bring
Digital Performance.

STATE OF SEARCH 2026 | AUSTRALIA

Professional and Financial Services

How Australian law, accounting, advice and insurance firms are found (and missed) in Google and AI search

68.8%
of firm keywords now trigger a Google AI Overview

9.1%
of those AI Overviews cite the firm

3.3%
map pack presence on local searches

Bring Digital Performance | bring.au | November 2026 | Data: Semrush AU, public sources

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The firm rarely gets the first word anymore

Search is still where Australians look for a lawyer, an accountant, an adviser or an insurer. What has changed is who answers first. Google now writes an AI answer above most of the results these firms rank for, and it usually quotes somebody else.

68.8%
of keywords 13 sampled firms rank for trigger an AI Overview (120,711 of 175,414)

9.1%
of those AI Overviews cite the firm as a source (11,008)

5x
organic traffic to Canstar, Moneysmart and iSelect vs all 13 firms combined

3.3%
of local-pack searches where firms actually appear in the pack

9 of 13
firms with no paid keywords in Semrush's AU sample

$5.41m
monthly value of the 13 firms' organic traffic at paid click prices

Three moves that matter most

OPPORTUNITY

1. Become the cited source. Rewrite core practice-area and advice pages so Google's AI can quote them: answer first, named specialists, fee ranges, Australian law and regulation.

OPPORTUNITY

2. Win the map pack. One family law firm appears in the pack on 32.7% of its local searches. The category average is 3.3%. That gap is enquiries.

OPPORTUNITY

3. Use paid where the auction is empty. Legal clicks cost up to $24.54, yet most firms we sampled show no paid presence. A tight, geo-fenced programme buys share while organic builds.

01 THE CATEGORY

A long tail of small firms behind a few national brands

97,500
solicitors in Australia (2024 National Profile of Solicitors)

37,231
accounting services businesses (IBISWorld, 2026)

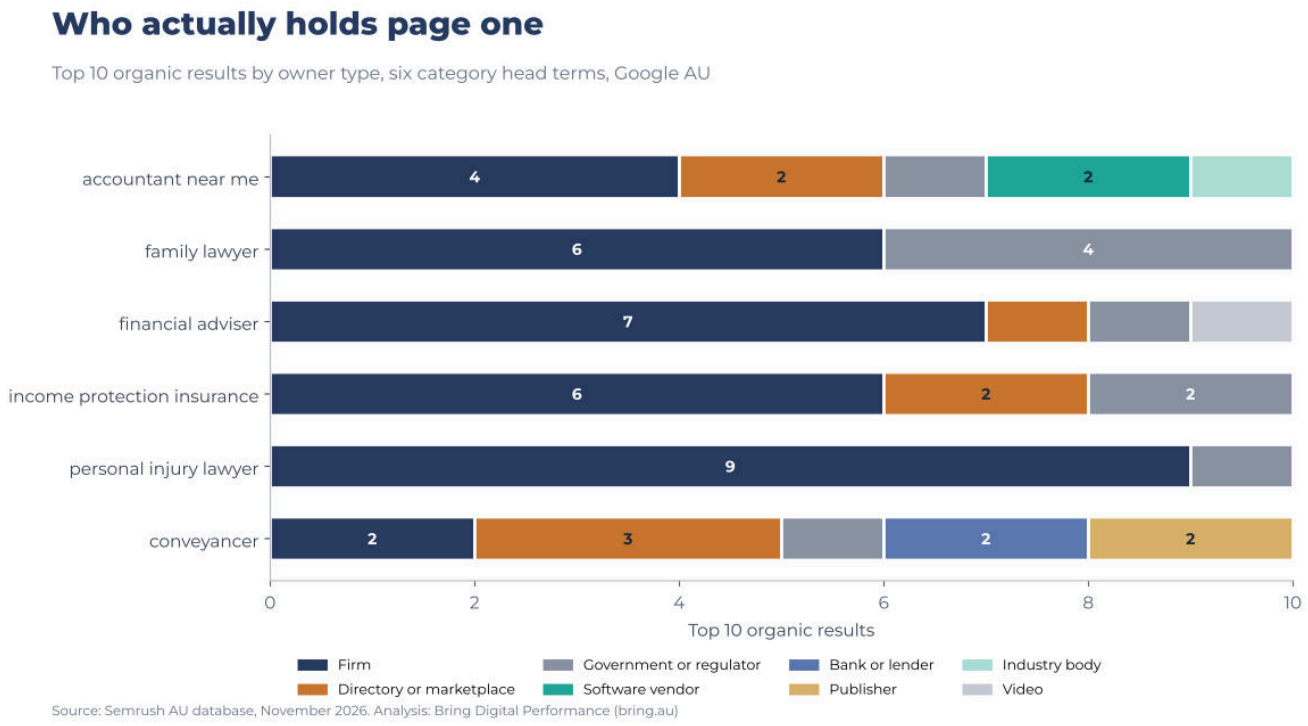
15,050
advisers on ASIC's Financial Advisers Register (July 2026)

