



QUEENSLAND
YOUNG
LAWYERS



SALARY AND CAREERS GUIDE

2023



2023

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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 and Ronan Analytics, the QYL Executive Committee has worked tirelessly to collate and present the results of the Queensland Legal Salary Survey 2023.



Beau Foley
President



Kimia Zarei
Vice President



Sam Billingsley-Dadd
Treasurer



Rhiannon Dudley
Secretary

QUEENSLAND YOUNG LAWYERS



FROM THE QYL TEAM

QYL are thrilled to release the results of the Queensland Legal Salary Survey 2023.

We enjoy releasing a new salary survey each year because as young lawyers embark on their professional journeys, it is essential to stay abreast of the evolving landscape of our profession. The salary survey aims to provide genuine insights into two critical areas: salaries and working conditions. By providing insights into these key areas, the salary survey equips young lawyers with the knowledge needed to navigate the financial aspect of their early careers. We truly believe that having an awareness of the data and “knowing your worth” will enable young lawyers to make informed decisions, leverage their skills and get more where it counts.

QYL are also proud to continue our strong partnership with Peppercorn Recruitment in what has been a big year for the salary survey. We have been getting questions about the salary survey from more young lawyers than in any previous years. This is no surprise because in many ways, the legal profession is almost unrecognisable from what it was just five years ago – female graduates now outnumber their male counterparts two to one, firms are quickly embracing and being impacted by the developing world of artificial intelligence, and workplace flexibility in the form of working from home is here to stay. As you will see, these changing dynamics are reflected within the results of the salary survey.

So, you have read the salary survey and you are thinking “now what”?

The salary survey is such an important tool to put all the numbers on the negotiating table and to be able to back up what you are asking for from your current or prospective employer to provide. The data within the salary survey is collected by lawyers, from lawyers. This means that the data accurately reflects the real salaries and working conditions of young lawyers in Queensland.

In 2023, despite the pressures placed on the market by inflation, young lawyers remain in demand and salary increases remain consistently strong across the board. More pleasingly are the salaries for law graduates, which the salary survey shows have grown at an impressive rate.

Finally, we would like to thank our gold sponsor and partner in this project, Peppercorn Recruitment. It is a pleasure working with you and producing this valuable resource. We would also like to thank Ronan Analytics for assisting our discovery of the insights and analysis of this year’s salary survey.

Beau Foley

*Queensland Young Lawyers 2023 President
June 2023*

PEPPERCORN RECRUITMENT

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 our candidates to the right jobs. We take the time to understand the unique experience and career goals of our candidates as well as the intricacies of the business and culture of our clients. This allows us to give you an insight into what employers are going to work best for your specific career aspirations.

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



Peter Liaw
Partner



Ross Dakin
Partner



SALARY AND CAREERS GUIDE

Peppercorn Recruitment is proud to have partnered with QYL and Ronan Analytics to bring you the sixth edition of the Queensland Legal Salary Survey.

We take great pride in providing you a reliable and accurate guide to confidently determine what you should be paid in the current market. As such, the Queensland Legal Salary Survey 2023 represents the only comprehensive exploration of lawyers' compensation across the state.

Having meticulously analysed the data collected over a seven-week period from February to April this year, it is with great anticipation that we present the findings, derived from the input of 615 individual respondents. The data reveals a consistent upward trajectory in salaries, this year an average increase of 5.4% compared to last year.

While generally the increases did not match those seen last year, the fact that there was a decent uplift this year comes as no surprise. Reflecting on the past year, Queensland's legal market may not be as white hot as 2022, but lawyers at all levels remain in high demand in equal measure by law firms and in-house employers. There remains an acute shortage of lawyers at two to seven years of post-admission experience as lawyers continue to seek opportunities abroad, the demand for lawyers to move into the in-house and government sectors continues to grow and lawyers continue to have career opportunities outside the profession.

Increasing salaries are not the only trend that has continued from last year. The work from home experiment continues with a concerted effort by many firms in the last 12 months to bring employees back to the office more often than not. And so "work from home" has been replaced in the most part by "hybrid work". This has been a welcome development by the bulk of lawyers we speak with who are now enjoying the best of both worlds.

As we look at the year ahead, it would appear that the legal sector in Queensland is poised for continued growth, despite global and domestic economic uncertainty. However, we expect that growth to be in certain areas of the law and at certain levels rather than the blanket growth across all areas and at all levels that we have seen in recent years. Hopefully next year we can continue the trend of growing the number of respondents involved in this survey so that we can dive deeper into a larger data pool for you.

This survey would not be possible without the dedication and commitment of our survey partners from the QYL committee and Ronan Analytics. It takes countless hours to transform the data collected into this publication as well as the fantastic interactive dashboard that made its debut last year. We value your feedback on how we present this data and hope that you find this information useful be that for your salary review discussions or simply to confidently know your worth. Every career is unique so if this survey raises questions for you, or you want to discuss your individual situation, we would be more than happy to speak with you.

Peter Liaw and Ross Dakin
Peppercorn Recruitment
June 2023

NOTABLE DATA POINTS

Welcome to the 2023 Queensland Legal Salary Survey.

In putting together this survey, we are using real data provided to us directly by lawyers across Queensland to ensure it is authentic, reliable and a valuable resource for you and your peers to point to as evidence of where you sit in the market. Now in its sixth year, the survey is quickly becoming the go-to resource for early career Queensland lawyers to understand their worth in the legal market.

1

The majority of respondents were from National Law Firms. While there was a decrease in respondents from Small Law Firms in 2022, there was an increase in responses this year from Small Law Firms (+7%) and Government Legal (+2%). There was also a decrease in respondents from In-house Legal (-6%) and International Law Firms (-4%).

2

When comparing full time positions at different PAE levels, women out earned men at the 0 to 1 years PAE, 1 to 2 years PAE and, most significantly, at the 5 to 6 years PAE (a difference of \$9,593). However, men earned more in other experience levels, with the largest gap occurring at 6 years PAE, where they earned \$20,993 more. In the 2023 survey, no male respondents worked part time, while 8% of women had part time employment.

NOTABLE DATA POINTS

3

Salaries of respondents increased, on average, from \$120,302 in 2020 to \$127,145 in 2023. Historically, the largest increase in average salary was between 5 to 6 years PAE and 3 to 4 years PAE, which had a 13.8% increase compared to an average 5.4% increase for all other years. The increase was significant but below the 11% increase that occurred from the previous year.

4

70% of respondents indicated that they had the option of working from home: a 5% increase from 2022, demonstrating that working from home is continuing to become a more common staple condition of working within the industry.

5

20% of respondents stated they were not offered flexible work arrangements: a 3% increase compared to 2022, representing a decrease in flexibility within the legal industry.

6

Despite salary being a lower reason why employees stay, it is consistently the number one factor why people leave.

While money may not present the greatest reward incentive to retain talent, it cannot be denied as the main attractor of talent.

DEFINITIONS

Firm Sizes

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

Other terms

- "PAE" means post admission experience
- Special Counsel includes Managing Associate, Executive Counsel and Counsel
- Graduate includes Trainee Solicitor

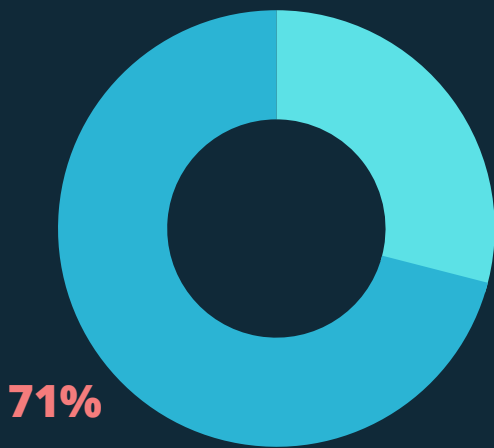


SURVEY RESPONDENTS

TOTAL SURVEY RESPONDENTS IN 2023:



SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY GENDER



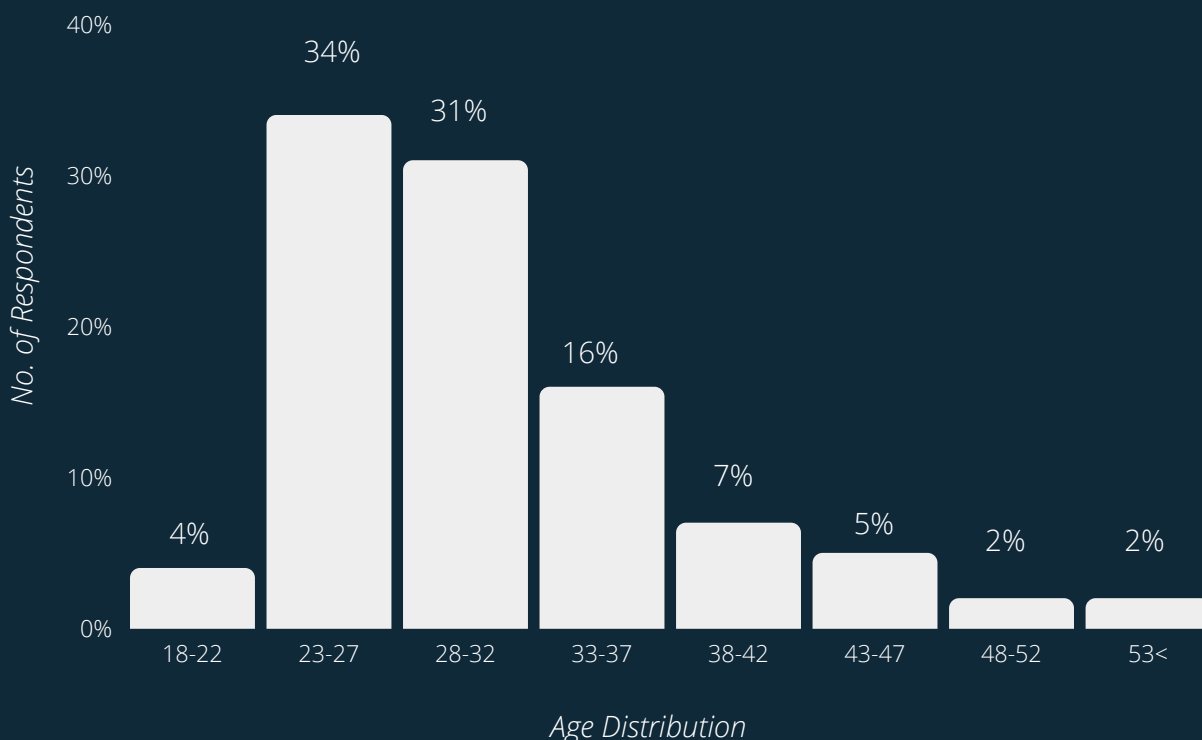
29%

The majority of survey respondents were female. This continues to reflect previous surveys and broader statistics that show female law graduates outnumber males 2 to 1.

Female Male

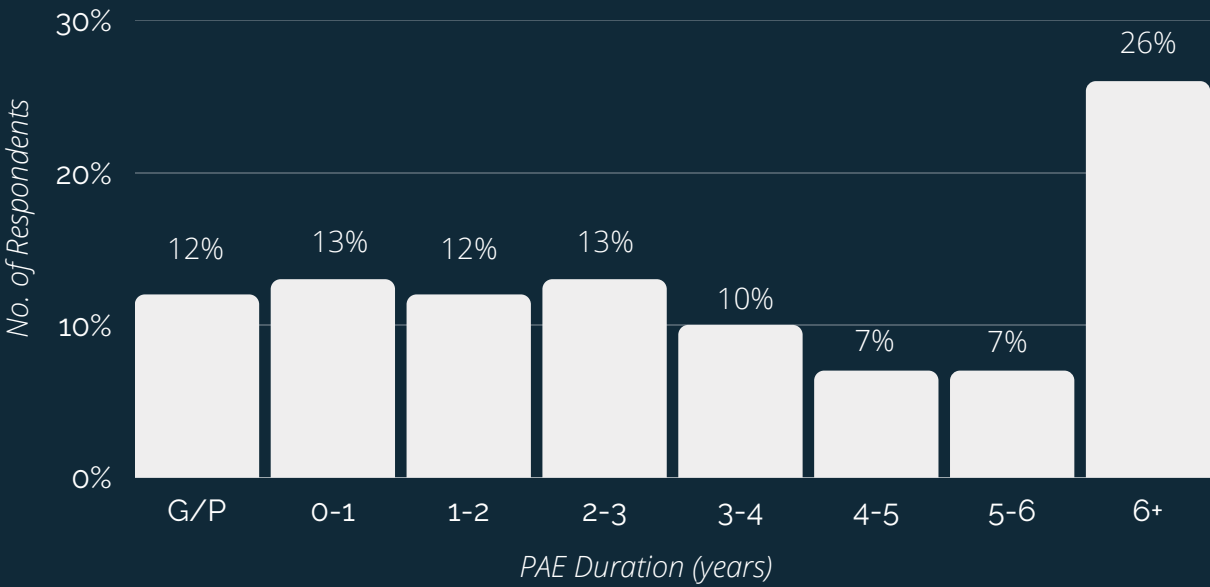
SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY AGE

85% of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 37, this was 5% higher than 2022 suggesting an older cohort. 26% of respondents had at least 6 years PAE, representing a 5% decrease since 2022, showing it is not just “young” lawyers who want to know their worth.



