

LEGAL SERVICES

THE INDUSTRY & WORKFORCE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA 2019



THE INDUSTRY ¹

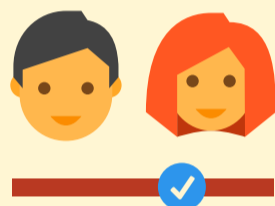


The Legal and Accounting Services industry employs approximately 27,300 Western Australians. The industries provide critical services to individuals and organisations requiring financial and/or legal advisory, support, technical and regulatory services, for everyday matters through to legal and government agency processes.

The last few years have seen a period of constrained legal spend with increased competition from big firms and emergent mid-tier firms offering specialist services. The largest market for legal services are corporate and business client accounts, particularly in banking, finance and insurance sectors.

KEY WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS ²

Gender



66%
female

Age



38%
<35 years of age

Nationality



33%
born outside Australia

Employment



69%
employed full time

Education



58% tertiary qualified
37% vocational and
secondary qualified

Weekly Income



26% earn <\$1,000
47% earn \$1,500+

WORKFORCE PRIORITIES ³

1

Growth in the accounting sector is dominated by the provision of advisory and business development services, reliant on highly skilled professionals. Individual accountability, financial risk management, data protection and privacy are key focus areas.

2

Companies value entrepreneurial and digital skills, advanced communication and reasoning, emotional intelligence and networking capability. Business administration and management skills are required by legal firms and smaller private practices.

3

Legal practitioners rely on their ability to understand and advocate for their clients. Increasingly they rely on their ability to build and sustain client relationships in a highly competitive environment while responding to growing expectations and requirements.

4

Business acumen and business development skills are critical, as is the ability to adapt to emerging business needs and delivery of adjunct services. The ability to craft a strong personal brand and online/social media presence continue to be sought after amongst graduates.

OCCUPATIONS & CAREERS



Solicitor
Barrister
Legal Executive
Partner
Judge
Magistrate

Paralegal
Legal Secretary
Practice Manager
Bailiff
Court Officer
In-house Counsel

Partner
Legal Clerk
Trust Clerk
Settlement Agent
Settlement Clerk



INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENTS⁴



DISRUPTION The Australian legal profession is facing increasing competition. Globalisation, offshoring, virtual assistants and the emergence of alternative legal service providers such as paralegal technicians and legal document preparers are all disrupting traditional models. Automating and digitising legal services delivery has led to an increase in the number of virtual law firms. Large accounting firms are expanding their legal service offerings to large corporate clients as a point of diversification, value-add and growth. Market share is further impacted by large firms and government departments as they expand their in-house counsel.



GRADUATE ACTIVITY Graduates entering the legal industry typically work for a firm, a legal aid office, organisations with in-house legal activity, government or lobby groups. Entry roles may entail the provision of legal advice and representation, development of legal documents, legal advice and advocacy services to those in need, providing in-house counsel at a company, processing patents and creating or advising on policy. Industry has access to quality, skilled and appropriately qualified entry level legal professionals due to a continued oversupply of legal graduates in Western Australia.



GROWTH Increased mining activity and support services are increasing demand for legal services. The Royal Commission has fuelled growth for lawyers and paralegals with financial regulatory experience. Legal reviews, internal audits and risk management services are anticipated to increase with a focus on financial advice, document development and record control, compliance and auditing processes, and risk. Increased in-house legal activity will increase demand for legal roles such as paralegals, legal, senior and general counsels with relevant industry experience, particularly across the commercial, banking and finance industries.



TECHNOLOGY Legal-tech entrants have quadrupled in the past two decades, improving employee productivity and streamlining operational processes, allowing for redirection of effort towards strengthening client relationships and business development. Technologies range from data analytics for in-house legal teams and intelligent cost-comparison technologies, to transaction deal rooms, file sharing and collaboration software, and blockchain-based access to legal aid. Adoption of technology by large organisations threaten the margins of more traditional firms with fewer resources to invest in technology and innovation.

TRAINING^{4, 5}

While Certificate III in Business Administration (Legal) supports entry level pathways and Certificate IV in Legal Services aligns to pathways for legal administration professionals, these remain underutilised. The legal services sector typically assigns entry level roles to tertiary graduates, already disproportionate to fewer vacancies.

Applicants who pursue legal qualifications via a pathway that includes prior business experience, undergraduate business or dual commerce/law degrees, or who opt to include business practicums or entrepreneurship/commerce/business electives in their Bachelor of Laws may be more attractive to organisations engaging graduate legal practitioners. Employers value candidates with a demonstrated ability to apply cross-disciplinary capability and skills to meet and grow emerging business opportunities and business performance.

The Business Services Training Package includes 21 traineeships with some qualifications in legal business administration and legal services. These provide vocational training through a combination of on-the-job and off-the-job training. Financial incentives exist for eligible employers.