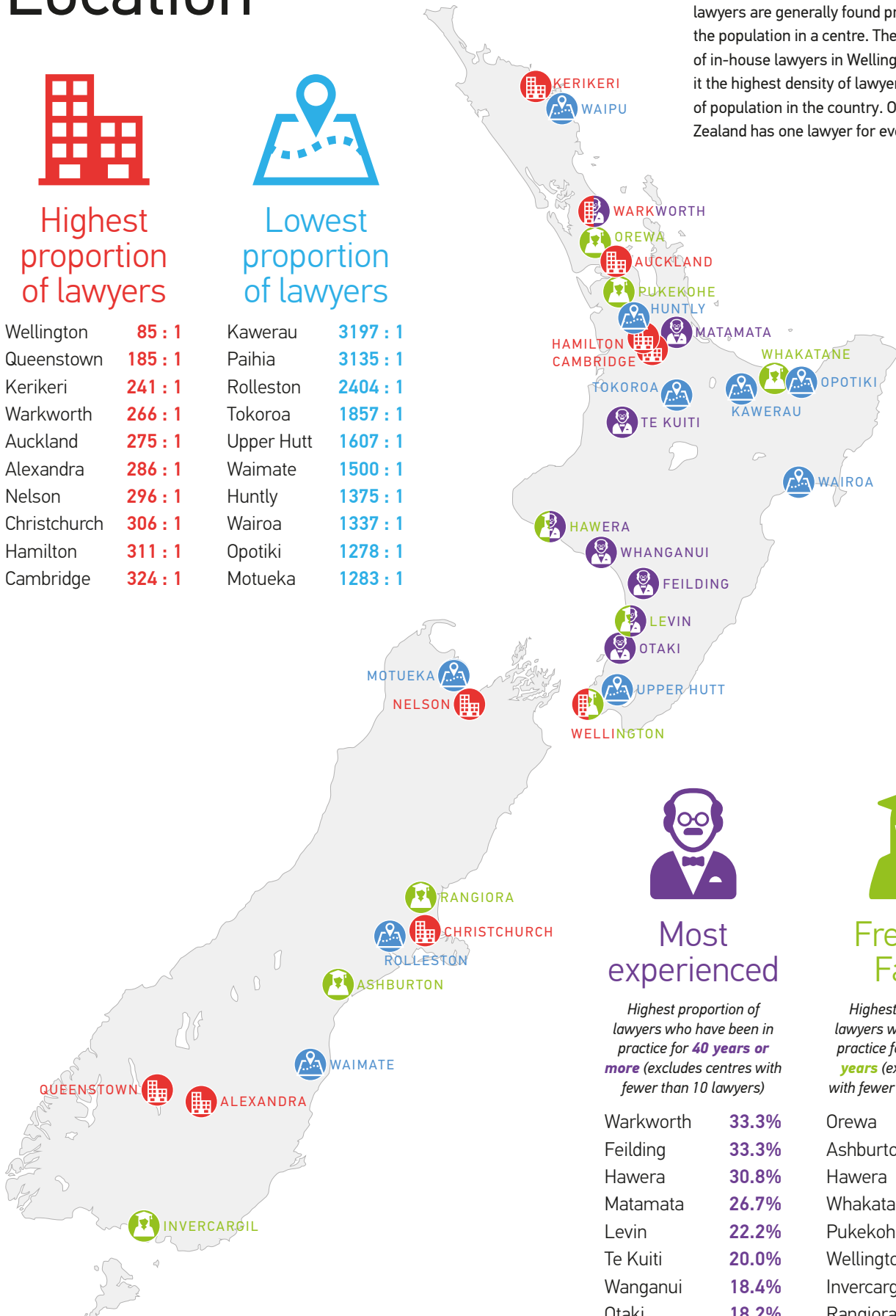
Wellington	85 : 1
Queenstown	185 : 1
Kerikeri	241 : 1
Warkworth	266 : 1
Auckland	275 : 1
Alexandra	286 : 1
Nelson	296 : 1
Christchurch	306 : 1
Hamilton	311 : 1
Cambridge	324 : 1



