



## Rural, Regional & Remote Areas Lawyers Survey

actlawsociety



As the new President of the Law Council and on behalf of your local law society, I invite you to take part in the Law Council's survey for lawyers working in rural, regional and remote areas (RRR) of Australia.

There is increasing concern at the steady decline in the number of legal practitioners working in RRR areas. Anecdotally, there are indications that this problem may get worse in coming years as large numbers of practitioners in rural areas retire. This will have a long-term impact on the ability of people in the bush to access legal services, including legal aid.

The Law Council is committed to working with your local body to promote and support country lawyers and their communities. We have established a Recruitment and Retention Working Group to examine initiatives for the recruitment and retention of lawyers in various sectors. The Working Group is focusing its efforts at present on the problem of recruitment and retention of lawyers in RRR areas.

We are undertaking a survey of all lawyers working in RRR areas to obtain data on their profile and experiences, including information on succession planning and retirement.

I urge you take the time to participate in this survey. The information you provide us will help the Law Council and your local law society to better understand the extent of the problem and also assist in formulating strategies to attract lawyers to RRR areas.

Yours sincerely,

**John Corcoran**  
President, Law Council of Australia



Law Council  
OF AUSTRALIA



## Completing this survey:

Please tick the answers that best describe you/your firm.

The information you disclose in this survey will be treated confidentially.

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### About My Region

The state/territory where I work most is:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ACT                | <input type="checkbox"/> South Australia   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New South Wales    | <input type="checkbox"/> Tasmania          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Territory | <input type="checkbox"/> Victoria          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Queensland         | <input type="checkbox"/> Western Australia |

The town where my office is located is:

The postcode of my office is:

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### About Me

I am:

- |                               |                                 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Male | <input type="checkbox"/> Female |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|

I was born in:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A capital city in Australia | <input type="checkbox"/> RRR Australia |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Overseas      |

My age group is:

- |                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20 – 29 | <input type="checkbox"/> 50 – 59 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30 – 39 | <input type="checkbox"/> 60- 69  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 40 – 49 | <input type="checkbox"/> 70 plus |

I completed my law degree at:

  
University  
Campus

I completed my degree as a distance student:

- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

I have been admitted to practice:

- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

If yes, I was admitted to practice in (year):

I have been practising law, excluding any career breaks, for the following length of time:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 – 10 years  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 2 years      | <input type="checkbox"/> 11 – 20 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 – 5 years      | <input type="checkbox"/> 21 plus years |

I have been practising law in a RRR area for:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 – 10 years  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 2 years      | <input type="checkbox"/> 11 – 20 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 – 5 years      | <input type="checkbox"/> 21 plus years |

I intend to continue practising law in a RRR area for:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 – 10 years  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 2 years      | <input type="checkbox"/> 11 – 20 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 – 5 years      | <input type="checkbox"/> 21 plus years |

The reasons I choose to work in a RRR area are best described as (please rank according to relevance, where 1 is the most relevant):

- |  |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nature of the legal work              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community involvement                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility to balance family & work  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work/life balance generally           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To gain legal experience              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extended family located in area       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunity to earn a good income     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Partner works in the area             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy the country lifestyle generally |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other .....                           |

If I were to leave my current firm, I would be most likely to:

- |   |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Move to another legal practice in my regional area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Move to a legal practice in the city               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Move to Government in-house position               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Move to a corporate in-house position              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Move to a community legal centre                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Move to become a barrister                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leave the practice of law to retire                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leave the practice of law to start a new career    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leave to care for my family                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other .....  |

If I were to move from a RRR area, this would most likely be due to (please rank according to relevance, where 1 is the most relevant):

- |   |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Change practice areas                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leave the practice of law to start a new career  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Better remuneration                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased professional development opportunities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Move to city for lifestyle reasons               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retire   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> For family reasons                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My partner's relocation                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Isolation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other .....                                      |

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### About My Firm

My organisation/firm is best described as:

- |   |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private law firm                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barrister's practice             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government legal department      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In-house corporate legal team    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community legal centre           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal aid / Aboriginal legal aid |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other .....                      |

**My firm mainly practices in (select all that apply):**

- Commercial / Business law
- Wills and probate
- Conveyancing
- Property law
- Litigation
- Family law
- Personal injury
- Criminal law
- Tax law
- General practice

**My role is best described as:**

- Principal
- Employee solicitor
- Graduate solicitor/articled clerk/trainee
- Other .....

