

# 2026 ALPMA Australasian IP, Trade Mark & Patent Firms Salary Survey

## Questionnaire

Thank you for participating in the [2026 ALPMA Australasian IP, Trade Mark & Patent Firms Salary Survey](#).

While participation is free, unlike our long running Legal Industry HR Issues & Salary Surveys, there is an access fee in order to obtain the published report containing the IP specific suite of customised salary data. If you have any questions about participating in this survey or purchasing the report, please contact us.

This report provides comprehensive data on salaries paid for 50+ legal, management and support roles at Australasian Intellectual Property, Trade Mark and Patent firms that will help you benchmark your compensation strategy to like firms and assist with salary reviews. The published report will provide valuable insight on employment trends facing Australasian Intellectual Property, trade mark and patent firms. Please be aware that firms that choose not to provide data for Partner roles will not receive Partner salary data in the final report.

### Who should complete this survey?

Salary information is highly sensitive. To retain a high level of quality control, the survey should be completed by staff who have the appropriate authority to provide accurate information (e.g. HR Managers, Practice Managers, CFO, Managing Partners).

### Before commencing the survey

We recommend that you gather the information outlined in this document and have it on hand prior to undertaking the online survey. You can also review a copy of the Position Descriptions [here](#). You can also use the [calculations spreadsheet](#) to assist with gathering this data and calculating the lowest, highest and average salary for each position type.

After collating the data, the online survey should take between 25–30 minutes to complete depending on the number of staff employed by your firm.

### Survey registration

When you have compiled your information, you can access the [Survey Link](#) and get started!

When you first enter the survey, you will receive a unique code, which you can have emailed to yourself, which will enable you to re-enter your survey if you are unable to enter the salary data for your firm in one sitting. **It is strongly recommended that you save this access code immediately by** using the **Email** or **Print** buttons. You can use this code to access the survey as many times as you need before the closing date, and it retains the data that you have already entered so you do not have to re-enter any information.

You will only need to complete this survey once in reference to your entire firm, even if it operates in more than one Country, State or Territory.

### Completing the survey

To ensure the final results provide reliable and comprehensive information, we ask you to allow plenty of time to complete the survey (at least 25–30 minutes) and to take care when entering data to ensure its accuracy.

You need to enter the total number of staff, lowest, highest and average salary for each position type at your firm. For a description of each position covered by the current survey, please see the [Benchmark Position Descriptions](#). Salaries should be entered to reflect the position as at **1 January 2026**.

You can use the [calculations spreadsheet](#) to assist with gathering this data and calculating the lowest, highest and average salary for each position type.

Please note that if you cannot complete the survey in one session, you will be able to resume the survey as long as you use the link that was provided when you commenced the survey.

Note: if you are operating as a company, please interchange the word 'partner' with 'Director' as you read the survey.

## **Legal Industry HR Issues & Salary Survey**

Law firms containing specialist IP, trade mark or patent departments are welcome to submit salary data for over 70 general legal and support positions to our [2026 ALPMA Australian Legal Industry HR Issues & Salary Survey](#). These Legal Industry surveys include questions about your firm's staff employment profile, employment benefits, bonuses, recruitment and salary projections for the next 12 months, and the HR practices and issues facing the legal community in 2026. Law firms that practice in IP, trade mark and patent areas are encouraged to participate in these survey as well, as participation guarantees their firm a complimentary copy of the final Legal Industry report. Data submitted to the Legal Industry surveys **should not overlap** with the salary data submitted to the current IP survey.

## **Privacy**

Survey Matters has been engaged to conduct the survey on behalf of ALPMA to ensure independence and confidentiality of data. Survey Matters is a member of The Research Society (formerly the AMSRS) and is bound by the Research Society Code of Professional Behaviour and the Australian Privacy Principles in the Privacy Act 1988.

All data submitted to this survey will be held as strictly confidential and used for the sole purpose of compiling the survey report and associated functionality relating to the report for participating firms. Individual responses will not be identified; the information you provide will be consolidated with that provided by other participants and provided to ALPMA in aggregate only. All data you provide will be de-identified immediately following the provision of results to ALPMA.

You can view our [Privacy Policy](#), [Terms of Use](#) and [AI Transparency Policy](#) here.

## **Need more information or help?**

If you have any queries or require further information to assist with completing the survey, please contact the ALPMA Research Team on +61 3 8644 7056 or email at [research@alpma.com.au](mailto:research@alpma.com.au)

Thank you for your participation.

