

Snapshot of the Profession 2024

COMPILED BY
MARIANNE BURT
AND **JACQUI VAN DER KAAJ**

DESIGNED BY
SOPHIE MANCER

This snapshot draws on information held by the New Zealand Law Society Te Kāhui Ture o Aotearoa as regulator of the practice of law. As at 30 June 2024, there were 17,009 lawyers (lawyers who hold a current practising certificate), 15,769 in New Zealand and 1,240 overseas. This equates to 314 New Zealanders per lawyer.¹ Last year there were 312 New Zealanders per lawyer. With overseas lawyers removed from the calculation, there are 339 New Zealanders per lawyer in the 2024 reporting year, compared with 331 New Zealanders per lawyer last year.

This year's snapshot statistics are similar to reporting-year 2023 but there are some notable changes.

There is a 19% increase in the number of 0-7 years post-admission lawyers working for overseas organisations, compared with last year, and there has also been a decline (5.5%) in the number of 0-7-year lawyers working in the main centres² in this group. Since reporting year 2022, there has been a 43% increase in the number of 0-7-year lawyers working for overseas organisations.

Most lawyers who work for an overseas organisation also live overseas.

There has been an increase (6.4%) in the number of lawyers speaking languages other than English.

The group of 0-7 years post admission has contracted slightly compared with last year. In FY 2024 they made up 33.2% of the profession, compared with 33.5% in FY 2023. There has only been a net increase of 51 lawyers in this group compared with last year.

There is a reduction in the number of lawyers identifying as Māori, Pacific, and Asian lawyers in the 0-7 years post admission range. This is due to fewer people in these ethnic groups obtaining a practising certificate (368) while at the same time more 0-7-year lawyers in these ethnic groups either moving into the next post-admission category or ceasing to hold a practising certificate in FY 2024 (667).

1. Population numbers sourced from: National population estimates: At 30 June 2024 (2018-base) | Stats NZ
2. Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, and Christchurch