Lowest proportion of lawyers

Kawerau	3197 : 1
Paihia	3135 : 1
Rolleston	2404 : 1
Tokoroa	1857 : 1
Upper Hutt	1607 : 1
Waimate	1500 : 1
Huntly	1375 : 1
Wairoa	1337 : 1
Opotiki	1278 : 1
Motueka	1283 : 1

With one major exception, New Zealand's lawyers are generally found proportionate to the population in a centre. The large number of in-house lawyers in Wellington gives it the highest density of lawyers per head of population in the country. Overall, New Zealand has one lawyer for every 383 citizens.



Most experienced

Highest proportion of lawyers who have been in practice for **40 years or more** (excludes centres with fewer than 10 lawyers)

Warkworth	33.3%
Feilding	33.3%
Hawera	30.8%
Matamata	26.7%
Levin	22.2%
Te Kuiti	20.0%
Wanganui	18.4%
Otaki	18.2%



Freshest Faces

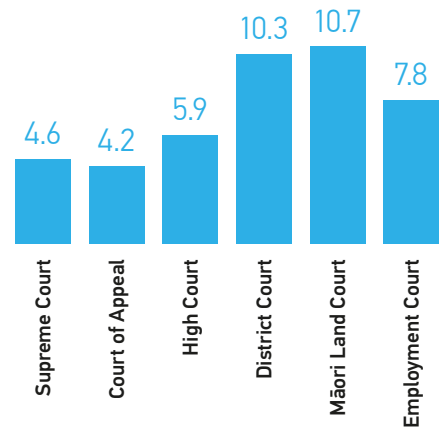
Highest proportion of lawyers who have been in practice for **less than 10 years** (excludes centres with fewer than 10 lawyers)

Orewa	52.6%
Ashburton	51.4%
Hawera	46.2%
Whakatane	40.6%
Pukekohe	40.0%
Wellington	39.0%
Invercargill	38.1%
Rangiora	37.9%

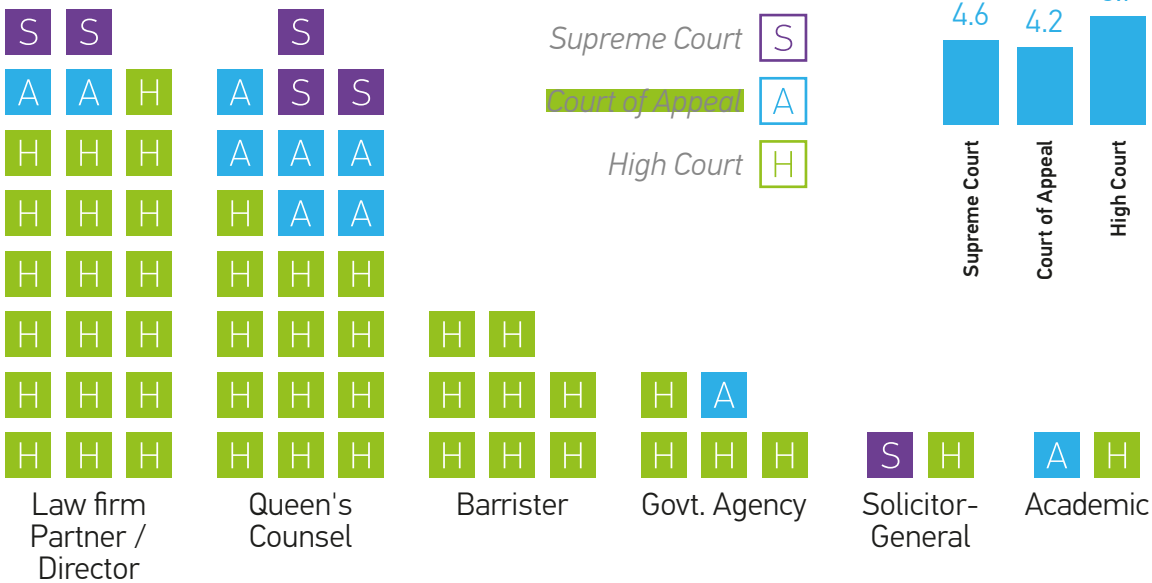
# Judiciary

Information on New Zealand's judiciary has been mainly sourced from the Ministry of Justice websites. All members of the judiciary appointed before 1 February 2015 are included. At that date there were 234 members of the judiciary.

