

# Snapshot of the Profession 2021

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This Snapshot draws on information held by the New Zealand Law Society | Te Kāhui Ture o Aotearoa as regulator of the practice of law.

In 2021, there were 15,554 lawyers with a current practising certificate, 14,799 were in New Zealand and 755 were overseas. The remaining figures reflect only the lawyers in New Zealand for the purposes of comparison.

The data highlights the number of lawyers to New Zealanders has steadily increased since the 1970s.

Likewise, the proportion of female lawyers has also increased; currently 53.9% of the profession.

More New Lawyers with 0-7 years post-qualified experience (PQE) are Māori 9.7%, compared to 6.9% of the profession overall. More growth is needed for Māori and Pacific lawyers to be proportional to their communities. Collectively they comprise 10.2% of the profession – compared with the 24.6% of the New Zealand population.

## People per lawyer in New Zealand

LAWYERS BASED IN NZ

15,554

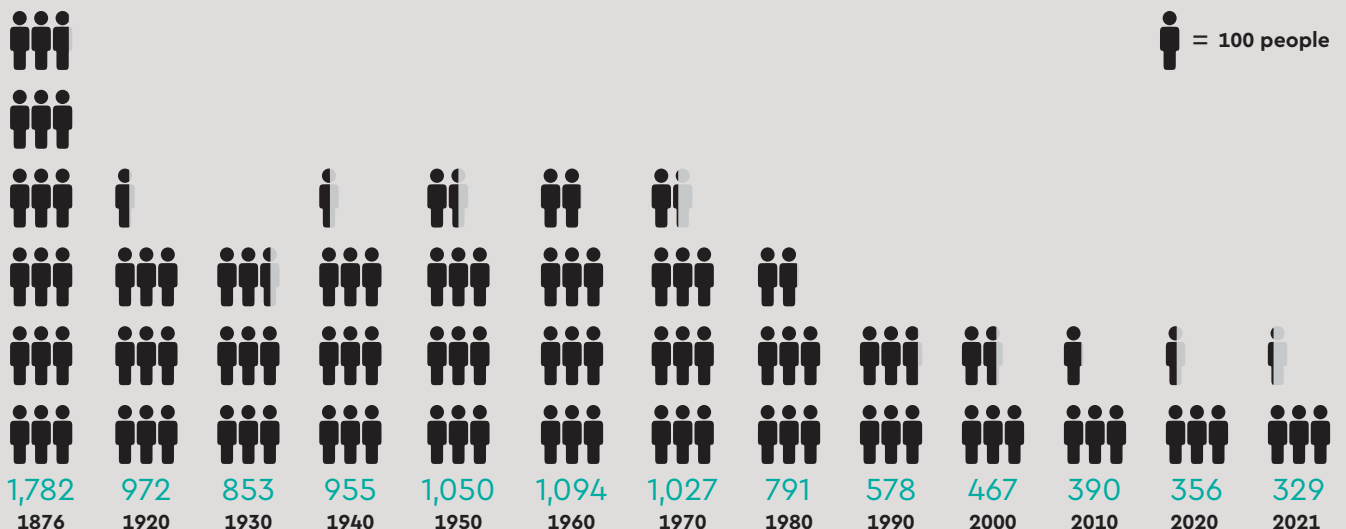
POPULATION

5,122,600

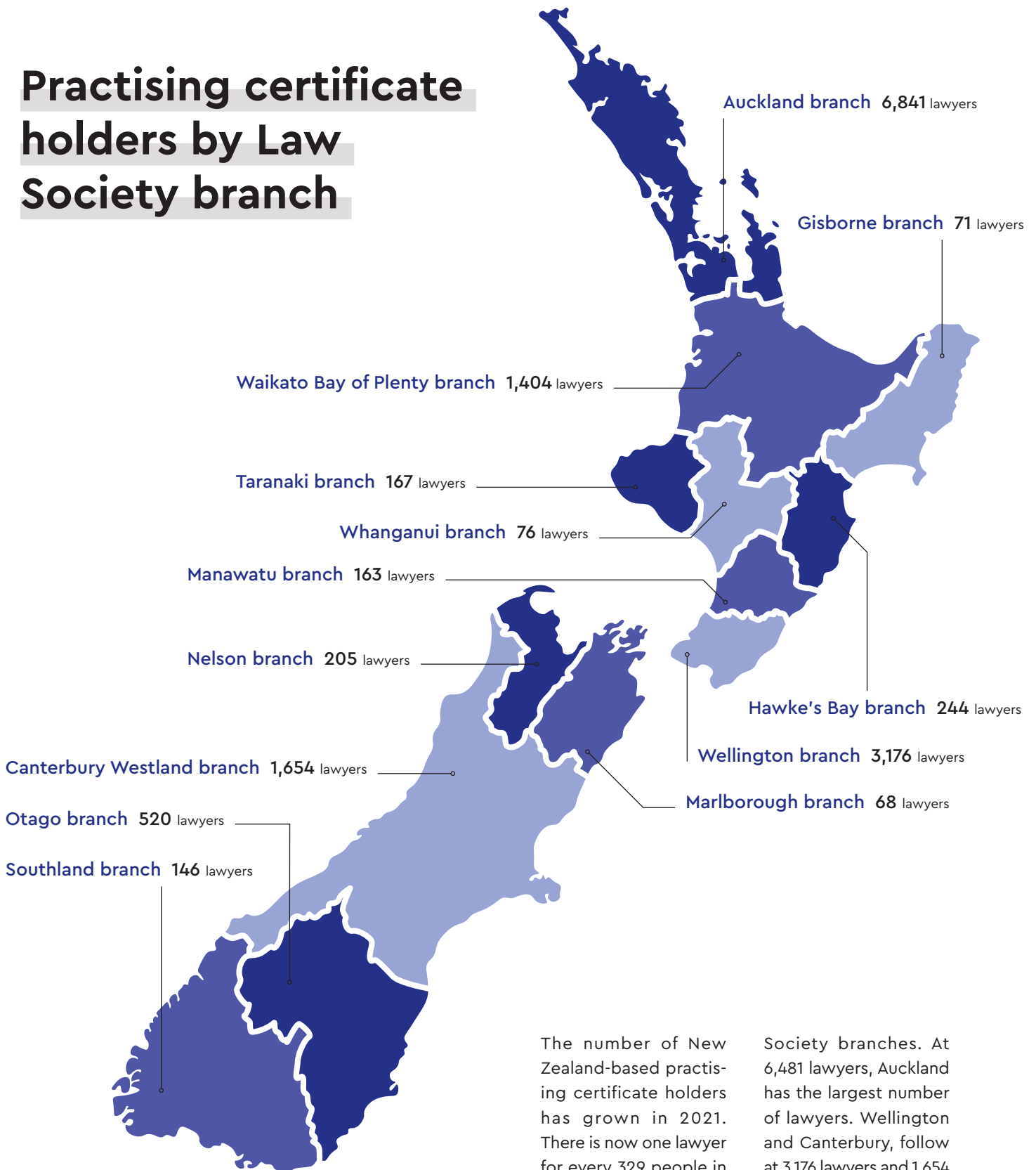
POPULATION PER LAWYER

329:1

PEOPLE PER LAWYER IN NEW ZEALAND



# Practising certificate holders by Law Society branch



The number of New Zealand-based practising certificate holders has grown in 2021. There is now one lawyer for every 329 people in New Zealand. Whereas, ten years ago there was one lawyer for every 390 people.

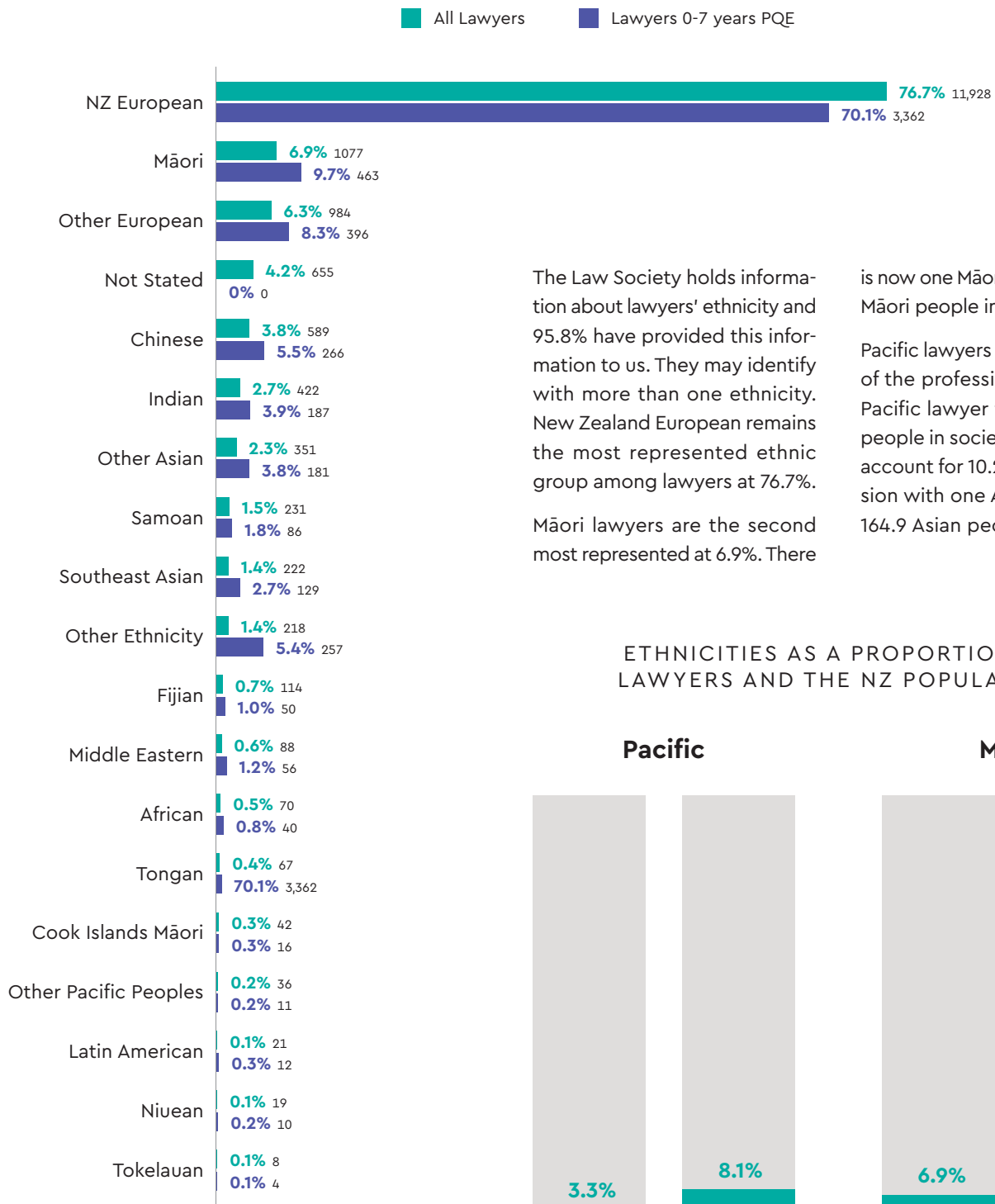
This map organises New Zealand practising certificate holders by Law