Contents

Section 1: Total Firm Salary Data for IP, Trade Mark & Patent Positions..... 4

    Instructions for entering Salary Data..... 4

    Salary Data by Position ..... 5

Section 2: Staff Turnover ..... 7

Survey Completion ..... 8

Appendix ..... 9

    Benchmark Position Descriptions ..... 9

        Intellectual Property Legal Roles ..... 9

        Intellectual Property Support Roles ..... 13

Legal Industry Positions ..... 16

    Solicitors / Lawyers..... 16

    Paralegals / Law Clerks ..... 18

## Section 1: Total Firm Salary Data for IP, Trade Mark & Patent Positions

The survey collects salary data for 50+ legal, management and support roles at Australasian Intellectual Property, trade mark and patent firms. You will first be asked to enter the total number of staff, the lowest salary, the highest salary and the average salary paid for each position type at your firm. A [calculations spreadsheet](#) is available for download to help capture salary data and calculate the averages for you. For a description of each position covered by the current survey, please see the [Benchmark Position Descriptions](#).

Enter all salaries to reflect the position within your firm at 1 January 2026.

### Instructions for entering Salary Data

When entering salary data, please note the following:

1. Salary data for Intellectual Property, trade mark and patent roles only needs to be entered once, and should cover all of Australia or New Zealand—that is, this information does not need to be broken down by state or territory.
2. Please select the **CLOSEST** match to the position. Positions should be **matched based first on competency and role responsibilities**, then years of service or time spent in the role. Note that the term Partner or Salaried Partner is used throughout the survey but also applies to Directors or Non-Equity Directors and to Salaried Principals or Vendor Principals. You may wish to review all of the position types prior to entering data by referring to the [Benchmark Position Descriptions](#).
3. If you have no staff in a particular position type, leave the salary boxes **EMPTY**.
4. If you have only one employee in a particular position, then place their salary in the **LOWEST** and **AVERAGE** salary boxes.
5. Salary rates should **INCLUDE** the superannuation guarantee levy (if this is paid).
6. Additional employment benefits and bonuses should be **EXCLUDED** from the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) salary calculation.
7. Salary sacrifice, part-time or casual staff salaries should be calculated out to the FTE rate for your firm, or 38 hours per week to obtain their FTE rate. For casual staff, please remove any casual loading applied to get the FTE rate.
8. If GST is applicable to salaries, this should **NOT** be included.
9. **Salaries should be entered in Australian dollars or converted to AUD rates.** Each salary should be entered as a **WHOLE NUMBER** with no commas, currency symbols or decimal places. For example, \$68,750.40 should be entered as 68750.
10. Average salary for each position is calculated by totalling all salaries in the position type and then dividing by the number of staff. For example:
  - Position X has 4 people with salaries:
  - \$73,000 + \$60,500 + \$69,000 + \$72,500 = total of \$275,000
  - Total \$275,000 divided by 4 people = \$68,750 average
  - Enter 68750 in the **AVERAGE** box

For positions where there are more than two staff the **AVERAGE** salary gives more accurate data for the analysis. By utilising all salaries in a position (not just the lowest and highest) you will be providing the true cost per person for each position at your firm.

An Excel spreadsheet is available which calculates the survey data and averages for you. You can download the spreadsheet [here](#).

If you have any queries or require further information to assist with completing the survey, please contact the ALPMA research team on [research@alpma.com.au](mailto:research@alpma.com.au).

## 0. For which country will you be entering salary data for this survey?

- Australia only
- New Zealand only
- Australia and New Zealand

Please remember that irrespective of the country you are entering data for, all salaries should be entered in Australian dollars (\$AUD) or converted to \$AUD rates.

## Salary Data by Position

PLEASE ENTER DATA FOR THE ENTIRE FIRM.

NOTE: Salaries should **INCLUDE** the superannuation guarantee levy and be adjusted from part time / casual payments to a full time equivalent (FTE) rate. Additional benefits and bonuses should be **EXCLUDED** from the FTE salary calculation. Please enter all details for each position at your firm (number of staff, lowest, highest and average salary) in whole numbers.