People per lawyer in New Zealand

LAWYERS BASED IN NZ

15,769

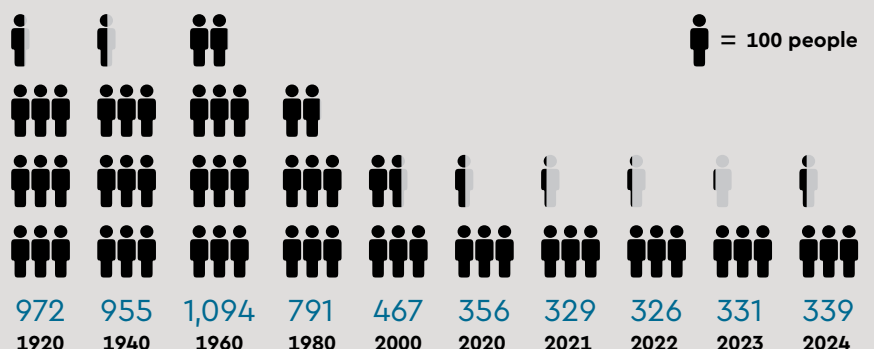
POPULATION

5,338,500

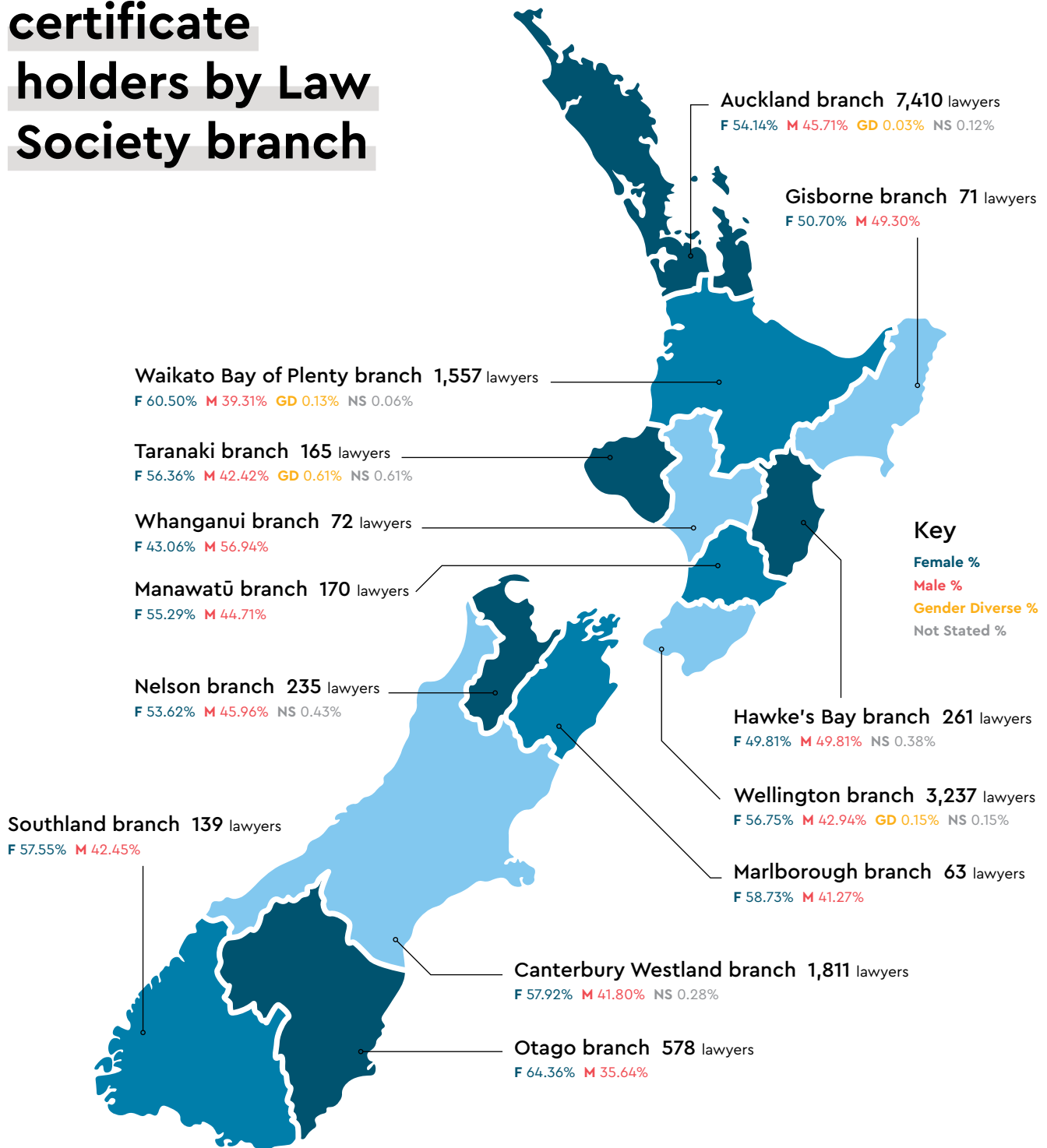
POPULATION PER LAWYER

339:1

PEOPLE PER LAWYER IN NEW ZEALAND



Practising certificate holders by Law Society branch



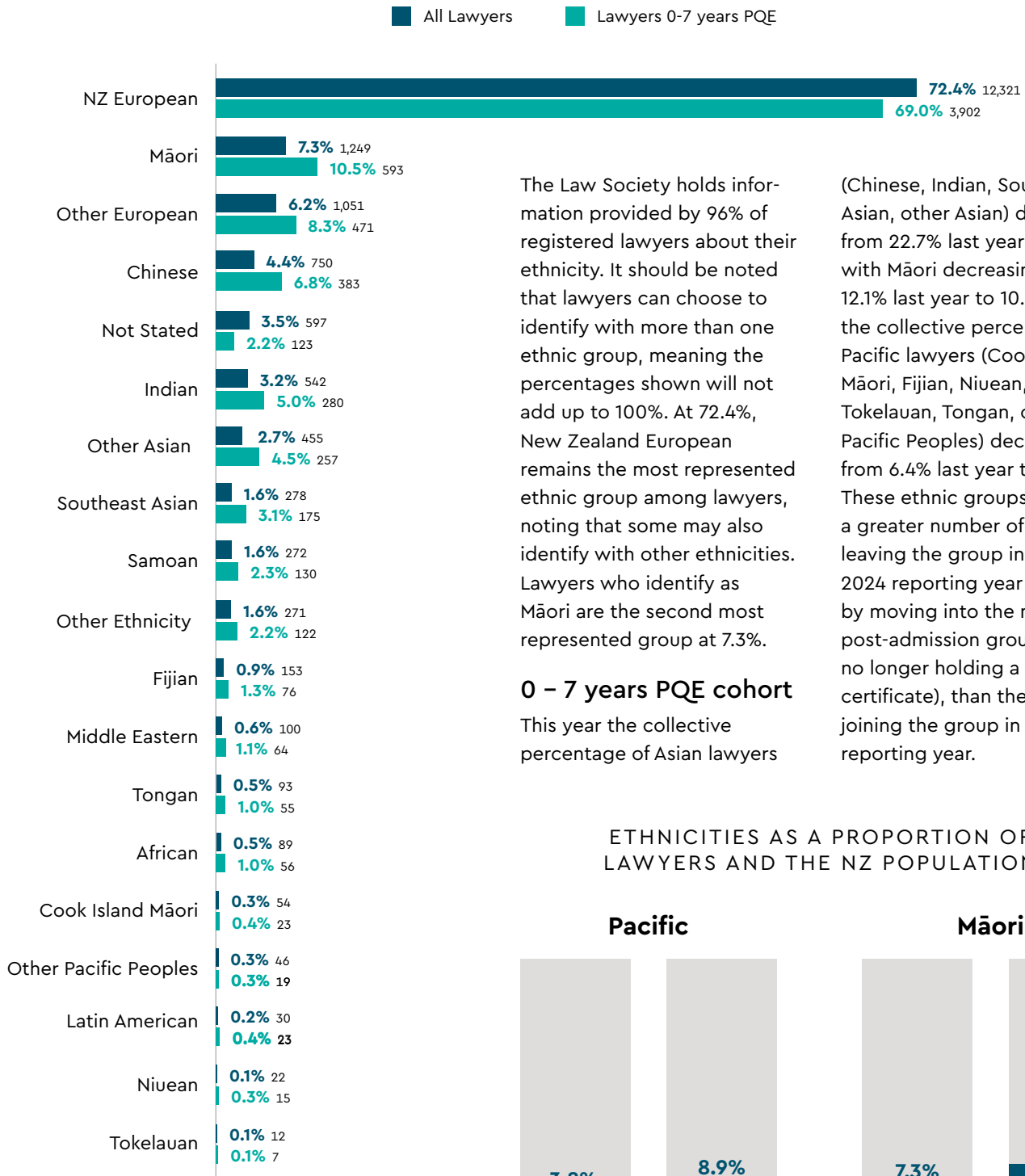
The number of New Zealand-based practising lawyers decreased to 15,769 compared with 15,792 in 2023. The map organises New Zealand practising certificate holders by Law Society branches. Auckland continues to have the largest number of lawyers in the country with 7,410, an increase of just over 1% compared with