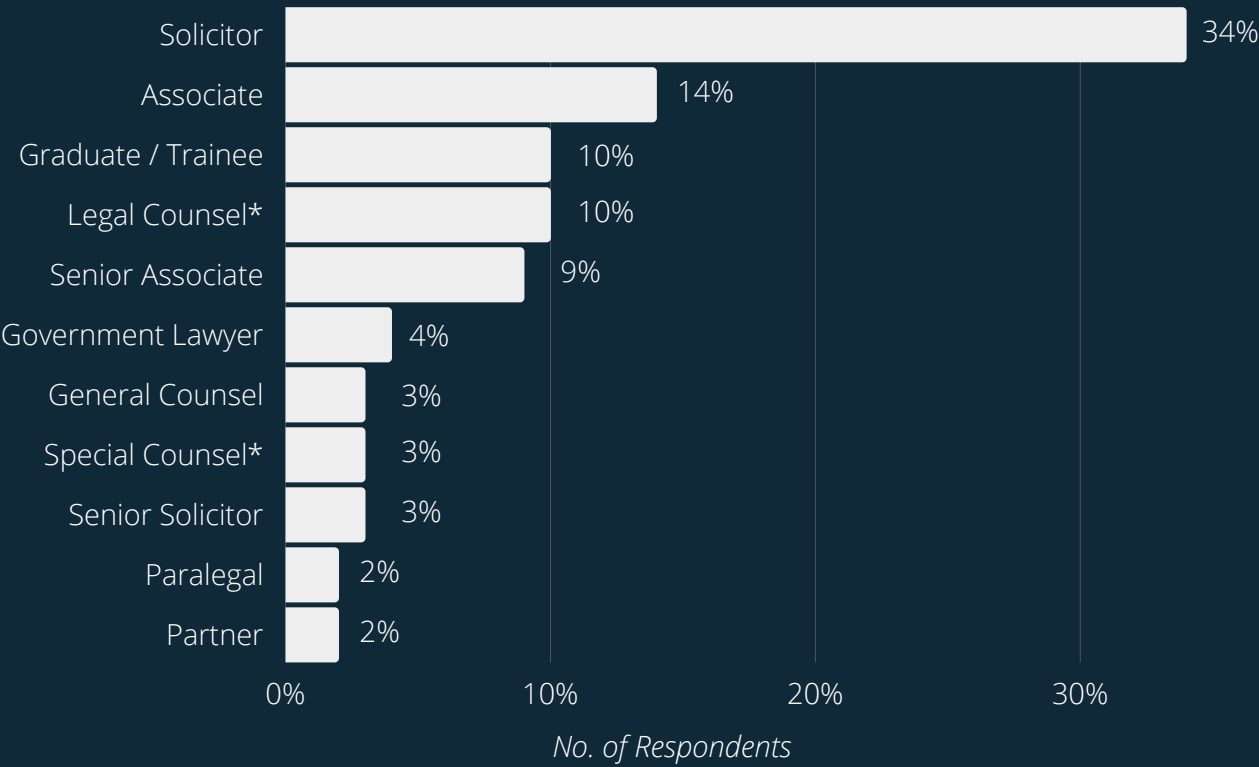
SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY PAE

The greatest number of respondents were 6+ years PAE.



SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY POSITION

The largest proportion of respondents were solicitors (34%). 2023 saw a lower proportion of In-house Counsel / Senior Legal Counsel (-4%) and Graduate / Trainee Solicitors (-5%) than 2022.



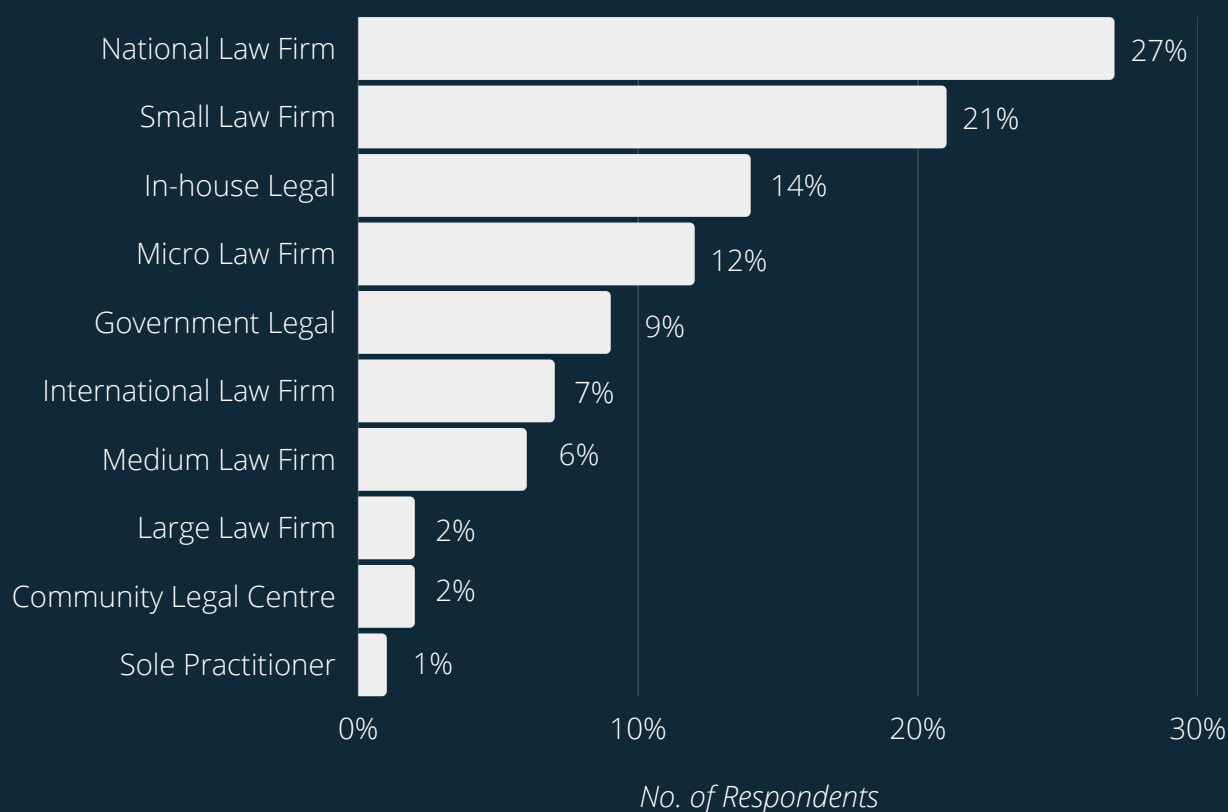
*Legal Counsel also includes: In-House Counsel and Senior Legal Counsel

*Special Counsel also includes: Executive Counsel and Managing Associate

*Categories with less than two responses have been removed.

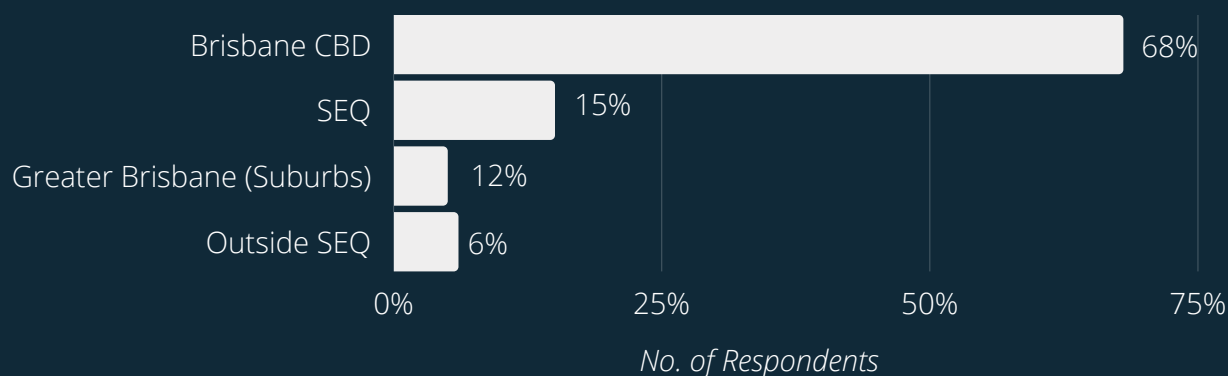
SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY FIRM

Similar to 2022's results, the greatest number of respondents came from National Law Firms. However, 2023 saw a significant increase in respondents from Small Law Firms (+7%) and Government Legal (+2%) and a decrease in In-house Legal (-6%) and International Law Firms (-4%).



SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY FIRM LOCATION

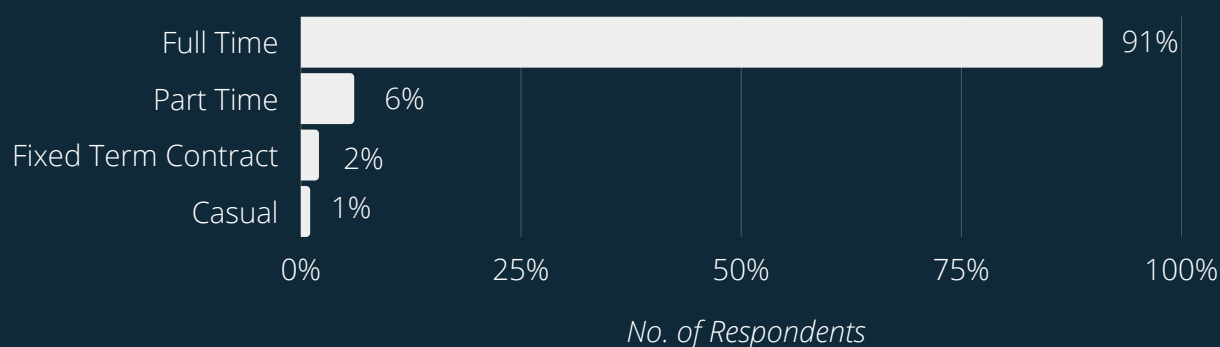
This year we saw a decrease in the number of respondents from Greater Brisbane, Southeast Queensland and the regions. Brisbane CBD remained the greatest location of respondents increasing to 68% in 2023, compared to 67% last year.



*SEQ - Southeast Queensland includes Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Toowoomba.

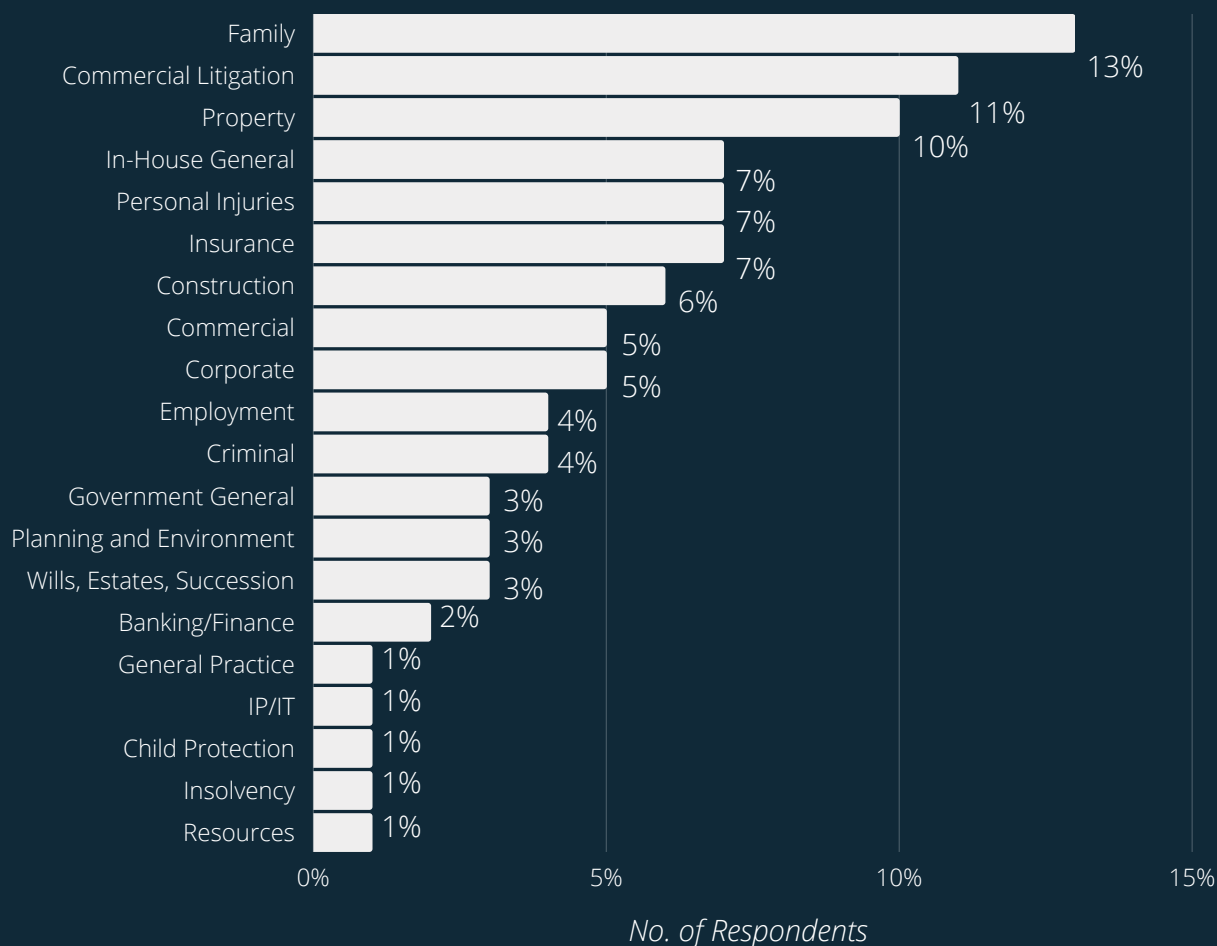
SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY ROLE CAPACITY

This year's data suggests that the Queensland legal market remains dominated by full time roles. We have seen a decrease in full time respondents (-2%) and increases in other employment capacities.



SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY MAIN PRACTICE AREA

The majority of respondents worked in Family Law, Commercial Litigation and Property Law. This was consistent with previous results. There was a reduction in In-house General (-3%) and respondents practicing in Employment Law (-2%). The largest percentage increase came from Criminal practice (+2%).



*Categories with less than three responses have been removed.



SALARIES

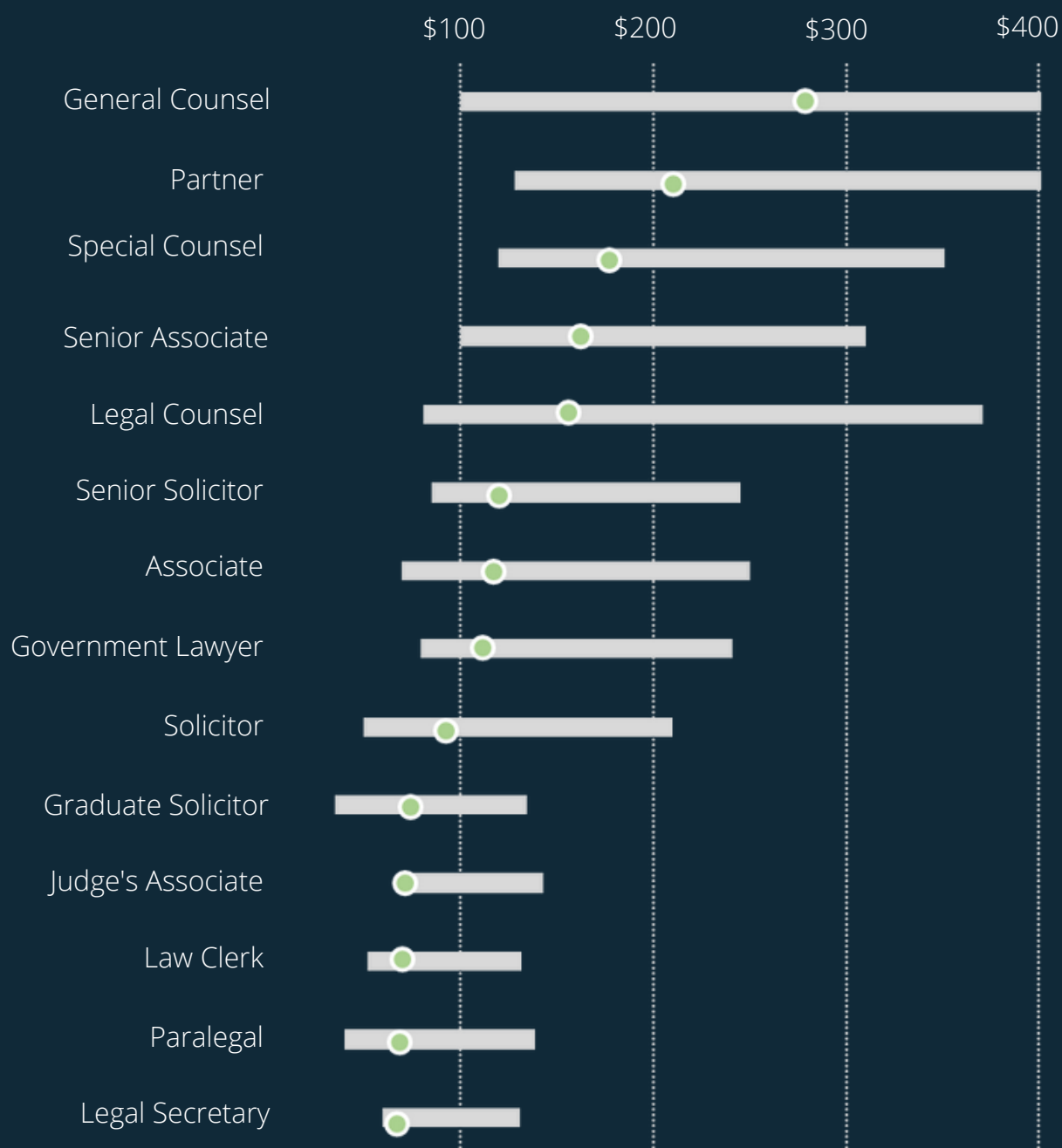
SALARIES

The salary figures presented in this report are inclusive of superannuation. The white line spans from the lowest to the highest salary reported for the relevant category and the dot indicates the average salary based on the amounts reported.

SALARIES BY POSITION

The highest individual salary was \$400,000 per annum for a National Law Firm in Brisbane CBD (this was \$150,000 below 2022). The lowest individual salary for a full time employee was \$42,000 for a Graduate working in Southeast Queensland in a Medium Law Firm (this was \$2,000 below 2022). On average, General Counsel has been consistently the highest paid position in Queensland.

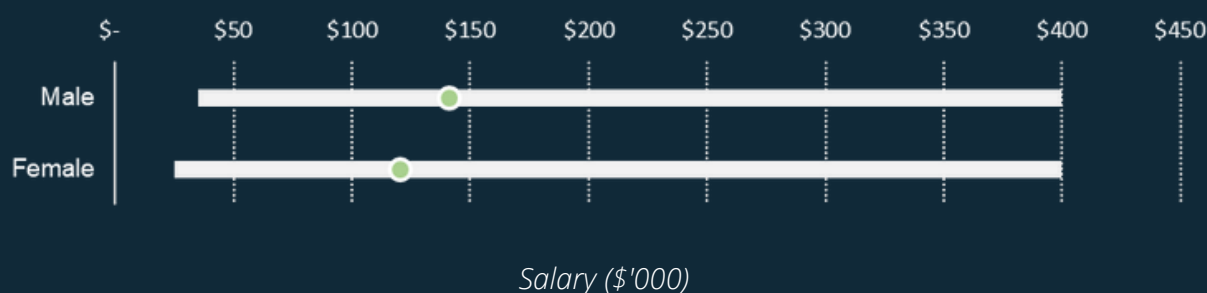
** Positions with only one respondent were removed.*



SALARIES BY GENDER

Based on the responses received, males, on average, had a slightly higher salary (\$141,389) than females (\$120,620). However, this does not account for PAE, practice area and the capacity of employment. The highest earning males and females earned \$400,000. These top earners worked in National and Sole Practitioner Firm types and were between the ages of 38 and 48. The lowest full time salary for an individual female was \$50,000 and \$42,000 for a male.

When comparing both full time employment and PAE, female practitioners out earned male practitioners at 0 to 1 year PAE, 1 to 2 years PAE and most significantly at 5 to 6 years PAE (a difference of \$9,581). On the other hand, male practitioners out earned female practitioners for the other experience levels with the largest gap occurring at 6 years PAE (a difference of \$20,993). In the 2023 survey, there were no male practitioners who worked part time with 8% of females having a part time employment capacity.



SALARIES BY AGE

On average, salaries by age see steady progression from 18 to 42 years. The 38 to 42 age bracket earned some of the highest individual salaries. However, practitioners within the 43 to 52 age bracket saw a decrease in salary before another steady salary progression through to the 53+ age cohort. On average, this cohort has also been the highest earning cohort.



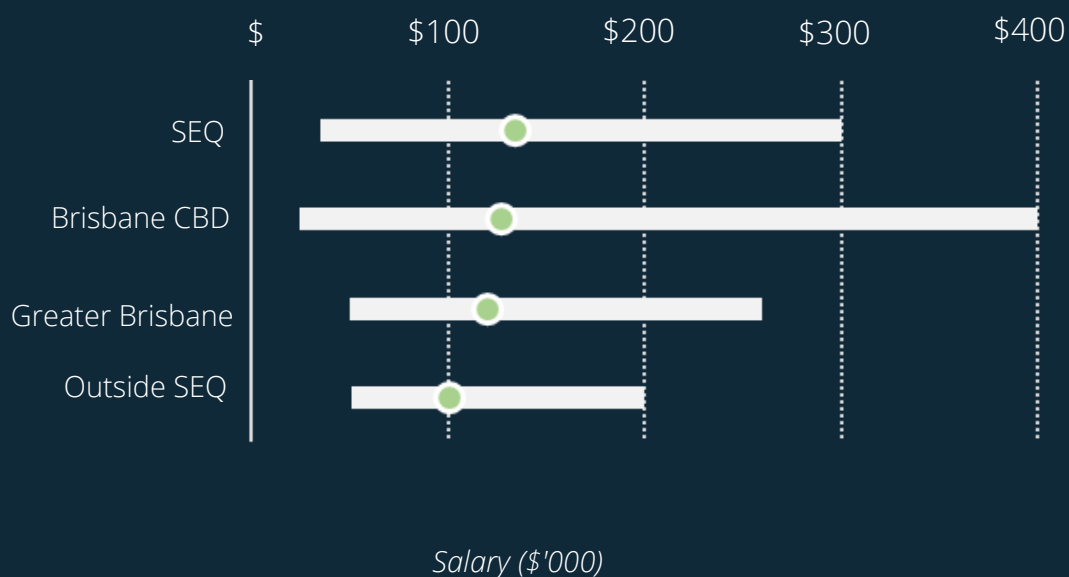
SALARIES BY FIRM TYPE

In keeping with historical data, In-house Legal positions earn, on average, a greater salary than law firm positions.



SALARIES BY FIRM LOCATION

Southeast Queensland (\$134,122) had the highest average salary. Brisbane CBD had the highest individual salary of \$400,000 and the largest salary distribution.



*SEQ - Southeast Queensland includes Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Toowoomba.

*Responses from interstate respondents have been removed.

SALARIES BY EMPLOYMENT CAPACITY

Part time employment roles had the highest average salary while full time roles had the highest individual earnings. Casual contracts were significantly lower than other employment capacities.



SALARIES BY PAE

Respondent salaries increased on average from \$120,302 in 2022 to \$127,145 in 2023. In keeping with historical data, the largest increase in average salary was 3 to 4 years PAE which had a 13.8% increase compared to an average 5.4% increase for all other years. The percentage increase was significant but below the 11% increase that occurred from the previous year.



SALARY BY PAE OVER TIME

PAE	2021	2022	2023	Change '22 to '23	% Change
Graduate	\$65,289	\$65,954	\$74,683	\$8,729	11.7%
0-1 year	\$69,985	\$76,767	\$81,061	\$4,294	5.3%
1-2 years	\$76,482	\$82,841	\$88,738	\$5,897	6.6%
2-3 years	\$84,801	\$94,088	\$104,884	\$10,796	10.3%
3-4 years	\$95,555	\$103,769	\$120,432	\$16,663	13.8%
4-5 years	\$111,246	\$118,404	\$121,157	\$2,753	2.3%
5-6 years	\$118,604	\$123,809	\$135,594	\$11,785	8.7%
6+ years	\$172,056	\$176,194	\$180,664	\$4,470	2.5%
Average Salary	\$106,027	\$120,302	\$127,145	\$6,844	5.4%



AVERAGE SALARY BY PAE

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GRADUATE/TRAINEE

This year saw average salary increases for graduates except for Government Legal which decreased by \$3,170. The largest increases on average were for International Law Firms (\$22,173) and In-house Legal (\$13,500).

International Law Firms lead all others with the highest paid graduates, this matched findings from the 2020 and 2022 salary survey. Community Legal graduates were not found in previous surveys and were the second highest in average salary by firm type.

