

2020

SALARY AND CAREERS GUIDE







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QUEENSLAND YOUNG LAWYERS

Queensland Young Lawyers (QYL) is an independent not-for-profit association dedicated to encouraging and supporting the personal and professional development of young lawyers and barristers in Queensland.

Together with Peppercorn Recruitment, the QYL Committee has worked tirelessly to collate and present the results of the Salary Survey.



STEPHANIE FORWARD
PRESIDENT



WILL MACINTOSH
TREASURER



DAMON HATCHETT
VICE PRESIDENT



MEGAN DUDLEY
SECRETARY

QYL is excited to release the 2020 Legal Salary Survey! This is the third year that QYL and Peppercorn have produced the survey.

We believe the survey is an important tool for young lawyers to 'know their worth' in an industry historically plagued by long hours and low starting salaries.

Unlike others, this survey focuses solely on Queensland and the data is collected by, and from, lawyers.

This means the data accurately reflects real salaries and working conditions.

Given the COVID-19 pandemic we thought it would be good to focus on some good news coming out of this years' survey:

This year the survey showed that:

- 45% of respondents reported that their firms offered bonuses;
- 43% of respondents reported that their firms offered paid parental leave;
- 45% of respondents indicated they would stay with their current employer for the work life balance;
- 44% said they had a great team; and based on this year's data (collected pre #WFH) the majority of firms offer some flexibility in working from home.

Thank you to our sponsor and partner in this project, Peppercorn Recruitment. It is a pleasure working with you and producing this valuable report.

QYL Executive
May 2020



PEPPERCORN RECRUITMENT



Peter Liaw
Partner

Established in 2015, Peppercorn Recruitment has grown to be Brisbane's leading specialist legal, risk and compliance recruitment agency.

We are lawyers, and we are legal recruiters. We understand the intricacies, demands and challenges of the legal, risk and compliance industries. This, combined with our extensive networks, ensures we match the best candidates to the right jobs.

Based in Brisbane, we have recruited at all levels across private practice, in-house and government for permanent, fixed term, contract and temporary positions.



Ross Dakin
Partner

WELCOME TO THE SALARY SURVEY

Alongside the Queensland Young Lawyers, Peppercorn Recruitment is pleased to present our 3rd annual 2020 Queensland Legal Salary Survey – presenting salary and employment data and designed specifically for Queensland Lawyers.

Last years' survey was a huge success, with a 90% increase in participation on the inaugural report. We had hoped to better the number of respondents this year, but to say the last few months have been eventful would be a huge understatement. As a result, participation started very well but slowed right down in the final weeks of the survey as COVID-19 restrictions hit with the end result at a level virtually the same as 2019. There was a noticeable increase in the number of respondents in the 6+ PAE category (something we will look at pushing more next year given the survey was initially targeted towards lawyers at the start of their career), however there was still a great spread of data with which to draw some interesting conclusions.

2020 began where 2019 left off: with huge demand across multiple practice areas within law firms and a continued upward trend for recruitment in the in-house market.

By March however, the brakes were firmly planted on hiring across most law firms (with the exception of some “always hard to fill” roles) as well as most corporates. As compared to last year when we released the salary survey data in May prior to salary and performance reviews, this year people are now working under an entirely different set of circumstances.

Work-from-home (WFH) has become the new norm and it will be interesting to see what impact this has long-term, particularly on traditional law firm work environments. Already in speaking to several law firm clients, productivity of fee-earners at home has remained surprisingly high. How employers adjust longer term remains to be seen, but with technology allowing remote working, “flexible” working arrangements which have often been high on the wish-list of lawyers at all levels could be here to stay.

It is still too early to say how the remainder of 2020 will pan out in terms of recruitment but it is safe to say that salaries will remain flat for some time to come. While the practical benefit of this salary survey in relation to annual performance reviews might be limited in the short-term (thanks to COVID-19!), we hope that the information contained in it still provides you with an idea of your worth relative to other lawyers in Queensland.

We would like to extend a big thank you to our partners on the QYL Committee for the countless hours of help pulling this survey together on behalf of lawyers in Queensland. And finally, thank you to all those lawyers who contributed their time towards completing the survey.

Here's hoping that the market bounces back in the not too distant future!

SURVEY DETAILS

The statistics in this guide are derived from the 2020 Queensland Legal Salary Survey which was open for five weeks in February and March 2020. This year, there was a total of 588 participants (compared to 589 participants in 2019). The slight decrease in participants was attributed to the collection period coinciding with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Of those participants, 90% were employed on a full-time basis. The sample of data collected was sufficient to provide the averages and statistics in this guide. Where there was a data sample too small, those statistics have been omitted. Prior to any analysis, entries in the survey were reviewed and corrected where obvious errors were identified.

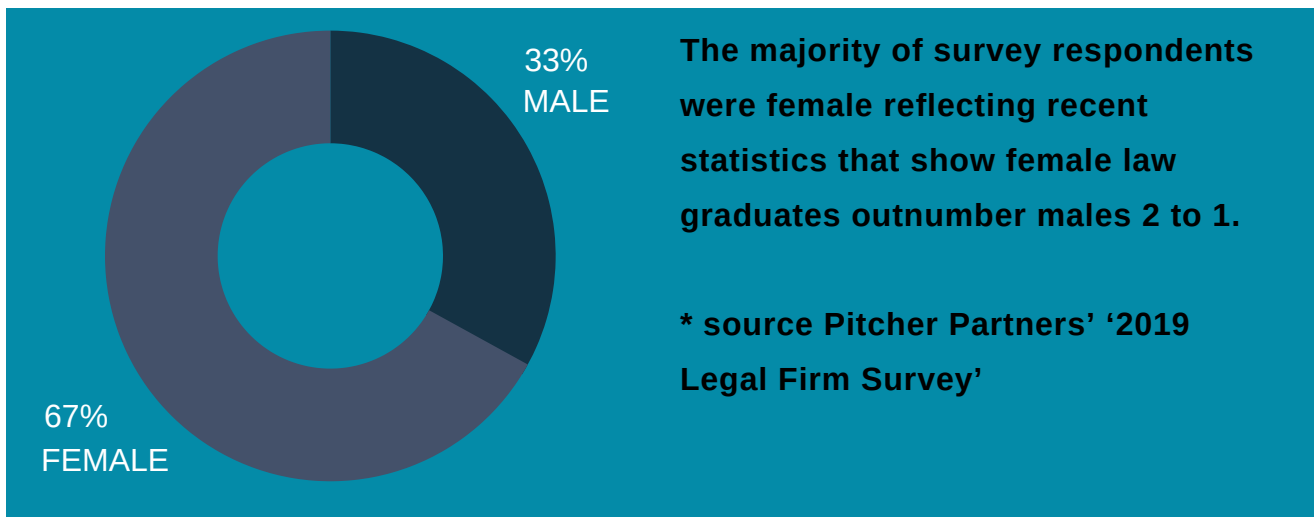
DEFINITIONS

- **Micro Law Firm (Micro) = 2-5 Solicitors**
- **Small Law Firm (Small) = 6-19 Solicitors**
- **Medium Law Firm (Medium) = 20-49 Solicitors**
- **Large Law Firm (Large) = 50+ Solicitors (no offices outside of Queensland)**
- **National Law Firm (National) = 50+ Solicitors (offices outside of Queensland)**
- **International Law Firm (International) = firm with international offices**

PAE = post admission experience

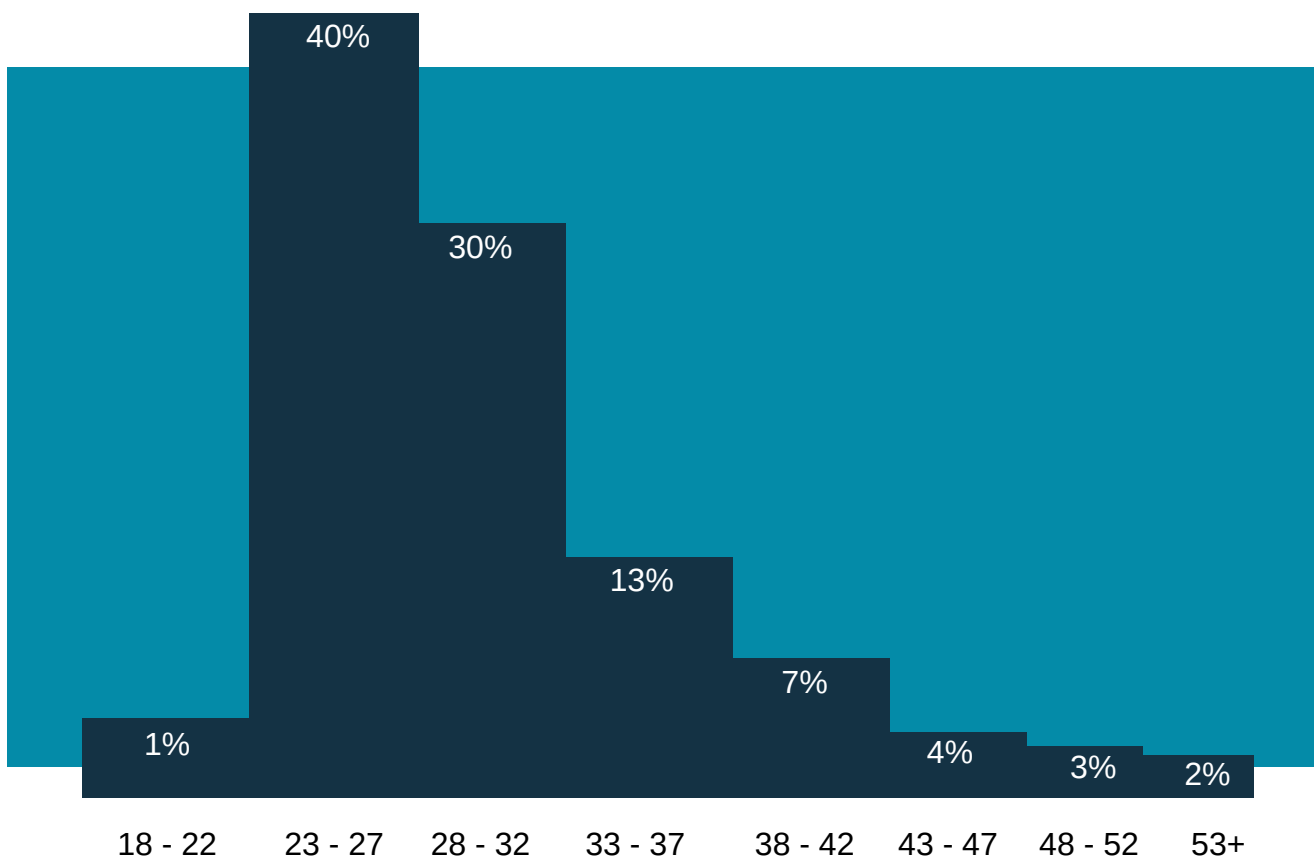
SURVEY RESPONDENTS

SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY GENDER



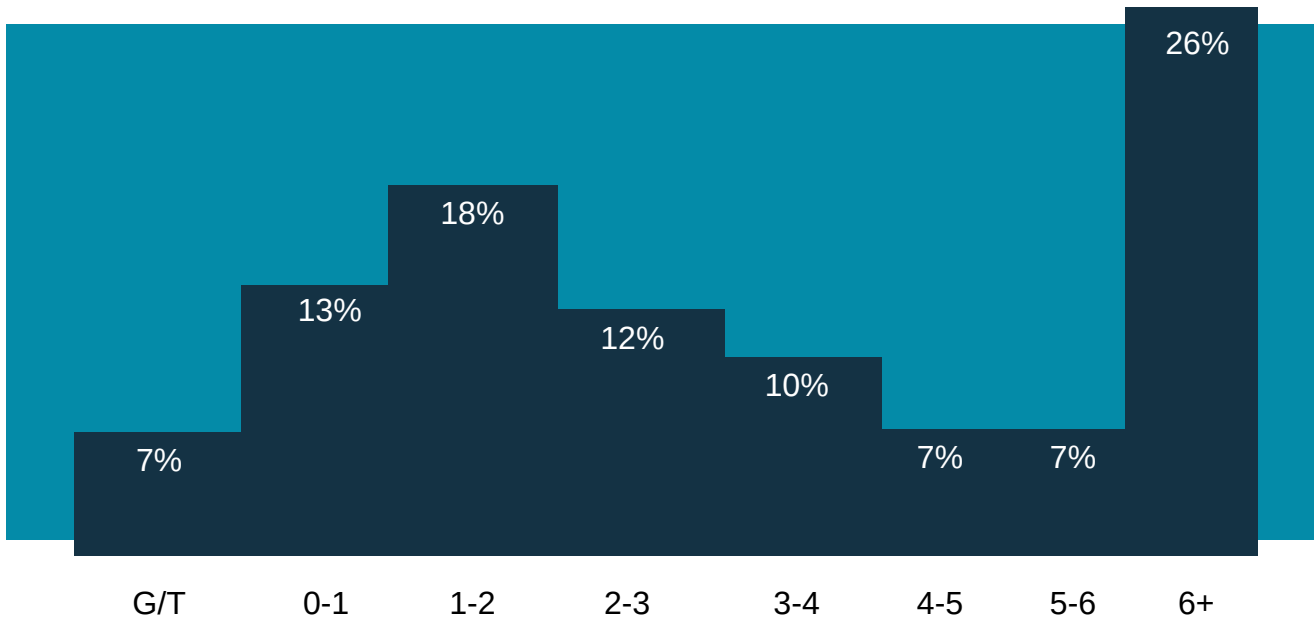
SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY AGE

84% of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 37. However 26% of respondents had at least 6 years PAE showing it is not just *young* lawyers who want to know their worth.