The structure shapes the search battle. A handful of national brands compete for head terms against comparison sites and government. Tens of thousands of small practices compete suburb by suburb. In 2020, 82% of Australia's 16,393 private law practices were sole practices or had one principal (Law Society of NSW). Financial advice is shrinking: the register hit 14,984 in early July 2026, its lowest since it began in 2015, before recovering to 15,050.

INSIGHT

Small firms do not lose to big firms in search. They lose to directories, comparison sites and government pages that answer the question better.

Who holds page one



Firms dominate matter-specific legal searches (9 of 10 for "personal injury lawyer") and lose ground wherever the query is local or comparative (2 of 10 for "conveyancer", 4 of 10 for "accountant near me").

02 THE BUYER

652,400 searches a month across 39 head terms

Where the demand and the click costs sit

39 buyer-intent head terms, 652,400 searches a month



Source: Semrush AU database, November 2026. Analysis: Bring Digital Performance (bring.au)

Selected professional services head terms

Keyword	Monthly searches	CPC (AUD)	Keyword difficulty
conveyancer	14,800	$7.13	56
accountant near me	6,600	$4.56	50
financial planner	6,600	$5.01	61
family lawyer	4,400	$9.16	39
personal injury lawyer	4,400	$22.66	39
tax agent near me	4,400	$3.12	26
divorce lawyer	3,600	$9.58	22
smsf accountant	2,400	$4.00	14
compensation lawyer	1,600	$24.54	22
income protection insurance	14,800	$37.27	42

02 THE BUYER

How Australians actually search for professional help

- **Accounting is a "near me" category.** "accountant near me" (6,600), "tax accountant near me" (4,400) and "tax agent near me" (4,400) outweigh every city-named search.
- **Legal buyers search by matter.** "conveyancer" (14,800), "family lawyer" (4,400) and "divorce lawyer" (3,600) all beat "lawyer near me" (2,400).
- **Advice buyers start with education.** The "financial adviser" top 10 is mostly explainers such as "when should I see a financial adviser". The page that answers wins.
- **Seasonality is real.** "retirement planning" sat at its 12-month peak for the last three months. Tax terms peak around lodgement season.
- **Easy wins exist.** "smsf accountant" (2,400 searches, difficulty 14) and "small business accountant" (1,900, difficulty 19) are under-contested.

INSIGHT

Insurance is a different sport. "life insurance" alone is 246,000 searches a month at $63.15 a click. Outside insurance, the professional services core is 132,400 searches across 31 terms, at single-digit to mid-twenties click costs.

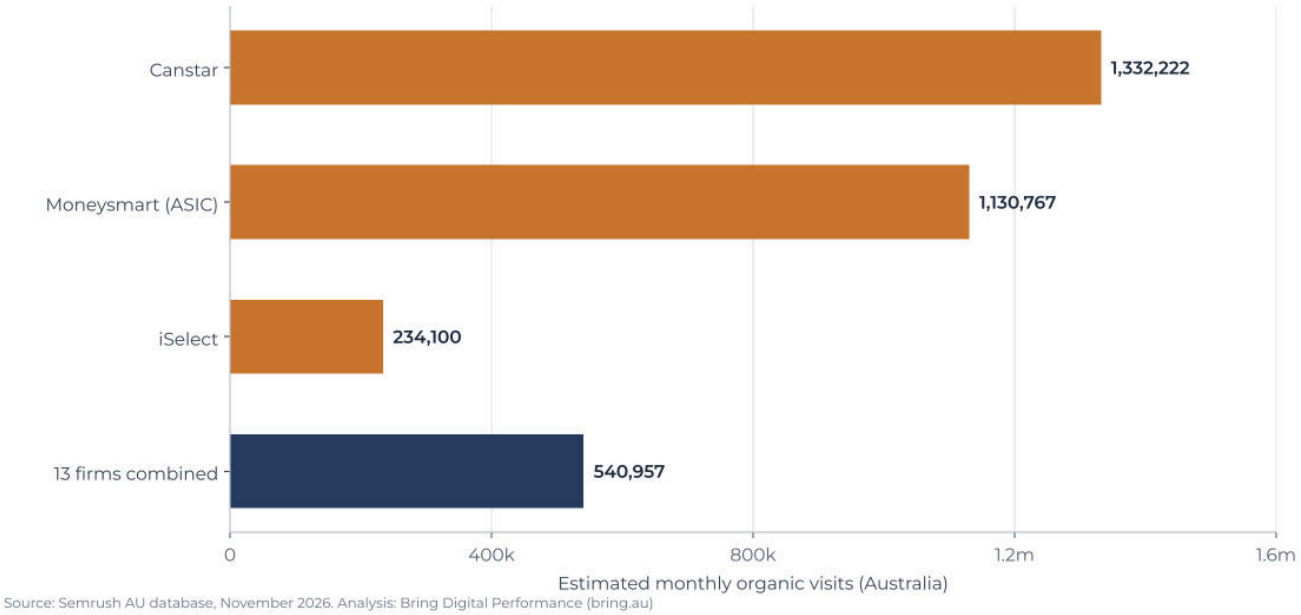
“The buyer types the problem, not the profession. Firms that build pages around matters, fees and suburbs meet them where they search.”