### 1. Intellectual Property Legal Roles

	Number of staff	Lowest Salary	Highest Salary	Average Salary
Patent Attorney – Trainee				
Patent Attorney – Newly Qualified				
Patent Attorney – Mid Level				
Patent Attorney – Senior				
Patent Attorney – Special Counsel				
PTMA Salaried Partner / Salaried Principal *				
PTMA Equity Partner / Vendor Principal (0–3 years) *				
Trade Marks Attorney – Trainee				
Trade Marks Attorney – Newly Qualified				
Trade Marks Attorney – Mid Level				
Trade Marks Attorney – Senior				
Trade Marks Attorney – Special Counsel				

\* For partners please just average their regular drawings into an annual amount and include these figures. Do not include any additional profit share or top up payments received throughout the year. Include only base salary + superannuation. Do not include any variable bonus, profit bonus, employee share scheme. Vendor Principals should be treated as Equity Partners for the purpose of this survey.

PTMA Equity Partner / Vendor Principal with more than 3 years' experience should not be included.

**Firms that exclude themselves from providing data for Partner roles will not receive this data in the final report.**

## 2. Intellectual Property Support Roles

**Please enter data for the entire firm.**

NOTE: Salaries should **INCLUDE** the superannuation guarantee levy and be adjusted from part time / casual payments to a full time equivalent (FTE) rate. Additional benefits and bonuses should be **EXCLUDED** from the FTE salary calculation. Please enter all details for each position at your firm (number of staff, lowest, highest and average salary) in whole numbers.

	Number of staff	Lowest Salary	Highest Salary	Average Salary
Patent and Trade Marks (PTM) Entry/Junior Administrator				
Patent and Trade Marks (PTM) Administrator				
Patent and Trade Marks (PTM) Senior Administrator				
Patent and Trade Marks (PTM) Administrative Team Leader				
Patent and Trade Marks (PTM) Administrative Manager				
IP Assistants or Secretaries - Career Level 1				
IP Assistants or Secretaries - Career Level 2				
IP Assistants or Secretaries - Career Level 3				
IP Assistants or Secretaries - Career Level 4 (Senior)				
IP Assistants or Secretaries – Coordinator				
Searcher – Trade Marks				
Searcher – Trade Marks (Senior)				
Searcher – Patent				
Searcher – Patent (Senior)				

## Section 2: Staff Turnover

Please report all information as representative of your firm's position on **1 January 2026**.

3. How many total staff are currently employed at your firm in IP Legal and Support Roles?

(Where there are no staff in the category, please enter '0'; please include all full-time, part-time, permanent, casual and contracted staff for roles where Salary data was gathered for this survey, see [Benchmark Position Descriptions](#) document if unsure)

	Number of staff
Intellectual Property Legal Roles	
Intellectual Property Support Roles	

4. How many staff departed your firm (voluntarily or involuntary turnover) last year (between 1 January 2025 and 31 December 2025)?

(Voluntarily turnover refers to staff that leave on their own choice, and involuntary turnover refers to staff that are laid off or terminated; where you had no departures in the category, please enter '0')

	Voluntary Departures	Involuntary Departures
Intellectual Property Legal Roles		
Intellectual Property Support Roles		

## Survey Completion

Thank you for participating in the *2026 ALPMA Australasian IP, Trade Mark & Patent Firms Salary Survey*.

The survey results are anticipated for April 2026. We will contact you via email when the 2026 report is published, or you can stay updated on our research at our website [here](#).

Please be aware that, unlike our long running Legal Industry HR Issues & Salary Surveys, there is an access fee in order to obtain the published IP specific salary data. If you have any questions about participating in this survey or purchasing the report, please contact us.

If you are a law firm in Australia, please complete our [2026 ALPMA Australian Legal Industry HR Issues & Salary Survey](#) and receive the final report to benchmark your firm's compensation strategy.

If you have any queries or require further information, please contact the ALPMA research team on +61 3 8644 7056 or email at [research@alpma.com.au](mailto:research@alpma.com.au).

Thank you again for your participation.

## Appendix

### Benchmark Position Descriptions

You will need to collect salary data (highest, lowest and average salaries) for each of the following positions in your firm. You will also need the total number of staff for each position type. As titles and responsibilities can vary between firms, please select the closest match to your position after carefully reviewing the definition. Positions should be matched based first on competency and role responsibilities rather than years of service or time spent in the role.

By doing this we will ensure, as best we can, that we are comparing salaries for similar tasks performed within firms. The position descriptions will also be supplied in the final report when it is released, however you may like to make a note of any differences for your records. Note that the term Partner or Salaried Partner is used throughout the survey but also applies to Directors or Non-Equity Directors and to Salaried Principals or Vendor Principals.