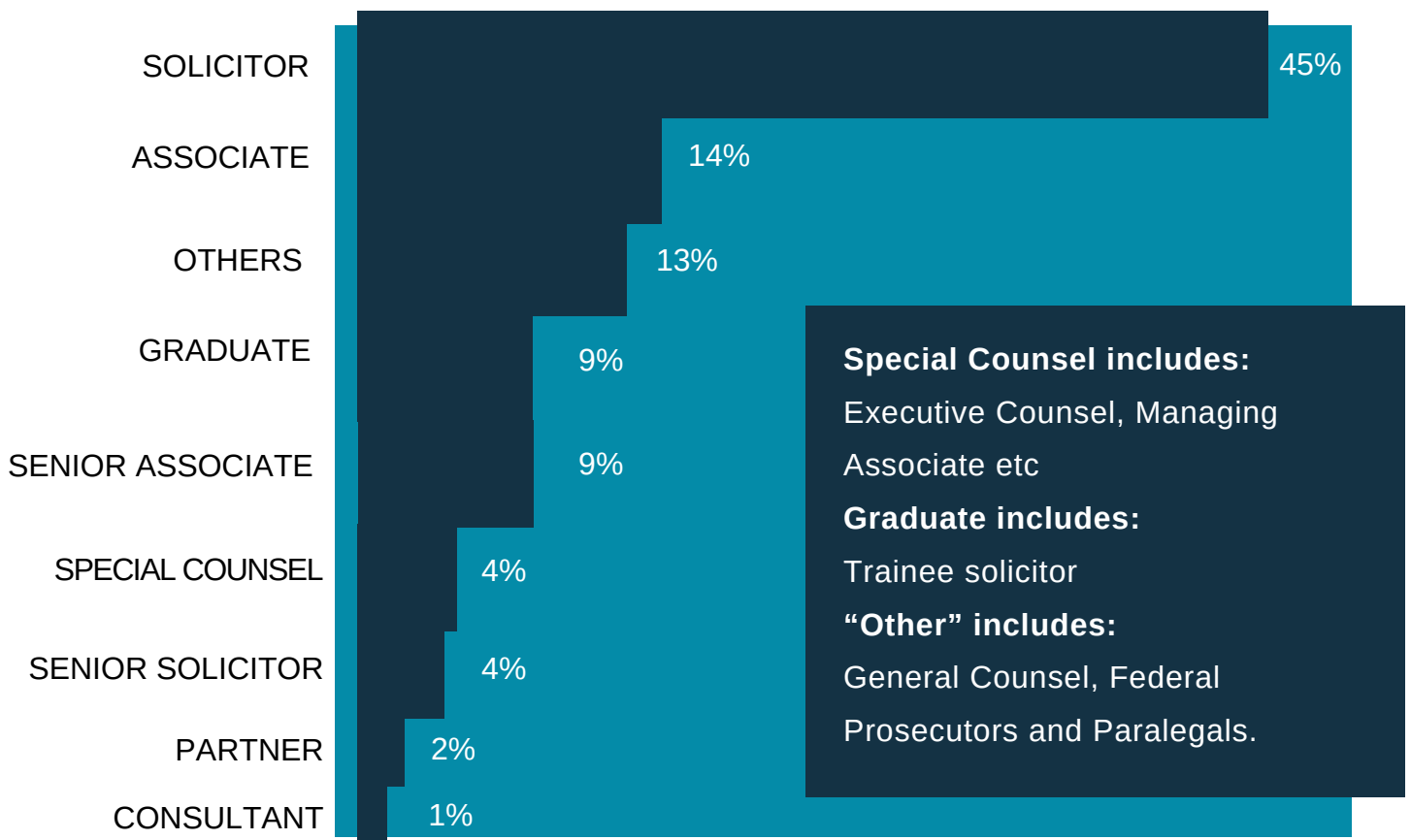


SURVEY RESPONDENTS

SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY PAE (YEARS PAE)



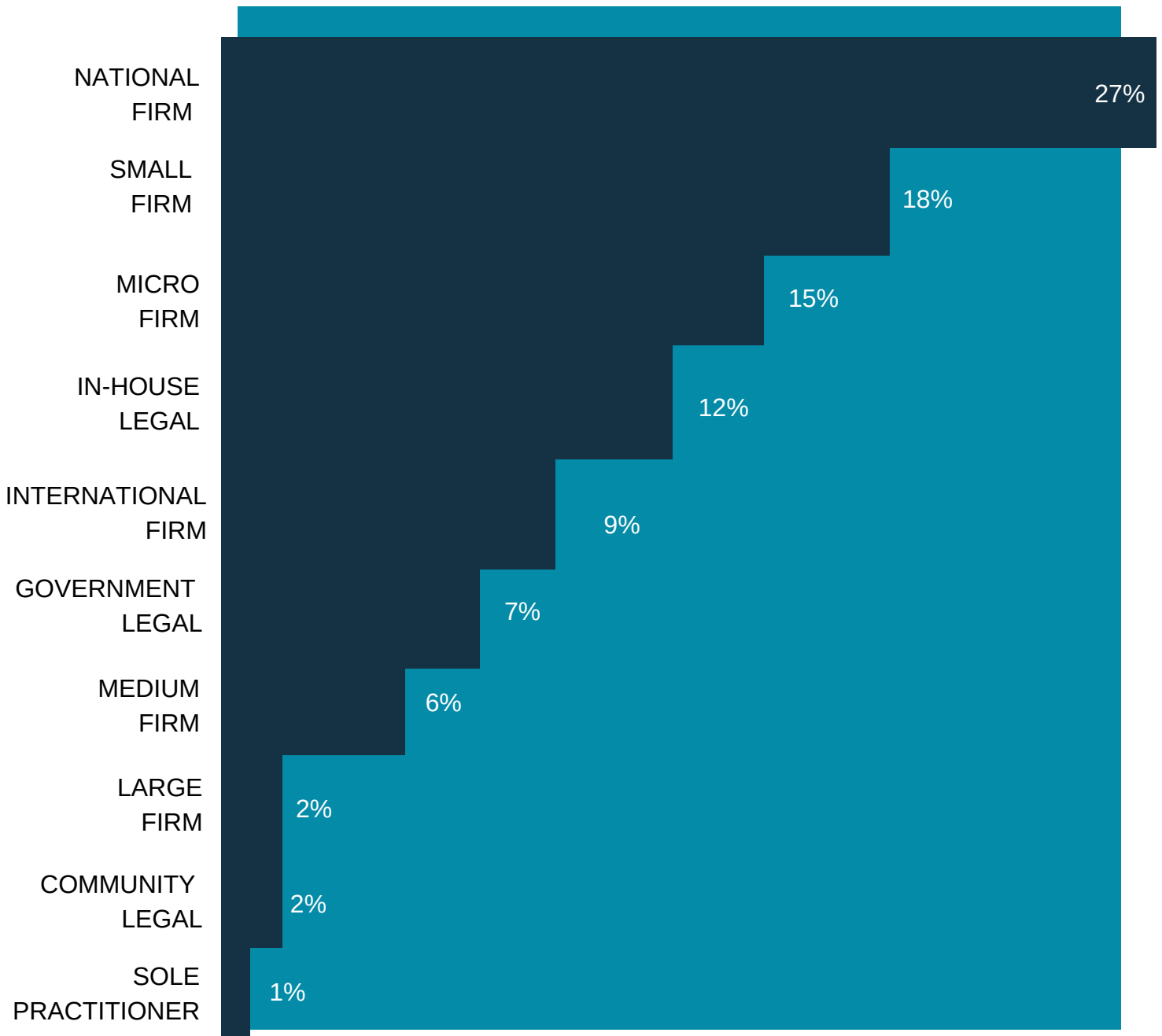
SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY POSITION



SURVEY RESPONDENTS

SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY FIRM SIZE

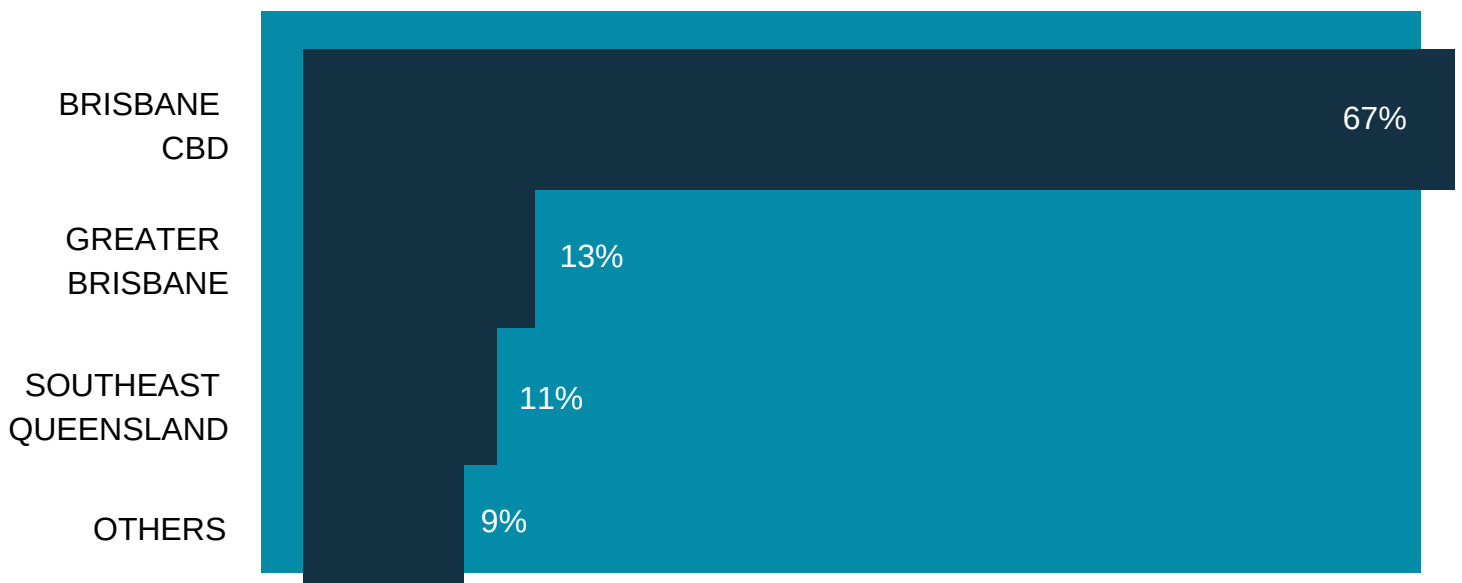
Similar to 2019's results, the greatest number of respondents came from large national firms. 40% of respondents work in sole practitioner, micro, small, or medium firms.



SURVEY RESPONDENTS

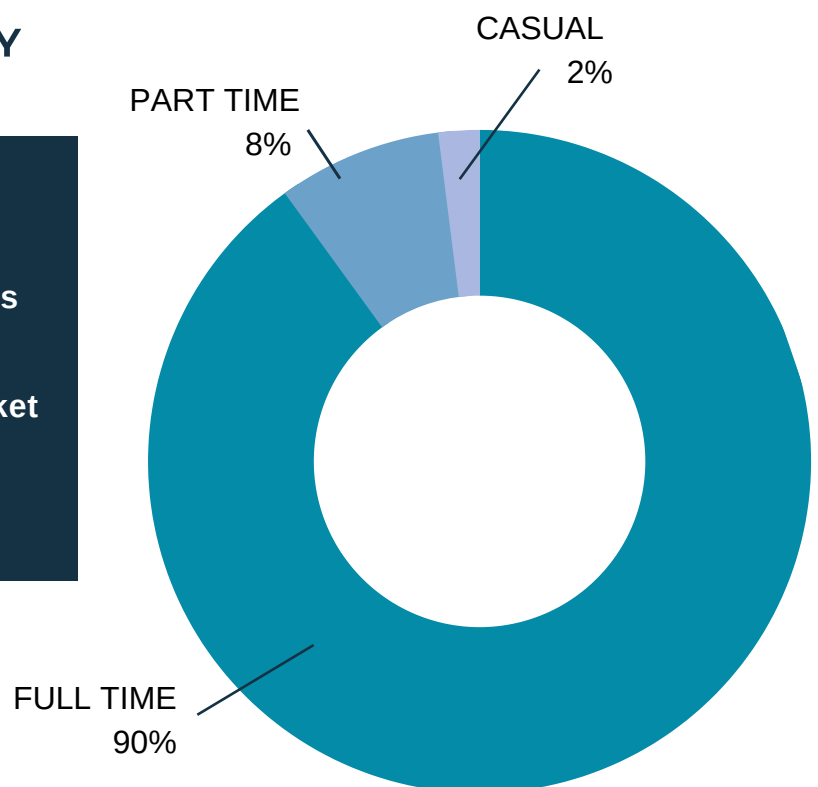
SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY FIRM LOCATION

This year saw an increase in the number of respondents from Greater Brisbane, Southeast Queensland and the regions but similar to last year over 65% of respondents work in the Brisbane CBD.



SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

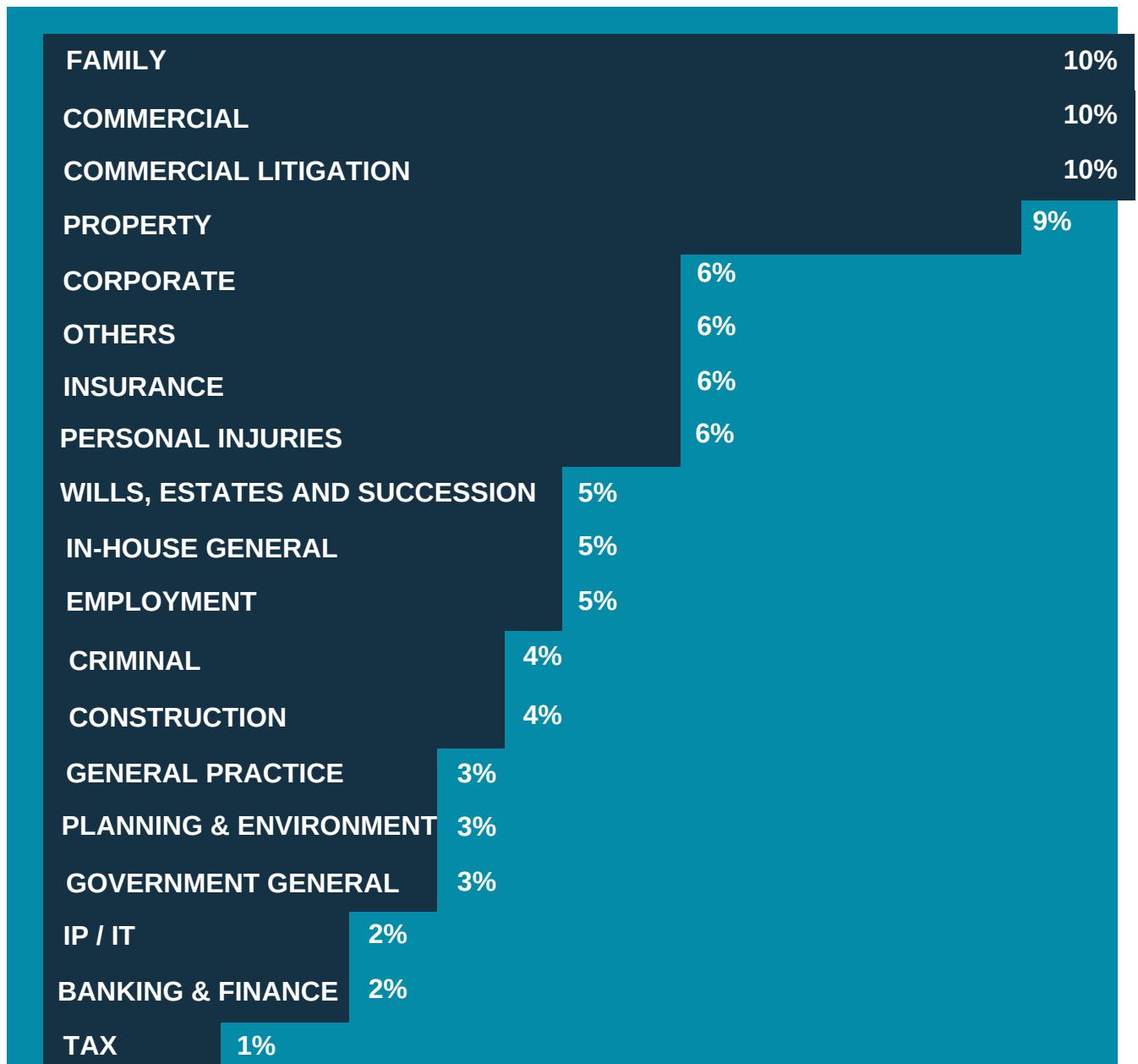
Though part time and casual arrangements are becoming more common, the respondents to this survey would suggest that the Queensland legal market remains dominated by full time roles.



SURVEY RESPONDENTS

SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY PRACTICE AREA

The majority of respondents work in Family Law, Commercial and Commercial Litigation. In future years, as the number of survey respondents grow, there will be enough data to further analyse salaries by practice area

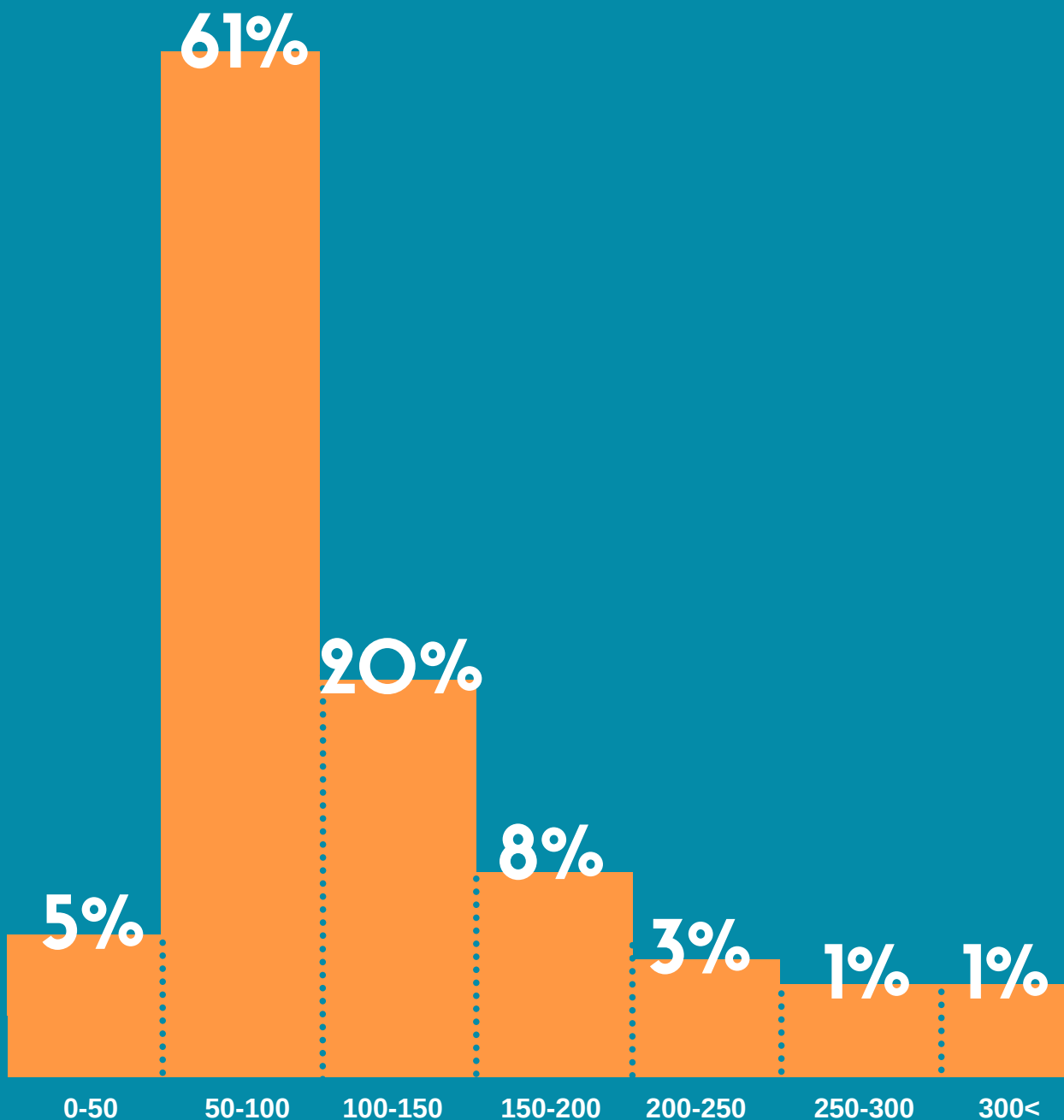


SALARIES

The salary figures presented in this report are inclusive of superannuation. Hyphens indicate that the data sample was too small.

The highest salary was \$330,000 per annum for a partner in a medium firm in Brisbane CBD. The lowest salary for a full time employee was \$32,000 for a graduate/trainee solicitor in a national law firm in Brisbane CBD.

SURVEY RESPONDENT'S SALARIES (\$'000')

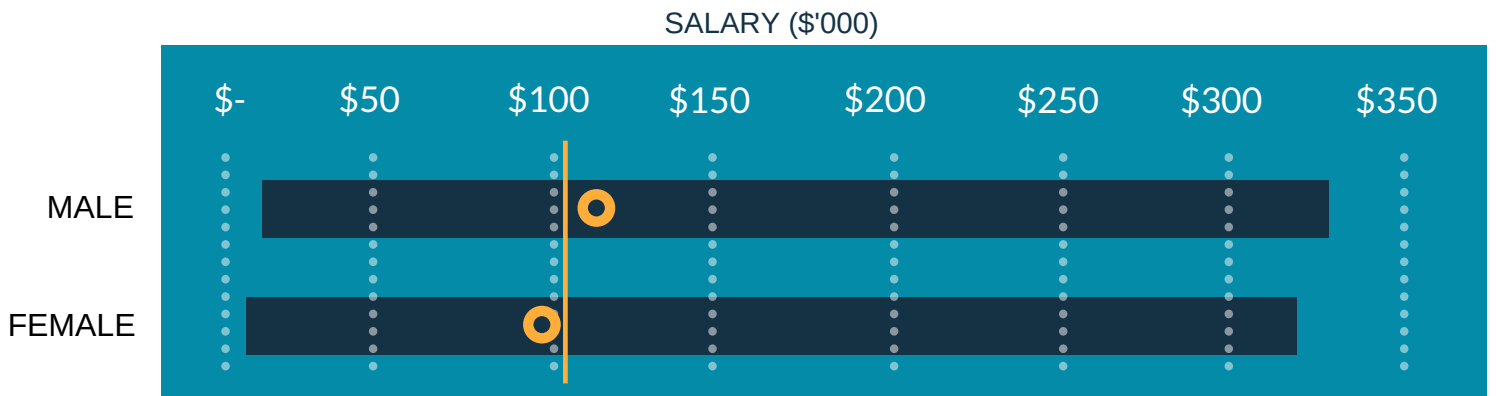


SALARIES

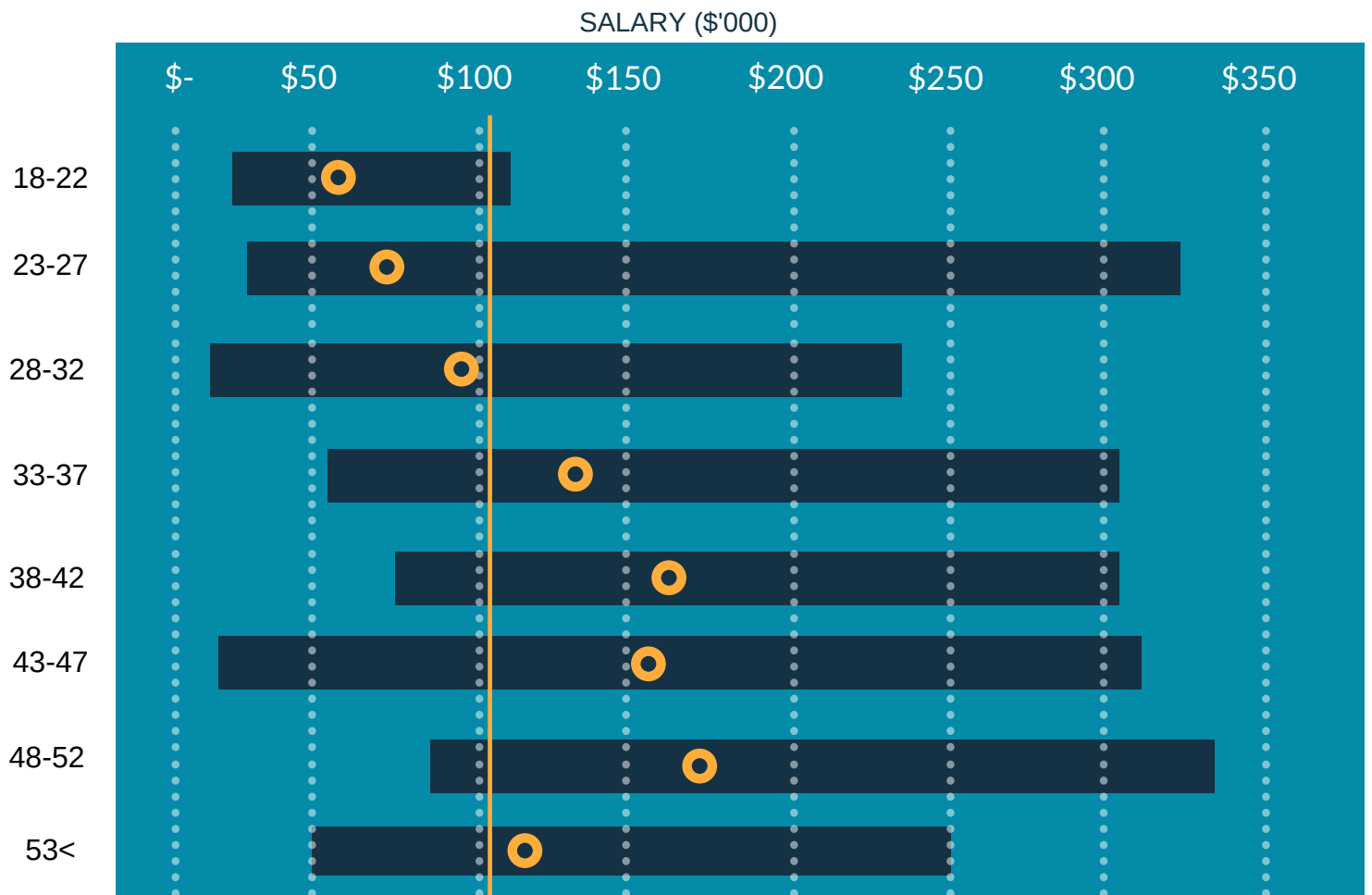


SALARIES BY GENDER

Based on the responses received, males average a higher average salary than females. However, this doesn't take into account PAE, practice area, and full time vs part time working arrangements. The highest salary received by a male was \$330,000 and the highest female salary was \$319,000 (for a 27 year old!). The lowest overall full time salary was reported by a female (\$32,000). The lowest salary reported by a male was \$50,000.