Society branches. At 6,481 lawyers, Auckland has the largest number of lawyers. Wellington and Canterbury, follow at 3,176 lawyers and 1,654 lawyers respectively.

Marlborough, Whanganui, and Gisborne have the fewest practising certificate holders at 68 lawyers, 76 lawyers and 71 lawyers respectively.

# Ethnicity

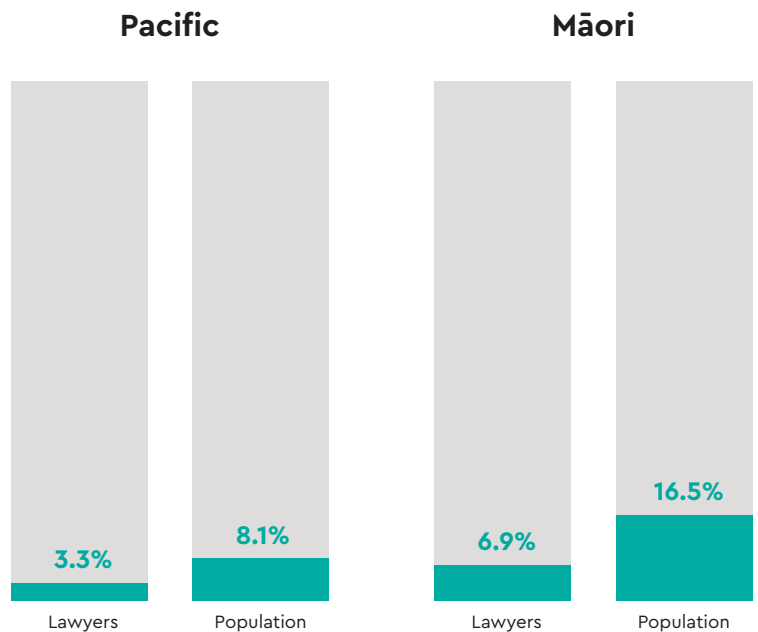
PROPORTION OF ALL LAWYERS AND LAWYERS 0-7 YEARS PQE BY ETHNICITY



The Law Society holds information about lawyers' ethnicity and 95.8% have provided this information to us. They may identify with more than one ethnicity. New Zealand European remains the most represented ethnic group among lawyers at 76.7%. Māori lawyers are the second most represented at 6.9%. There

is now one Māori lawyer for 784.8 Māori people in the population. Pacific lawyers account for 3.3% of the profession. There is one Pacific lawyer for 802.6 Pacific people in society. Asian lawyers account for 10.2% of the profession with one Asian lawyer per 164.9 Asian people in society.

