Practitioner survey – interim results

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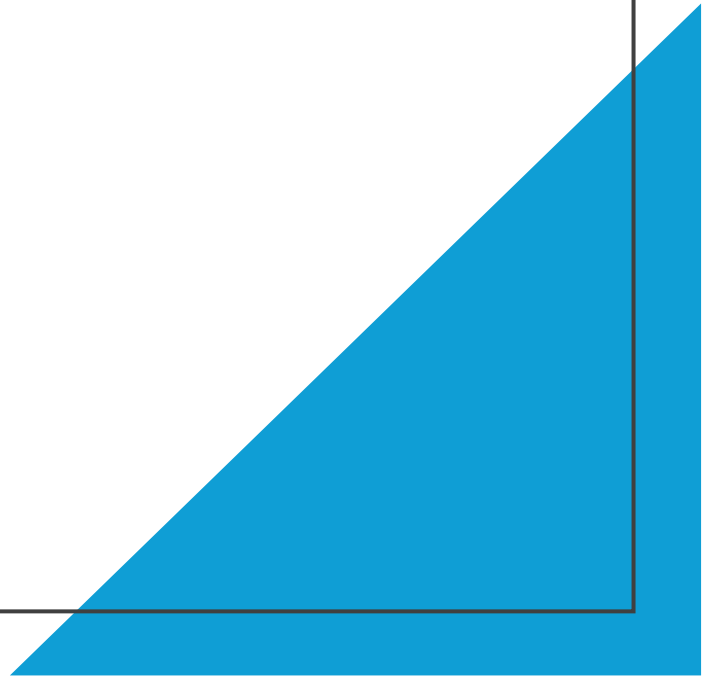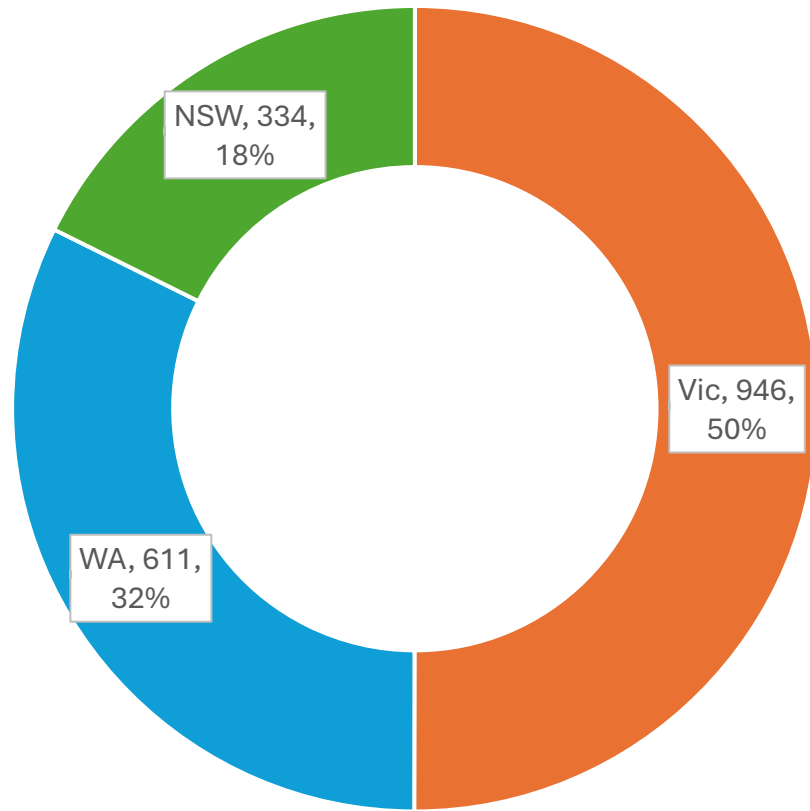
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Aim of research

To explore the relationships between:
- lawyer wellbeing
- ethical climate
- workplace incivility
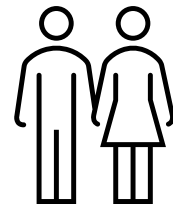- wellbeing safeguards

in legal workplaces

NSW, 334, 18%

Vic, 946, 50%

WA, 611, 32%

64%

32.4%

<1%

| Practising Certificate	% of Total
Principal	25.3%
Government	16.8%
Employee	41.5%
Corporate	11.4%
Barrister	5.0%

Overall Positive Workplace Wellbeing

- o Wellbeing was **higher in males** compared with females.

- o **Principal PC holders** reported substantially **higher levels of wellbeing**, compared with all other PC holders, other than barristers

- o **Employee PC holders** reported the **lowest levels of wellbeing**.

Psychological Distress

Almost **1 in 3 lawyers** reported elevated psychological distress

Psychological distress
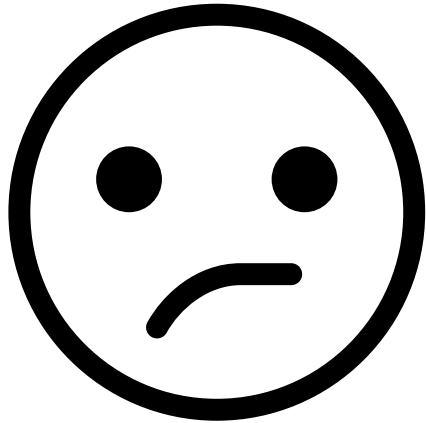
■ Female lawyers had higher levels of psychological distress than males.

