



AUSTRALIAN
PRO BONO CENTRE



19TH ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE
NATIONAL PRO BONO TARGET

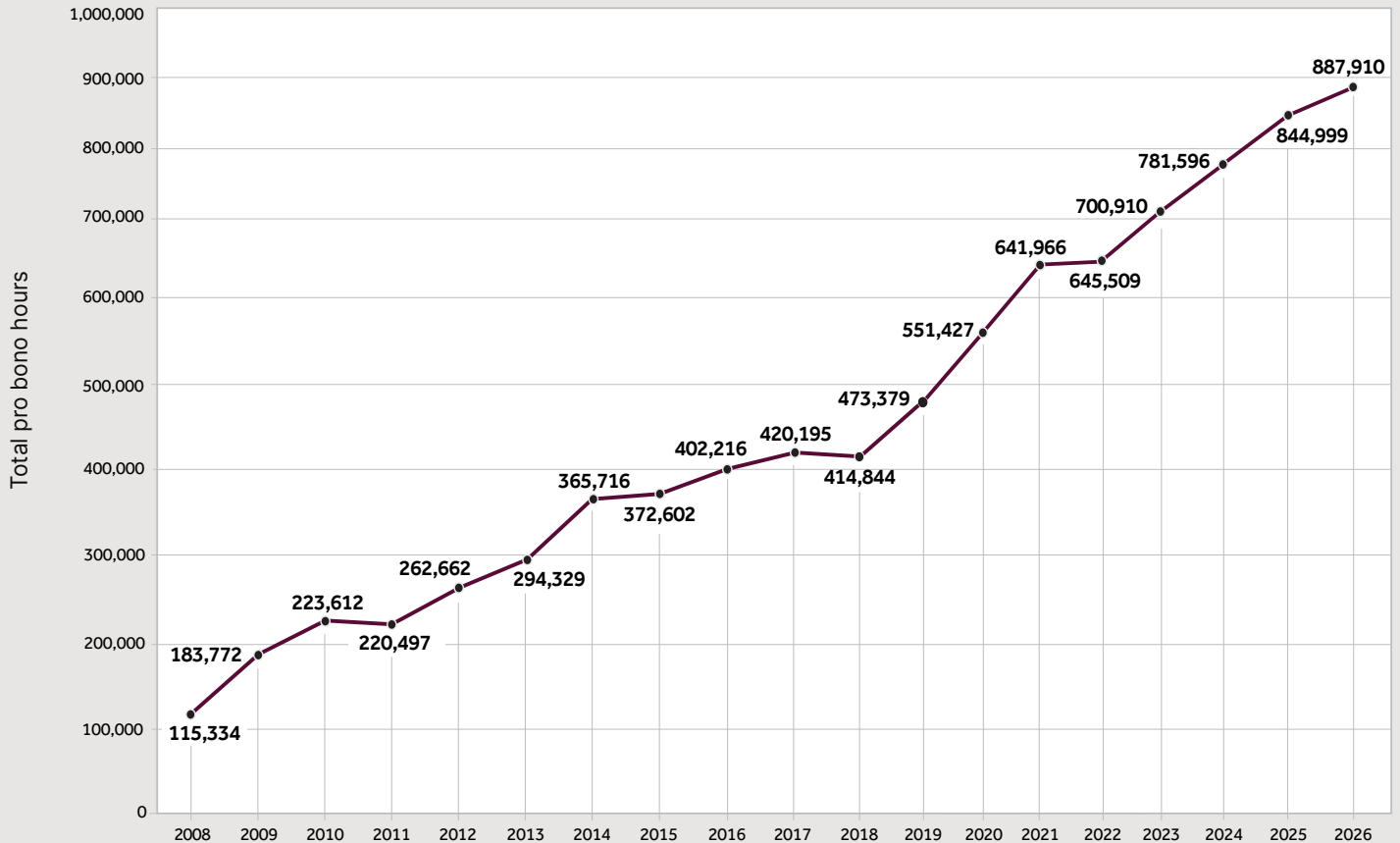
OCTOBER
2026





TARGET SIGNATORIES: 2008-2026

TOTAL PRO BONO HOURS



The National Pro Bono Target is administered and promoted by the [Australian Pro Bono Centre](#). It is a voluntary and aspirational target that can be adopted by:

- law firms and incorporated legal practices (ILPs)
- solicitors
- barristers
- barristers' chambers
- in-house legal teams
- individual in-house lawyers.

Signatories commit to the Target by signing a [Statement of Principles](#).

Law firm, ILP, solicitor and barrister signatories to the Target agree to use their best efforts to provide at least **35 hours** of '[pro bono legal services](#)' per lawyer per year.