ETHNICITIES AS A PROPORTION OF LAWYERS AND THE NZ POPULATION



**802.6:1**  
Pacific Lawyers as a proportion of the Pacific Population

**784.8:1**  
Māori Lawyers as a proportion of the Māori Population

# Gender

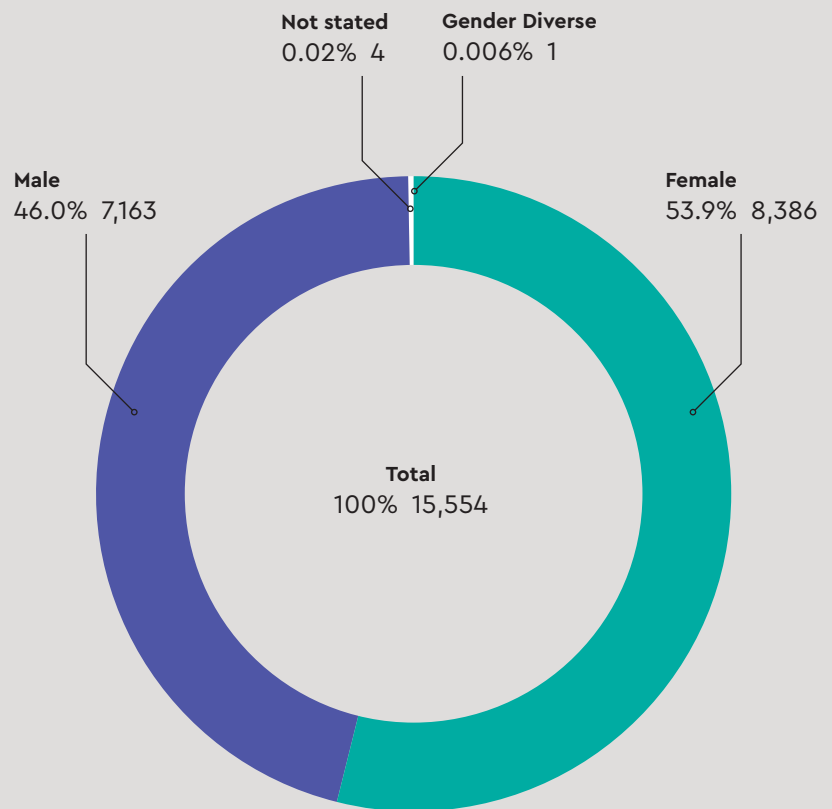
Lawyers can identify their gender as female, male and gender diverse, or they may choose not to state their gender.

There are currently 8,386 female lawyers practising and they make up the majority of the profession at 53.9%. Ten years ago, 43.9% of lawyers were female.

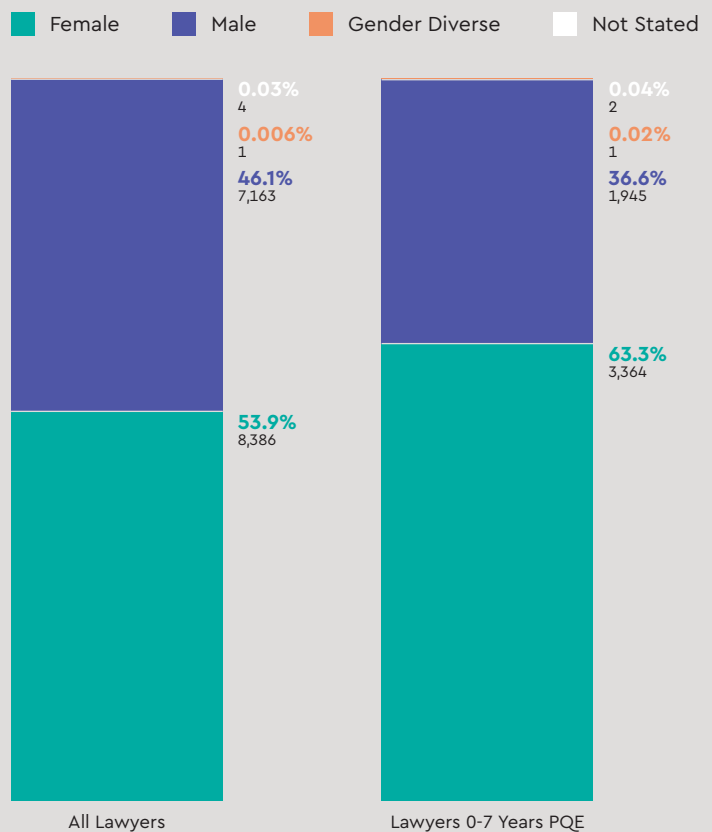
Male lawyers amount to 46.0% of the profession, with 7,163 lawyers being male.

The trend of majority female lawyers will likely continue to increase with 63.3% of all lawyers with 0-7 years of post-qualified experience (0-7 PQE) being female. We also anticipate gender diverse lawyers will increase with time, currently there is one.

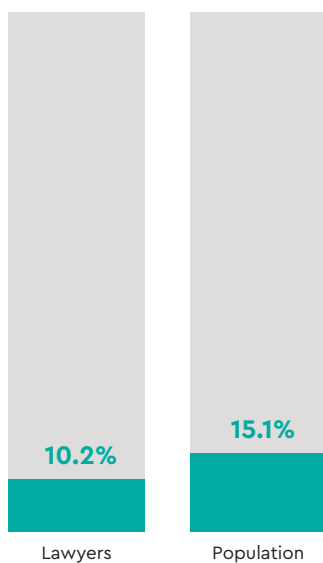
PROPORTION OF ALL LAWYERS BY GENDER



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



## Asian



164.9:1

Asian Lawyers as a proportion of the Asian Population

# Language

These graphs present the top ten languages spoken by lawyers alongside English.