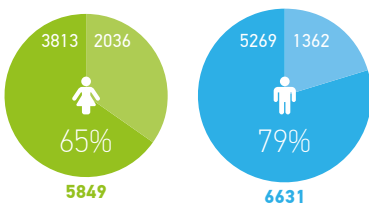
AVERAGE TIME SINCE APPOINTMENT TO THE COURT



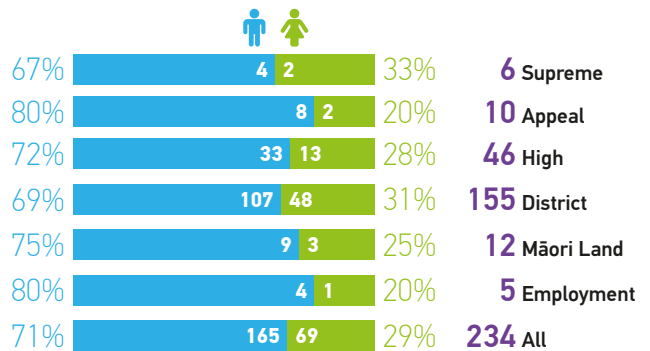
ROLE ON APPOINTMENT TO JUDICIARY



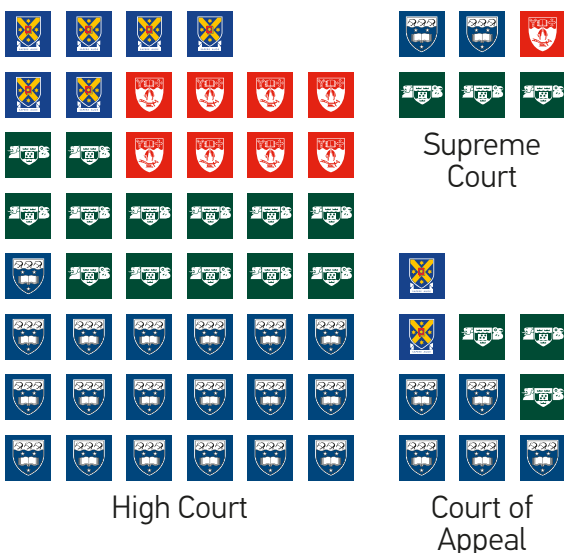
ELIGIBILITY FOR APPOINTMENT



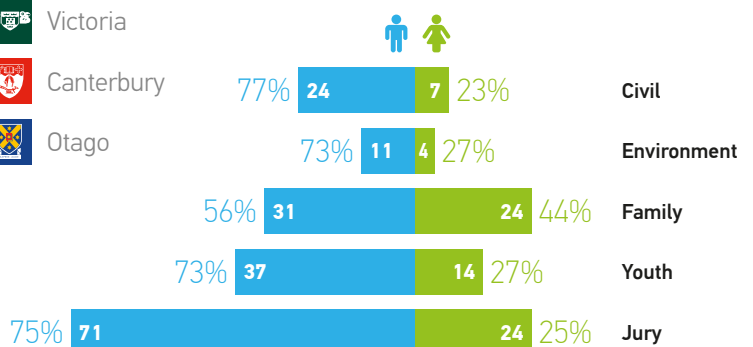
To be eligible for appointment to the judiciary, a lawyer must have been admitted for at least 7 years.



