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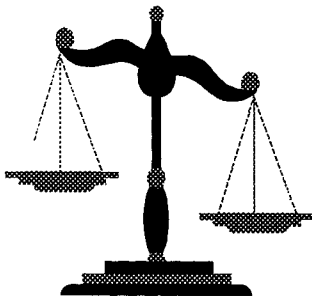
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## Where Do All the Law Graduates Go?

Very little is known about where people who qualify in law in Australian universities end up. We imagine that the vast majority become practising lawyers and, whilst this is no doubt largely true, we have almost no firm nationwide data.

Most law graduates nowadays have a combined degree - the law degree is combined with some other discipline. It would be wrong to imagine that law is necessarily their first priority for a career. We do know that a number do not go on to practical training, either in articles or in a practical training course. Even amongst those who are admitted, we know that a proportion do not go on to employment in the private legal profession.

To rectify this, the Centre for Legal Education in Sydney will be commencing over the next few years a nationwide study of the career destinations of law graduates. Those who entered the private legal profession will be relatively easy to trace, but a major focus of the project will be on those who either never seek admission or, having sought admission, do not work in the private legal profession.

The information obtained will be of value to government, the university law schools, the professional bodies and the practical training courses.

As a start to this project, the Centre for Legal Education has reviewed data obtained by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as part of its five-yearly censuses throughout Australia. Reports on the careers of legal qualified people were completed by the Department of Employment Education and Training after the 1981 and 1986 censuses. However a decision was made not to prepare a similar report based on the 1991 census.

The Centre for Legal Education took up the challenge to prepare this report, and has now published it. At the same time, it has examined the trends which are evident over the 10-year period from 1981 to 1991. This report is now available from the Centre for Legal Education at a cost of \$5. The Centre's address is GPO Box 232 Sydney NSW 2001 (Fax (02) 221 6280).

In brief, the report records that less than two-thirds of the almost 37,000 people holding qualifications in law in Australia were actually working as lawyers at the time of the 1991 census. The largest proportion of legally qualified people who were working as lawyers peaked at 63% in the period two to five years after qualifying. Of those with legal qualifications, just under 30% were women.

Between 1981 and 1991 there was an increase of 63% in the number of people in Australia with a qualification in law. In the same period the number of people employed as lawyers grew by 71%. The population of Australia in the same period increased by only 12.5%.

However, during this period no more than 65% of those with legal qualifications have been employed as lawyers (as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics).

Further work by the Centre for Legal Education will look at the proportion of people working as lawyers, and also the particular sorts of work in which they are engaged. □