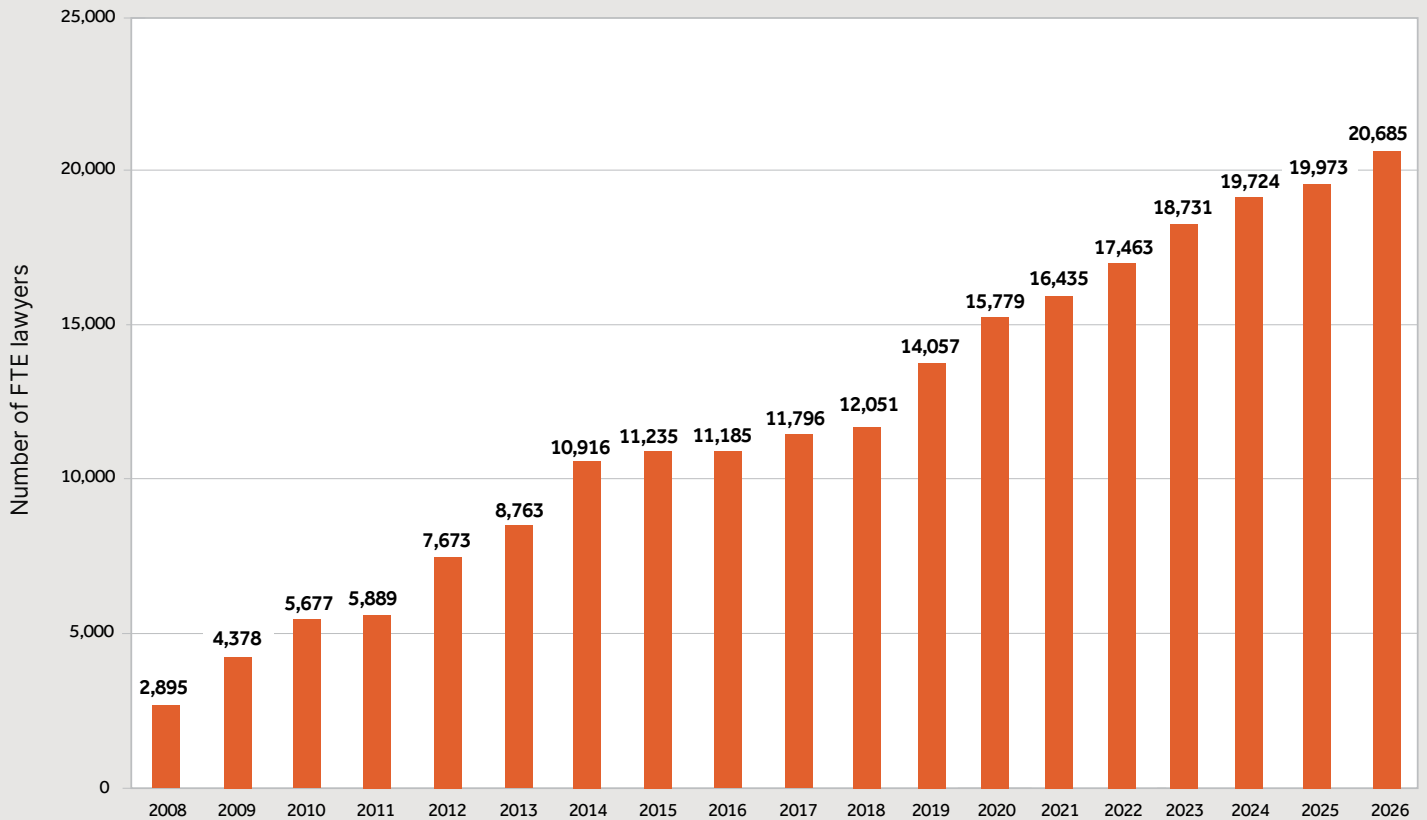
Since 1 July 2020, the Target has been open to in-house legal team signatories. In-house signatories agree to use their best efforts to provide at least **20 hours** of pro bono legal services per lawyer per year.