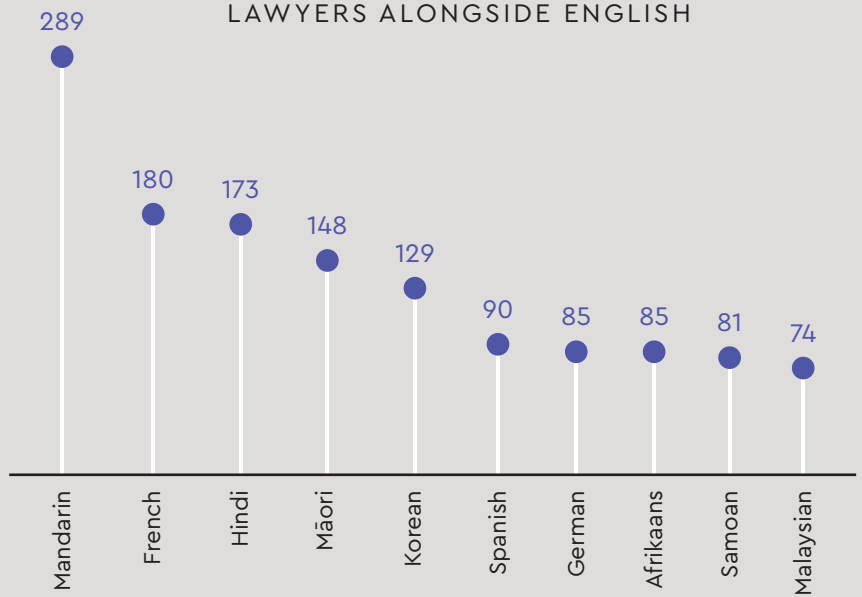
It is inferred that lawyers can speak English. Those who recorded additional languages make up 36.8% of the profession.

Mandarin has the highest number of speakers at 289 lawyers, followed by 180 who speak French and 173 who speak Hindi.

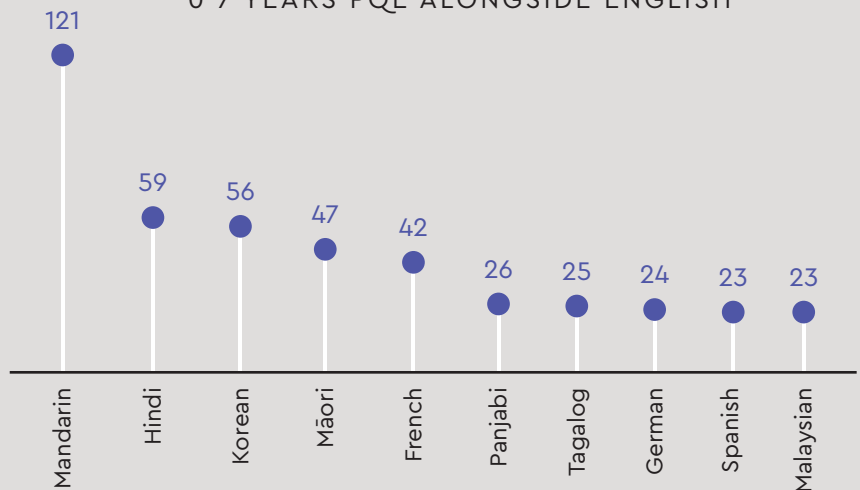
Seven lawyers specified they can speak New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL). With 256,130 people speaking NZSL, there is one lawyer for 35,690 NZSL speakers in New Zealand.

Te reo Māori is the fourth most spoken language specified, spoken by 148 lawyers. This means there is one lawyer per 1,384 te reo speakers in New Zealand.

TOP TEN LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY ALL LAWYERS ALONGSIDE ENGLISH