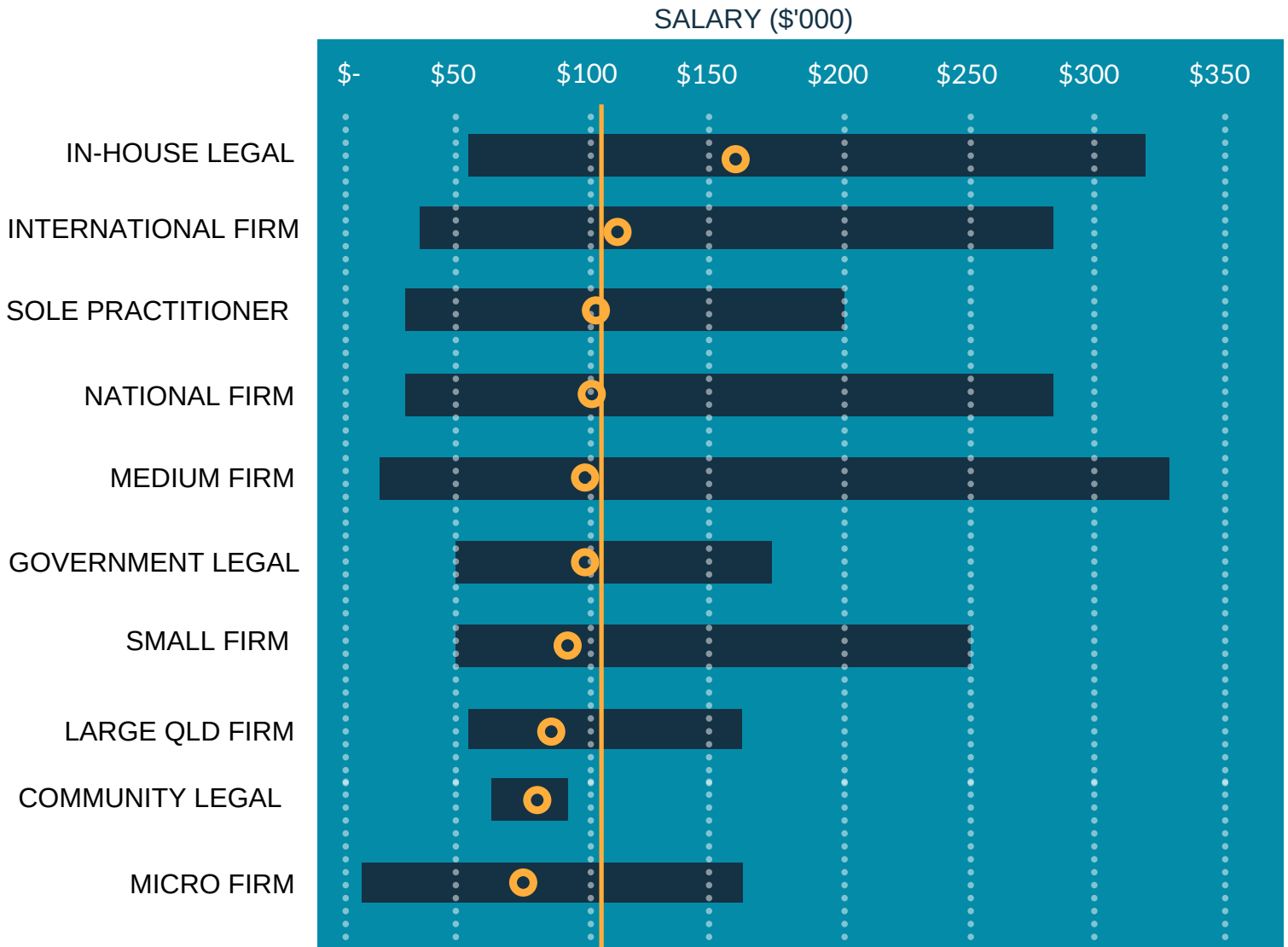


SALARIES BY AGE



SALARIES

SALARIES BY FIRM TYPE



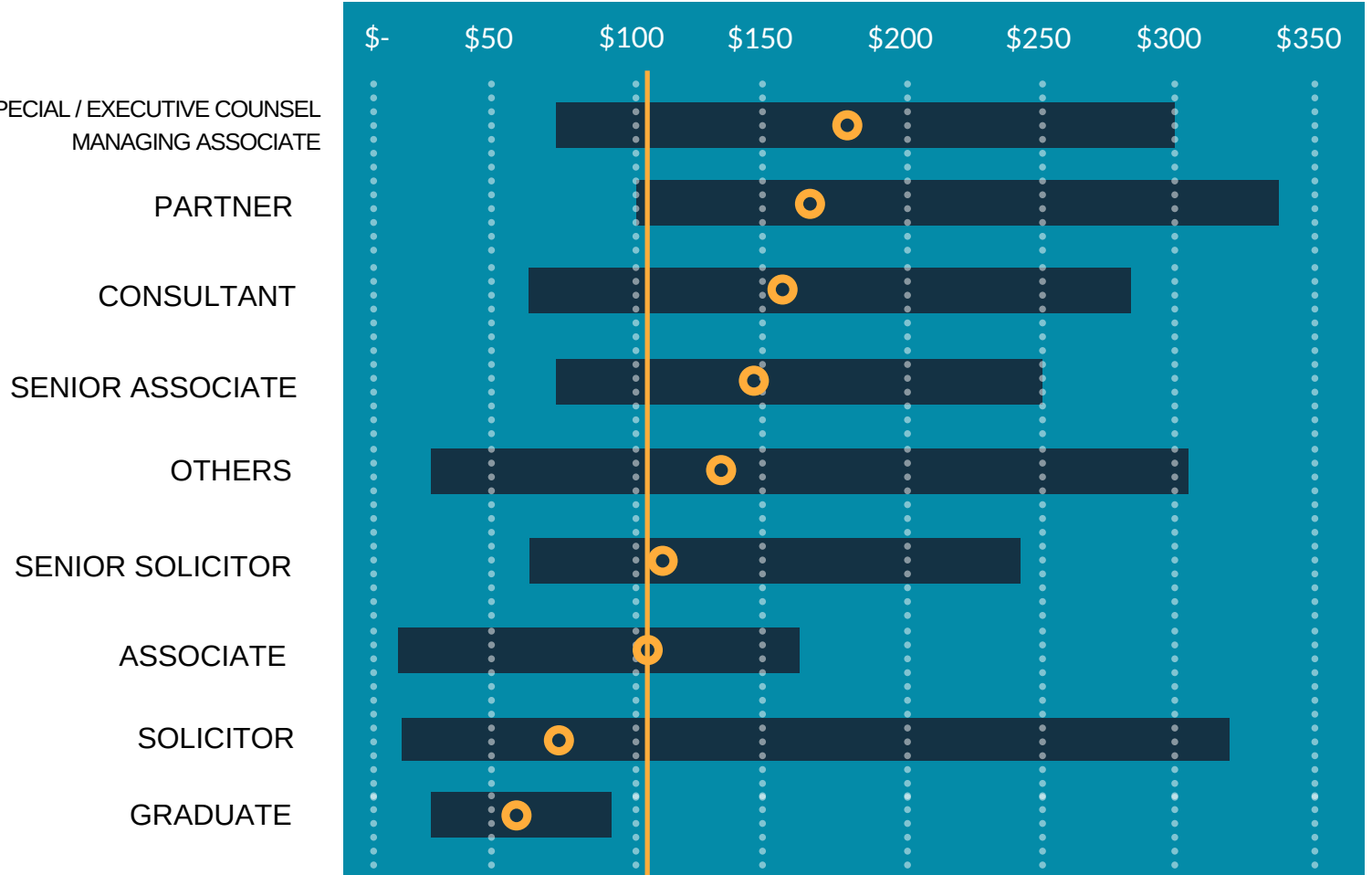
SALARIES BY FIRM LOCATION



SALARIES

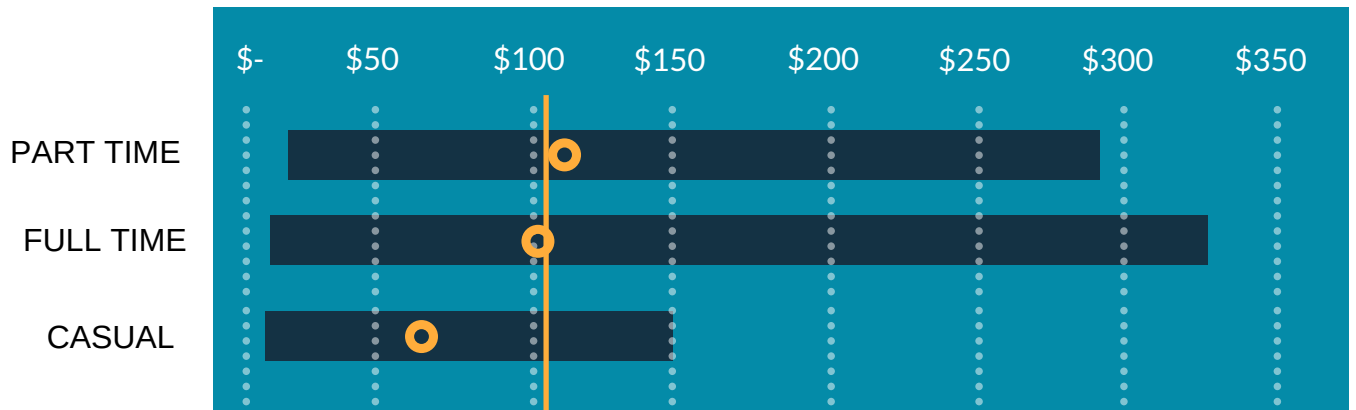
SALARIES BY POSITION

SALARY (\$'000)