FIRM SIZE	AVERAGE	LOWEST	HIGHEST
Micro Law Firm	\$60,316.68	\$35,000.00	\$77,350.00
Small Law Firm	\$61,446.02	\$40,000.00	\$80,000.00
Medium Law Firm	\$58,477.61	\$42,000.00	\$75,000.00
Large Law Firm	\$72,388.89	\$70,000.00	\$75,000.00
National Law Firm	\$72,952.44	\$36,000.00	\$95,000.00
International Law Firm	\$96,423.19	\$66,500.00	\$120,000.00
Government Legal	\$70,480.00	\$68,000.00	\$99,000.00
Community Legal Centre	\$95,000.00	\$95,000.00	\$95,000.00
In-house Legal	\$82,000.00	\$77,000.00	\$84,000.00



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0-1 YEAR PAE

0 to 1 year PAE respondents saw a salary increase across all firm types with the exception of National Law Firms and In-house Legal. In-house Legal saw the largest reduction in salary with a decrease of \$44,250 – this may represent an anomaly due to a smaller volume of graduates in this category in 2023.

The largest increase occurred in Government Legal (\$19,016) and International Law Firms (\$16,355).

FIRM SIZE	AVERAGE	LOWEST	HIGHEST
Sole Practitioner	\$57,000.00	\$57,000.00	\$57,000.00
Micro Law Firm	\$68,828.48	\$50,000.00	\$85,000.00
Small Law Firm	\$77,148.09	\$59,389.00	\$110,500.00
Medium Law Firm	\$77,963.46	\$63,000.00	\$93,925.00
National Law Firm	\$81,973.55	\$65,000.00	\$105,000.00
International Law Firm	\$95,354.84	\$88,000.00	\$107,000.00
Government Legal	\$106,924.35	\$68,500.00	\$113,000.00
Community Legal Centre	\$84,240.68	\$53,814.00	\$101,200.00
In-house Legal	\$62,000.00	\$62,000.00	\$62,000.00



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1 to 2 years PAE respondents saw salary increases across all firm types except for Medium and Micro Law Firms.

The largest increases were seen in Community Legal Centres (\$21,917), In-house Legal (\$19,970) and Government Legal (\$10,745).

FIRM SIZE	AVERAGE	LOWEST	HIGHEST
Sole Practitioner	\$70,000.00	\$70,000.00	\$70,000.00
Micro Law Firm	\$72,725.26	\$55,000.00	\$82,875.00
Small Law Firm	\$84,600.76	\$55,000.00	\$99,500.00
Medium Law Firm	\$82,187.39	\$67,000.00	\$96,135.00
National Law Firm	\$90,955.09	\$75,000.00	\$120,450.00
International Law Firm	\$95,384.62	\$92,500.00	\$100,000.00
Government Legal	\$98,142.71	\$70,000.00	\$170,000.00
Community Legal Centre	\$83,417.11	\$68,000.00	\$98,082.00
In-house Legal	\$117,970.00	\$100,000.00	\$137,000.00

1-2 YEARS PAE



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2-3 YEARS PAE

2 to 3 years PAE respondents saw salary increases in 2023 across all firm types except for Micro Law Firms (-\$7,098) and Small Law Firms (-\$2,937).

The largest growth was seen within International Law Firms (\$17,224), National Law Firms (\$13,991) and Medium Law Firms (\$11,611).

FIRM SIZE	AVERAGE	LOWEST	HIGHEST
Sole Practitioner	\$128,000.00	\$128,000.00	\$128,000.00
Micro Law Firm	\$86,402.28	\$51,700.00	\$120,000.00
Small Law Firm	\$79,008.46	\$50,934.00	\$107,500.00
Medium Law Firm	\$99,111.11	\$96,000.00	\$110,000.00
Large Law Firm	\$99,591.84	\$76,000.00	\$120,000.00
National Law Firm	\$108,104.51	\$85,000.00	\$139,000.00
International Law Firm	\$120,349.30	\$88,000.00	\$124,600.00
Government Legal	\$111,876.63	\$82,000.00	\$138,000.00
In-house Legal	\$108,717.39	\$81,000.00	\$154,000.00



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3-4 YEARS PAE

In-house Legal (-\$10,877), Government Legal (-\$10,391) and Medium Law Firms (-\$3,307) saw average salary decreases while National Law Firms (\$25,510), Small Law Firms (\$24,121) and International Law Firms (\$6,150) saw the largest increases in average salary.

FIRM SIZE	AVERAGE	LOWEST	HIGHEST
Micro Law Firm	\$89,067.42	\$60,000.00	\$154,000.00
Small Law Firm	\$123,436.95	\$78,000.00	\$176,800.00
Medium Law Firm	\$104,442.62	\$86,000.00	\$115,000.00
Large Law Firm	\$82,000.00	\$82,000.00	\$82,000.00
National Law Firm	\$128,706.97	\$70,000.00	\$154,000.00
International Law Firm	\$122,740.18	\$85,000.00	\$136,000.00
Government Legal	\$109,609.38	\$90,000.00	\$129,000.00
In-house Legal	\$118,322.64	\$25,000.00	\$160,225.00



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4-5 YEARS PAE

4 to 5 years PAE respondents saw salary decreases for Large Law Firms (-\$24,328) and Government Legal (-\$15,071).

The largest increases were seen for Micro Law Firms (\$29,244), Small Law Firms (\$21,498) and International Law Firms (\$16,901).

FIRM SIZE	AVERAGE	LOWEST	HIGHEST
Micro Law Firm	\$136,000.00	\$120,000.00	\$200,000.00
Small Law Firm	\$118,000.15	\$82,500.00	\$180,000.00
Medium Law Firm	\$124,415.38	\$104,975.00	\$160,000.00
Large Law Firm	\$90,672.00	\$90,672.00	\$90,672.00
National Law Firm	\$136,726.75	\$90,000.00	\$165,000.00
International Law Firm	\$132,428.57	\$118,000.00	\$150,000.00
Government Legal	\$111,387.71	\$104,000.00	\$125,000.00
In-house Legal	\$124,365.85	\$95,500.00	\$175,000.00



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5-6 YEARS PAE

5 to 6 years PAE respondents saw salary decreases for In-house Legal (-\$14,365) and Government Legal (-\$8,597).

The largest increase occurred for Micro Law Firms (\$29,244) and Small Law Firms (\$21,498).

FIRM SIZE	AVERAGE	LOWEST	HIGHEST
Micro Law Firm	\$139,561.00	\$94,350.00	\$187,850.00
Small Law Firm	\$123,198.00	\$92,000.00	\$155,000.00
Medium Law Firm	\$124,207.00	\$110,000.00	\$145,000.00
National Law Firm	\$130,485.00	\$79,000.00	\$165,000.00
International Law Firm	\$162,414.00	\$130,000.00	\$177,000.00
Government Legal	\$115,021.00	\$110,500.00	\$123,000.00
In-house Legal	\$136,400.00	\$100,000.00	\$201,500.00



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6+ YEARS PAE

6+ years PAE respondents saw decreases for International Law Firms (-\$26,955) and National Law Firms (-\$7,051).

The largest increases across all PAE years were seen in over 6 years PAE for Sole Practitioner Law Firms (\$235,000), Medium Law Firms (\$56,651) and Community Legal Centres (\$51,206).

The highest salary in the survey was found over 6 years PAE in a National Law Firm as well as the largest gap between the highest and lowest paid salaries.

FIRM SIZE	AVERAGE	LOWEST	HIGHEST
Sole Practitioner	\$310,000.00	\$130,000.00	\$400,000.00
Small Law Firm	\$168,223.25	\$114,000.00	\$253,000.00
Medium Law Firm	\$203,483.87	\$182,000.00	\$218,000.00
Large Law Firm	\$140,000.00	\$140,000.00	\$140,000.00
National Law Firm	\$178,625.17	\$104,000.00	\$400,000.00
International Law Firm	\$184,912.28	\$120,000.00	\$350,000.00
Government Legal	\$142,354.63	\$91,000.00	\$268,000.00
Community Legal Centre	\$141,468.75	\$105,000.00	\$198,000.00
In-house Legal	\$205,146.01	\$120,000.00	\$395,000.00



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6+ YEARS PAE

The figures in the table below are the average salary for each position for lawyers 6+ years PAE. The variance in these salaries is significant given many factors influence remuneration at this point in a lawyer's career, including responsibilities that impact on participation, staff supervision and client introductions.

	SOLE	MICRO	SMALL	MEDIUM	NATIONAL	INTERNATIONAL	GOVERNMENT	IN-HOUSE	COMMUNITY
Barrister	\$400,000								
General Counsel						\$350,000	\$268,000	\$279,600	
Head of Legal								\$257,000	
Partner		\$168,928	\$191,319		\$288,458				
Management									\$198,000
Deputy General Counsel								\$196,400	
Special Counsel		\$189,868	\$211,589	\$204,200	\$170,552				
Legal Counsel					\$207,666		\$126,322	\$174,556	
Team Leader					\$175,000				
Senior Associate		\$200,000	\$165,134	\$182,000	\$152,213	\$186,991			
Principal (Non-Director)		\$150,000							
Solicitor		\$65,000	\$121,000			\$160,000	\$116,946		
Academic							\$147,500		
Legal Advisor							\$146,000		
Assistant Director							\$140,000		
Government Lawyer							\$133,723		
Associate		\$130,171	\$143,650		\$140,757	\$131,250			
Principal Solicitor	\$130,000								
Adviser (public service)							\$125,000		
Senior Solicitor		\$141,670	\$114,000						\$105,230



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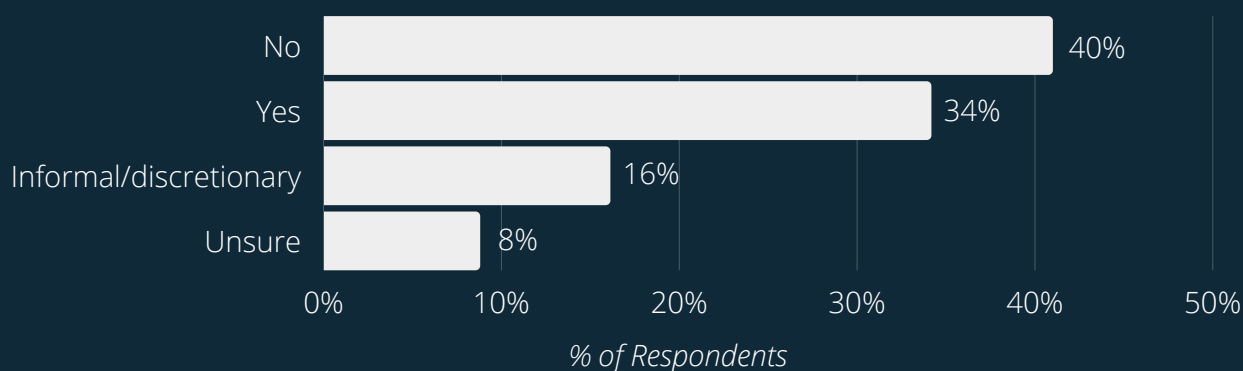




BONUSES, BILLABLES, BENEFITS & PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

BONUS SCHEME

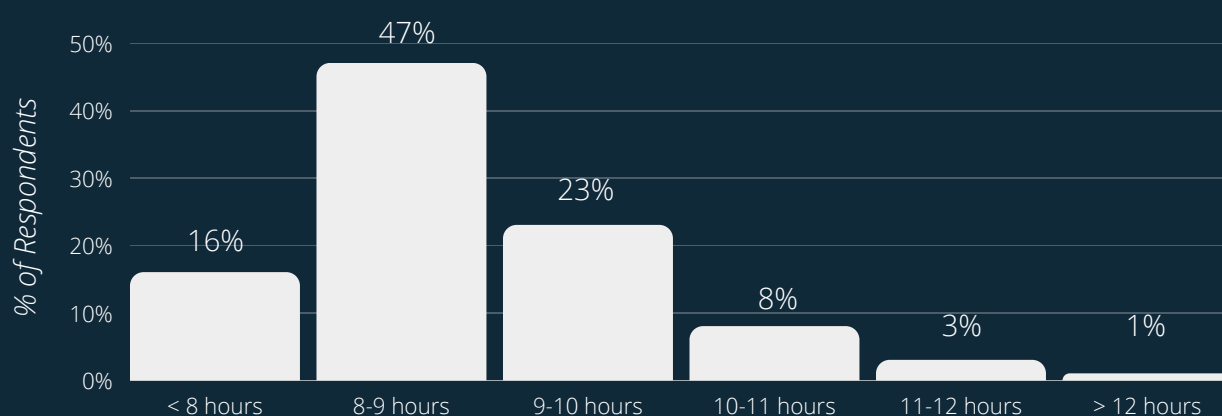
40% of respondents reported that their firm does not offer a bonus scheme, this was a 2% decrease from 2022. There was a 3% increase in informal/discretionary bonus schemes.