TARGET SIGNATORIES: 2008-2026

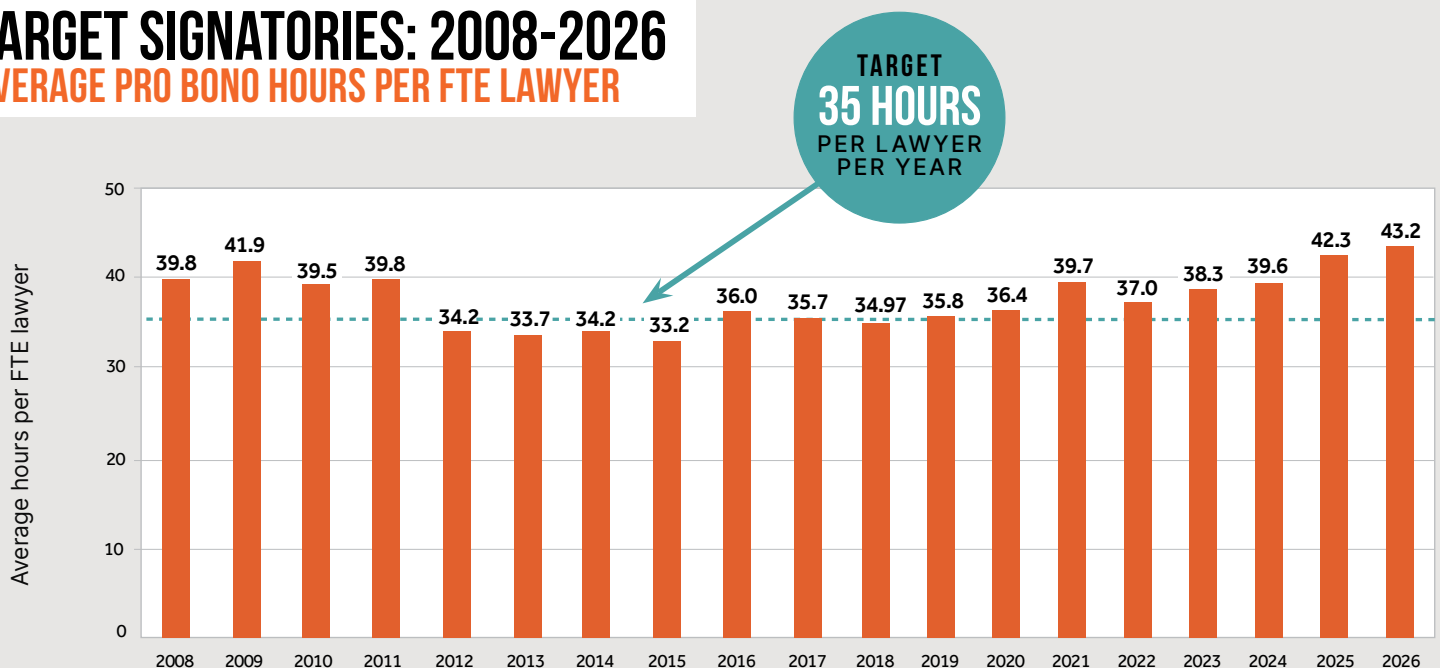
FTE¹ LAWYERS COVERED BY TARGET

Lawyers 'covered' by the Target includes all lawyers employed by signatory firms and organisations, in addition to individual solicitors and barristers signed up in a personal capacity.