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



LAWYERS WHO SPEAK NZ SIGN LANGUAGE COMPARED TO THE NZ POPULATION

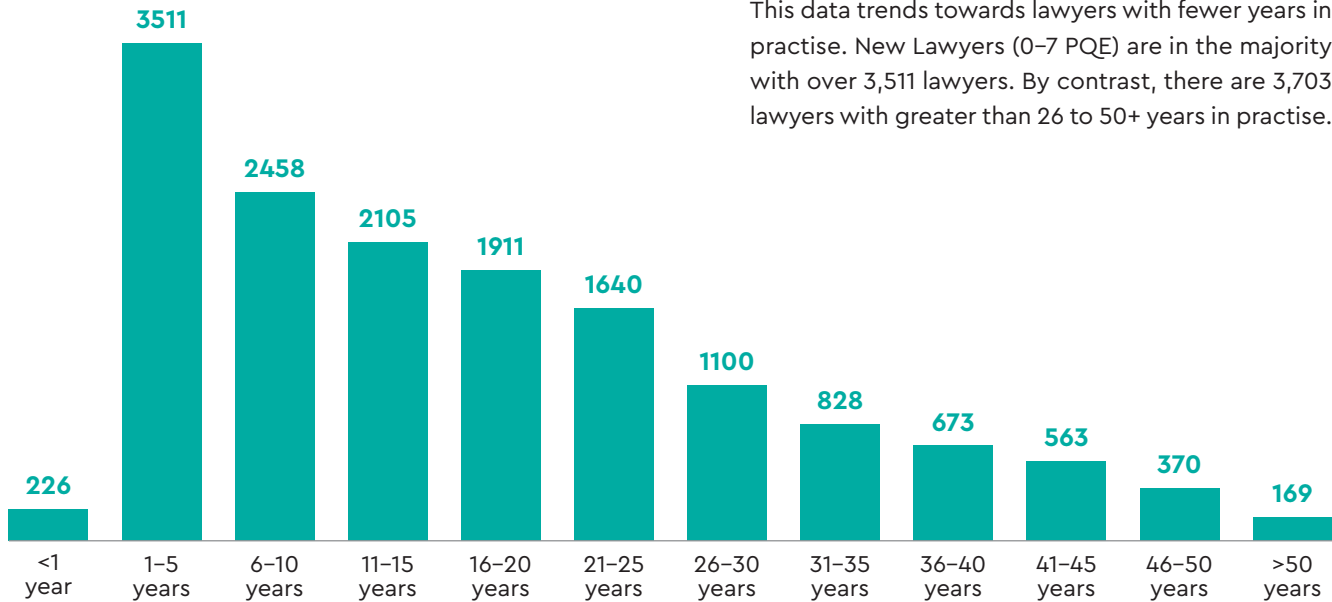
LAWYERS	POPULATION	RATIO
7	256,130	36,590:1

LAWYERS WHO SPEAK MĀORI COMPARED TO THE NZ POPULATION

LAWYERS	POPULATION	RATIO
148	204,904	1,384:1

# Time in practise

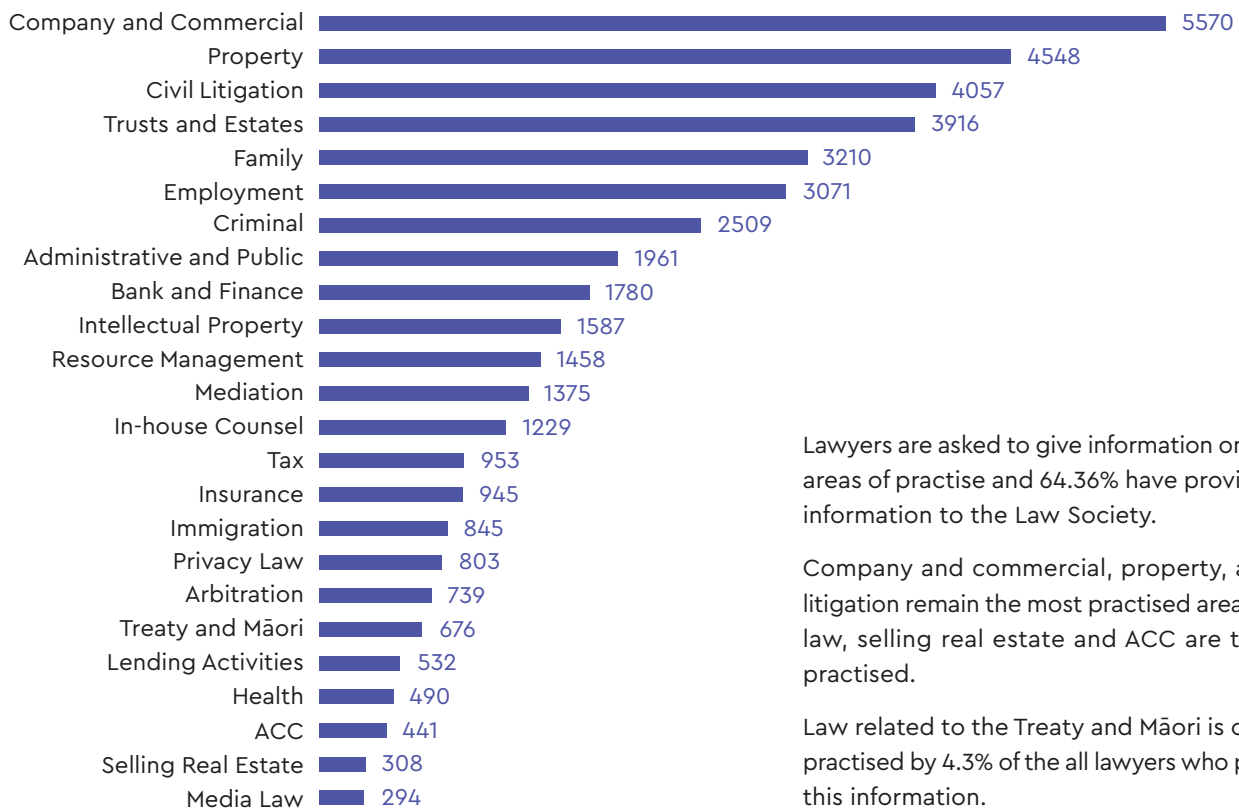
LAWYERS BY YEARS SINCE ADMISSION



The Law Society records years since admission for every registrant lawyer. These figures do not represent years in practise nor account for time when a lawyer does not practise.