**My income range is:**

- Under \$40,000
- \$40,001-50,000
- \$50,001-60,000
- \$60,001-70,000
- \$70,001-80,000
- \$80,001-90,000
- \$90,001-100,000
- \$100,001-110,000
- \$110,001-120,000
- \$120,001-130,000
- \$130,001-140,000
- \$140,001-150,000
- \$150,001-175,000
- \$175,001-200,000
- \$200,001-225,000
- \$225,001-250,000
- More than \$250,001

**Including yourself (if applicable), how many principals are in your firm?**

- 1
- 2
- 3 – 5
- 6 – 9
- More than 10
- Not applicable

**Including yourself (if applicable), how many employee legal practitioners are in your firm?**

- 1 – 2
- 3 – 5
- 6 – 15
- 16 – 35
- More than 35
- Not applicable

**How many non-legal staff are employed in your firm (based on total number of employees)?**

- 1 – 2
- 3 – 5
- 6 – 15
- 16 – 35
- More than 35
- Not applicable

**Legal Aid / Pro Bono**

**My firm currently accepts instructions for legally aided matters:**

- Yes
- No

**If yes, in the last 12 months, how many legally aided cases has your firm taken instructions in?**

- Less than 5
- 5 – 15
- 16 – 30
- More than 30
- I don't know

**My firm provides pro bono services other than for legally funded cases:**

- Yes
- No

**I undertake other volunteer work within my community:**

- Yes
- No

**Questions for Principals**

**Does your legal practice currently have enough lawyers to serve your client base?**

- Yes
- No

**Does your legal practice currently have enough lawyers to serve the legal needs of your community?**

- Yes
- No

**If no, how many lawyers do you think you need?**

**The following things concern me about the future of my firm and its personnel:**

- Succession planning – finding lawyers/principals interested in and able to take over the practice
- Attracting additional lawyers/principals to allow the practice to grow
- Attracting lawyers/principals to replace departures
- Retaining employees already at the firm
- Attracting and retaining good legal/admin support staff
- Employing locums
- Other .....

**Further Surveys**

**Are you willing to participate in further surveys aimed at finding out more information about the profile and experiences of regional, rural and remote lawyers?**

- Yes
- No

**If yes, please enter your contact details:**



Thank you for completing this survey.

Simply fold up this form, seal it with tape and post it to the address on the form, or fax it to: 03 9607 9558.

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#### Privacy Statement

The results of this survey will be used by the Law Council to help develop strategies to assist in the recruitment and retention of lawyers to rural, regional and remote areas of Australia. Only authorised personnel of the Law Council and the Law Institute of Victoria will have access to the information you disclose. Any personal information you provide us will be kept in complete confidence and will not be released to third parties without your consent.

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#### Further Information

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this survey, or the work of the Regional, Rural & Remote Lawyers Working Group, please contact Nicole Pulvirenti at the Law Council of Australia on (02) 6246 3711 or email [nicole.pulvirenti@lawcouncil.asn.au](mailto:nicole.pulvirenti@lawcouncil.asn.au).

If you have any IT-related questions about this form, or experience any problems in accessing the online survey, please contact Ali Beriman at the Law Institute of Victoria by email on [aberiman@liv.asn.au](mailto:aberiman@liv.asn.au).

Returning Officer  
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The Law Council of Australia speaks on issues of national and international importance, federal law and the operation of federal courts and tribunals.

The Law Council advises governments, courts and federal agencies on ways in which the law and the justice system can be improved for the benefit of the community.

The Law Council also represents the Australian legal profession overseas, and maintains close relationships with legal professional bodies throughout the world.

Through its specialist sections, working groups, standing and ad-hoc committees, the Law Council provides interest groups and professional development opportunities for lawyers across a variety of specialised areas of law.

The Law Council, with the help of its constituent bodies and Sections, also presents major events such as the biennial Australian Legal Convention, and organises seminars, workshops and conferences on a wide range of legal issues.

Find out more at [www.lawcouncil.asn.au](http://www.lawcouncil.asn.au)

