

<b>Legal Professionals</b>		<b>Tasmania</b>
ASCO Code: 2521	April 2007	
Labour market rating	Regional Recruitment Difficulties	
<b>Comment</b> <i>Recruitment difficulties exist on the north-west coast of Tasmania, but the labour market is in balance elsewhere.</i>		

### **Occupational demand**

Demand factors for lawyers tend to vary according to the field of activity in which lawyers to operate. For example, crime rates tend to drive demand for criminal lawyers, divorce rates and custody disputes tend to be the main drivers of demand for family lawyers, while improvements in general economic conditions increase demand for commercial and property lawyers. Since around mid-2001 economic activity in Tasmania has improved, with increases both in the level of building, and property prices. Increased demand for commercial and property lawyers can be linked to these increases. Census data show very little change in the numbers of legal professionals between 1996 and 2001 at just over 500, but unpublished data from the ABS monthly labour force survey suggest numbers had increased to around 1200 by November 2006.

### **Occupational supply**

The major source of supply of legal professionals locally is the University of Tasmania. People wishing to practice law in Tasmania must complete a five year degree which combines law with one other discipline, most commonly arts or commerce. They then must complete a six month Graduate Certificate in Legal Practice before they can gain admission as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Tasmania. There have been an average of around 59 people complete the graduate certificate course over the last seven years, varying between a low of 48 in 2001, and a high of 72 in 2002 and 2004. Between 1996 and 2001, 42 legal professionals moved to Tasmania from interstate or overseas.

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

Of the vacancies advertised for lawyers in the lead up to this report, 90 per cent were filled, and most employers had a good field of applicants. There were some variations both in terms of experience sought and the location of vacancies. For example, the only vacancy that remained unfilled was on the north-west coast of Tasmania, and industry sources indicated that it is much more difficult to fill positions for lawyers outside Hobart generally, but particularly on the north-west coast. In addition, in the area of estate planning for example, higher than average salaries were offered in order to attract suitable applicants. The comment was made by some employers that if they had not been able to attract experienced applicants they would have taken one of the new graduates who had applied.

### **Labour market outlook**

The high fill rate of vacancies for legal professionals in Tasmania supports the view that there are few recruitment problems at present. The exception appears to be on the north-west coast of Tasmania, as industry sources suggest there are long-standing difficulties in recruiting lawyers in that region.