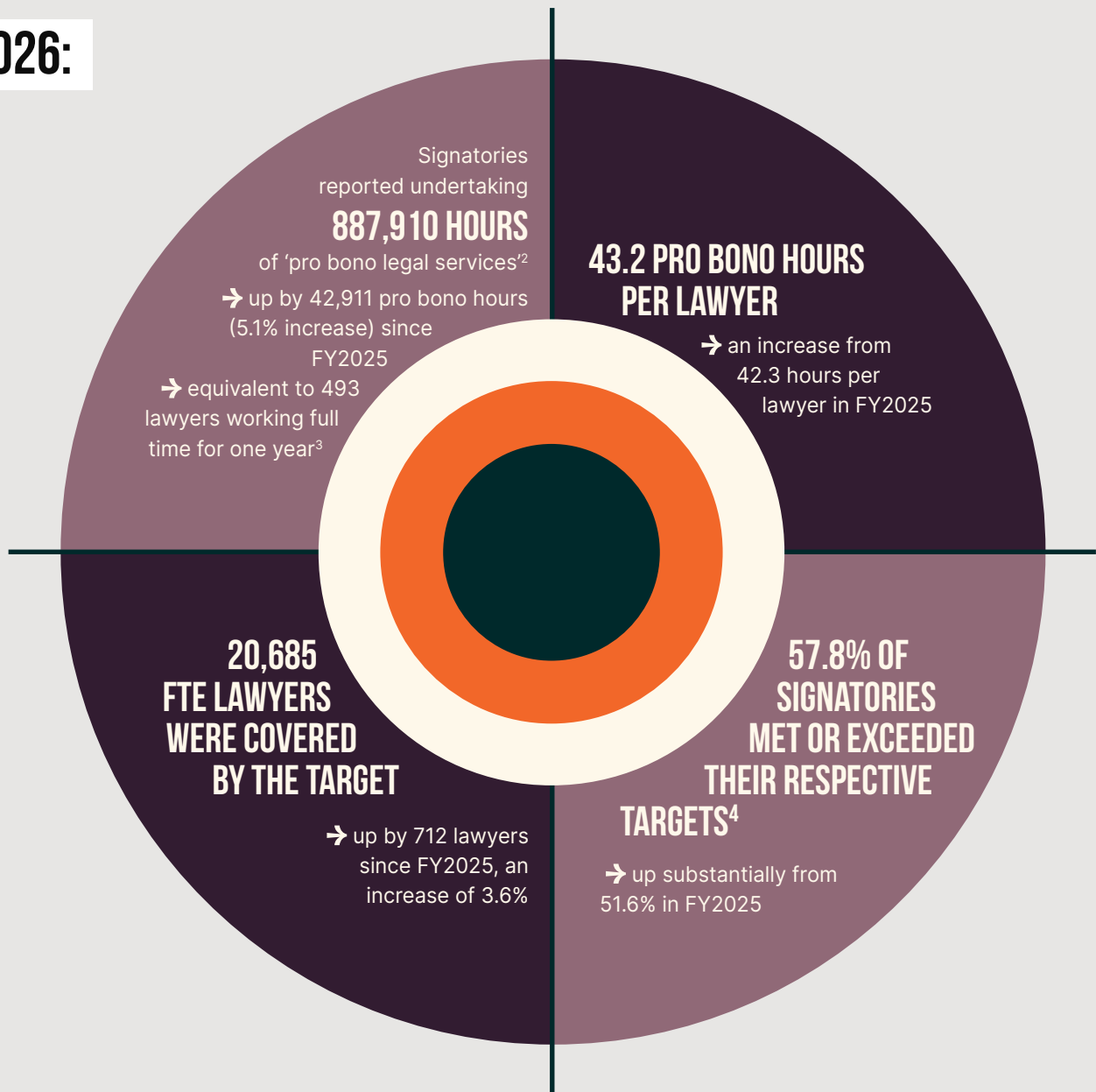
TARGET SIGNATORIES: 2008-2026

AVERAGE PRO BONO HOURS PER FTE LAWYER



¹ Throughout this report, 'FTE lawyers' refers to full-time equivalent lawyers.

IN FY2026:



TOTAL NUMBER OF TARGET SIGNATORIES

There were **339 signatories** to the Target as at 30 June 2026. This is an increase from 333 signatories as at 30 June 2025.⁵ A breakdown of all new signatories is as follows:

- 20 new law firm/ILP signatories
- 8 new individual barrister signatories
- 3 new individual solicitor signatories

A list of all current Target signatories can be found [here](#).

² In this report, the contribution of signatories who joined the Target on or after 1 July 2025 is included for the purpose of reporting the total number of hours of pro bono legal services performed and the total number of FTE lawyers covered by the Target, but **excluded** for the purpose of calculating hours per FTE lawyer and the percentage of signatories who met or exceeded their respective Targets. This is due to the distorting effect of figures provided by these signatories that cover less than the full year.

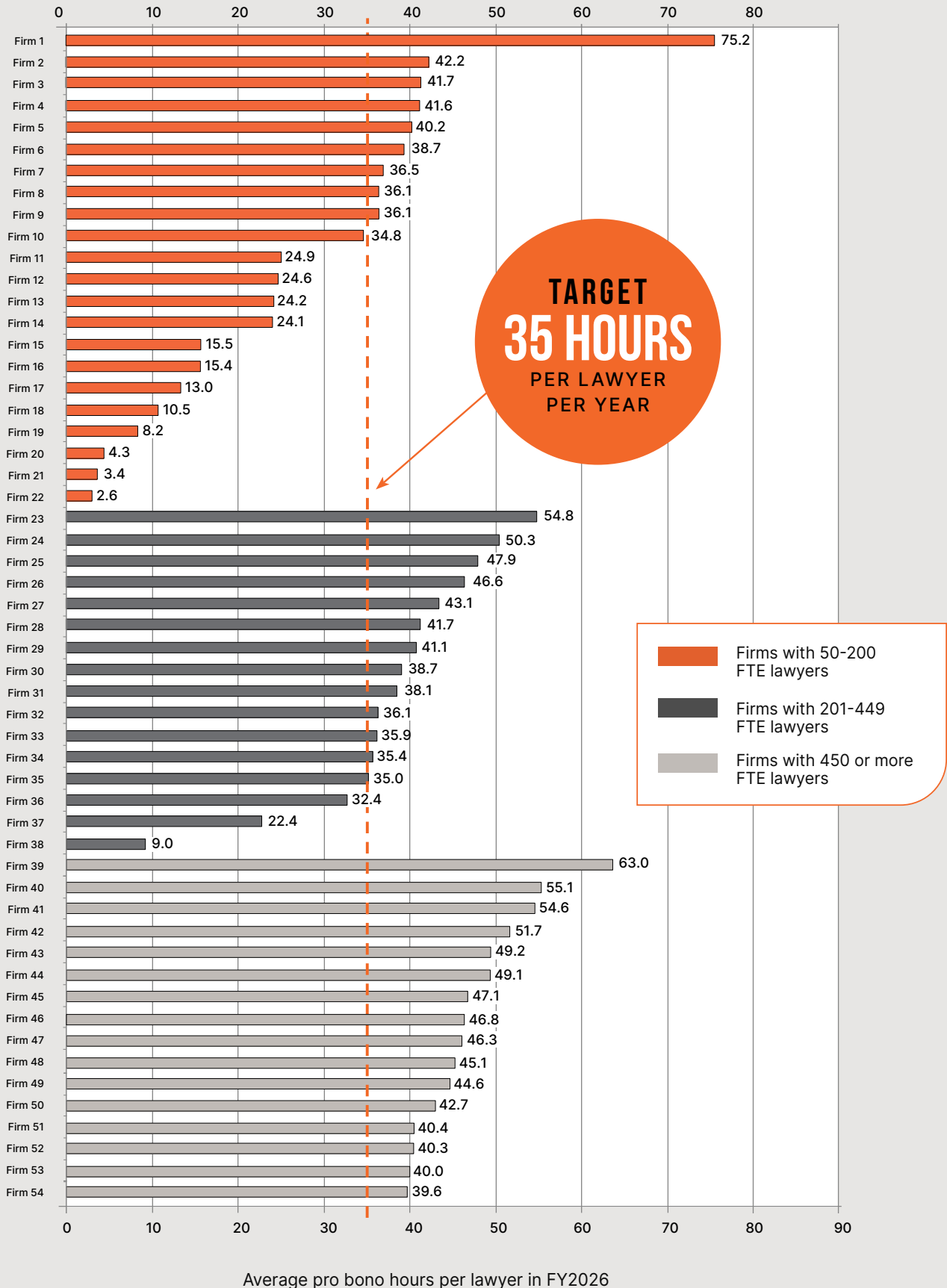
³ Calculated on the basis of a 37.5 hour working week over 48 weeks.