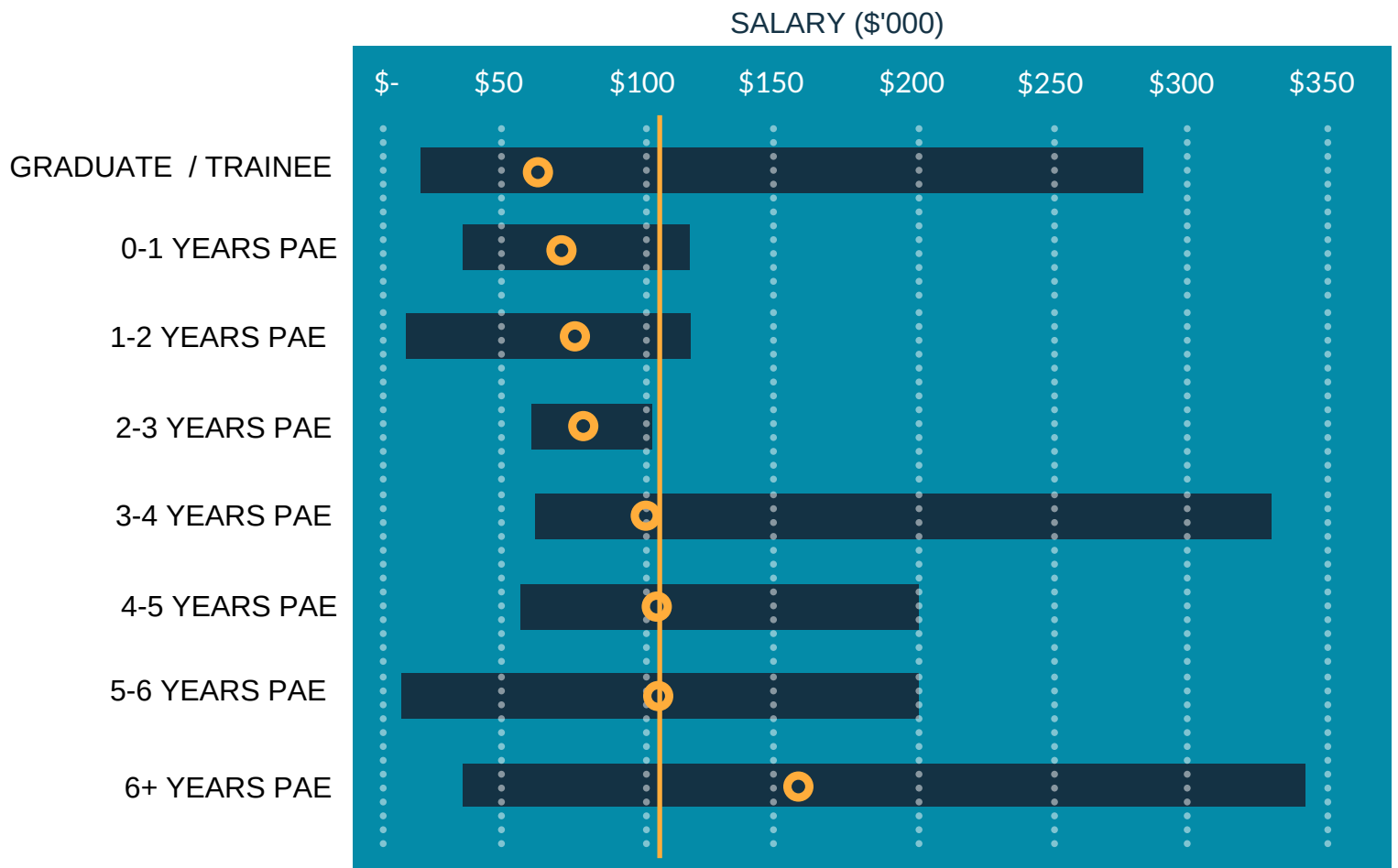
SALARIES BY EMPLOYMENT CAPACITY

SALARY (\$'000)

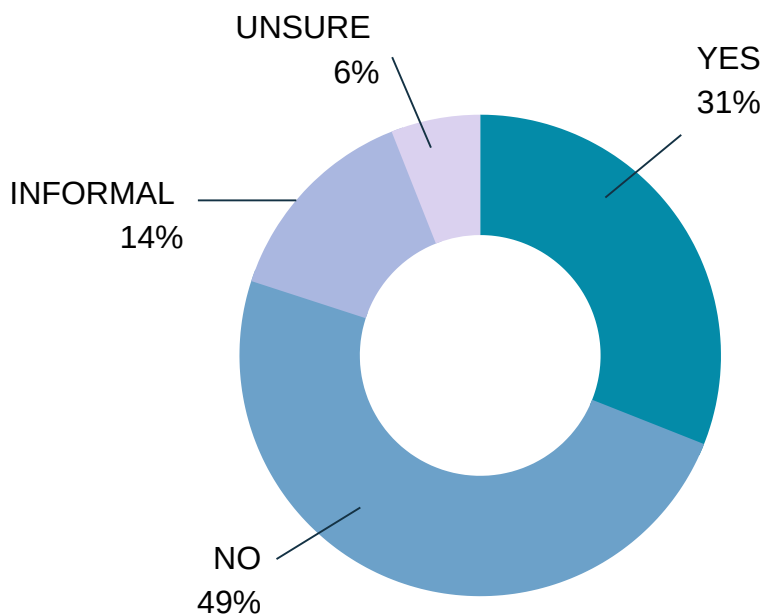


SALARIES

SALARIES BY PAE



DO YOU HAVE A BONUS SCHEME?



Nearly 50% of respondents reported that their firm does not offer a bonus scheme.



AVERAGE SALARY BY POST ADMISSION EXPERIENCE

GRADUATE / TRAINEE SOLICITOR

This year's data saw the average salary for graduates much closer than last year's across the different sized law firms. As expected in-house has the highest salary average for graduates. This is consistent with the trend that sees in-house lawyers paid better at an early stage in their careers but overtaken by their law firm counterparts as they become more senior.

Government would typically also have a higher average but was impacted by the lowest number in the sample. This year we also saw a number of participants at a graduate level who were on part time arrangements which for example impacted the lowest salary entry for Medium law firms.

FIRM SIZE	AVERAGE	LOWEST	HIGHEST
MICRO	\$42,500	\$31,000	\$51,000
SMALL	\$59,000	\$50,000	\$77,000
MEDIUM	\$62,000	\$17,000	\$77,000
LARGE	\$64,000	\$63,000	\$65,000
NATIONAL	\$65,000	\$42,000	\$75,000
INTERNATIONAL	\$69,000	\$62,000	\$76,000
GOVERNMENT	\$63,500	\$47,500	\$79,000
IN-HOUSE	\$84,000	\$84,000	\$84,000

0-1 YEARS PRAE

Due to sample size the average for in-house legal was a bit lower than we would expect.

Government is the highest paying by quite a way which reflects the fact that like in-house, salaries often start quite high but do not increase annually as much as they do in private practice.

FIRM SIZE	AVERAGE	LOWEST	HIGHEST
MICRO	\$60,000	\$31,000	\$82,000
SMALL	\$64,000	\$47,500	\$87,600
MEDIUM	-	-	-
LARGE	\$73,000	\$73,000	\$73,000
NATIONAL	\$74,000	\$74,000	\$74,000
INTERNATIONAL	\$79,000	\$75,000	\$88,500
GOVERNMENT	\$80,000	\$60,000	\$110,000
IN-HOUSE	\$68,000	\$60,000	\$71,500
COMMUNITY	\$71,500	\$71,500	\$71,500

1 - 2 YEARS PRAE

It is interesting to see that the highest paid lawyers at this level are in the Micro and Large law firms and not in the international or national law firms.

Because they are often run more cost effectively many smaller law firms pay very well compared to their top tier equivalents, particularly when bonuses are taken into account.

FIRM SIZE	AVERAGE	LOWEST	HIGHEST
MICRO	\$70,000	\$55,000	\$111,020
SMALL	\$71,000	\$55,000	\$93,500
MEDIUM	\$71,500	\$62,000	\$93,000
LARGE	\$86,000	\$71,000	\$109,000
NATIONAL	\$76,000	\$62,000	\$88,000
INTERNATIONAL	\$81,000	\$77,000	\$86,000
GOVERNMENT	\$90,000	\$80,500	\$96,000
IN-HOUSE	\$86,500	\$67,000	\$107,200
COMMUNITY	\$75,000	\$65,000	\$91,500

2 - 3 YEARS PAE

The highest recorded salaries at the 2-3 year PAE level are very close reflecting the fact that lawyers are very profitable for their firms at this level. In addition, this is one of the most in demand levels for firms seeking lateral hires.

Therefore, in order to retain good lawyers, firms are very conscious to ensure they are competitive on salary, particularly for their high performers.

FIRM SIZE	AVERAGE	LOWEST	HIGHEST
MICRO	\$69,000	\$59,000	\$93,000
SMALL	\$79,000	\$65,000	\$100,000
MEDIUM	\$78,000	\$62,000	\$85,000
LARGE	\$90,000	\$75,000	\$105,000
NATIONAL	\$86,000	\$62,000	\$100,000
INTERNATIONAL	\$89,500	\$80,000	\$99,000
GOVERNMENT	\$94,000	\$90,000	\$98,000
IN-HOUSE	\$95,000	\$95,000	\$95,000
COMMUNITY	\$76,000	\$70,000	\$82,000

3 - 4 YEARS PAE

We had to adjust the average for in-house for this level given the highest salary recorded.

However, but for that outlier (and much like last year), this 3-4 year PAE level is the tipping point where in-house salaries begin to be outstripped by law firms.

The lowest salary recorded for a number of entries also reflected part time/casual arrangements impacting salary level.

FIRM SIZE	AVERAGE	LOWEST	HIGHEST
MICRO	\$89,000	\$78,000	\$125,000
SMALL	\$87,000	\$59,950	\$140,000
MEDIUM	\$86,000	\$67,000	\$100,000
LARGE	\$95,000	\$95,000	\$95,000
NATIONAL	\$101,000	\$70,000	\$148,000
INTERNATIONAL	\$102,000	\$77,000	\$135,000
GOVERNMENT	\$107,500	\$96,000	\$122,000
IN-HOUSE	\$105,000	\$80,000	\$319,000

4 - 5 YEARS PRAE

The significant range between high and low salaries in firms can be explained by Associate and Senior Associate promotions at this level which have a substantial positive impact on salary.

FIRM SIZE	AVERAGE	LOWEST	HIGHEST
MICRO	\$75,000	\$55,000	\$95,000
SMALL	\$95,000	\$80,000	\$115,000
MEDIUM	-	-	-
LARGE	-	-	-
NATIONAL	\$111,500	\$83,000	\$140,000
INTERNATIONAL	\$120,000	\$110,000	\$130,000
GOVERNMENT	\$109,000	\$95,000	\$128,000
IN-HOUSE	\$142,000	\$107,500	\$200,000
COMMUNITY	\$82,000	\$82,000	\$82,000

5 - 6 YEARS PAE

As lawyers become more senior there is an increasing disparity in salary between high performers and the rest. This is very evident in the figures at the 5-6 year PAE level.

The lowest figures were also impacted by lawyers who were part time or on arrangements other than full time, permanent. This reflects the impacts of parental responsibilities on work arrangements and therefore salaries.

FIRM SIZE	AVERAGE	LOWEST	HIGHEST
MICRO	\$105,000	\$105,000	\$200,000
SMALL	\$102,000	\$71,500	\$125,000
MEDIUM	\$101,500	\$93,000	\$115,000
LARGE	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$55,000
NATIONAL	\$117,000	\$93,000	\$143,000
INTERNATIONAL	\$130,000	\$75,000	\$150,000
GOVERNMENT	-	-	-
IN-HOUSE	\$125,000	\$97,000	\$155,000
COMMUNITY	\$77,000	\$77,000	\$77,000

6+ YEARS PAE

The figures in the table below are all the average salary for each position from the data collected from lawyers with 6+ PAE.

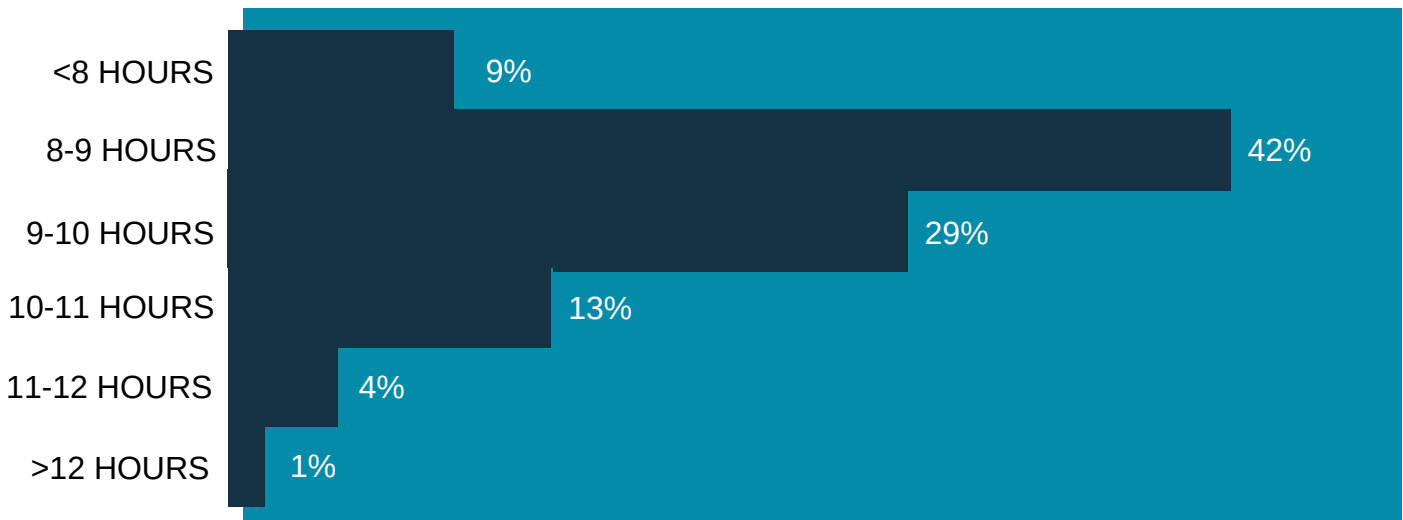
The variance in salary at this more senior level is significant given many factors influence remuneration at this point in a lawyer's career. These include responsibilities outside work that impact on participation as well as responsibilities at work including staff supervision and client introductions.

Additionally, practice area and profitability of the particular practice have an impact on remuneration.