UNIVERSITY FOR FIRST LAW DEGREE



DISTRICT COURT WARRANTS



# Census 2013

- Judges
- Lawyers
- All NZers

*All employed usually resident New Zealanders aged 15 years and over*

New Zealand's first census for seven years was held on the night of 5 March 2013. Statistics New Zealand has provided the Law Society with a number of sets of customised data for people who gave their occupation as "Lawyer", "Barrister", "Solicitor" or "Judge". To help round out our picture of the legal profession we've summarised some of the information. The graphs show the top five in each category for lawyers, with comparative proportions for judges and for all employed usually resident New Zealanders aged 15 years and over.

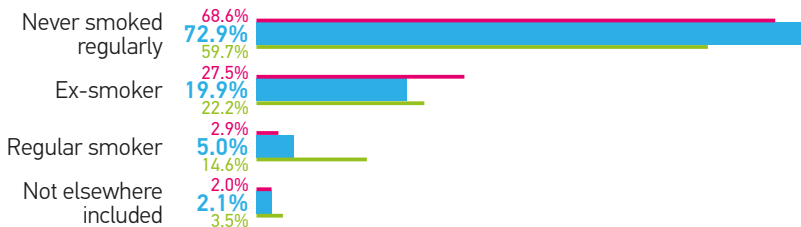
## BIRTHPLACE



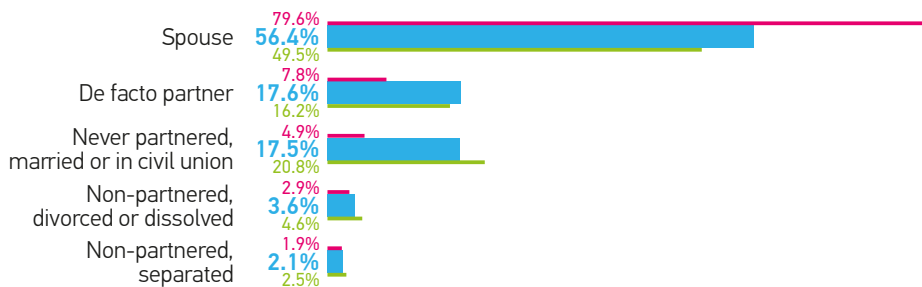
## ETHNICITY



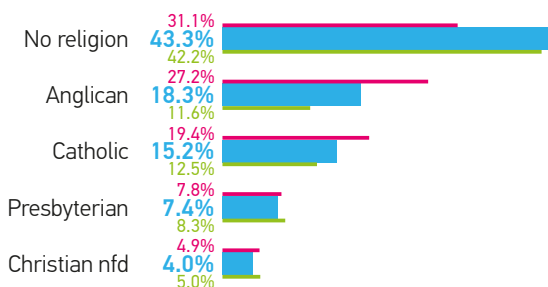
## CIGARETTE SMOKING



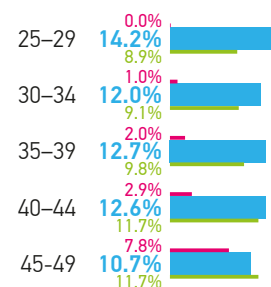
## MARITAL STATUS



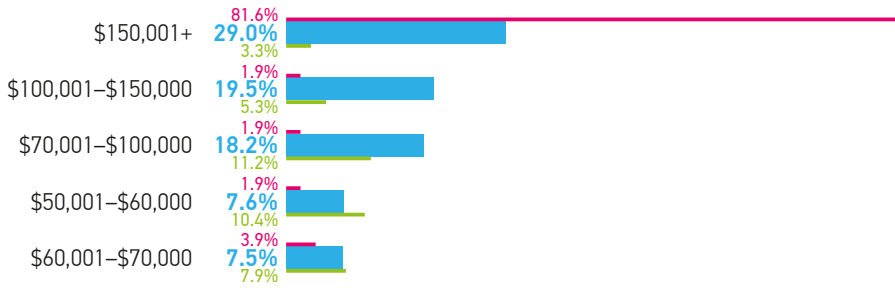
## RELIGION



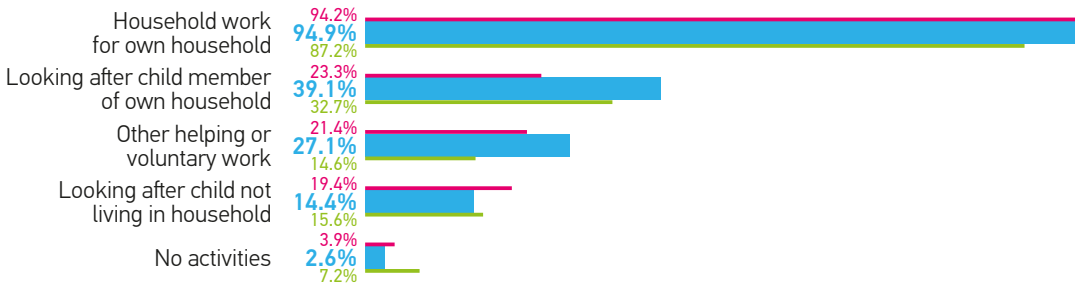
## AGE



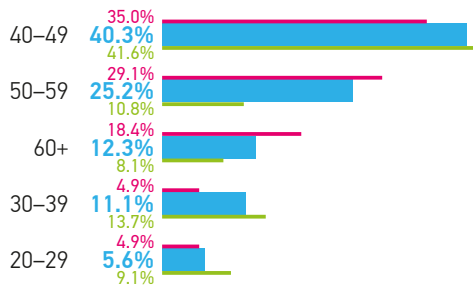