last year. Of note this year, is the 13% increase in the number of overseas lawyers to 1,240.

Also, of interest this year is a decline in the number of lawyers in the regions. In Southland there are 7.3% fewer lawyers, Marlborough 4.5% fewer, Gisborne and Whanganui 2.7% fewer in both regions.

Ethnicity

PROPORTION OF ALL LAWYERS AND LAWYERS 0-7 YEARS PQE BY ETHNICITY



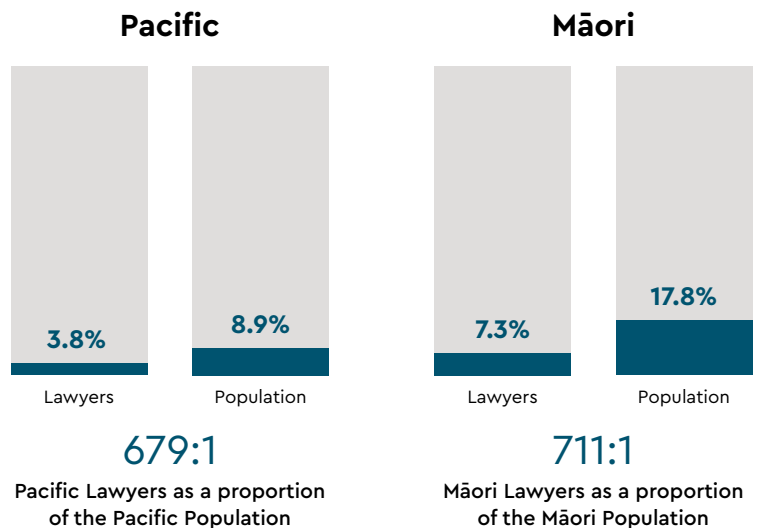
The Law Society holds information provided by 96% of registered lawyers about their ethnicity. It should be noted that lawyers can choose to identify with more than one ethnic group, meaning the percentages shown will not add up to 100%. At 72.4%, New Zealand European remains the most represented ethnic group among lawyers, noting that some may also identify with other ethnicities. Lawyers who identify as Māori are the second most represented group at 7.3%.

0 – 7 years PQE cohort

This year the collective percentage of Asian lawyers

(Chinese, Indian, Southeast Asian, other Asian) declined from 22.7% last year to 19.4%, with Māori decreasing from 12.1% last year to 10.5% and the collective percentage of Pacific lawyers (Cook Island Māori, Fijian, Niuean, Samoan, Tokelauan, Tongan, other Pacific Peoples) decreasing from 6.4% last year to 5.7%. These ethnic groups have had a greater number of lawyers leaving the group in the 2024 reporting year (either by moving into the next post-admission group, or by no longer holding a practising certificate), than the number joining the group in the 2024 reporting year.