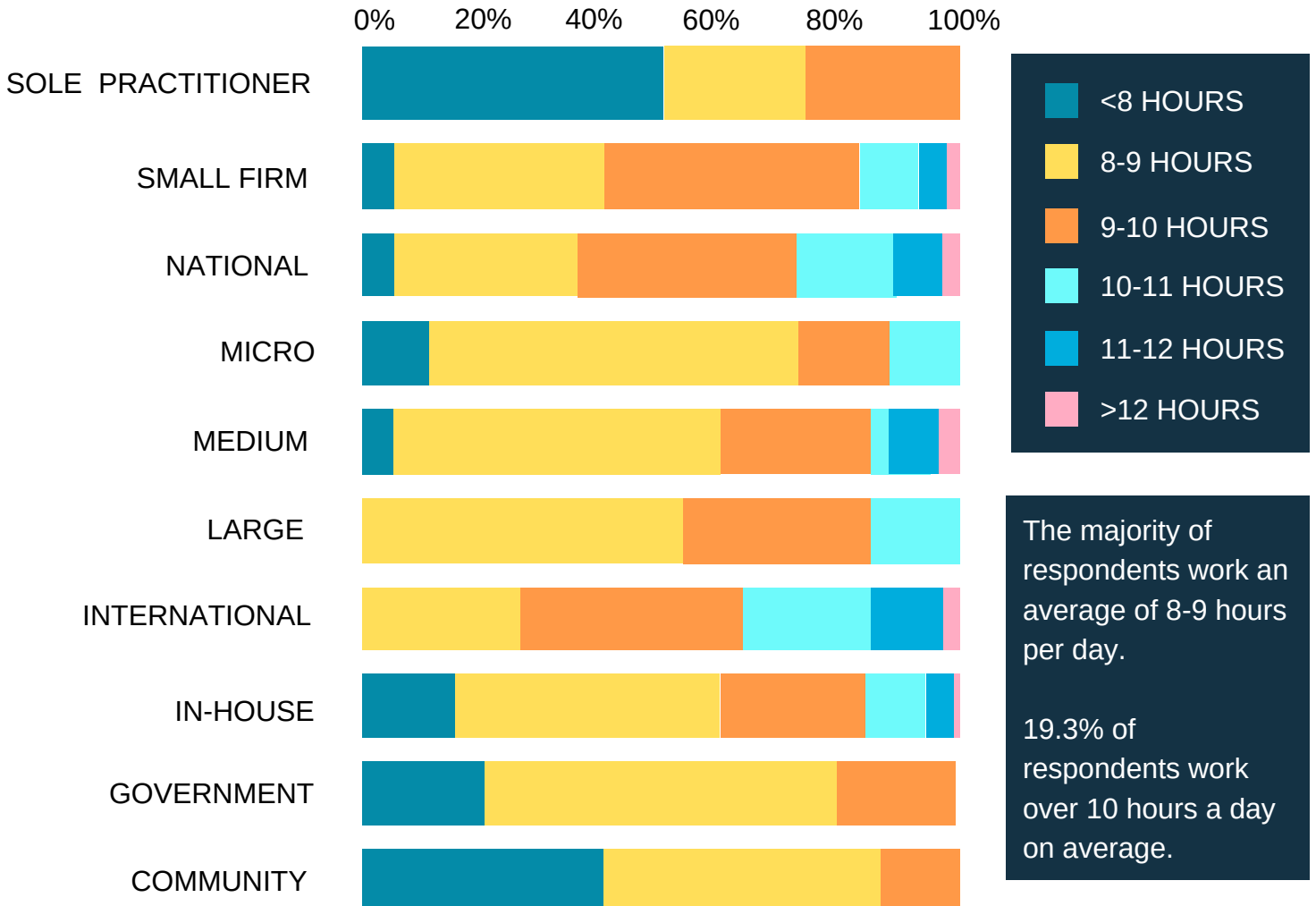
	MICRO	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	NATIONAL	INTERNATIONAL	GOVERNMENT	IN-HOUSE	COMMUNITY
SOLICITOR	\$98,000	\$96,000	-	-	\$100,000	-	\$121,000	\$111,000	-
ASSOCIATE	\$112,500	\$140,000	\$70,000	-	\$122,000	-	-	-	-
SENIOR ASSOCIATE	\$132,500	\$146,000	\$125,000	-	\$159,000	\$177,000	-	\$220,000	-
SENIOR SOLICITOR	\$90,000	-	-	-	\$102,000	\$135,000	\$120,000	\$184,000	\$83,000
CONSULTANT	-	\$175,000	-	-	\$280,000	-	-	-	-
PARTNER	\$125,000	\$157,500	\$208,000	-	\$240,000	-	-	-	-
GENERAL COUNSEL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$245,000	-
SPECIAL / EXECUTIVE COUNSEL, MANAGING ASSOCIATE.		\$136,000	\$195,000	\$165,000	\$164,000	\$243,500	\$161,000	\$229,000	-

HOURS AND BILLABLES

AVERAGE HOURS WORKED PER DAY



AVERAGE HOURS WORKED BY FIRM TYPE

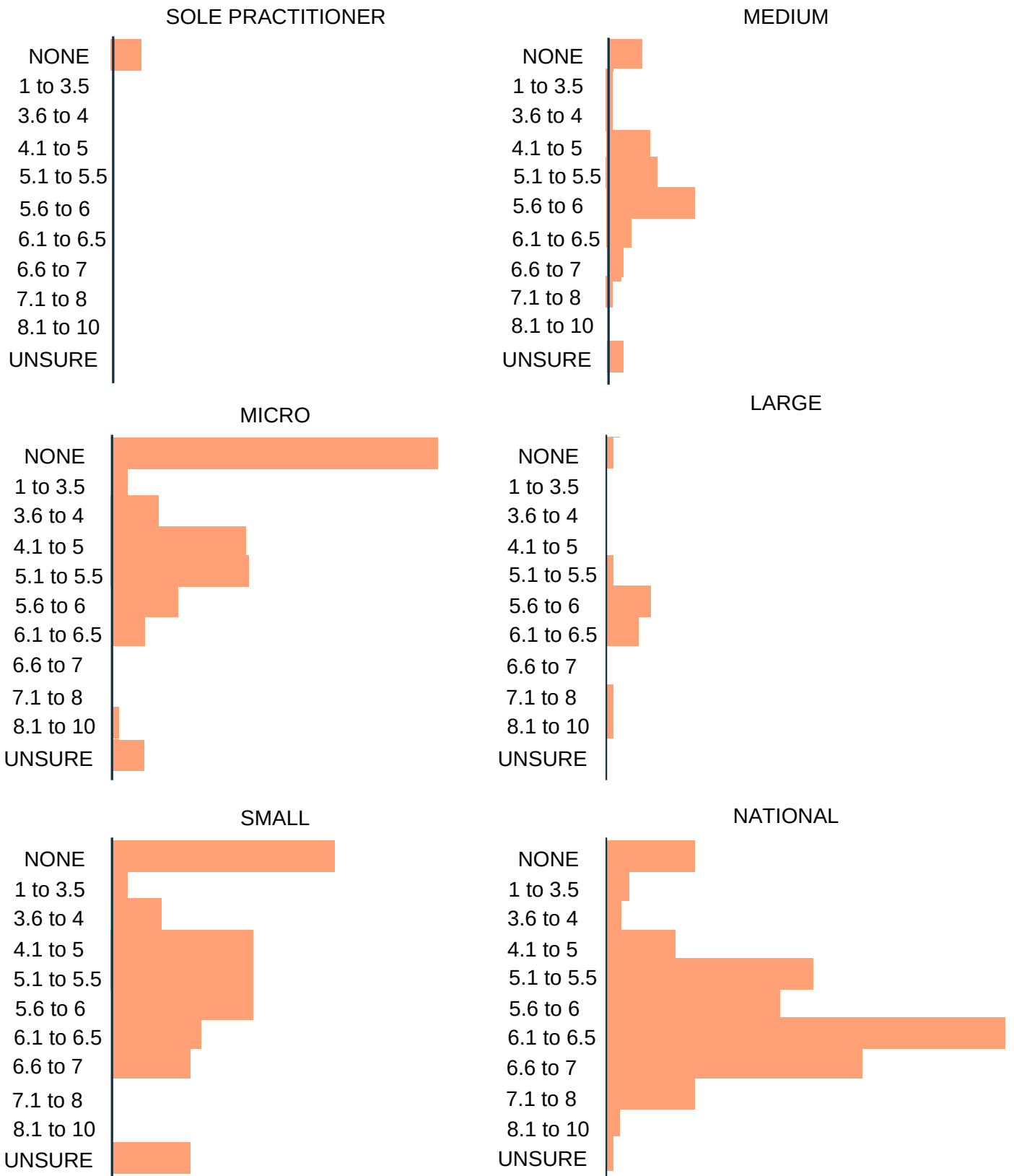


The majority of respondents work an average of 8-9 hours per day.

19.3% of respondents work over 10 hours a day on average.

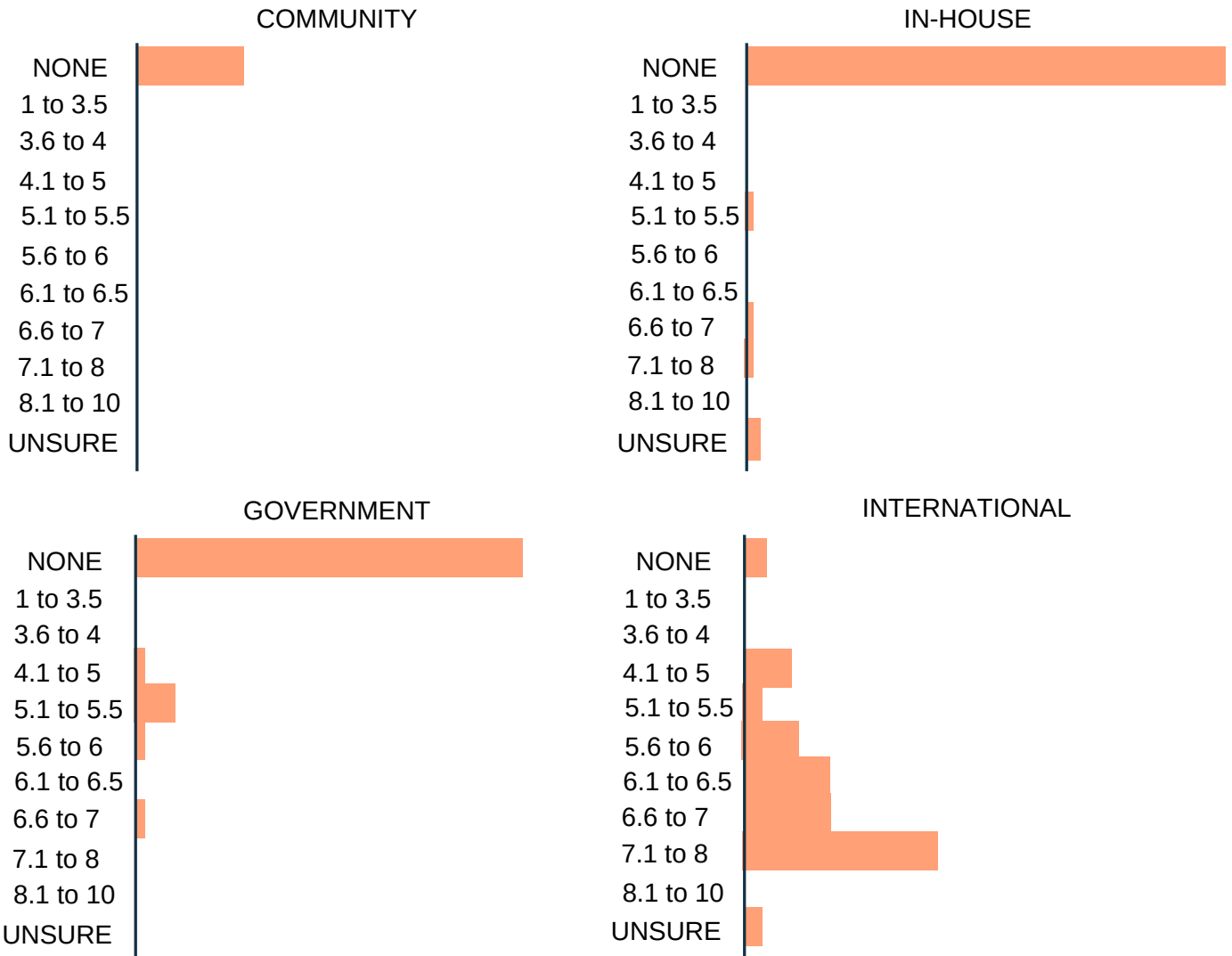
BILLABLES

BILLABLE HOURS BY FIRM SIZE



BILLABLES

BILLABLE HOURS BY FIRM SIZE

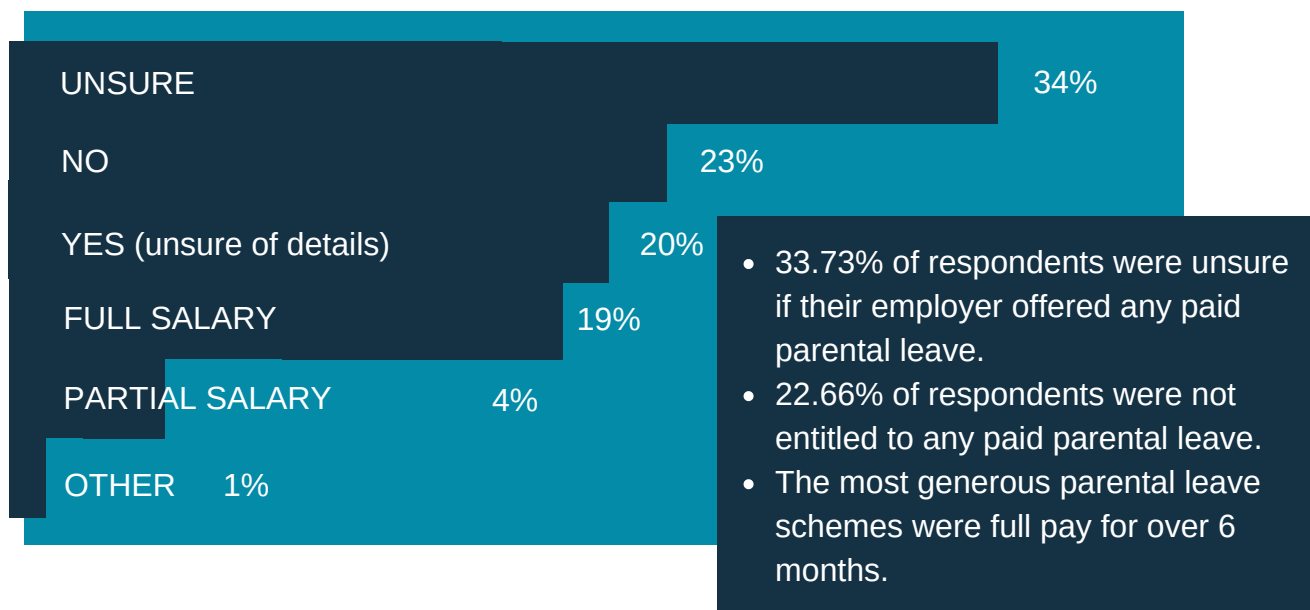


National and international law firms appear to have the highest billable hour budgets. Micro, small and government roles have the highest reports of no billable targets.