Employee PC holders had the highest level of psychological distress compared with all other PC holders.

■ Psychological distress was highest in lawyers with <5 years experience, and levels of distress decreased significantly with increasing experience.

Almost 43% of <5 years PQE lawyers had an elevated level of psychological distress.

Ethical Climate

• *Ethical Climate Index* measures employee' perceptions of how people make decisions requiring ethical criteria.

https://pxhere.com/en/photo/1639989

Positive Ethical Climate

- A perception that the workplace (and other people in the workplace) value positive ethical behaviours and relationships, including acting on one's ethical responsibilities as a lawyer and showing care for others

Self-interest & Self-protection

- a perception that the workplace (and other people in the workplace) ==value self-interest and self-protection.==

- valuing actions that protect one's own interests over the interests of others, ethical principles or the administration of justice.

Power based & instrumental outcomes

- a perception that the workplace (and other people in the workplace) ==value power-based and instrumental outcomes:==

- an 'ethical flexibility' to prioritise outcomes over ethical principles .

Practising Certificate Type	Ethical Climate Dimension		
	Positive ethical behaviours and relationships	Self-interest and self-protection	Power and instrumental outcomes
Employees	–		
Principals	+	–	–
Government			
Corporate	–	+	+
Barrister	–	+	

+ above average across all participants, – below average across all participants

Ethical Climate Environments
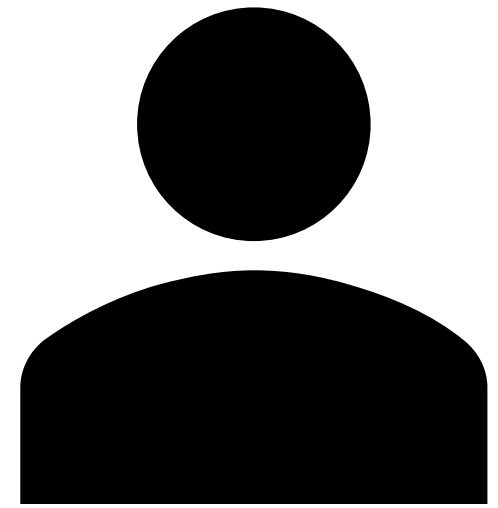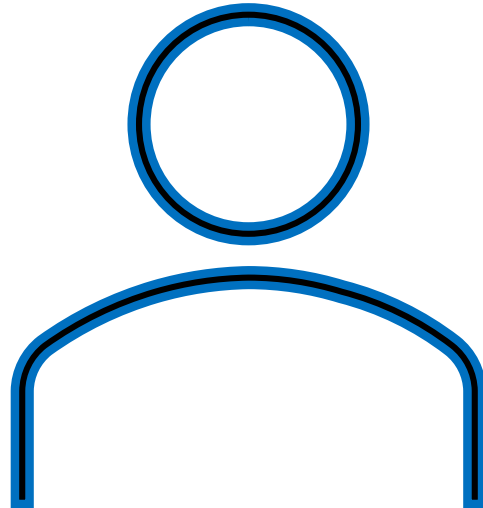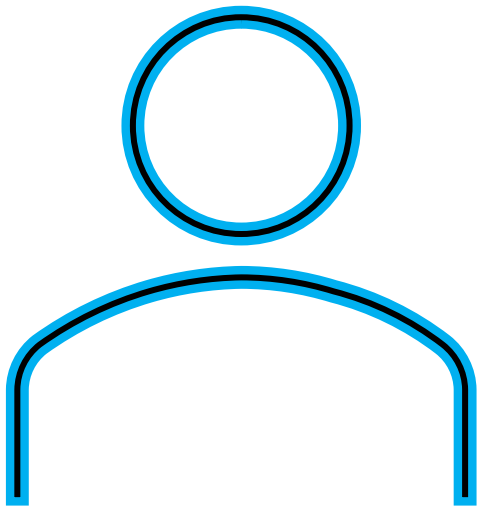
2/3 in more positive environments

- Correlations

Perceptions of a positive ethical climate was associated with:

higher levels of wellbeing

lower levels of psychological distress.

Perceptions of a negative ethical climate (both self-interest and ethical flexibility dimensions) were associated with

lower wellbeing

 higher psychological distress.

Beneficial Supports at work (top 4 in order)

Paid counselling, support from a psychologist or Employee Assistance Program

Management approach, including actively monitoring workloads, monitoring staff at risk, showing an interest in staff ; allowing time for debriefing

Flexibility in workload and use of leave (or additional leave) to cope with personal circumstances (e.g. illness, mental health, bereavement)

Flexible work arrangements including working from home

Next Steps

Further analysis

Full report