This data trends towards lawyers with fewer years in practise. New Lawyers (0-7 PQE) are in the majority with over 3,511 lawyers. By contrast, there are 3,703 lawyers with greater than 26 to 50+ years in practise.

# Areas of work



Lawyers are asked to give information on all their areas of practise and 64.36% have provided this information to the Law Society.

Company and commercial, property, and civil litigation remain the most practised areas. Media law, selling real estate and ACC are the least practised.

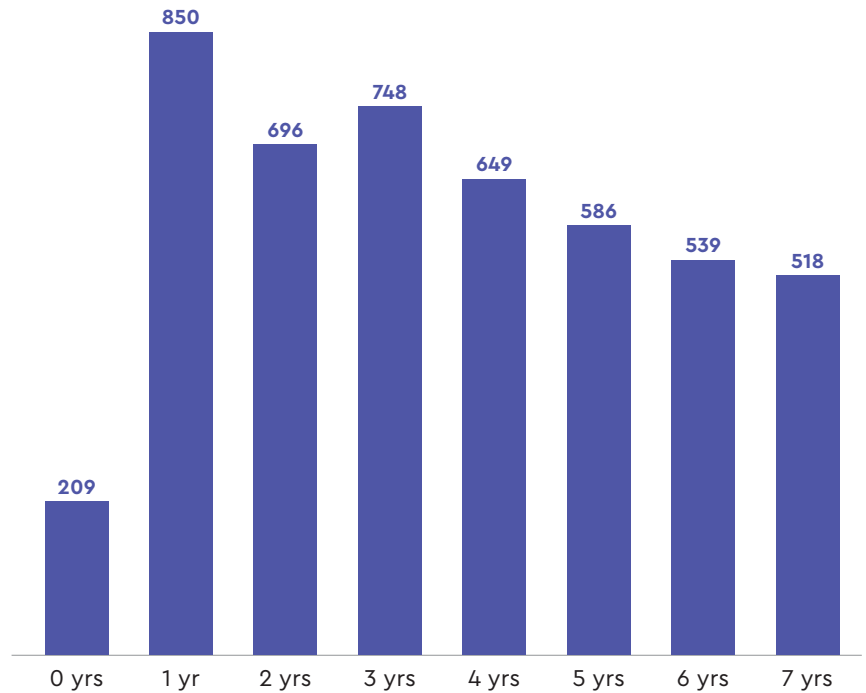
Law related to the Treaty and Māori is currently practised by 4.3% of the all lawyers who provided this information.

# New Lawyers

New Lawyers are the proportion of lawyers who have been in the profession up to and including 7 years since admission. There were a total of 4,795 New Lawyers in 2021. Overall, this data reflects an increase in the number of New Lawyers being admitted to the profession. On average, 63.7% of all New Lawyers across 0-7 years since admission are female.

The impact Covid-19 has had on lawyers being admitted remains to be seen. At 209, those for whom it has been less than one year since they were admitted make up the smallest proportion of the New Lawyers group.

