

DOYLES

Pricing Report – Family Law Brisbane Legal Market, 2016

Queensland's family lawyers remain comparatively affordable when compared to the counterparts in other East Coast states. The state's family lawyers are, on average, cheaper than in NSW and Victoria and the state's top family lawyers are substantially cheaper too.

Hourly Rates

There's a substantial variation in the "typical" hourly rate of a family lawyer across Queensland's various geographical regions. As would be expected family lawyers in the larger metropolitan area have the higher the average hourly rate with prices in Brisbane typically \$100 per more than in smaller metropolitan areas.

There is however no distinctive correlation between positioning in our rankings and price. While it is typically the case that individuals and firms placed higher in our rankings sit towards the upper ends of the below pricing bands they are joined by a collection of individuals from various firm types, some of whom don't even feature in our rankings. Nor does there appear to be any link between firm type and price. Specialist family law firms price themselves across the breadth of our pricing spectrum and Queensland's limited number of "commercial" firms combined with the dominant presence of HopgoodGanim & Barry Nilsson, makes it difficult to say that "commercial" or "full-service" firms are more expensive than specialist firms. Similarly there is no major difference between the pricing of non-CBD firms compared to CBD based firms.

What is apparent though is a link in the Brisbane market between "grey hair" and price. In this regard the \$500 per hour mark appears as the dividing line. The more "junior" partners in the Brisbane family law market (i.e. those under approximately 45 years old) typically price themselves under the \$500 per hour mark whereas more senior practitioners tend to sit above this mark.

Hourly Rate	Brisbane	Toowoomba	Gold Coast	Nth Queensland
Under \$300	0%	0%	0%	3%
\$300 - \$350	2%	4%	4%	13%
\$350 - \$400	4%	28%	14%	36%
\$400 - \$450	24%	55%	27%	43%
\$450 - \$500	32%	0%	32%	5%
\$500 - \$550	20%	8%	11%	0%
\$550 - \$600	12%	0%	6%	0%
\$600 - \$650	4%	0%	0%	0%
\$650 - \$700	2%	0%	4%	0%

Alternative Pricing

Queensland's family lawyers lead the pack nationally when it comes to the adoption of alternative pricing methods being two to three times more likely than family lawyers in other states to use alternative pricing. With only some 21% of family lawyers in Sydney and Melbourne reporting having moved away from an hourly rate in the past 12 months there's certainly a level of pricing innovation and competitiveness in the Queensland market.

Pricing Method	Brisbane	Toowoomba	Gold Coast	North Queensland
Usage	49%	54%	71%	65%
Fixed Price	86%	100%	93%	84%
Capped Fees	18%	100%	33%	84%
Stage-Based Pricing	41%	16%	54%	18%
Retainer	14%	0%	6%	0%