ETHNICITIES AS A PROPORTION OF LAWYERS AND THE NZ POPULATION



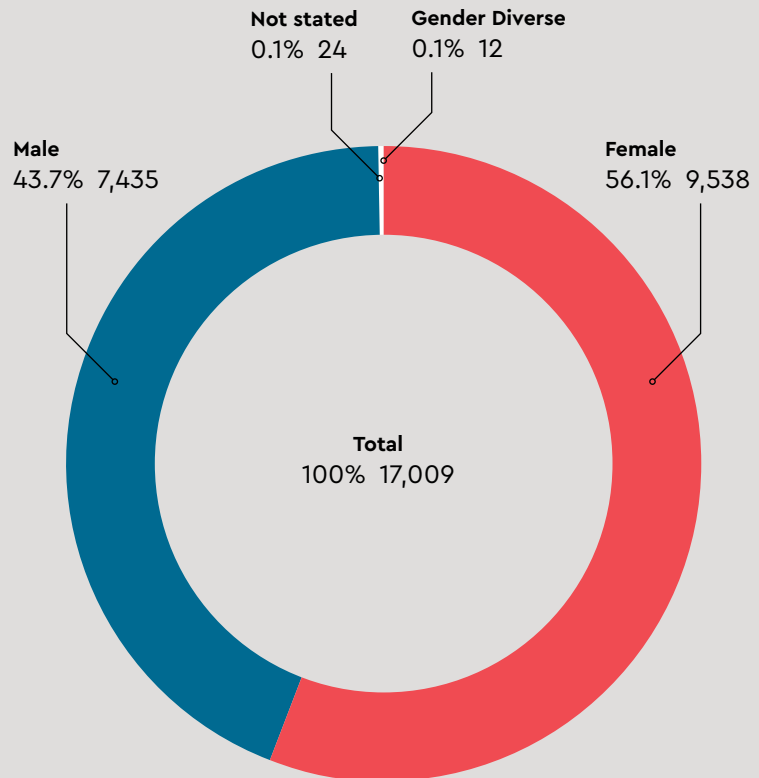
Gender

Lawyers can identify their gender as female, male or gender diverse, or they may choose not to state their gender. There are currently 9,538 female lawyers practising and they make up 56.1% of the profession. Male lawyers amount to 43.7% of the profession, with 7,435 lawyers being male. The gender balance shift has slowed, with female lawyers increasing only slightly this year, after a 1% rise in female lawyers every year for the past five years.

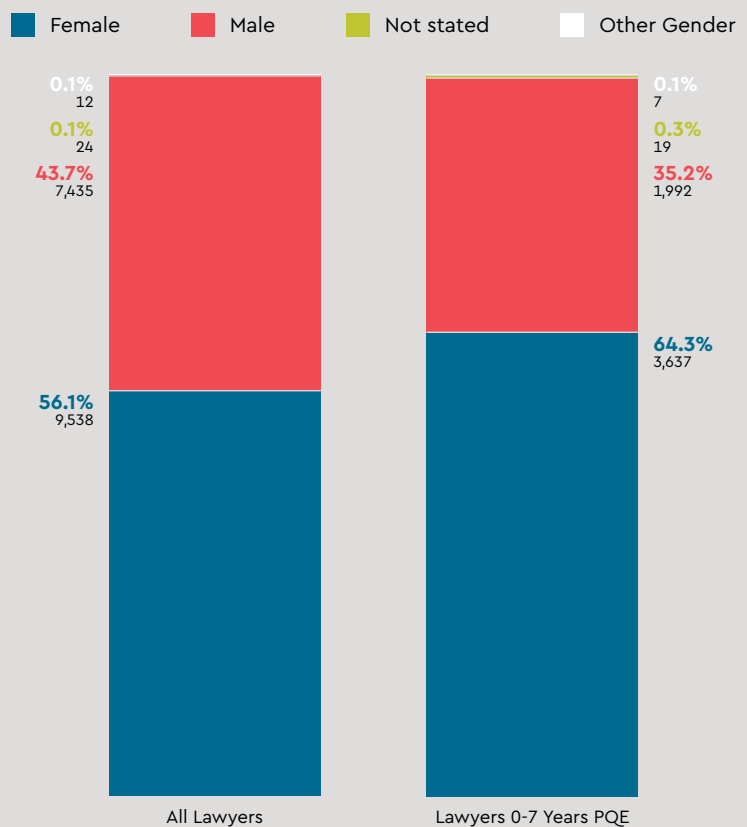
The trend of a move to an overall majority of lawyers identifying as female will likely continue as 64.3% of all lawyers 0-7 years post-admission (0-7 PQE) identify as female. However, as already noted, the trend towards female lawyers in the majority has slowed this year. Lawyers identifying as gender diverse comprised 0.1% of the profession.

There are net 39 more barristers of all genders this year compared to 2023. While five of these are men, proportionally the number of barristers identifying as male has decreased from 55.0% in FY 2023 to 54.2% this year.

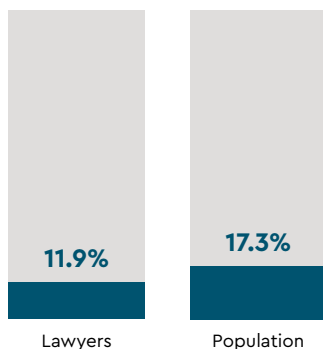
PROPORTION OF ALL LAWYERS BY GENDER



PROPORTION OF ALL LAWYERS BY GENDER COMPARED TO LAWYERS 0-7 YEARS PQE



Asian



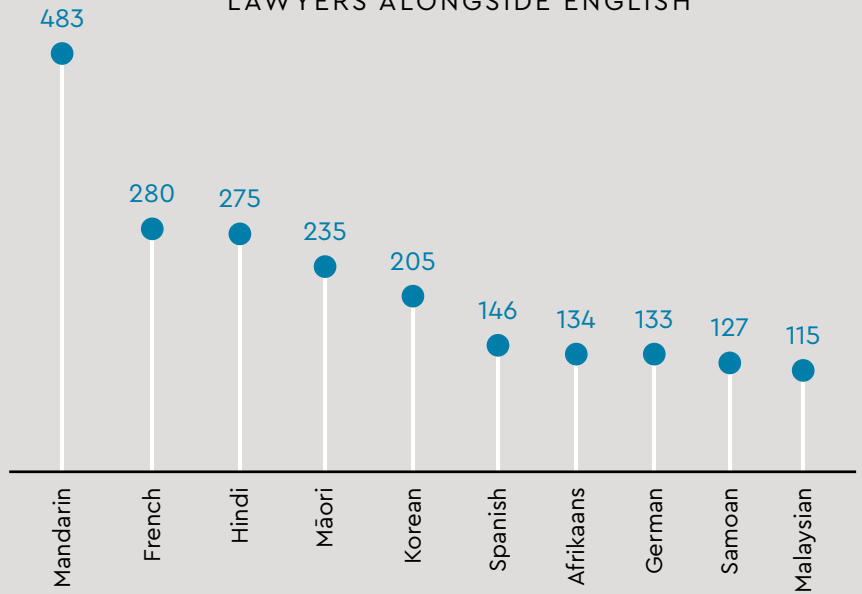
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Asian Lawyers as a proportion of the Asian Population