⁴ Of the signatories subject to the 35-hour benchmark, 59.7% met or exceeded the Target in FY2026.

⁵ 31 new signatories joined and 25 signatories withdrew from the Target in FY2026.



LARGE LAW FIRMS (50 OR MORE FTE LAWYERS): AVERAGE PRO BONO HOURS PER LAWYER IN FY2026 - FIRM BY FIRM





LARGE LAW FIRMS

(50 OR MORE FTE LAWYERS)

- 54 large law firms and incorporated legal practices reported on the pro bono hours of **19,368 FTE lawyers** (717 more lawyers than in FY2025)
- Reported an **average of 43.1 pro bono hours** per lawyer (an increase from 41.8 hours in FY2025)⁶
- 38 large firms (**70.4%**) met or exceeded the Target (an increase from 60.7% in FY2025)
- **59.1%** average participation rate (down from 60.5% in FY2025)

SMALL LAW FIRMS

(FEWER THAN 50 LAWYERS)

- 110 small law firms reported on the pro bono hours of **1,162 FTE lawyers** (6 more lawyers than in FY2025)
- Signatories reported an **average of 44.2 pro bono hours** per lawyer (down from 51.4 hours in FY2025)
- 43 small firms (**45.7%**) met or exceeded the Target (same percentage as FY2025)
- **68.8%** average participation rate (down from 72.3% in FY2025)

LAW FIRM PARALEGALS

- 69 firms reported that **733 FTE paralegals** engaged in pro bono work (down from 808 in FY2025)
- Firm paralegals completed a total of **24,655 hours** (up from 24,607 hours in FY2025)
- On average, **31.5 hours** of pro bono work of a legal nature were undertaken per FTE firm paralegal (up from 25.5 hours in FY2025)⁷

INDIVIDUALS

(SOLICITORS AND BARRISTERS)

- **62 individuals** reported in FY2026 (down from 66 in FY2025)
- Reported a total of **5,356 pro bono hours** (down from 6,096 hours in FY2025)
- Reported an **average of 93.1 pro bono hours** each (down from 98.6 hours in FY2025)
- 41 individuals (**74.5%**) met or exceeded the Target (compared to 70.4% in FY2025)

LEGAL WORK UNDERTAKEN FOR A SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED FEE

In FY2026, **58** signatories reported having undertaken a total of **29,980** hours of substantially reduced fee work.

This represents an increase from **23,099** hours in FY2025, while the number of signatories undertaking this substantially reduced fee work decreased by nine.

⁶ As noted earlier in this report, the contribution of signatories who joined the Target on or after 1 July 2025 is included for the purpose of reporting the total number of hours of pro bono legal services performed and the total number of FTE lawyers covered by the Target, but **excluded** for the purpose of calculating hours per FTE lawyer and the percentage of signatories who met or exceeded their respective Targets. This is due to the distorting effect of figures provided by these signatories that cover less than the full year.

⁷ Where firms were unable to report the total number of paralegals that undertook pro bono work (but did provide a total number of hours), their hours are not reflected in this 'average hours' figure due to the distorting effect this would have.