### Intellectual Property Legal Roles

#### Patent Attorney – Trainee

A Trainee Patent Attorney (may also be known as a Technical Assistant, Patent Technical Assistant, Patent Technical Specialist, Patent Scientist, or Patent Engineer) works directly with Partners and qualified attorneys, receiving training in patent attorney practice and keeping their skills up to date through constant exposure to the latest developments in technology. They will be required to undertake study and sit examinations to gain qualification as a patent attorney.

A Trainee Patent Attorney holds a degree, diploma, advanced diploma or graduate diploma under the Australian Qualification Framework that is in a field of technology that contains potentially patentable subject matter and is awarded in the Higher Education Sector.

A common career path for an aspiring patent attorney will include several years, for example, up to 3 years, working as a Trainee Patent Attorney under supervision of a registered patent attorney while studying for registration.

#### Patent Attorney

A qualified and registered Patent Attorney within Australia and working within a patent role within a law or IP firm.

- **Newly Qualified**

A Newly Qualified Patent Attorney is formally qualified, completed their Masters of Intellectual Property and then registered as a Patent Attorney within Australia and working within a patent role within a law or IP firm. They work directly with Partners and qualified attorneys taking an increased responsibility with clients under supervision, receiving training in patent attorney practice and keeping their skills up to date through constant exposure to the latest developments in technology.

Could cover multiple levels of experience:

- 0–1 year post registration
- 1–2 years post registration
- 3 years post registration

- **Mid Level**

A Mid Level Patent Attorney (may also be called Associate Patent Attorney) is competent in drafting, prosecution, infringement opinion and works with minimal supervision.

Could cover multiple levels of experience:

- 1–2 years post registration
- 3–4 years post registration
- 4–5 years post registration.

- **Senior**

A Senior Patent Attorney (may also be called Senior Associate Patent Attorney) has developed a strong relationship with the client and works autonomously with occasional supervision.

A Senior Patent Attorney may typically have 5 to 15 years of experience (post registration).

- **Special Counsel**

This position sits in between Senior Associate and Partner. This person specialises in Patents.

At this stage, typically the person holding this position has either decided they do not want to progress to partner, or the firm has decided they cannot progress to partner.

In some firms, a person holding this position is not precluded from progressing to partner at a future date. A person holding this position may be regarded as a leading technical expert in their specialised field. A Special Counsel Patent Attorney may typically have 12 to 15 years or more of experience.

The title is sometimes applied to partners who are on the path to retirement, however, as their remuneration structure is referenced to partner income, a person holding this position should not have their remuneration included in this category.

### **PTMA Salaried Partner / Salaried Principal**

This position is the most senior in the firm but considered the entry level for Partner / Principal roles. This position specialises in patents or trademarks.

Successfully manages a large portfolio of clients. Consistently achieves fee growth year on year. Responsibility for generating work to delegate to others which supports team's ongoing development. Takes an active role in building the business through Business Development initiatives including identification and pursuit of targets with a track record of successful conversion to clients. Manages and maintains existing clients through outstanding client care and customer relationship management capabilities. Work product is always excellent, pitched at the right level, on budget and on time. Takes responsibility for self-development and personal accountability for ensuring professional standards are met. Demonstrates leadership across the firm including leading others, culture, risk management, team building capability and governance. Strong contribution to firm profitability both through individual and team contributions.

Note: For partners please just average their regular drawings into an annual amount and include these figures. Do not include any additional profit share or top up payments received throughout the year.

Include only base salary + superannuation. Do not include any variable bonus, profit bonus, employee share scheme.

**Firms that exclude themselves from providing data for this role type will not receive this data in the final report.**

## PTMA Equity Partner / Vendor Principal (0–3 years)

In addition to the PTMA Salaried Partner / Principal role, also plays a key role in the development, implementation and successful execution of the firm's business strategy.

Deep understanding of how the business and IP industry operate as a whole. Strong network across the IP profession and regarded as a go to person in their area of expertise and sought out accordingly. Advanced financial and business literacy. Plays a key role in developing others in the team including building their own practices. Key contributor to ongoing development and success of the firm.

Note: For partners please just average their regular drawings into an annual amount and include these figures. Do not include any additional profit share or top up payments received throughout the year.