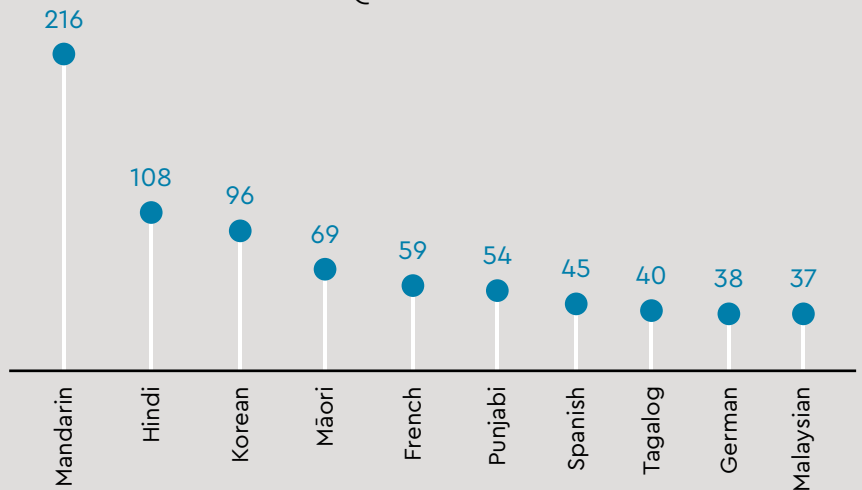
Language

These graphs present the top ten languages spoken by lawyers alongside English. It is inferred that lawyers speak English. There has been a 9% increase in the number of Te Reo Māori-speaking lawyers from 216 in reporting year 2023 to 235 this reporting year. Similarly, there has been a 6% increase in Mandarin speakers from 456 to 483. Other languages to see an increase between reporting years 2023 and 2024 include Hindi, and Cantonese. The increasing numbers of languages spoken reflects the increasing diversity of lawyers in New Zealand. However, this may, in part, also be attributed to improved data collection.

TOP TEN LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY ALL LAWYERS ALONGSIDE ENGLISH