03 VISIBILITY

Intermediaries own the informational layer

Three intermediaries out-traffic 13 firms five to one

Comparison sites and the regulator own the informational layer of financial and legal search



Source: Semrush AU database, November 2026. Analysis: Bring Digital Performance (bring.au)

- Canstar: 1,332,222 estimated organic visits a month, top 3 for 29,846 keywords.
- Moneysmart (ASIC): 1,130,767 visits, top 3 for 20,408 keywords, no paid search at all.
- iSelect: 234,100 visits, the heaviest paid presence in our sample (110 paid keywords).
- All 13 firms combined: 540,957 visits.

RECOMMENDATION

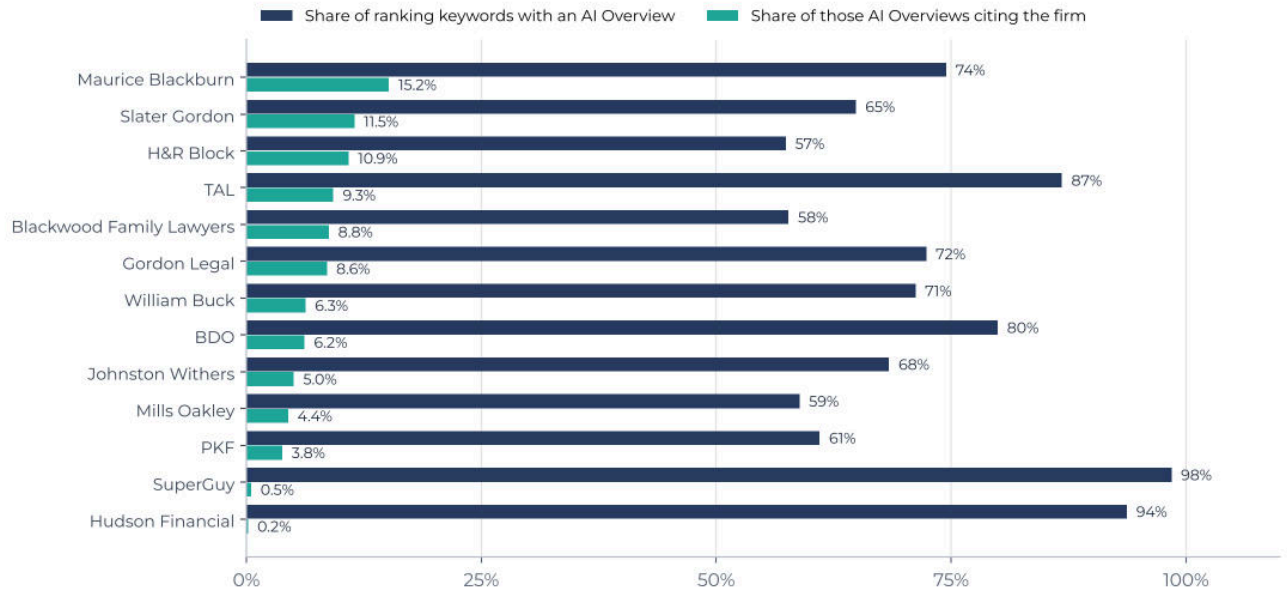
Do not fight Canstar for "life insurance". Pick the specific, local and matter-led long tail where a firm's expertise is the better answer, and own it.

04 AI SEARCH

AI Overviews are the new page one. Firms are mostly absent.

AI Overviews are everywhere. Firms are rarely the source.