Include only base salary + superannuation. Do not include any variable bonus, profit bonus, employee share scheme. Vendor Principals should be treated as Equity Partners for the purpose of this survey.

PTMA Equity Partner / Vendor Principal with more than 3 years' experience should not be included.

**Firms that exclude themselves from providing data for this role type will not receive this data in the final report.**

## Trade Marks Attorney – Trainee

A Trainee Trade Marks Attorney Trainee works directly with qualified attorneys, receiving training and keeping their skills up to date through exposure to marketing and branding issues. If they desire to pursue a career as a Trade Marks Attorney, they will be required to undertake study and pass four subject groups to gain appropriate qualification.

## Trade Marks Attorney

A qualified and registered Trade Marks Attorney within Australia and working within a trade marks role within a law or IP firm.

- **Newly Qualified**

Covers three levels of experience:

- 0–1 year post registration
- 1–2 years post registration
- 3 years post registration

- **Mid-Level**

May also be called Associate Trade Marks Attorney. Covers two levels of experience:

- 3–4 years post registration
- 4–5 years post registration

- **Senior**

A Senior Trade Marks Attorney (may also be called Senior Associate Trade Marks Attorney) has developed a strong relationship with the client and works autonomously with occasional supervision.

A Senior Trade Marks Attorney may typically have 5 to 15 years of experience (post registration).

- **Special Counsel**

This position sits in between Senior Associate and Partner. The person specialises in Trade Marks.

At this stage, typically the person holding this position has either decided they do not want to progress to partner, or the firm has decided they cannot progress to partner.

In some firms, a person holding this position is not precluded from progressing to partner at a future date. A Special Counsel Trade Marks Attorney may typically have 12 to 15 years or more of experience.

The title is sometimes applied to partners who are on the path to retirement, however, as their remuneration structure is referenced to partner income, a person holding this position should not have their remuneration included in this category.

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## Intellectual Property Support Roles

### Patent and Trade Marks (PTM) Entry / Junior Administrator

Performs filings and specialised administrative tasks in the life cycle of a patent or trade mark, and supports patent attorneys or trade mark attorneys. Covers junior and entry-level experience.

0–2 years' experience. Heavily supervised as trained in the role within the first 12 months. Between 1 and 2 years, work still supervised and reviewed but increasing independence in being able to complete work in first instance unsupervised, although work is checked and may ask for occasional guidance.

Competently completes routine work.

Not required to problem solve.

Can be a career position in itself.

### Patent and Trade Marks (PTM) Administrator

Performs filings and specialised administrative tasks in the life cycle of a patent or trade mark, and supports patent attorneys or trade mark attorneys. Covers mid-level experience

2–4 years' experience. Understands what is required in the role and generally works unsupervised with only occasional questions relating to irregular or infrequent issues. A reference point for trainees (0–1 year) to ask questions.

Competently completes routine work.

Not required to problem solve.

Can be a career position in itself.

### Patent and Trade Marks (PTM) Senior Administrator

Performs filings and specialised administrative tasks in the life cycle of a patent or trade mark, and supports patent attorneys or trade mark attorneys. 4 – 5 + years' experience. Able to work unsupervised and work of a consistently high quality. Act as a reference point for PTM Administrators with up to 3 years' experience.

Able to step up into the Team Leader role to cover periods of short absence but does not yet have team supervisory skills.

2IC for the Team Leader and involved in training others.

Required to problem solve and complete non-routine tasks.

### Patent and Trade Marks (PTM) Administrative Team Leader

Also referred to as a Coordinator.

Supervises and coordinates the work of the rest of the team. Leads a team of people. Oversees all filings and administrative tasks in the life cycle of a patent or trade mark including ensuring month-end billing completed, providing client quotes and respond to client queries (filings, examinations, amendments etc).

In depth knowledge of Patent and Trade Mark processes.

'Go To' person for the team and considered a subject matter expert.

### Patent and Trade Marks (PTM) Administrative Manager

Leads the IP Services Team. Oversees all Filing and Examination Clerks/ Docketing. Supporting the Team Leaders, overseeing all processes and procedures. Ensuring the billing guidelines and flagfalls are accurate for the teams. Maintain client instruction guides for the team's processes. Optional: Prepared and create precedents as required by the team.

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**IP Assistants or Secretaries – Career Level 1**

An entry-level position typically requiring little to no prior knowledge or experience.

- Work is routine or follows standard procedures.
- Work is closely supervised.
- Communicates information that requires little explanation or interpretation.