TOP TEN LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY LAWYERS 0-7 YEARS PQE ALONGSIDE ENGLISH



LAWYERS WHO SPEAK TE REO MĀORI COMPARED TO THE NZ POPULATION OF TE REO MĀORI SPEAKERS

LAWYERS

235

POPULATION*

213,849

RATIO

910:1

*Census 2023, Stats NZ

LAWYERS WHO USE NZ SIGN LANGUAGE COMPARED TO THE POPULATION OF NZ WHO COMMUNICATE IN NZ SIGN LANGUAGE

LAWYERS

10

POPULATION*

4,600

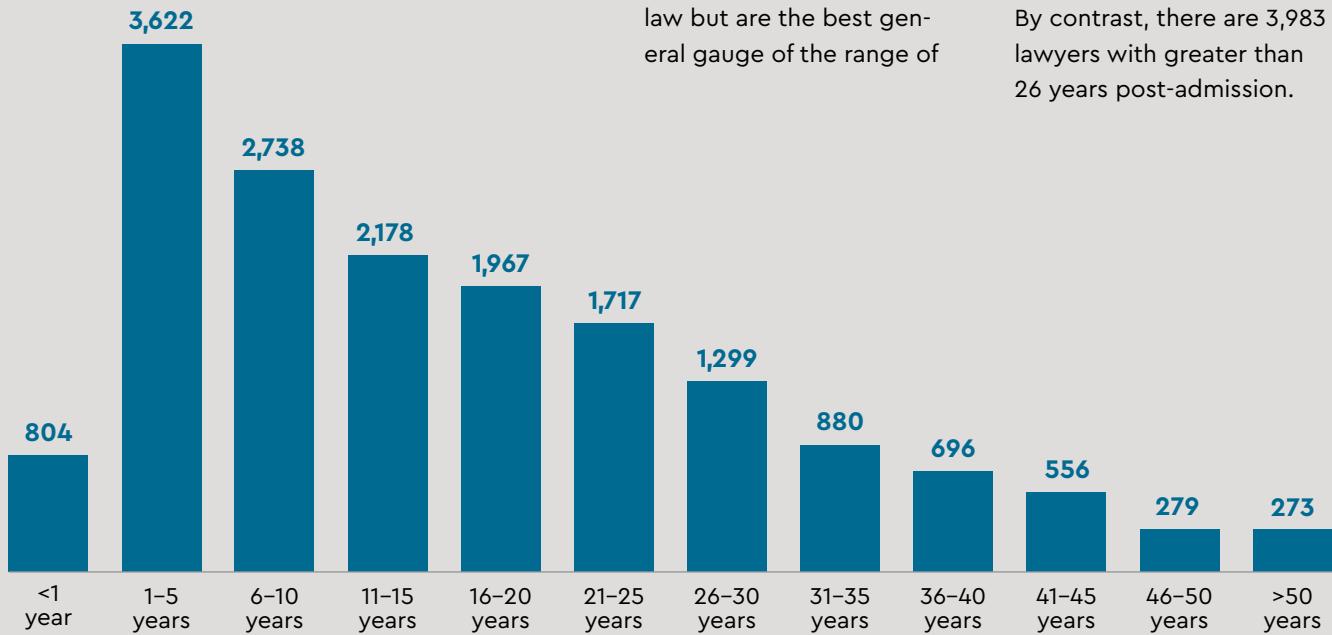
RATIO

460:1

*Census 2018, Stats NZ

Time in practice

LAWYERS BY YEARS SINCE ADMISSION



The Law Society records years since admission for every registered lawyer. These figures do not necessarily represent years in practice or account for time when a lawyer has paused their practice of the law but are the best general gauge of the range of

age and experience across the profession. This data trends towards lawyers with fewer years post-admission. Lawyers 0-7 years post-admission make up a large group within New Zealand lawyers with 5,655. By contrast, there are 3,983 lawyers with greater than 26 years post-admission.

Types of practice

Lawyers may practise in three ways: as barristers and solicitors (providing services to the public), as barristers sole and as in-house lawyers (providing services to firms).

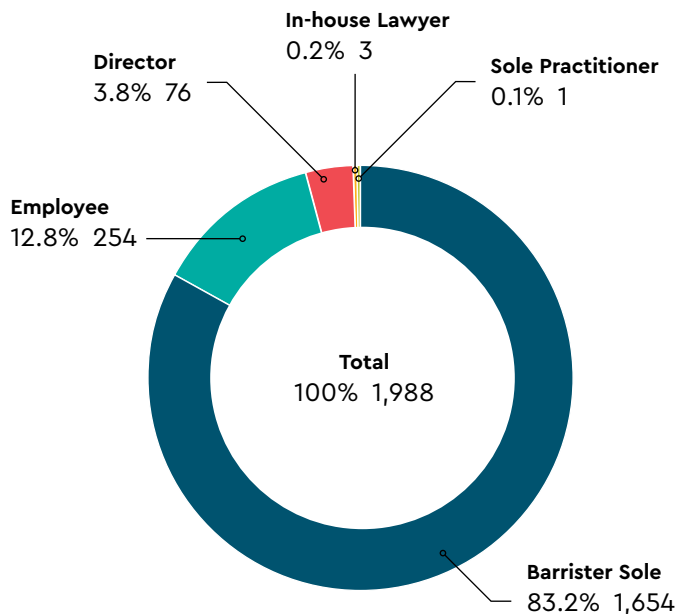
Barristers

As of 30 June 2024, there were 2,011 lawyers practising as barristers – 11.8% of all lawyers; slightly higher than last year. The number of barristers recorded as employed barristers was 254, an increase compared to last year (238).

BARRISTERS COMPARED TO NEW ZEALAND BASED LAWYERS

12.8%

PROPORTION OF POSITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT OF BARRISTERS