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

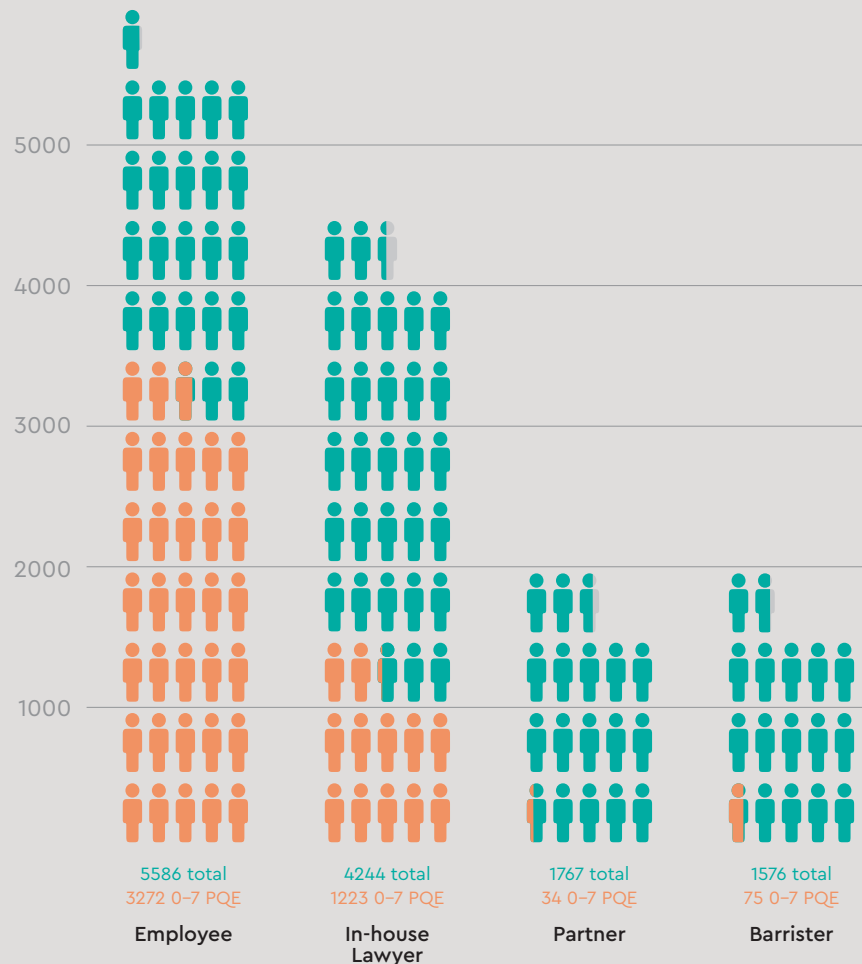


# Positions of employment

It is optional for lawyers to disclose their position of employment, and 98.6% of them have provided this information to the Law Society.

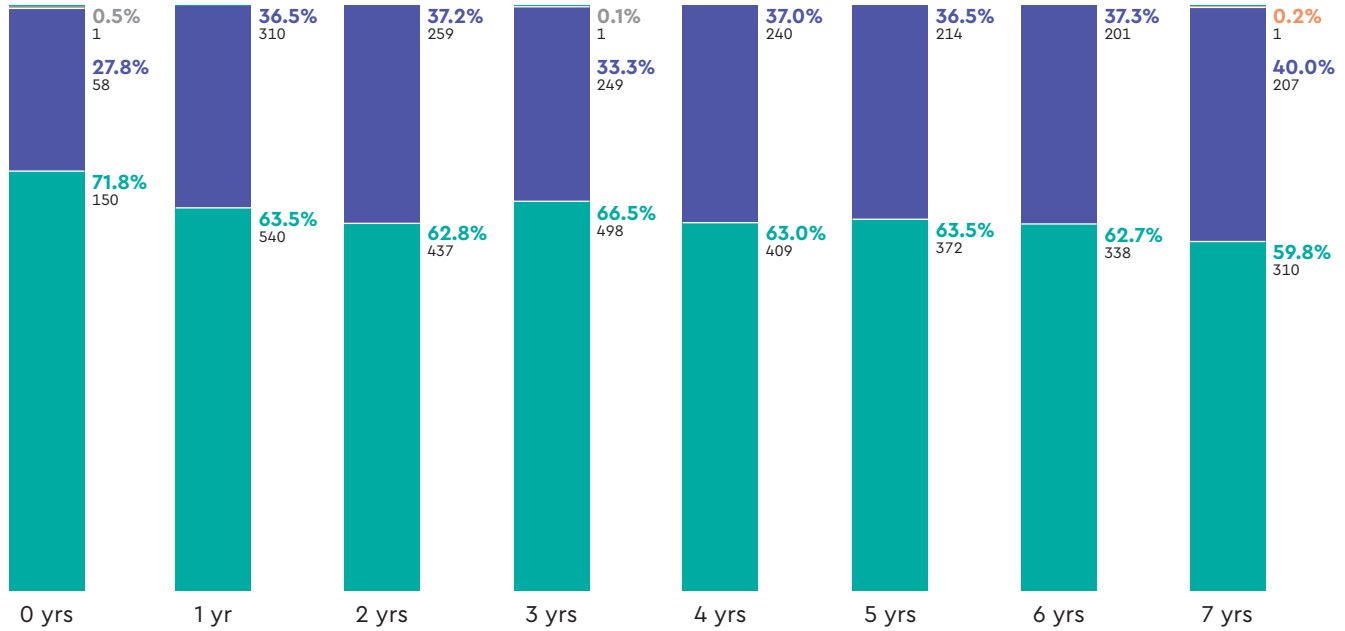
Most lawyers are employees, there were 5,586 lawyers with this position. New Lawyers (0-7 PQE) make up 58.6% of all lawyers in the position of employee.

The second largest proportion are in-house lawyers at 4,244 lawyers. Very few New Lawyers (0-7 PQE) hold positions other than employee and in-house lawyers. There are 34 New Lawyers employed as partners, and 75 New Lawyers employed as barristers.



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

Female Male Gender Diverse Not Stated



### POSITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT OF LAWYERS AND LAWYERS 0-7 YEARS PQE

= 100 Lawyers = 100 Lawyers 0-7 Years PQE

### CENTRES WITH COUNT >50 PQE 0-7 LAWYERS

Main centre	Number
Auckland	1956
Wellington	867
Christchurch	509
Hamilton	203
London UK	190
Tauranga	100
Dunedin	87
Lower Hutt	82