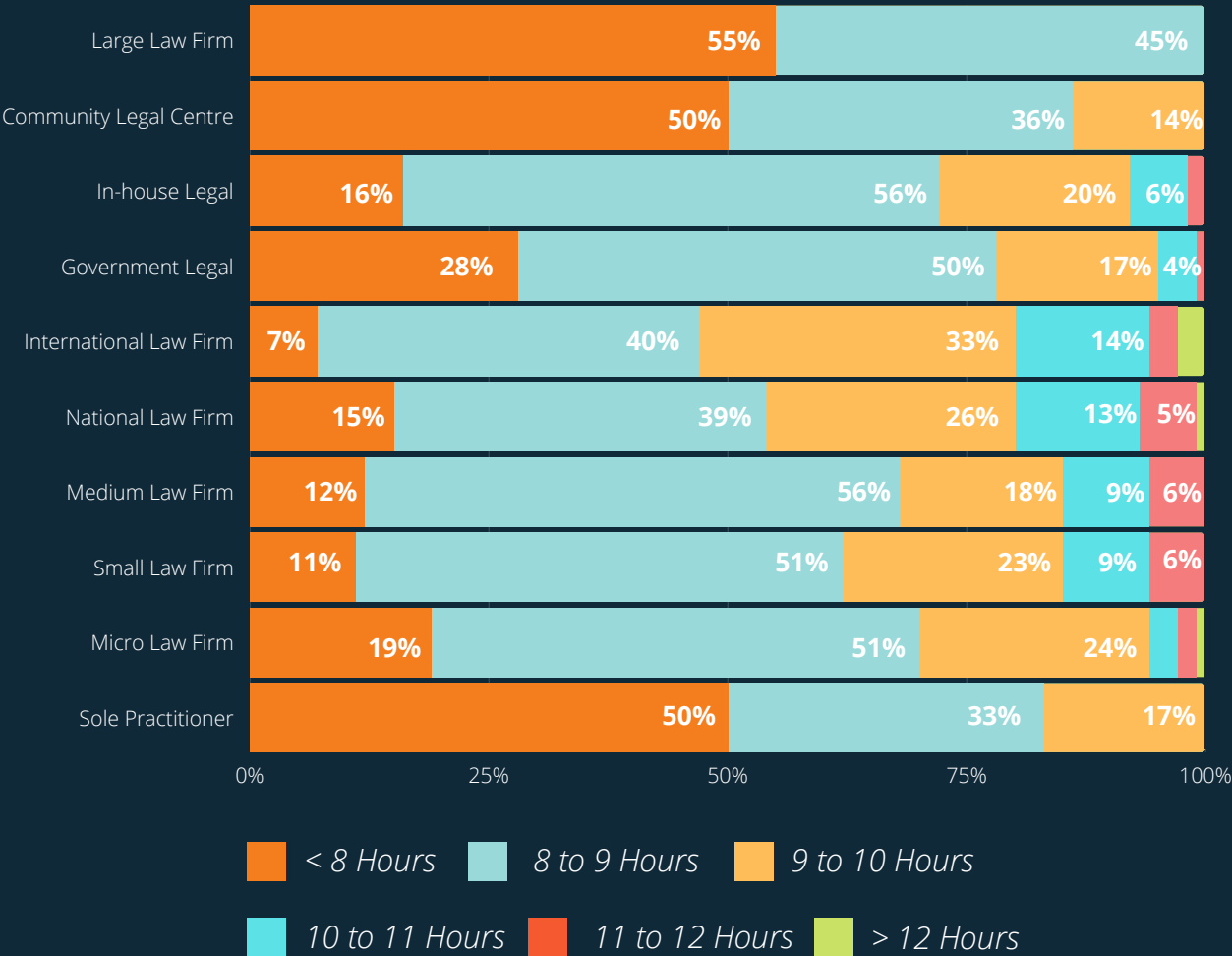
HOURS PER DAY

47% of respondents reported working between 8-9 hours, 6% higher than 2022. Respondents were 10% less likely to have worked more than 9 hours a day (35%) in 2023 when compared to 2022 (45%).

52% of respondents from International Law Firms, 47% of National Law Firms and 45% of Large Law Firms worked over 9 hours a day. 50% of Sole Practitioners and Community Legal Centres worked less than 8 hours a day.



AVERAGE HOURS WORKED PER DAY



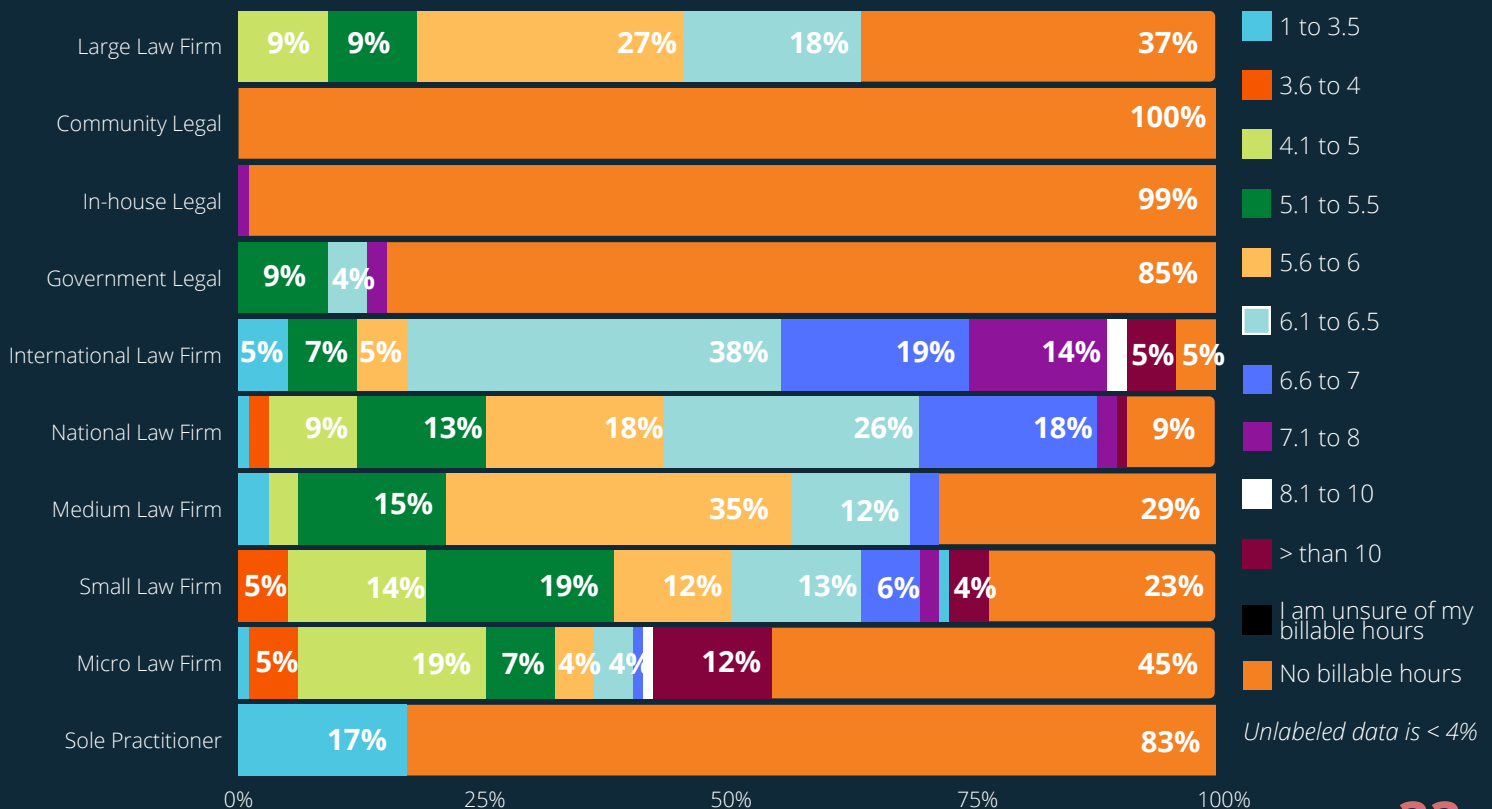
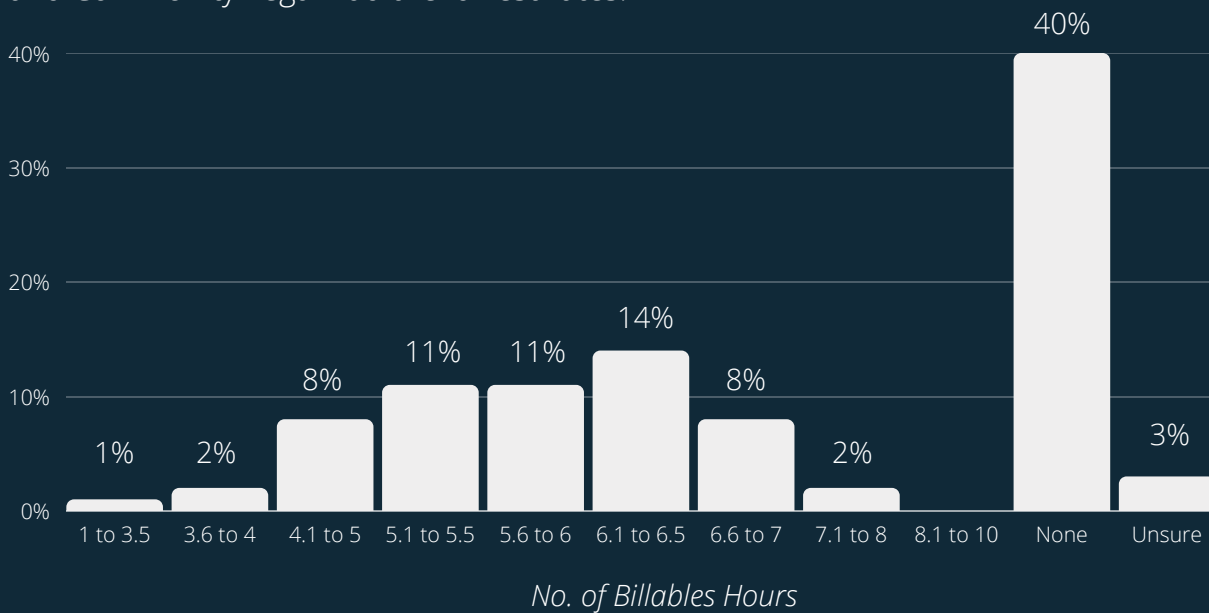
Unlabeled data is < 4%

BONUS SCHEME

BILLABLES

40% of respondents reported requiring no billable hours, a 3% increase from 2022. 57% had billables that they could record. The most common billable hours were 6.1 to 6.5 hours (14%), 5.1 to 5.5 hours (11%) and 5.6 to 6 hours (11%).

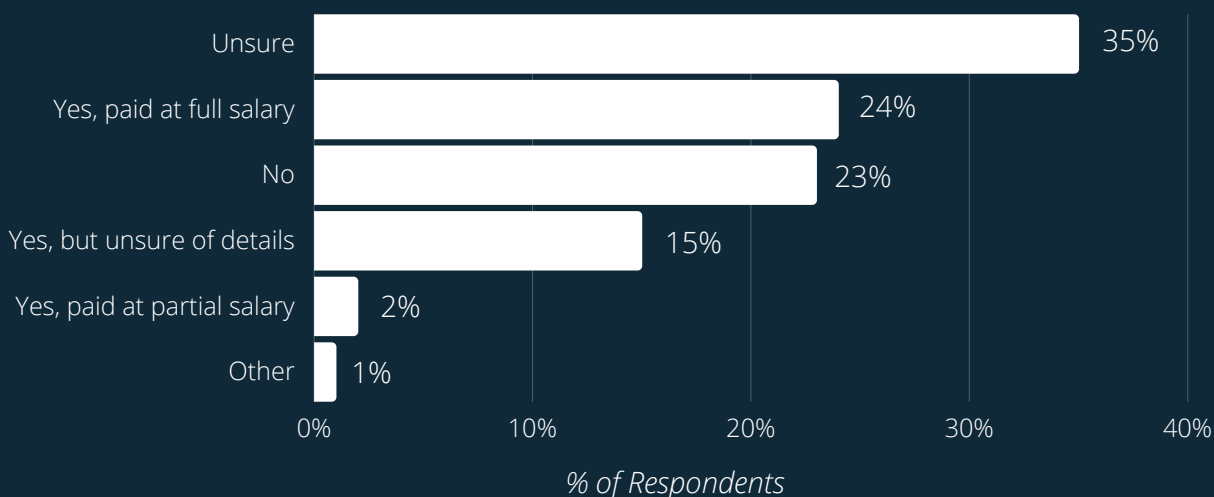
There was a 2% increase in 5.6 to 6 billable hours from 2022. International, National and Large Law Firms had the highest rate of billables while In-house, Government and Community Legal had the lowest rates.