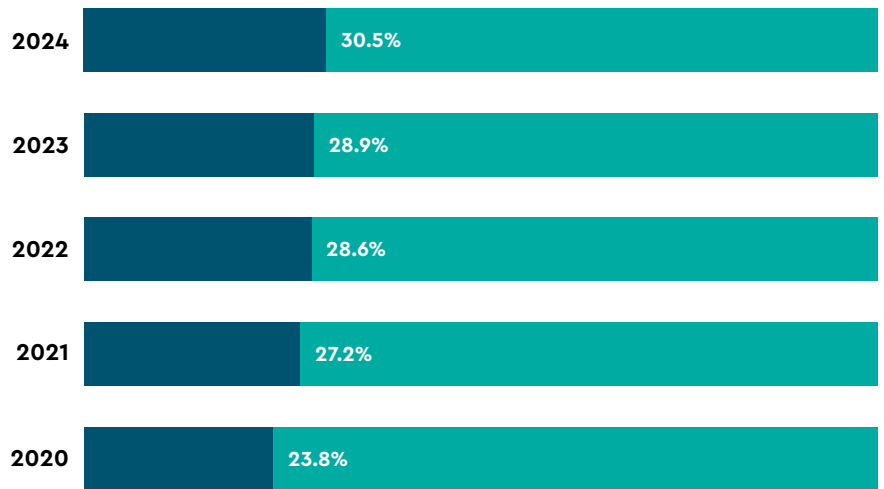


Types of practice

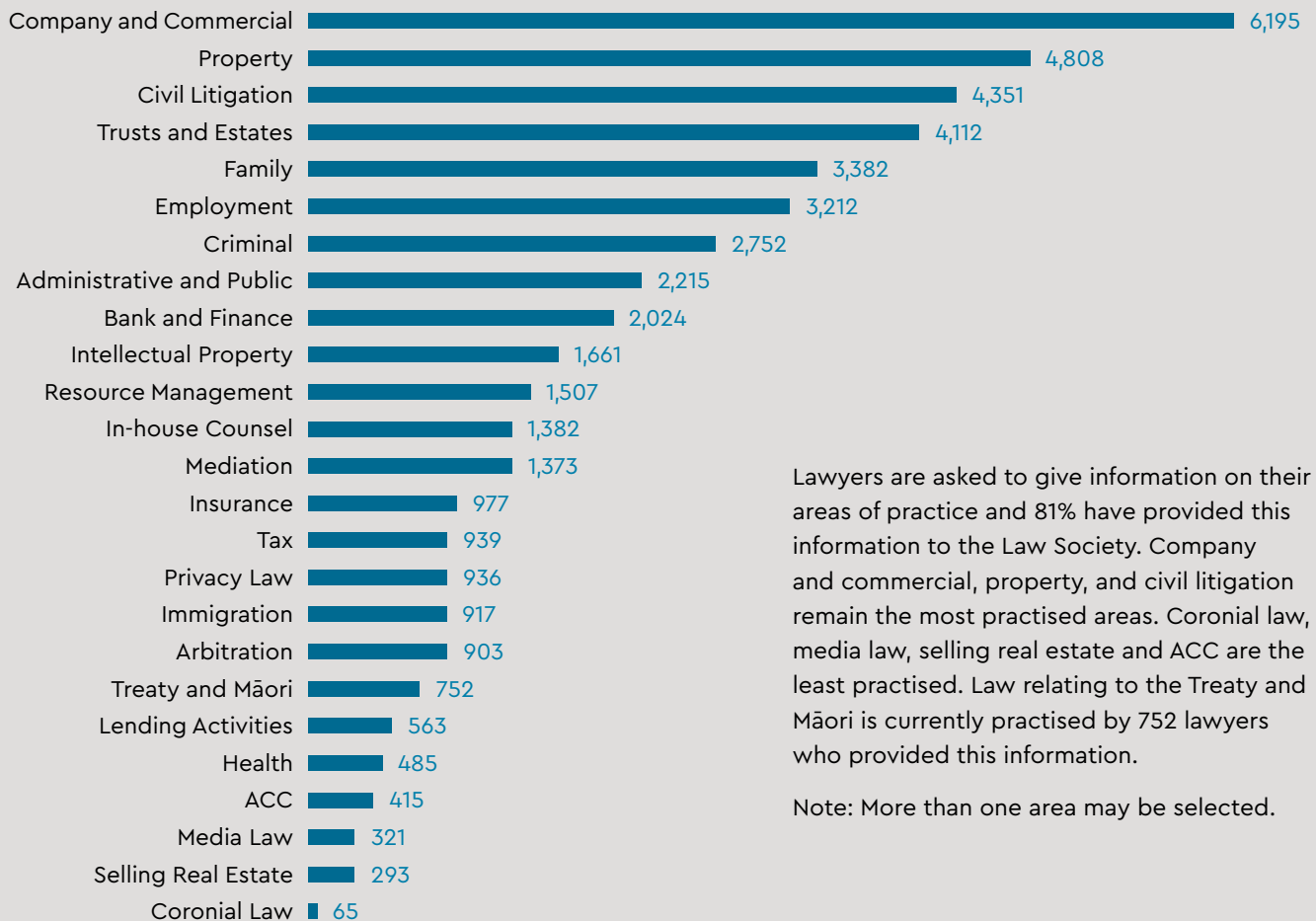
In-house lawyers

The trend of increasing numbers of in-house lawyers has continued this year rising from 4,851 to 5,101 this year. In-house lawyers now account for 30.5% of the practising profession.

PROPORTION OF LAWYERS THAT PRACTISE AS IN-HOUSE LAWYERS



Areas of practice



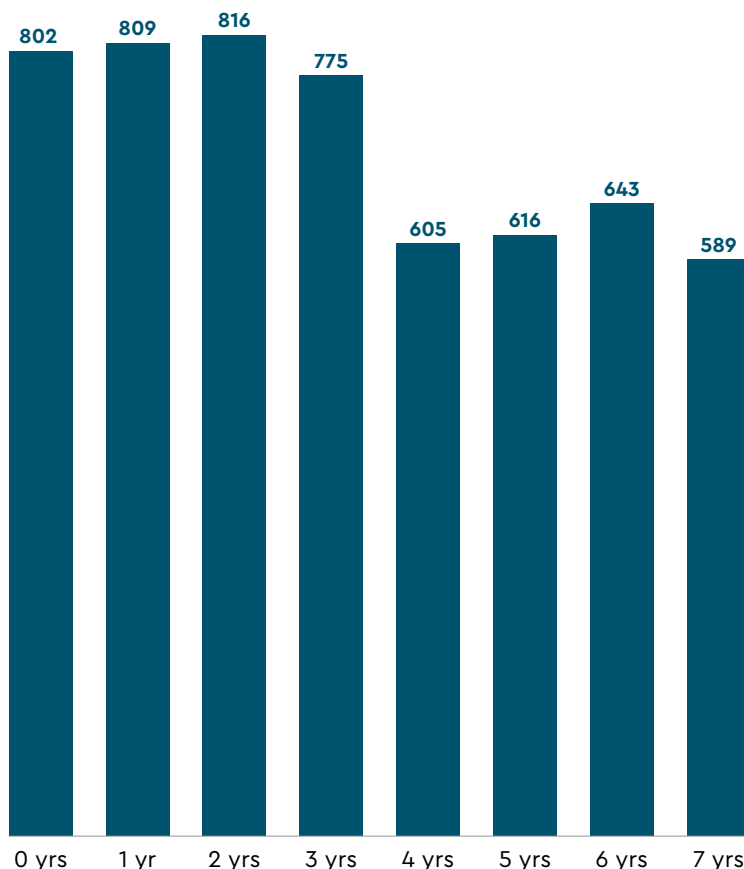
Lawyers are asked to give information on their areas of practice and 81% have provided this information to the Law Society. Company and commercial, property, and civil litigation remain the most practised areas. Coronial law, media law, selling real estate and ACC are the least practised. Law relating to the Treaty and Māori is currently practised by 752 lawyers who provided this information.