The most common budget for billable hours was 6.1 – 6.5 hours per day (13.5%). Only 4.1% of respondents had a budget of under 4 hours per day. 6% of respondents had a budget of over 7 billable hours per day. 3.2% of respondents did not know their billable target (yikes).

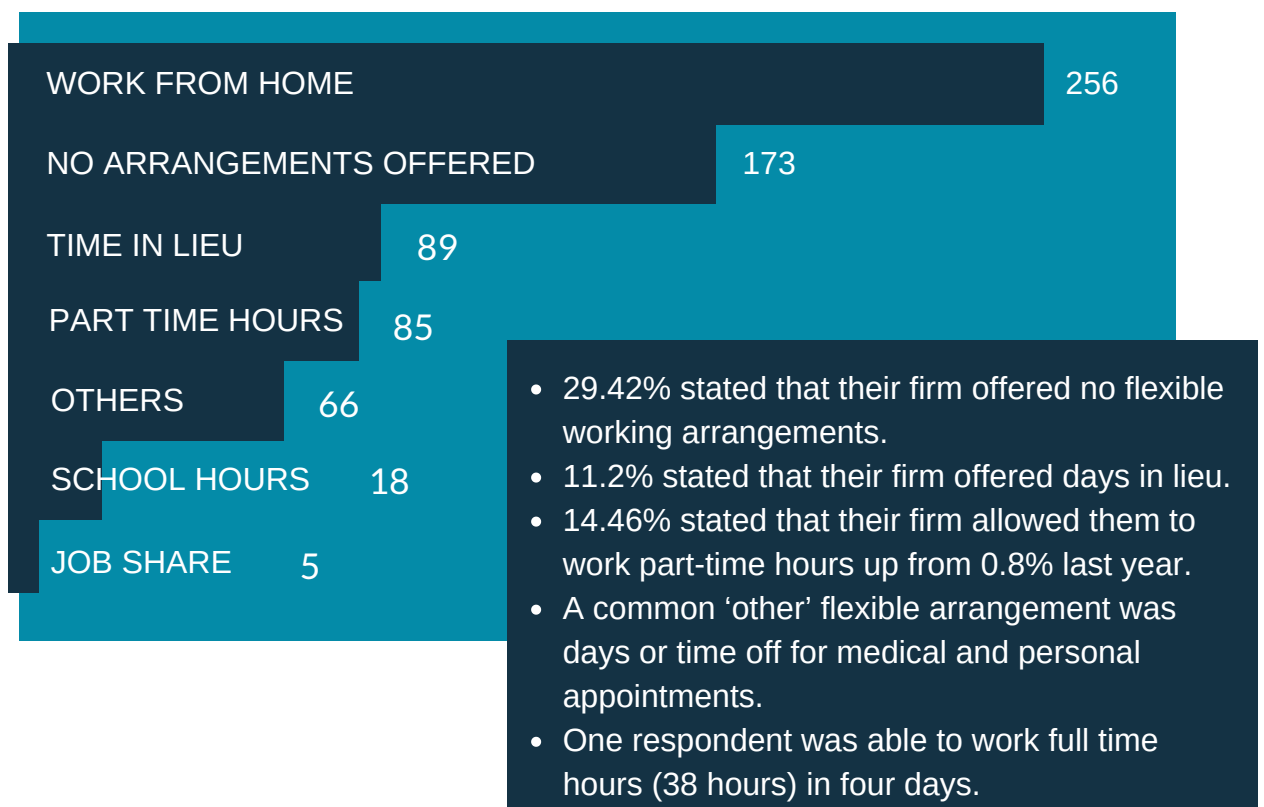
ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)



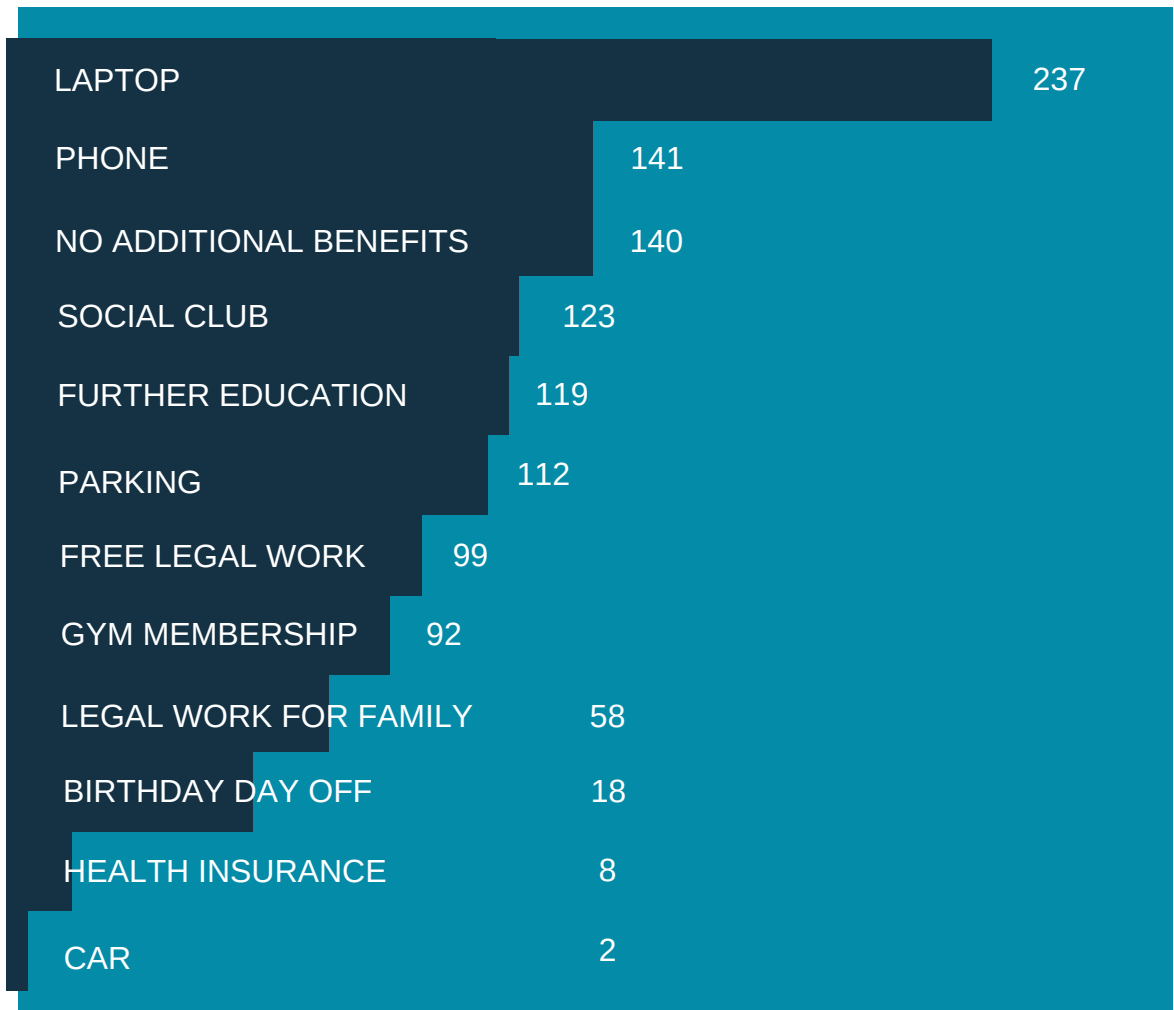
FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS (NUMBER OF MENTIONS)

43.54% of respondents indicated that they had the option of working from home up from 29.5% in 2019. It will be interesting to see how this compares next year.



ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

OTHER BENEFITS (NUMBER OF MENTIONS)



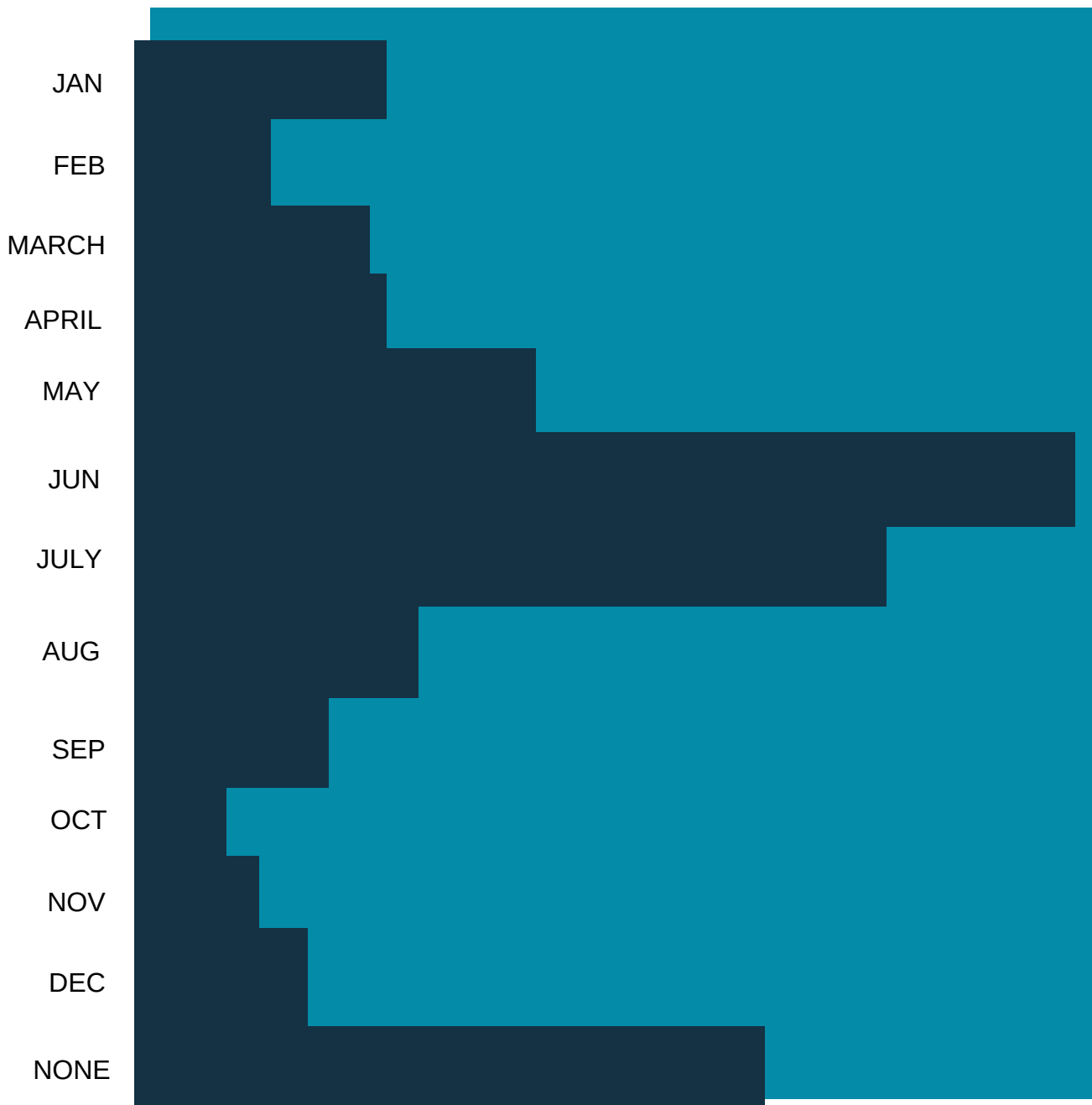
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE TAKEN EXTENDED BREAKS



PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

SALARY PERFORMANCE REVIEW FREQUENCY

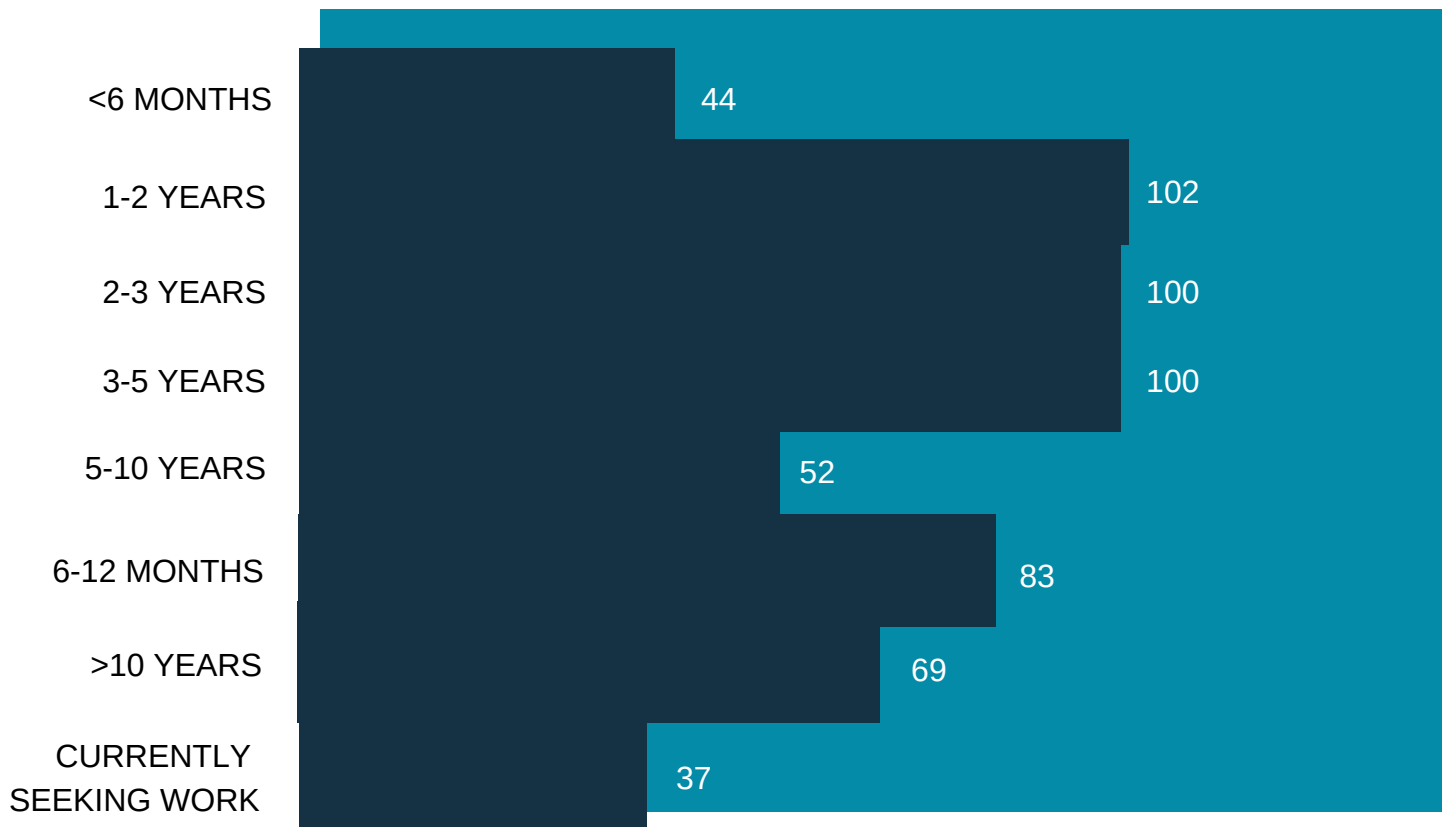
Most lawyers have their performance review either mid year or end of year. But what remains a concern to many in the profession – particularly at the junior level – is the lack of any formal annual review process. This lack of transparency has consistently been a major source of frustration for many lawyers and a contributing factor in our decision to produce an annual salary survey for those in the legal profession.



STAYING POWER & FLEXIBILITY

EMPLOYMENT PLAN (EXPECTED DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT)

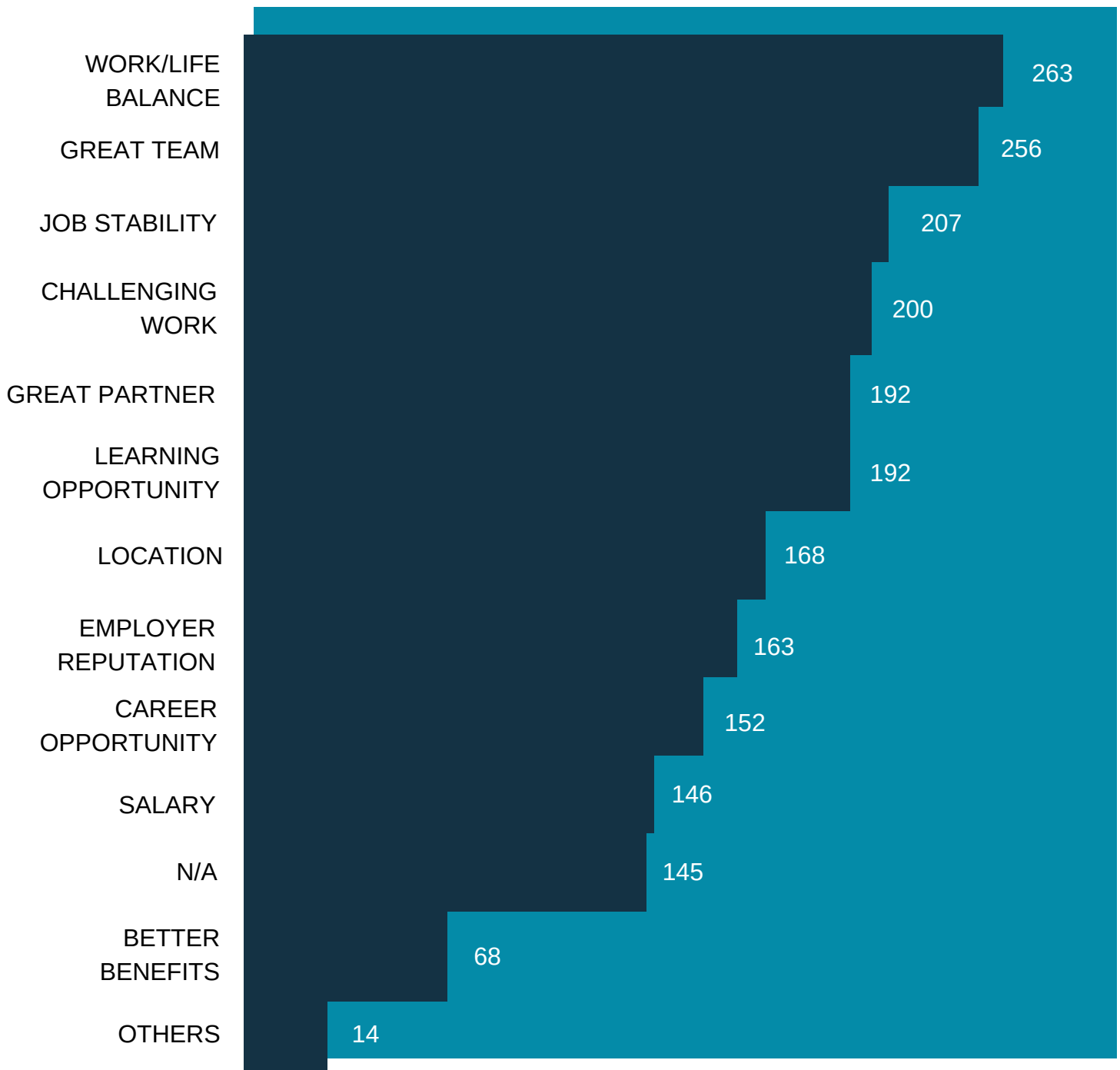
Only 8.84% of respondents expect to stay at their current employer for a further five to ten years and 14.12% of respondents can see themselves staying for over 10 years.



REASONS TO STAY / LEAVE

REASONS TO STAY WITH YOUR CURRENT ORGANISATION

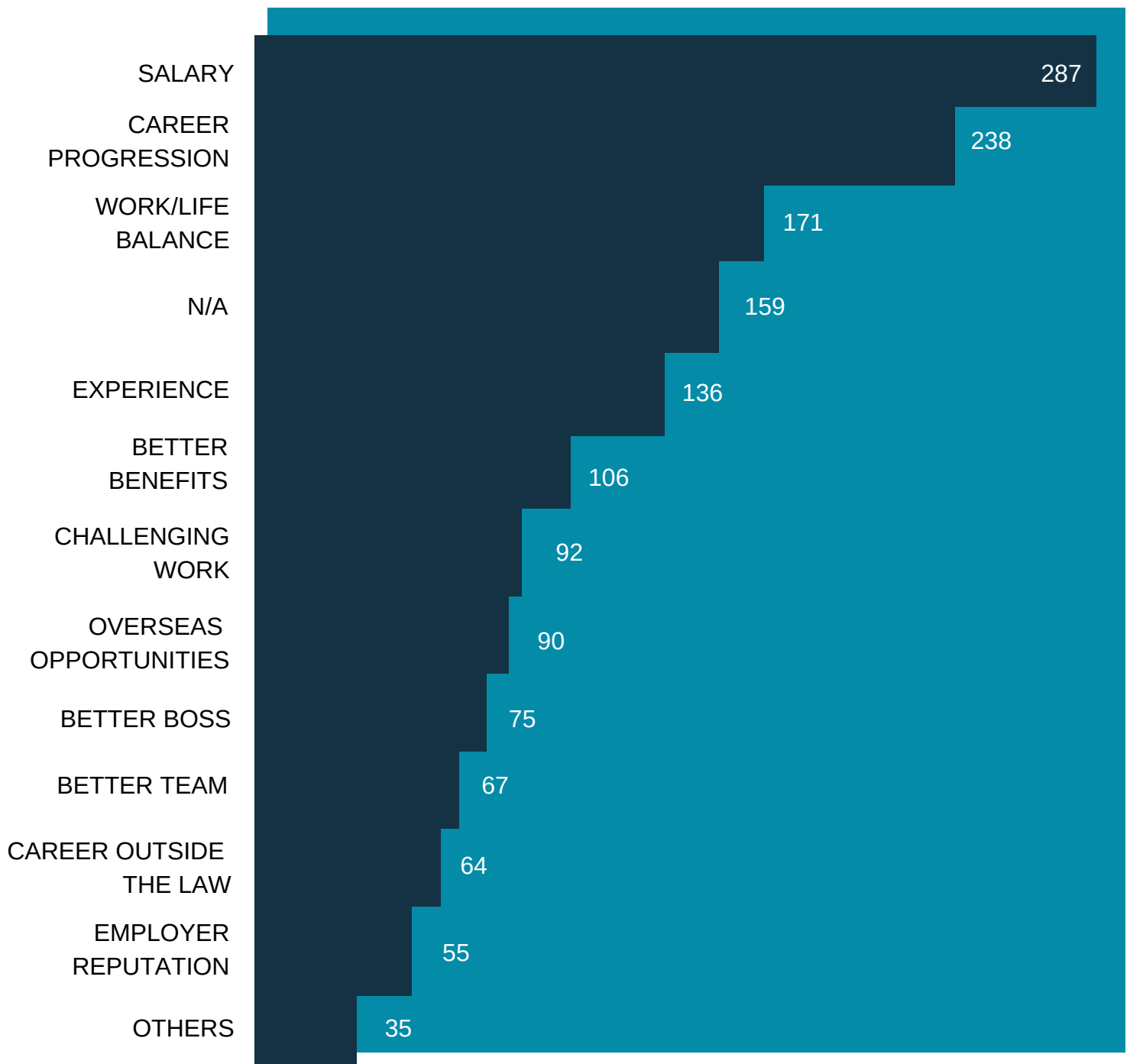
The number one reason identified by respondents this year as a reason to stay with their employer was work/life balance with 44.73% of respondents indicating this was their key motivator to stay. This was closely followed by a great team (43.54%), job stability (35.2%) and challenging work (34.01%).



REASONS TO STAY / LEAVE

REASONS TO LEAVE YOUR CURRENT ORGANISATION

The number one reason identified by respondents this year as a reason to leave their employer was salary, with 48.81% of respondents indicating this was their key motivator to move firms. This was closely followed by career opportunities (40.48%) and work/life balance (29.08%).





CONCLUSION

The goal for producing the 2020 Queensland Legal Salary Survey was straight forward – for young lawyers to “know their worth”.

Knowledge is power, and with this document, we hope that young lawyers are empowered in their next pay review or job interview.

KNOWLEDGE
LEADS
IS
POWER