INCOME (BEFORE TAX IN YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2013)



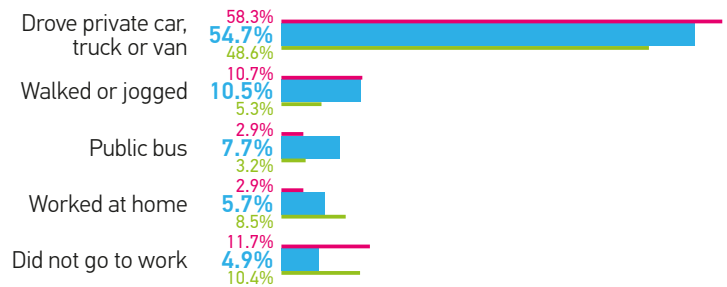
VOLUNTARY WORK IN FOUR WEEKS BEFORE 5 MARCH 2013



HOURS WORKED PER WEEK (SELF-ASSESSED)



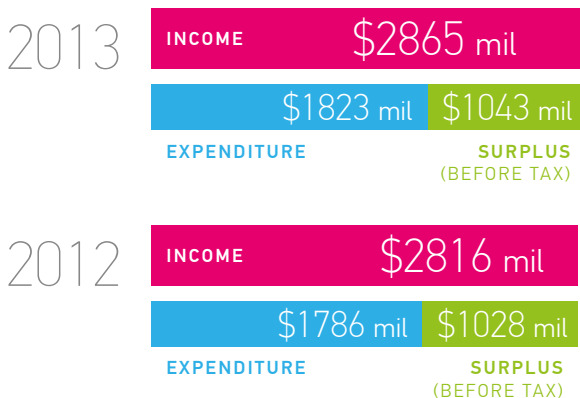
TRAVEL TO WORK ON TUESDAY, 5 MARCH 2013



# The Legal Services Industry

New Zealand lawyers in private practice work in the legal services industry. Statistics New Zealand collects information annually on New Zealand industries and business enterprises. The latest available information for the legal services industry is as follows:

LEGAL SERVICES FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE (NZ\$ MILLION, YEAR TO 31 MARCH)



Statistics New Zealand's Producers Price Index measures changes in the price paid for legal services (personal and corporate).

ANNUAL INCREASE IN LEGAL SERVICES PRICES, YEAR TO DECEMBER



# Legal aid

Ministry of Justice data for payments to legal aid providers in the year to 30 June shows a fall from 2013 to 2014 of 5.4% in the number of providers who received a payment and a fall of 4.4% in total payments.

GROSS PAYMENTS TO LEGAL AID PROVIDERS, YEAR TO 30 JUNE