BILLABLES

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

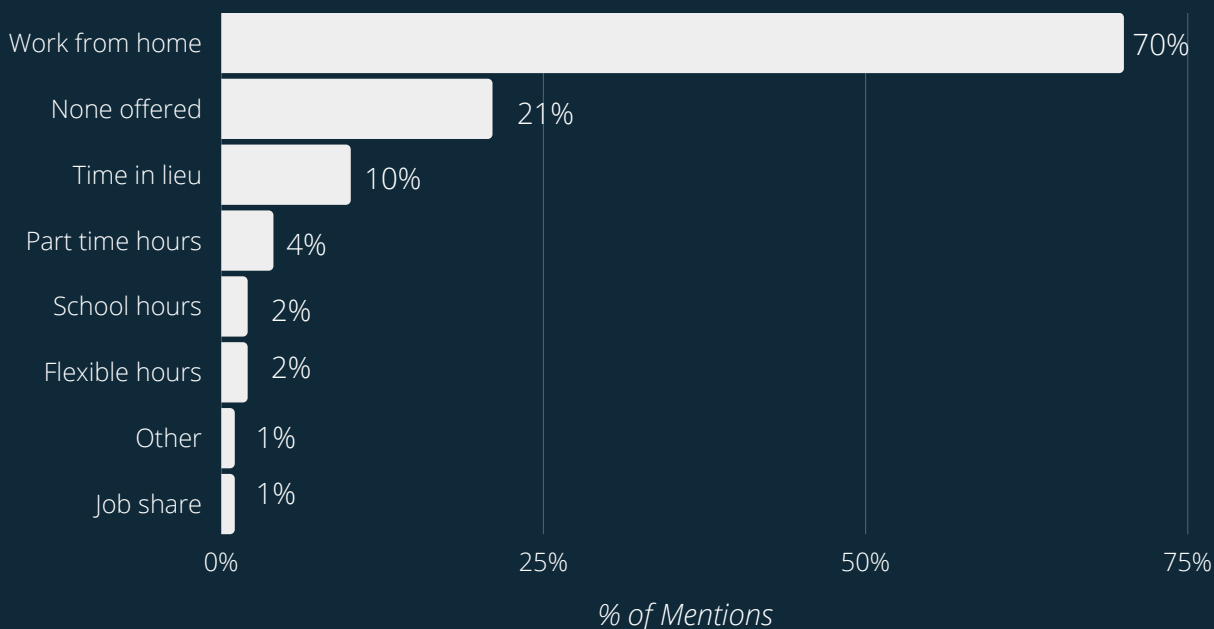
Perhaps reflecting the significant input from younger lawyers, 35% of respondents were unsure about whether paid parental leave was offered by their law firm, a 7% increase. 24% reported having access to paid parental leave at full salary, a 4% decrease from 2022. The most generous paid parental leave period was more than 6 months.



FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

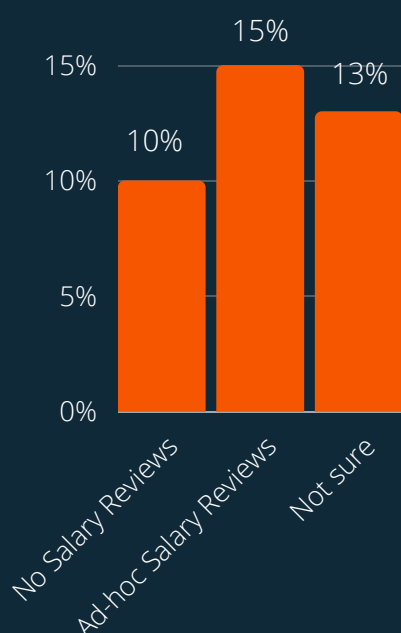
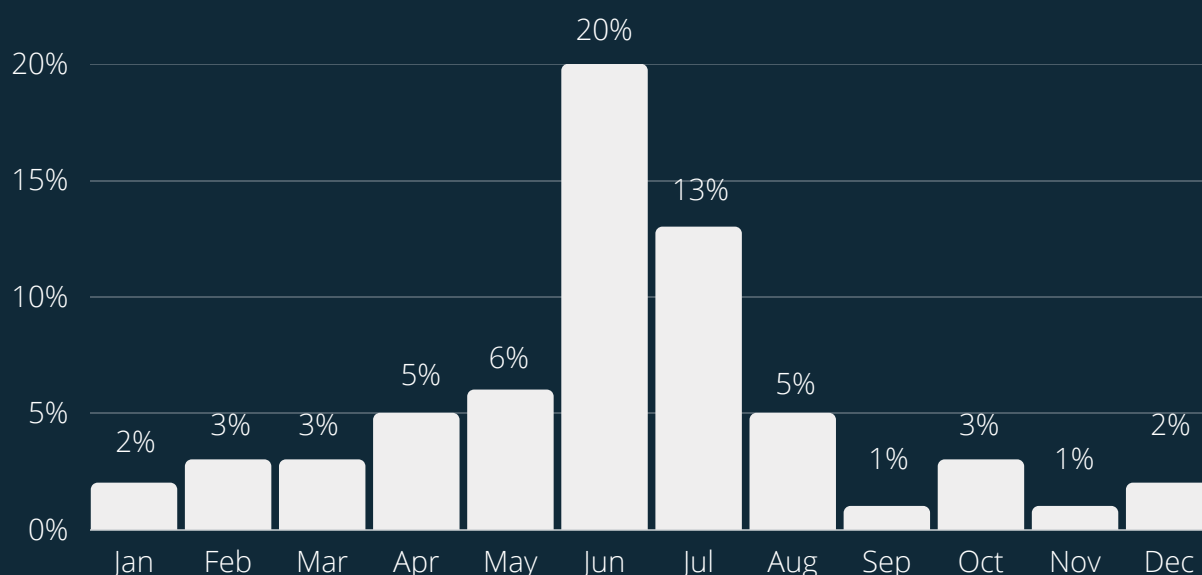
70% of respondents indicated that they had the option of working from home, a 5% increase from 2022, demonstrating that working from home is continuing to become a more common staple condition of working within the industry.

21% of respondents stated they were not offered flexible work arrangements, a 3% increase compared to 2022, representing perhaps a reduction in flexibility in the legal industry in a post-pandemic era.



PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

The most common performance review period was mid-year, with 33% of respondents reporting performance reviews around June / July.



What remains a concern to many in the profession particularly at the junior level is the lack of formal annual review process which was reported among 25% of respondents.

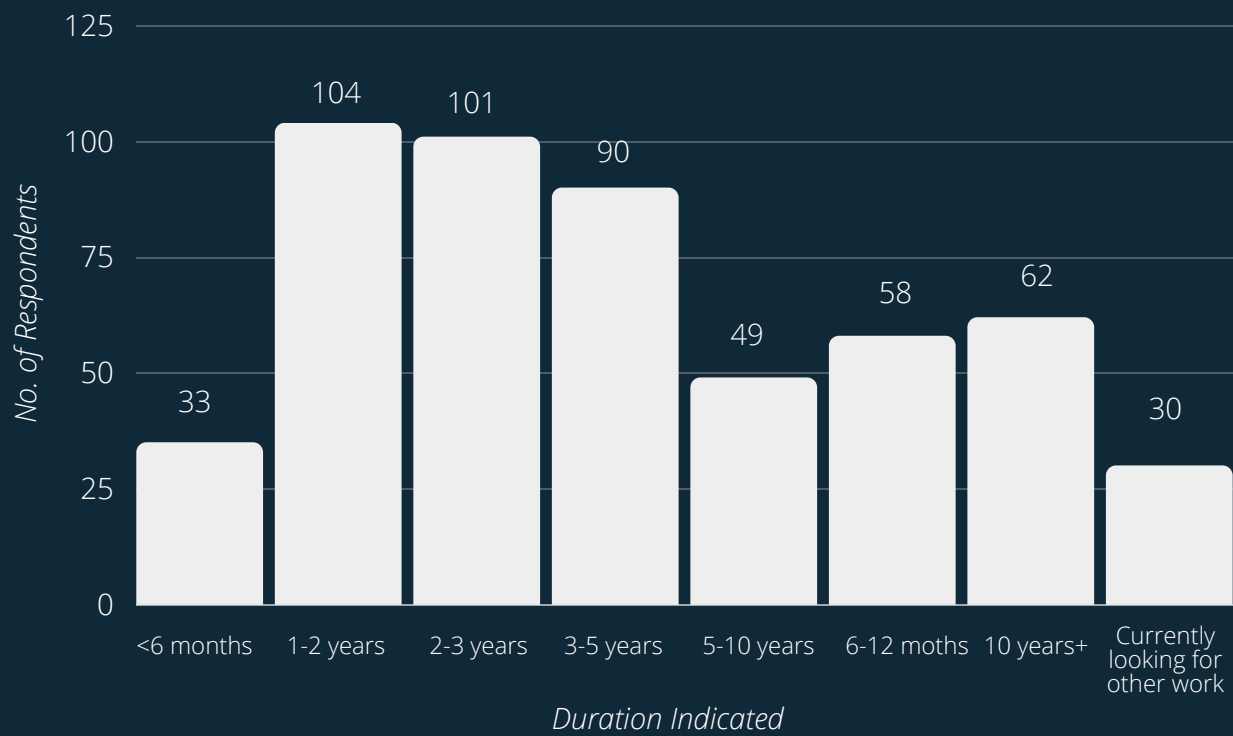
The lack of transparency has consistently been a major source of frustration for many lawyers, with 13% of respondents being unsure as to whether their employer conducts performance reviews. This is another contributing factor for us to produce an annual salary survey for the legal profession.



SATISFACTION, REASONS TO STAY & REASONS TO LEAVE

COMMITMENT

The bulk of respondents expect to stay at their current employer for between 1 to 5 years with the most common response being 1 to 2 years.

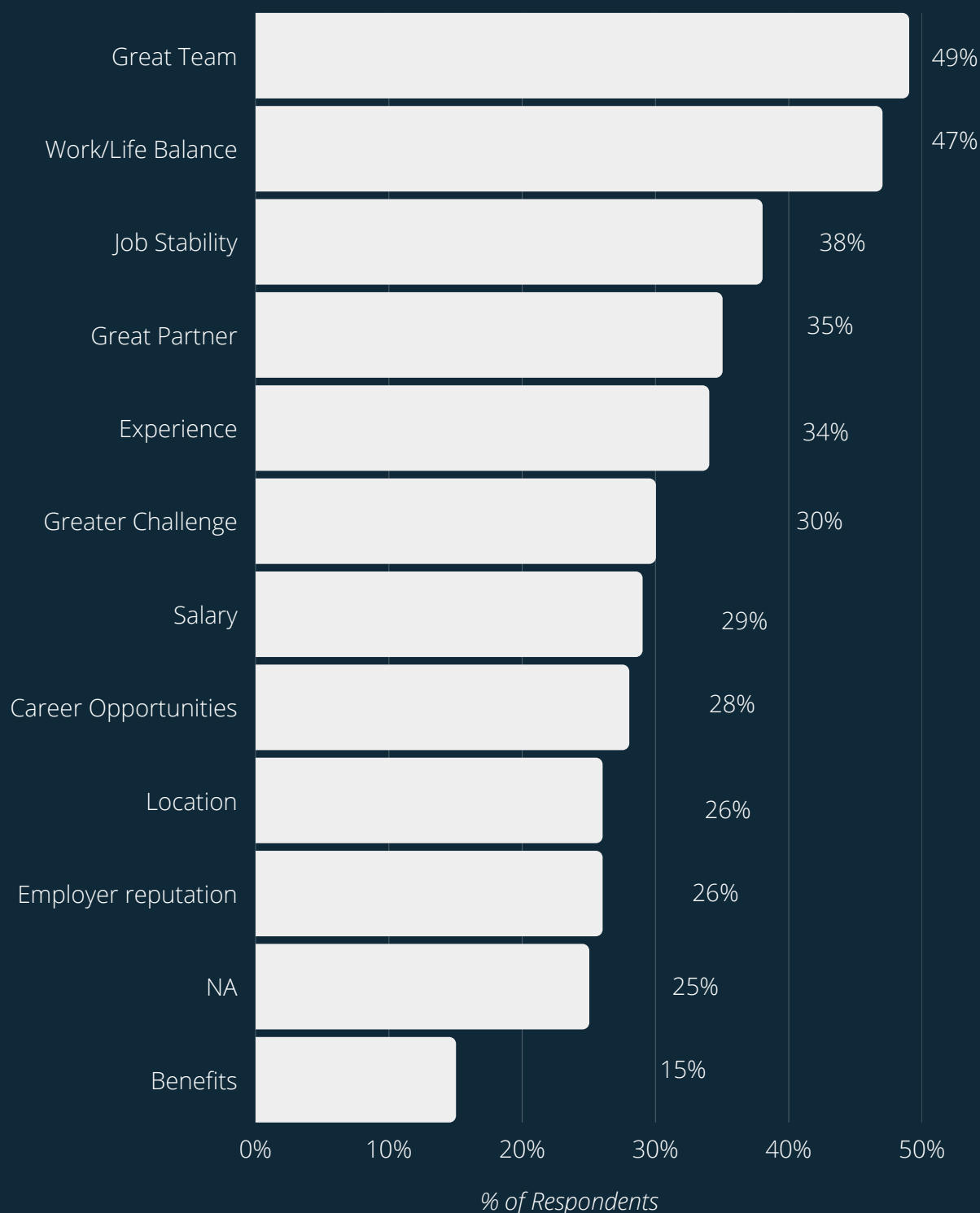


COMMITMENT

REASONS TO STAY

The main reasons consistently mentioned as to why employees stay with their employer are having a great team, maintaining a good work/life balance, job stability, and engaging in challenging work.

