

<b>Legal Professionals</b>		<b>Queensland</b>
<b>ASCO Code: 2521</b>	April 2007	
<b>Labour market rating</b>	Shortage	
<b>Comment:</b> .		

### **Occupational demand**

Legal professionals have traditionally been divided into barristers and solicitors and can be self-employed or employed in private legal practices, government departments, community law centres or business corporations. Legal professionals provide legal advice, prepare and draft legal documents, conduct negotiations on behalf of clients and plead cases before civil, criminal and industrial courts and other tribunals. Demand for legal services depends to a large extent on general economic circumstances and factors affecting particular industries. Particularly buoyant business conditions in Queensland have supported growing demand for legal professionals over recent years, particularly in areas such as property, construction, mining and corporate law. Government policy and funding decisions also affect demand for legal services.

### **Occupational supply**

Entry to this profession in Queensland requires the completion of a bachelor degree with a major in law, which is available as a single or combined degree at five universities across the State. Data from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations show that approximately 800 new students enrolled in these courses each year from 2001 to 2003, increasing to 1100 students in 2004 and 2005. Wastage from education could be high, with an average annual number of 465 students completing studies from 2001 to 2004, while many law graduates do not go on to practise as a legal professional. Obtaining a solicitor's practising certificate requires additional legal training by completing either a recognised Practical Legal Training Course or an articulated clerkship with a legal practice. Overseas departures and arrivals data indicate that direct international migration has contributed small net losses to the overall supply of legal professionals in Queensland over the last two years. However, Labour Force Survey data show a strong increasing trend in the number of employed legal professionals over the same period, indicating that interstate migration is likely to be a significant supplement to local education as a source of supply in Queensland.

### **Employer and industry comments/current labour market**

About 35 per cent of the vacancies in this year's survey were filled within six weeks of advertising and less than 20 per cent of the applicants were considered suitable by employers, mostly because they had limited skills or experience. Demand has been very high for specialists in property, construction and mining law, and employers have experienced great difficulty recruiting solicitors with two to five years experience. Contacts reported placing multiple advertisements and using a variety of methods to attract applicants, especially in regional and rural areas. The majority of employers reported that their advertised vacancies had remained unfilled for more than three months. Employers and recruitment specialists reported that newly admitted solicitors who have completed the Practical Legal Training Course but have no work experience are less competitive than those who have completed an articulated clerkship.

### **Labour market outlook**

With the State's population and volume of business activity expected to continue to grow, demand for legal professionals should expand further over the next few years. The labour market for legal professionals with two to five years experience is in particular demand and regional vacancies are exceptionally difficult to fill. While there is some contribution to supply coming from interstate migration, it has not been enough to meet current demand.