This band covers 0–2 years' experience at a trainee level.

It takes approximately 6 to 12 months to train a person holding this position into the role of IP Assistant / Secretary because of the level of technical knowledge and understanding of procedures required.

They will undergo intensive training, but on the job and through formal training.

0–1 year: heavily supervised and mastering the role. Work checked thoroughly. Allocated a buddy / supervisor and undergoing intensive training.

1–2 years: increasingly able to work unsupervised and understands the process around IP work. Able to produce a higher volume of work with increasing accuracy.

**IP Assistants or Secretaries – Career Level 2**

An Experienced Para-Professional who requires basic knowledge of job procedures and tools obtained through work experience and may require vocational or technical education.

May require the following proficiency:

- Works under moderate supervision.
- Problems are typically of a routine nature, but may at times require interpretation or deviation from standard procedures.
- Communicates information that requires some explanation or interpretation.

Typically 0–2 years' experience post trainee level, but competency should be the primary guide.

**IP Assistants or Secretaries – Career Level 3**

A Senior Para-Professional who requires broad knowledge of operational procedures and tools obtained through extensive work experience and may require vocational or technical education.

May require the following proficiency:

- Works under limited supervision for routine situations.
- Provides assistance and training to lower-level employees.
- Problems typically are not routine and require analysis to understand.

Typically 2–4 years' experience post trainee level, but competency should be the primary guide.

**IP Assistants or Secretaries – Career Level 4 (Senior)**

A Specialist Para-Professional who requires advanced knowledge of operational procedures and tools obtained through extensive work experience and may require vocational or technical education.

Responsibilities may include:

- Working under limited supervision for non-routine situations and may be responsible for leading daily operations.
- Training, delegating and reviewing the work of lower-level employees.
- Problems are typically difficult and non-routine but not complex.

Typically 3–5 years' experience post trainee level, but competency should be the primary guide.

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**IP Assistants or Secretaries – Coordinator**

Team Leader or Coordinator. Typically 5+ years' experience, but supervisory role and competency should be the primary guide.

**Searcher – Trade Marks**

A Trade Mark Searcher is responsible for searching multiple Australian and foreign databases to provide accurate trade mark search results, undertakes trade mark watches and may manage all business and company name searches. A Trade Mark Searcher may also be required to attend to due diligence matters, the filing and renewal of business and company names, and prepare client reports and correspondence.

A Trade Mark Searcher typically has a minimum of 1–2 years' experience in an intellectual property environment and an understanding of trade mark principles and practice.

May also be called IP Searcher or Trademark Analyst.

**Searcher – Trade Marks (Senior)**

A Senior Trade Mark Searcher is responsible for searching multiple Australian and foreign databases to provide accurate trade mark search results and reviews the search results. The Senior Trade Mark Searcher is also responsible for overseeing the trade mark search department for an organisation including billing, client services/relationships, quoting, business development and is also responsible for all staffing matters and training within the trade mark searching department. The Senior Trade Mark Searcher undertakes and oversees trade mark watches and manages all business and company name searches. A Senior Trade Mark Searcher may also be required to attend to due diligence matters, the filing and renewal of business and company names, and prepare client reports and correspondence.

A Senior Trade Mark Searcher typically has a minimum of 5–7 years' experience in an intellectual property environment and an understanding of trade mark principles and practice. A Senior Trade Mark Searcher may also be a qualified trade mark attorney.

**Searcher – Patent**

A Patent Searcher is responsible for searching multiple Australian and foreign databases to provide accurate patent and non-patent literature search results, undertakes watches and may manage all business and company name searches. A Patent Searcher may also be required to prepare client reports and correspondence.

A Patent Searcher requires experience in searching patent and/or technology databases. May have a technology degree in a broad based discipline or Bachelor of Science degree if required to conduct searches of a scientific nature.

May also be called IP Searcher or Patent Analyst.

**Searcher – Patent (Senior)**

A Senior Patent Searcher is responsible for searching multiple Australian and foreign databases to provide accurate patent and non-patent literature search results and conducts watches. A Senior Patent Searcher is also responsible for overseeing the patent search department for an organisation including billing, client services/relationships, quoting, business development and is also responsible for all staffing matters and training within the patent searching department. A Senior Patent Searcher requires experience in developing complex search strategies and searching patent and/or technology databases as well as patent data analysis. May have a technology degree in a broad based discipline or Bachelor of Science degree if required to conduct searches of a scientific nature.