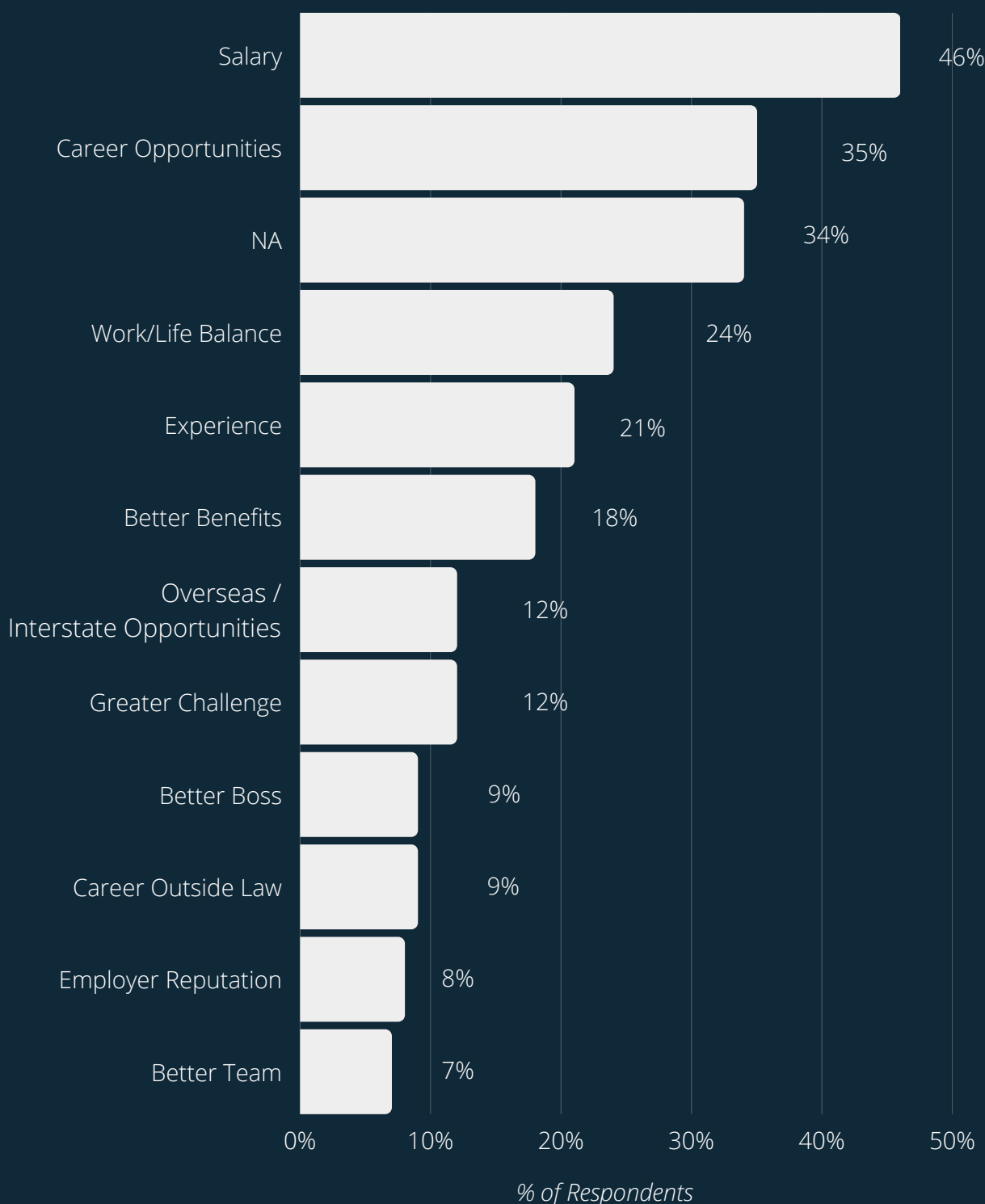
Salary consistently ranks as the seventh highest reason for employee retention. This indicates that other factors related to job satisfaction, rather than just financial rewards, offer stronger motivation for employees to stay with their employer.



REASONS TO LEAVE

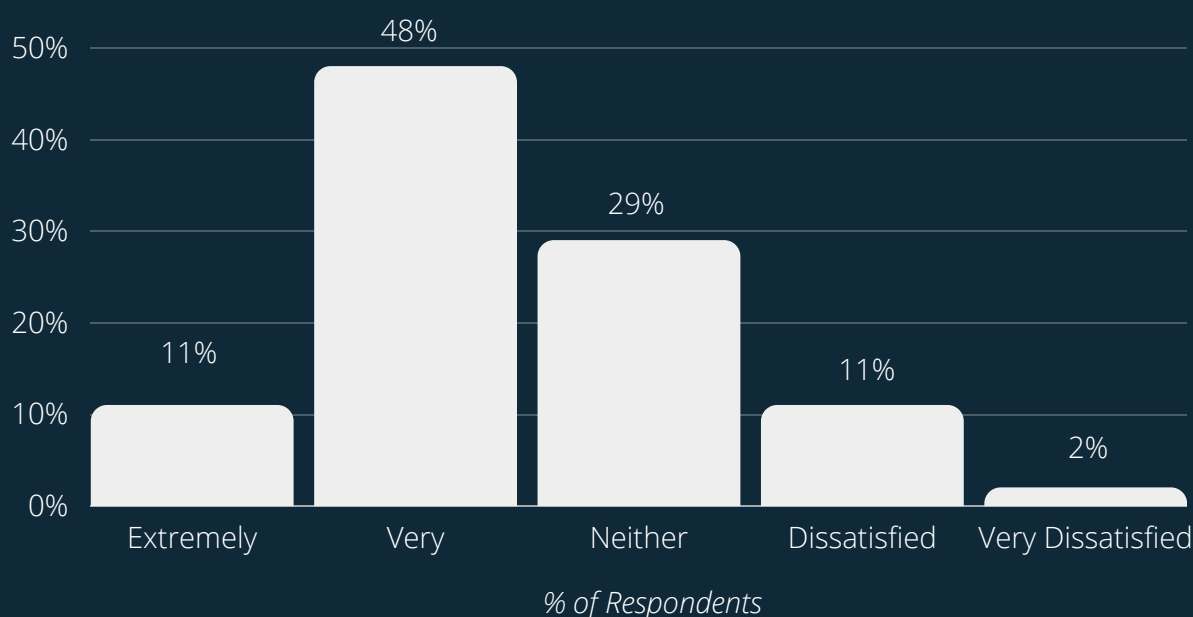
Despite salary being a relatively low reason for employees to stay, it is consistently the number one reason for employees to leave.

When things are good for an employee in a job, salary alone is not a significant source of job satisfaction. However, when the other elements of job satisfaction are low, salary often becomes something that employees focus on, in fact the most significant motivating factor to move.



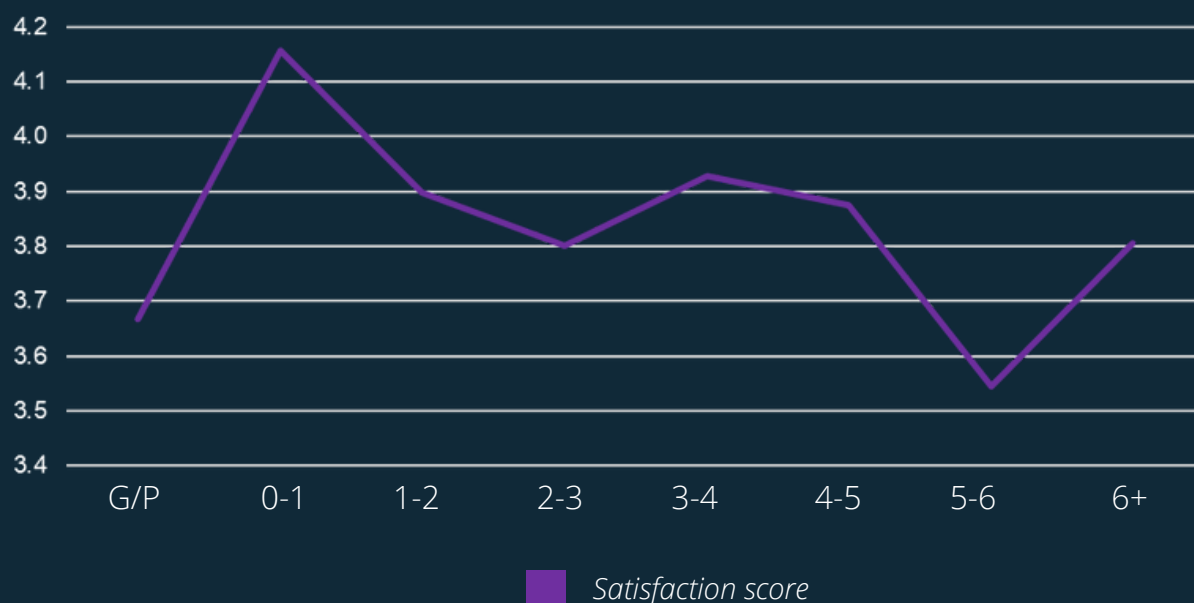
SATISFACTION

48% of respondents were very satisfied with their current job, 29% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied, 11% were extremely satisfied and a total of 13% mentioned that they were dissatisfied. If adjusted to a 5-point score, 2023 had a satisfaction score of 3.8 which was a satisfaction increase from 3.5 in 2022.



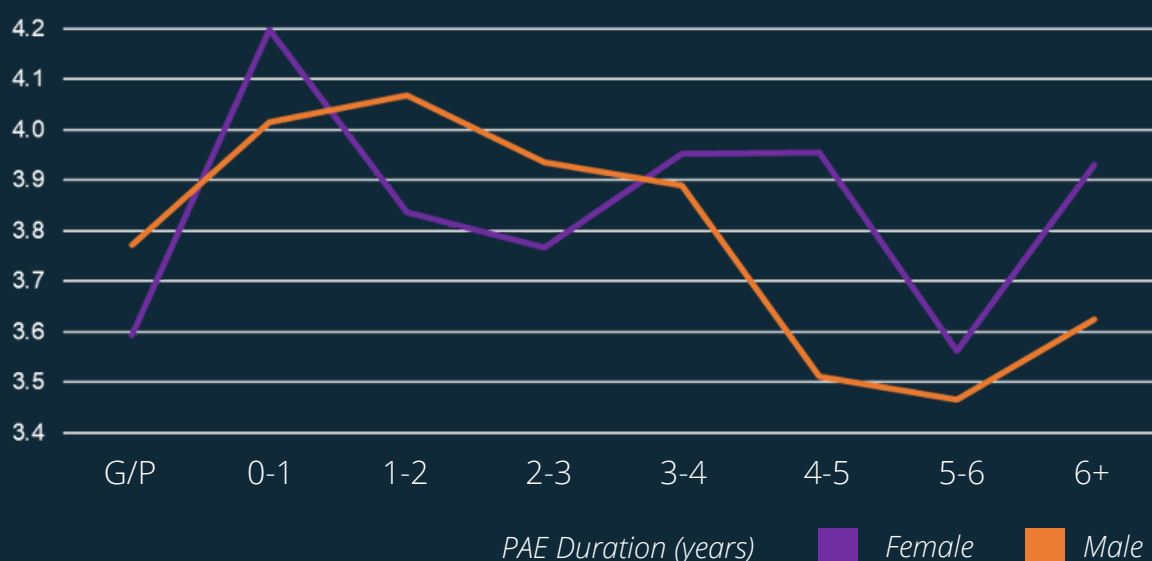
SATISFACTION BY PAE

If we compare post admission experience to satisfaction, satisfaction scores peaked at the 0 to 1 year PAE before decreasing between 1 to 3 years PAE, an increase occurs from 3 to 5 years PAE before the lowest score at 5 to 6 years PAE. After 6 years PAE, there is an increase, however this satisfaction rating is only marginally higher than at the graduate level.