IN-HOUSE TARGET SIGNATORIES

Since 1 July 2020, the Target has been open to in-house legal team signatories. In-house signatories agree to use their best efforts to provide at least **20 hours** of pro bono legal services per lawyer per year.⁸

IN-HOUSE TEAMS

- In FY2026, 6 in-house teams reported on the pro bono hours of **62 FTE lawyers**
- They reported a total of **438 pro bono hours** (a decrease from 620 hours in FY2025)
- In-house legal team signatories reported an **average of 7.1 hours of pro bono legal work** per lawyer in FY2026 (a decrease from 9.1 hours per lawyer in FY2025)
- 2 in-house teams (**33.3%**) met or exceeded the Target (up from 14.3% in FY2025)
- There was a **32.4%** average participation rate (down from 47% in FY2025)
- 3 FTE paralegals based within in-house teams undertook a total of **20 hours** of pro bono work

IN-HOUSE INDIVIDUAL LAWYERS

- In FY2026, 9 individual in-house lawyers reported a total of **157 pro bono hours** (up from 104 hours in FY2025)⁹
- On average, each individual in-house lawyer signatory completed **6 hours** of pro bono work in FY2026 (down from 9.9 hours in FY2025)
- 1 in-house individual lawyer exceeded the Target in FY2026, compared to 2 in FY2025

CLIENTS ASSISTED BY PRO BONO LEGAL WORK

In FY2026, Target signatories assisted **15,016 individuals** and **4,553 organisations** through their pro bono work.

This question was asked for the first time in FY2026.



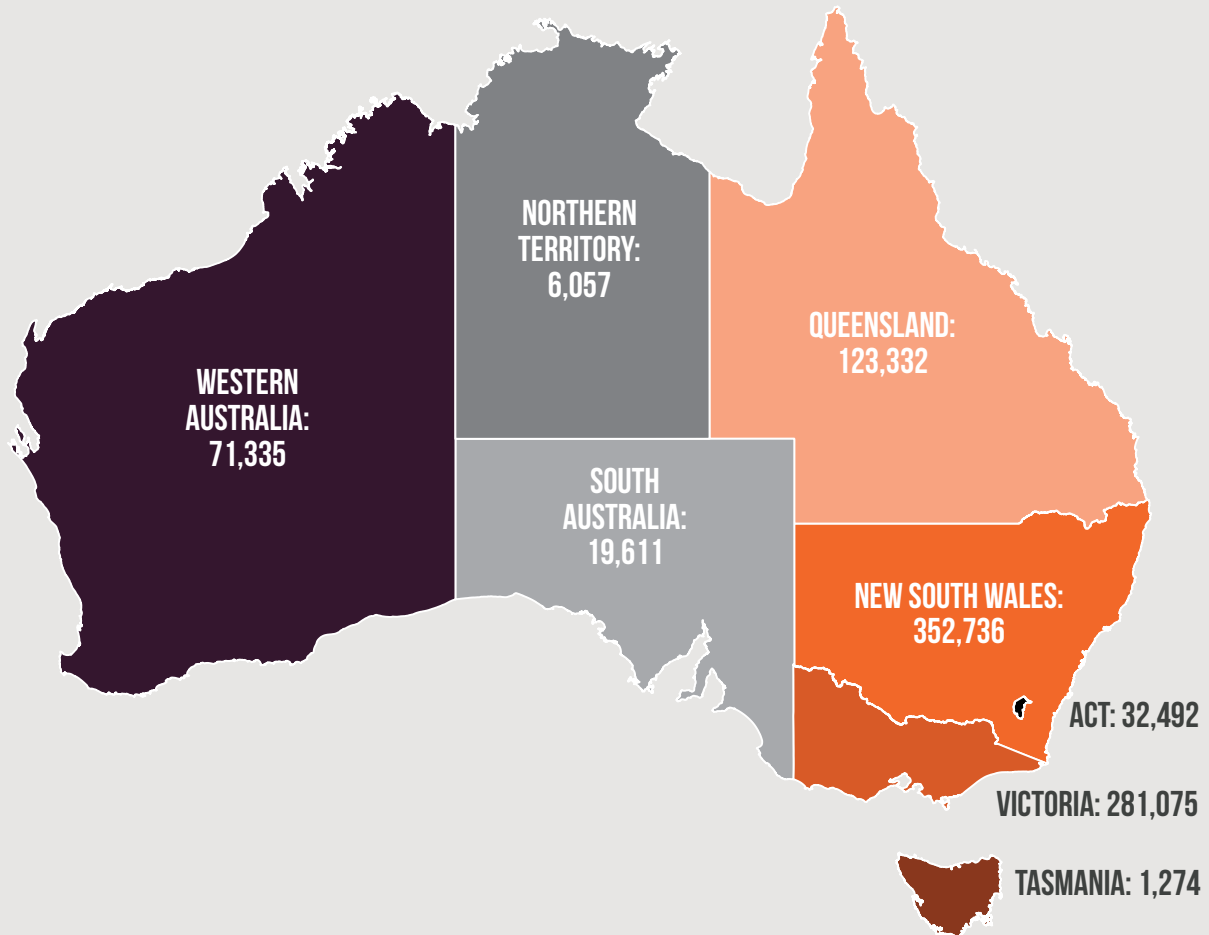
⁸ This benchmark will be reviewed over time based on the performance of in-house signatories against the Target.