A Senior Patent Searcher typically has a minimum of 7–10 years' experience in an intellectual property environment and an understanding of local and international patent principles and practice. A Senior Patent Searcher may also be a qualified patent attorney and /or a qualified Patent Information Professional (QPIP).

## Legal Industry Positions

The following legal and support positions are covered in our [2026 ALPMA Australian Legal Industry HR Issues & Salary Survey](#), also open for participation until 27 February.

### Solicitors / Lawyers

#### Graduate

Has successfully completed a Law Degree and is undertaking further supervised work experience or training as governed by the relevant Law Societies and other legal bodies or institutions across Australasia to gain admission.

#### Lawyer \*

Enter salary data based on a titled position first (e.g. Associate/ Senior Associate) then by PAE level. For example: A lawyer with 3 years PAE would be entered under Lawyer 3–4 years PAE but a 3-year PAE Associate would be entered under Associate.

A qualified and admitted Legal Practitioner with years of Post Admission Experience (P.A.E.). Salaries to be entered by years of experience:

- **0–1 yr P.A.E.**
- **1–2 yrs P.A.E.**
- **2–3 yrs P.A.E.**
- **3–4 yrs P.A.E.**
- **4–5 yrs P.A.E.**
- **5–6 yrs P.A.E.**
- **6+ years P.A.E.**

#### Associate \*

A lawyer with 3–5 years' experience who has achieved a level of specialist knowledge that can be held out to the public as a representative of the firm.

#### Senior Associate \*

A lawyer with 5+ years' experience held out to be an experienced representative of the firm on the path towards a Partner Position/Special Counsel/Consultant.

#### Special Counsel

A lawyer with 7+ years' experience. Appointment to Special Counsel can be a career path promotion towards Partnership or applied to a Senior Lawyer who is not seeking partnership as part of career goals. This person may also be a very senior lateral hire or person who has stepped down from Partnership.

#### General Counsel

An experienced Lawyer with 7+ years' experience who typically is responsible for the in-house legal functions for a company, organisation or government department.

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**Consultant**

Usually a lawyer whose role can range from a specialist advisor (like a Special Counsel), a Partner who has retired or been bought out (and may never come into the office), or can include an overseas qualified lawyer who is not yet admitted in Australia. This person may take the role of coach/mentor or client Relationship Manager and may also be a significant person on a retainer to appear at special events. This position relates to internal salaried consultants, not external consultants.

**Salaried Partner \*\***

Also known as Non-Equity Partner or Fixed Draw Partner. They do not receive a profit share but are subject to liability as a Partner. This is often an intermediary step to a full Equity Partner or may be recognition of seniority and prestige.

NOTE: The term Partner or Salaried Partner is used throughout the survey but also applies to Directors or Non-Equity Directors.

**Managing Partner \*\***

Usually performed by an Equity Partner who has been given authority from the partnership to have overall responsibility for the firm's partnership matters, practice management and other operational matters.

**Equity Partner \*\***

A Partner that shares in the profits and losses of the business, but who is not involved in its management. Vendor Principals should be treated as Equity Partners for the purpose of this survey.

\*\* NOTE: For partners please just average their regular drawings into an annual amount and include these figures. Do not include any additional profit share or top up payments received throughout the year.

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## Paralegals / Law Clerks

### Paralegal (also referred to as Law Clerk)

Undertakes specialist legal duties under the supervision of a lawyer, usually in a very defined and process driven area; e.g. Conveyancing, Mortgage, Debt Collection, and Personal Injury. They are frequently considered Fee Earners but are not qualified as a lawyer. They may have completed a Legal Diploma or Certificate. Salaries to be entered by years of experience:

- **Paralegal / Law Clerk (less than 5 yrs experience)**
- **Paralegal / Law Clerk (5+ yrs experience)**

### Undergraduate Student Paralegal / Clerk

Also referred to as a **Vacation** or **Seasonal / Student Law Clerk**

Students recruited, often in their penultimate year, to assist and gain experience within the firm. Students undertake a range of tasks including simple legal tasks supervised by a lawyer, research or assisting on specific projects. Usually work on a part time basis or as a Summer / Winter Clerk.

### Registered Conveyancer

A licensed conveyancer holds a current registered licence and has complied with the various requirements or units of competency under the relevant legislation or regulatory bodies.