Note: More than one area may be selected.

New lawyers

PROPORTION OF LAWYERS 0-7 YEARS PQE BY YEARS SINCE ADMISSION

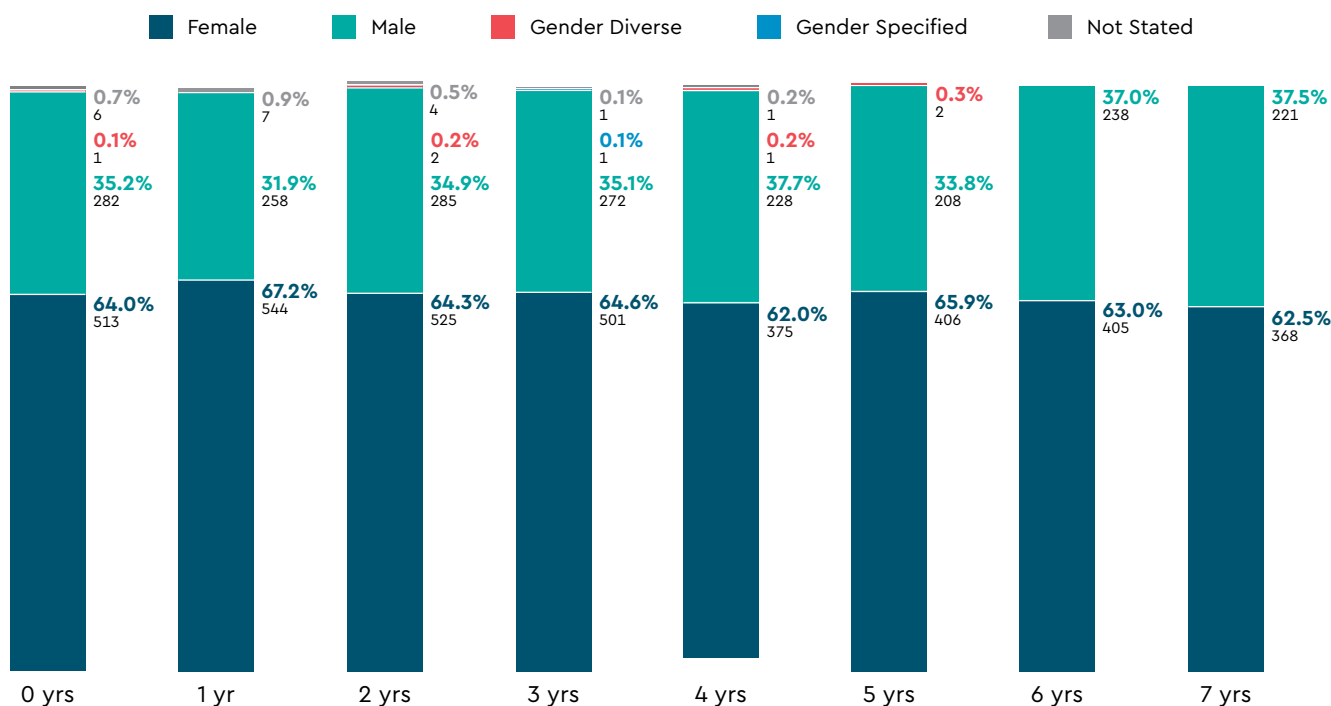
At the year ending 30 June 2024, the 0-7 years post-admission category comprised 5,655 lawyers of which 64.3% were female. The largest subset of the new lawyers' group was in the two-years post-admission category with a total of 816 lawyers. This was closely followed by 809 lawyers in the one-year category.



CENTRES WITH COUNT >100 PQE 0-7 LAWYERS

Main centre	Number
Auckland	2,182
Wellington	760
Christchurch	540
Overseas	501
Hamilton	203
Auckland Region	196
Tauranga	140
Waikato	119

GENDER OF NEW LAWYERS 0-7 YEARS PQE BY YEARS SINCE ADMISSION



Positions of employment

As at 30 June 2024, 97 per cent of all lawyers had positions of employment. Employees of law firms, as an employment position description, make up the largest group of the profession at 5,651 lawyers, a decrease of 83 from the previous year. The two areas to see an increase in numbers year on year are

directors and shareholders, rising from 1,519 to 1,563 and 35 to 47, respectively. Most new lawyers are employees and in-house lawyers. There are 32 lawyers in the new lawyer category practising on their own account as partners and 105 new lawyers employed working as barristers.