⁹ Hours are reflective of the low response rate from individual in-house lawyers registered as Target signatories.



HOURS BY STATE/TERRITORY

All signatories reported on how many of their pro bono hours were undertaken by lawyers based in each Australian State/Territory. Below is the breakdown:¹⁰



JURISDICTION	SHARE OF SOLICITORS NATIONALLY ¹¹	PERCENTAGE OF PRO BONO HOURS FY2025	PERCENTAGE OF PRO BONO HOURS FY2026
NSW	42%	39.5	39.8
VIC	25%	30.5	31.8
QLD	16%	14.0	13.9
WA	8%	9.0	8.0
SA	4%	2.6	2.1
ACT	3%	3.7	3.7
TAS	1%	0.1	0.1
NT	1%	0.7	0.7

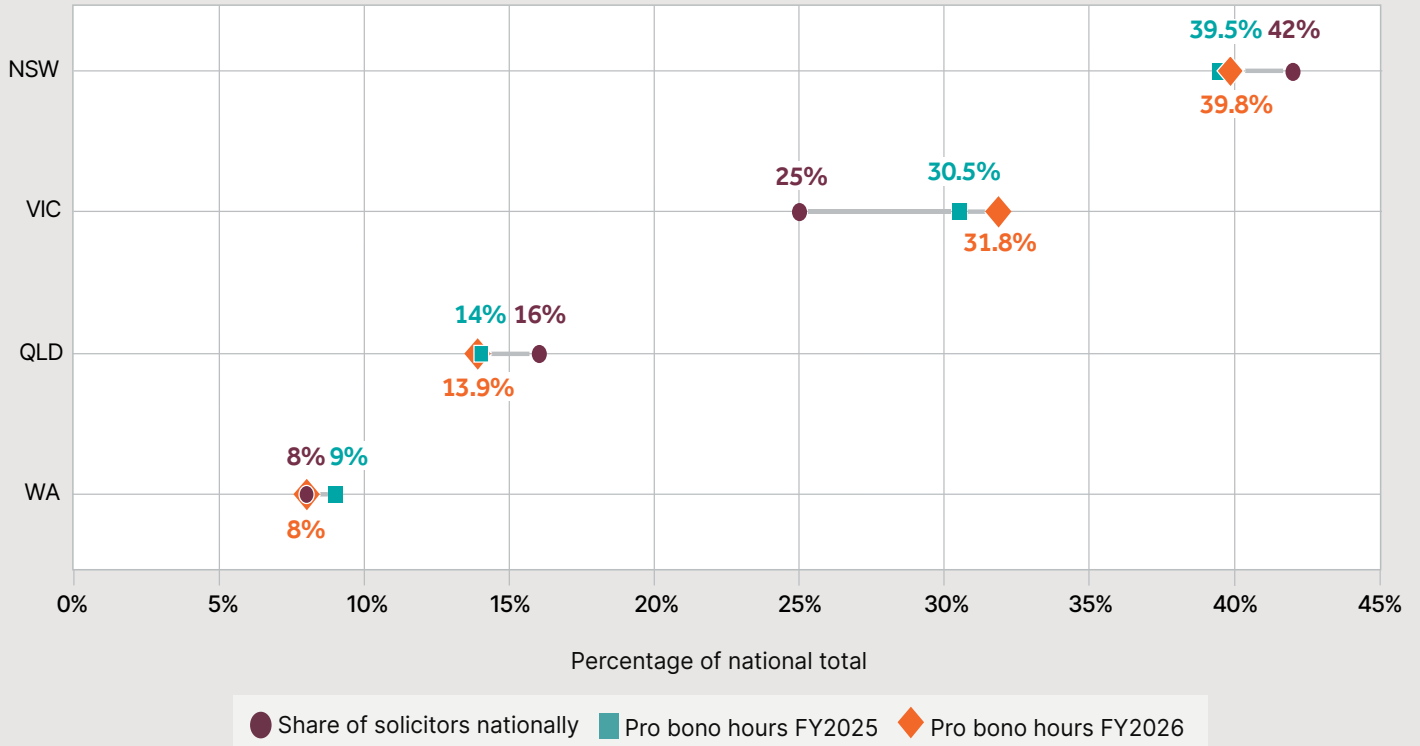
¹⁰ Due to rounding to whole numbers for readability, the total of all jurisdictions in this map adds up to 2 hours more than the overall total of 887,910 hours. This map includes barrister hours.