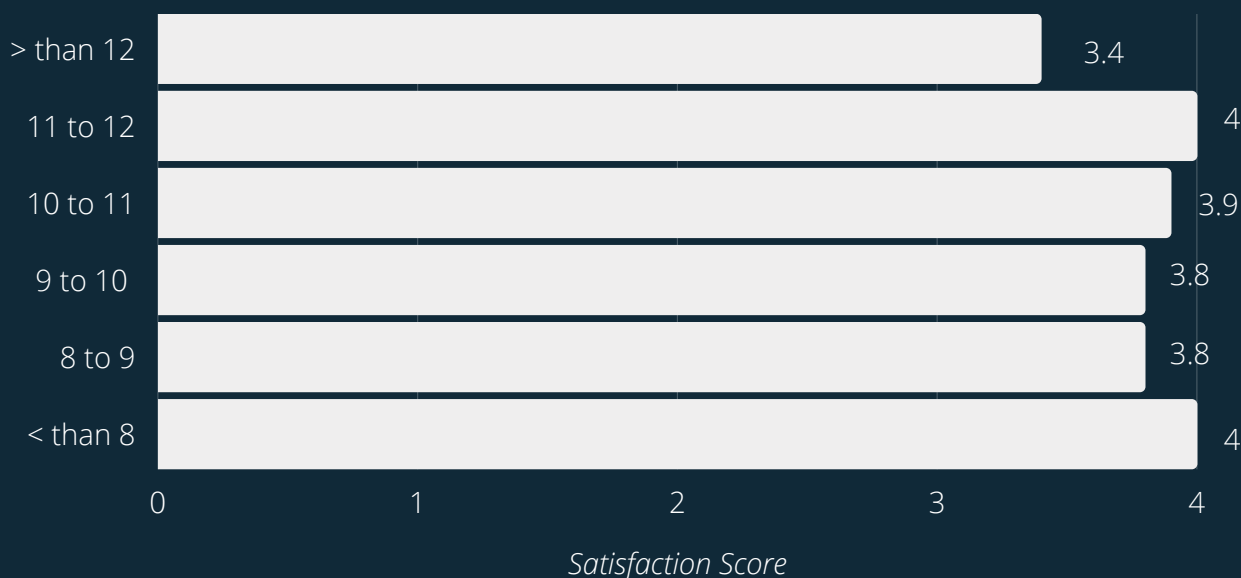
SATISFACTION BY GENDER AND PAE

Overall, females respondents had a higher average satisfaction score (3.9) when compared to male respondents (3.8). However, the survey shows significant variation in career trajectories with female satisfaction peaking highest at 0 to 1 year PAE. Between 1 and 3 years PAE, male respondents rated their satisfaction higher. At the four year mark, satisfaction rates of female respondents increased and exceeded male respondents whose satisfaction scores decreased significantly.



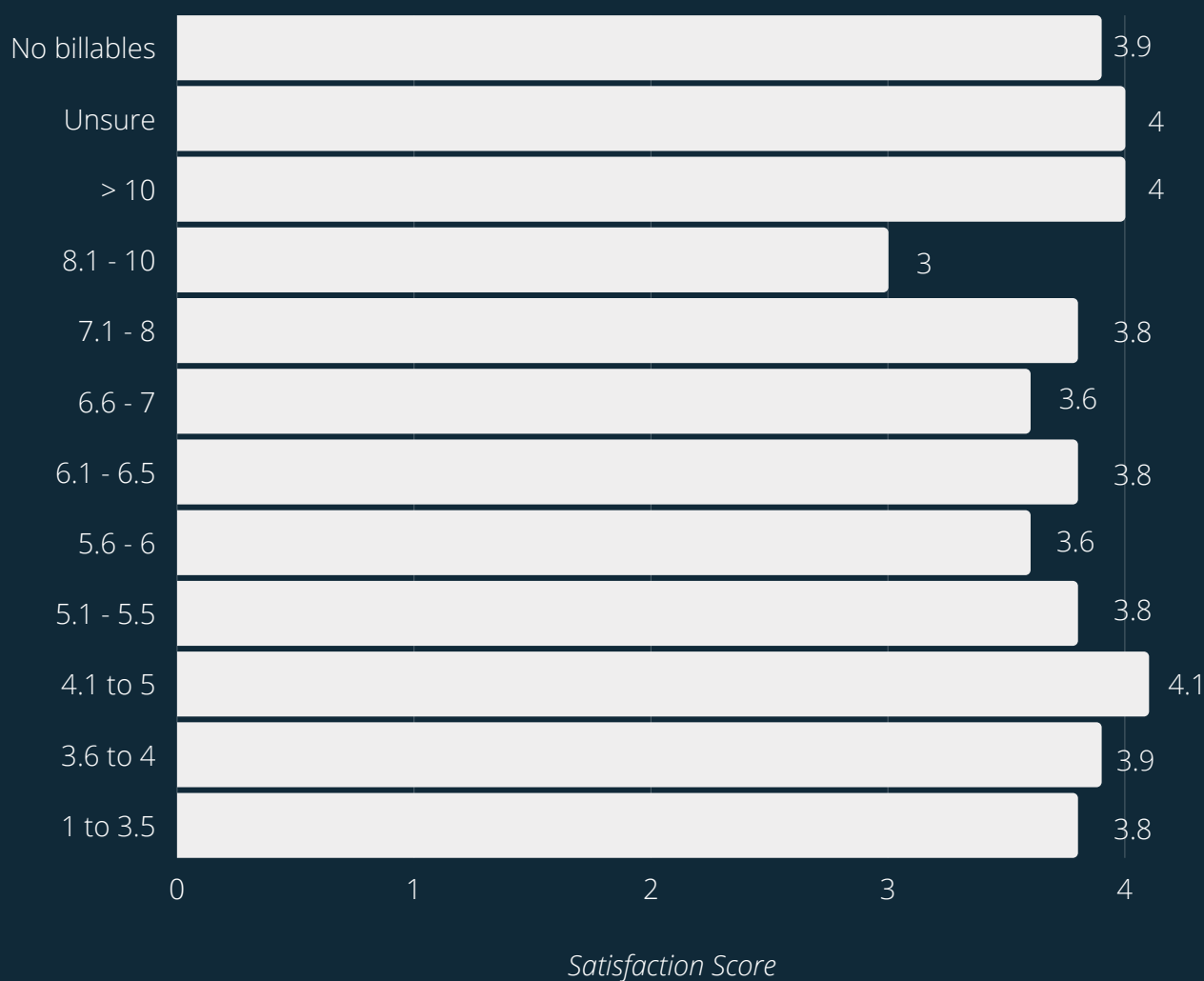
SATISFACTION BY AVERAGE HOURS

There was no link between hours worked and satisfaction with the highest rate of satisfaction occurring amongst those who worked less than 8 hours and those who worked 11 to 12 hours a day. Those who worked more than 12 hours experienced the least satisfaction followed by 9 to 10 hours a day.



SATISFACTION BY BILLABLE HOURS

Similarly to hours worked, the link between billable hours and satisfaction was not clear cut with respondents who had 4.1 to 5 hours a day exceeding those with no billable hours. Respondents who completed 8.1 to 10 billable hours a day had the least satisfaction. Interestingly, respondents who completed the most billables or more than 10 billable hours had a higher rate of satisfaction than those who do not have billable hours suggesting that while billables are a factor there were other more significant factors that contribute to work satisfaction.

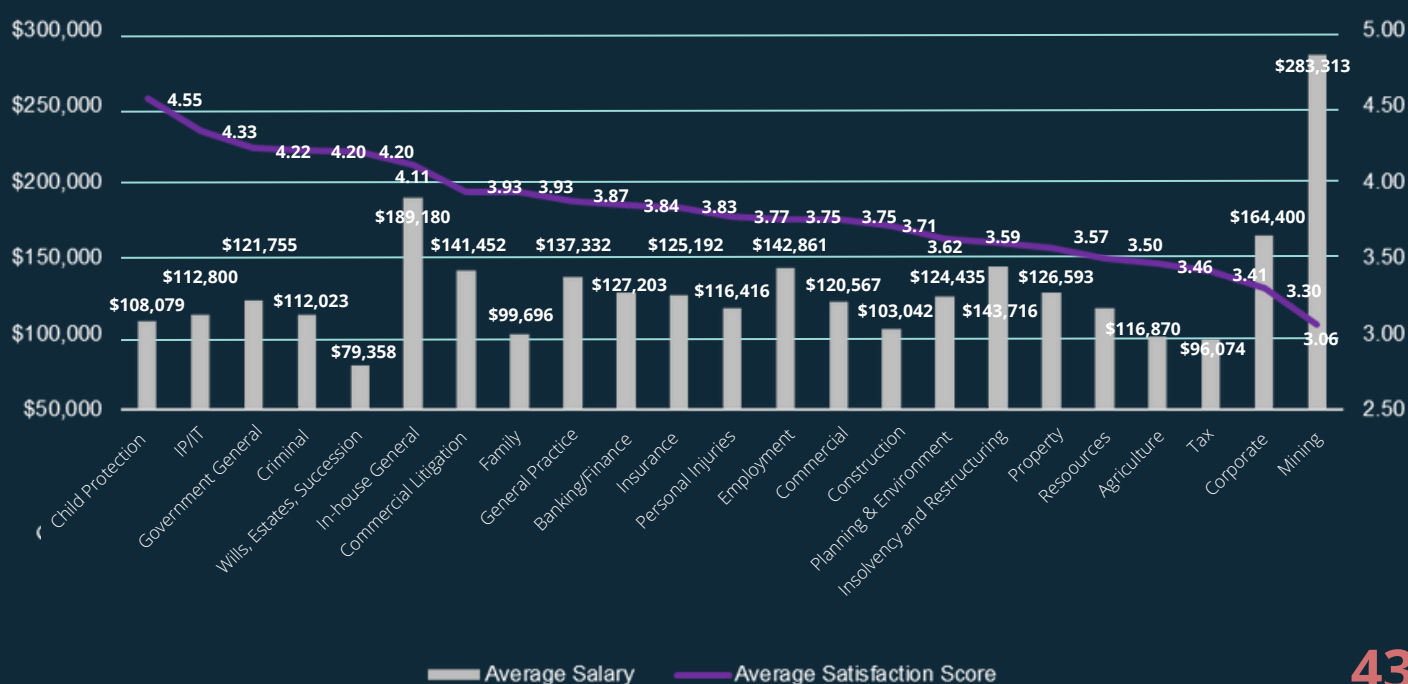
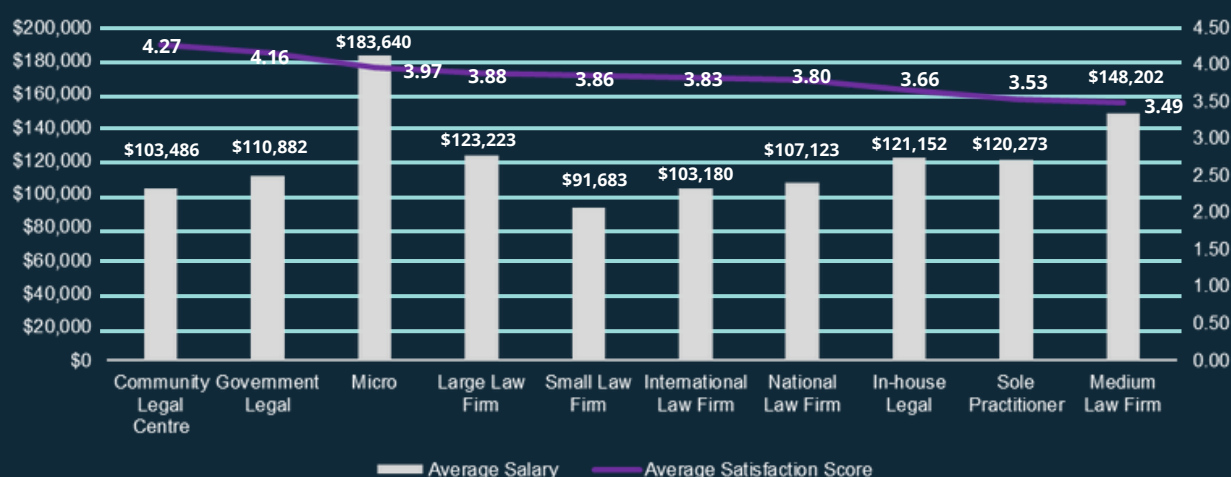


SATISFACTION BY SALARY AND FIRM TYPE

When comparing satisfaction to salary, there was a negative (-0.65) correlation between salaries and satisfaction scores in the survey sample. This is represented by the higher paid practice areas, Corporate and Mining, having the lowest satisfaction scores but with the highest average salaries. However, lower paid practice areas such as Child Protection, IP/IT, Government General and Wills, Estates and Succession had the highest satisfaction rates of any practice area.

Micro Law Firms and In-house General represent two areas where both satisfaction and salary were high in contrast to this trend.

Community Legal Centres and Government Legal respondents had the highest rates of satisfaction while Sole Practitioners and Medium Law Firms have the lowest satisfaction on average.



SALARY AND CAREERS GUIDE

CONCLUSION

The goal for producing the 2023 Queensland Legal Salary was to provide young lawyers with a resource they can refer to in their next pay review or job interview.

As it stands, most legal salary surveys ignore or are not targeted to collect data specifically for lawyers in the Queensland market.

While a survey is useful, every lawyer's salary depends on many different factors – practice area, firm size, years of experience, billable expectations etc. The partners at Peppercorn Recruitment have over 30 years of combined experience in knowing a lawyer's worth and are always happy to have a confidential chat with you to discuss your unique situation.

We hope that this report inspires confidence in young lawyers across Queensland to know their worth and make this clear to their employer.



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