¹¹ As reported by the Law Society of NSW in its 2024 National Profile of Solicitors (page 6). This is the latest data available at the time of writing the report. The pro bono **hours undertaken by barristers have been removed** from this table and the graphs that follow, due to limitations in obtaining the exact number of barristers in each State and Territory.



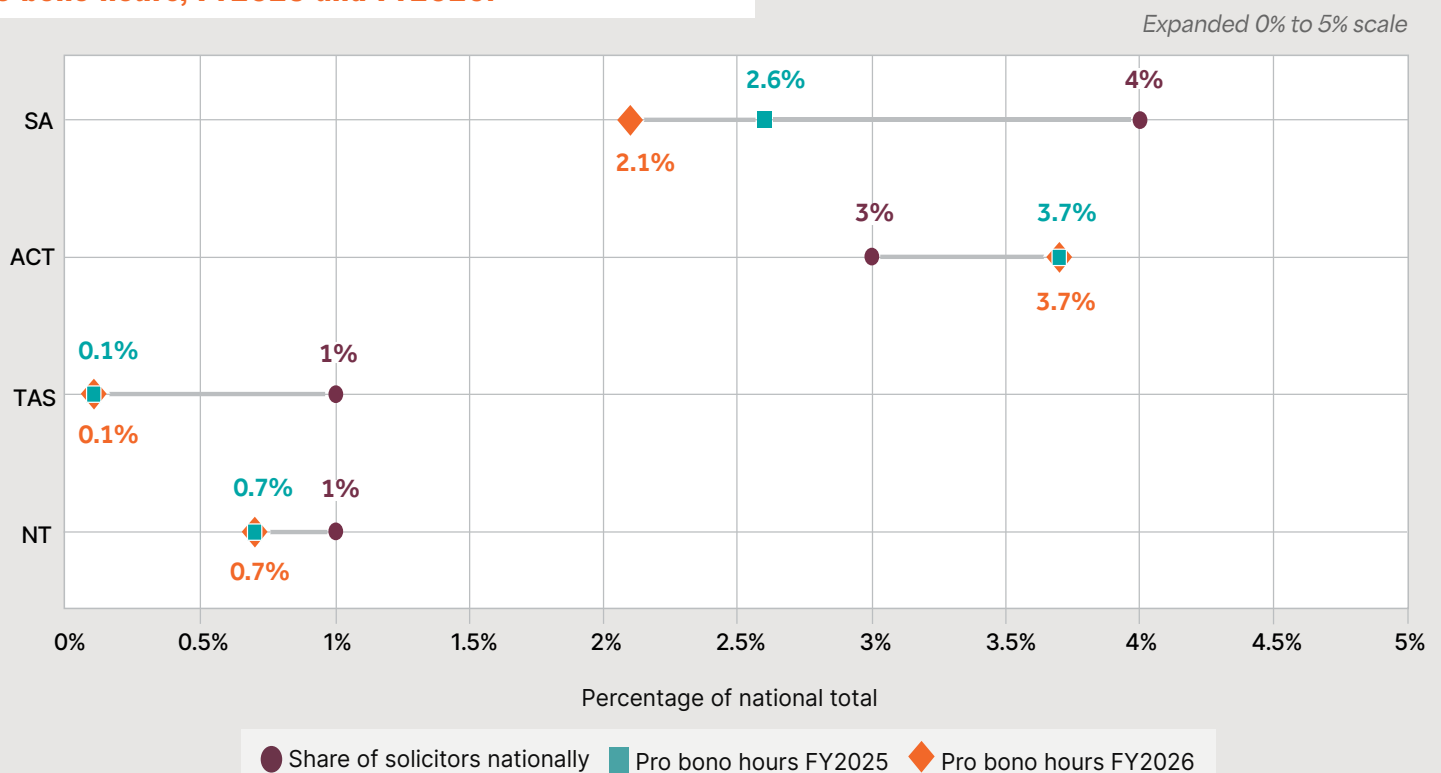
LARGER JURISDICTIONS

Share of solicitors nationally compared with share of pro bono hours, FY2025 and FY2026.



SMALLER JURISDICTIONS

Share of solicitors nationally compared with share of pro bono hours, FY2025 and FY2026.





AUSTRALIAN
PRO BONO CENTRE



The Australian Pro Bono Centre acknowledges the traditional custodians of the various lands on which we work throughout Australia. We pay our respects to the Elders – past and present – and the youth who are working towards a brighter tomorrow.

The Australian Pro Bono Centre is grateful for the funding support it receives from the governments of the Commonwealth and all Australian States and Territories. It is also grateful for the in-kind support it receives from private firms, volunteers, and the Faculty of Law and Justice at UNSW Sydney (which includes the use of the Faculty's premises and facilities and support from student interns).



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For more information, visit the Centre's website at probonocentre.org.au



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