13 Australian firms: 69% of ranking keywords trigger an AI Overview, firms are cited in 9.1% of them



Source: Semrush AU database, November 2026. Analysis: Bring Digital Performance (bring.au)

120,711
firm keywords with an AI Overview

11,008
where the firm is a cited source

0.2%
citation rate for the least-cited advice firm

04 AI SEARCH

Why firms are being skipped, and what Google cites instead

- **Advice is the most exposed segment.** Hudson Financial Partners has AI Overviews on 93.7% of its keywords and is cited in 0.2% of them. SuperGuy: 98.5% and 0.5%.
- **Government and comparison sites are the default sources.** Moneysmart is cited on 28,535 AI Overview results and Canstar on 39,296.
- **Size helps, but not much.** Maurice Blackburn leads the sample at 15.2%. Even the strongest firm is missing from five in six AI answers on its own keywords.
- **AI Mode raises the stakes.** Google AI Mode launched in Australia on 8 October 2025. Google says early testers ask questions two to three times longer than traditional searches.

RISK

When Google answers "how much does a family lawyer cost" without citing a firm, the firm loses the click and the chance to frame the decision.

RECOMMENDATION

Write for citation: one clear answer in the first 60 words, a named and credentialed author, Australian jurisdiction detail, published fee ranges, and clean, crawlable pages (Google says no AI-specific markup is needed). Then track which AI answers name you.

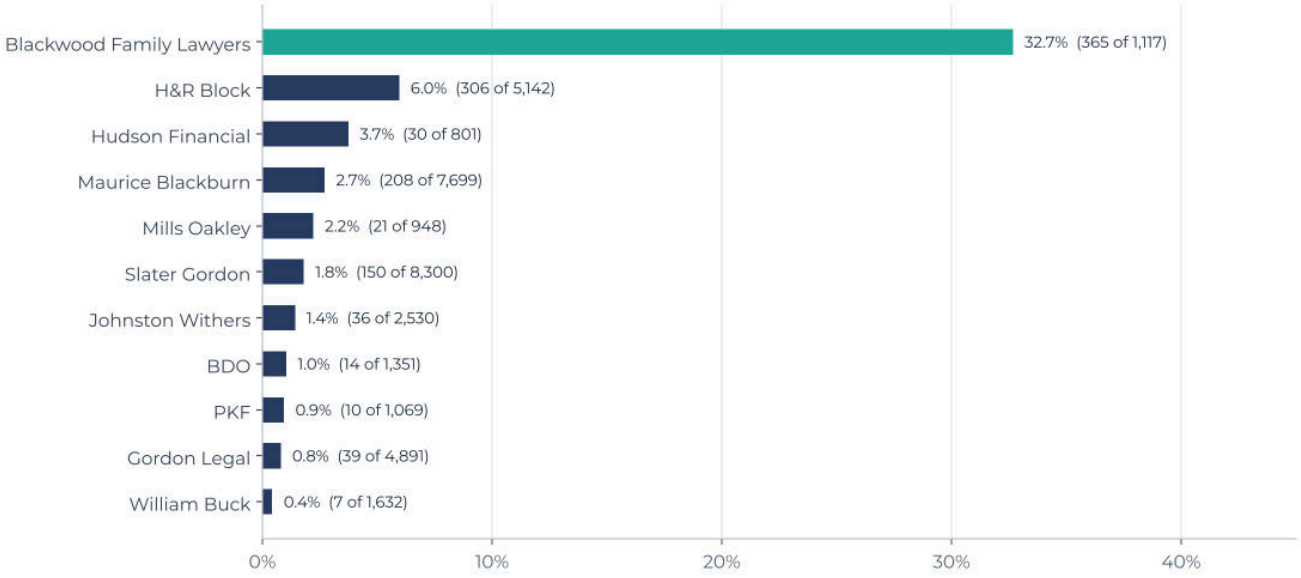
Method note: AI Overview figures are Semrush counts of a domain's ranking keywords whose results include an AI Overview, and of AI Overview positions held by that domain. A four-engine prompt audit (ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, Claude) is part of every personalised report.

05 LOCAL

The map pack is the most under-worked asset in the category

The map pack is the most under-worked asset

Share of a firm's local-pack SERPs where the firm itself appears in the pack



Source: Semrush AU database, November 2026. Analysis: Bring Digital Performance (bring.au)

- 13 firms rank organically on 35,846 searches that show a map pack. They appear in the pack on 1,198 of them.
- Blackwood Family Lawyers appears on 365 of 1,117 (32.7%). No other firm in the sample clears 6.0%.
- National firms do worst relative to footprint: William Buck 0.4%, Gordon Legal 0.8%, PKF 0.9%, BDO 1.0%.

RECOMMENDATION

Run Google Business Profiles like a practice-area channel: one verified profile per office, categories per service, a review request built into matter close, and suburb pages that match the profile.

06 PAID SEARCH

High click costs, thin competition

Firm	Paid keywords	Organic visits/mo	Organic traffic value/mo
Maurice Blackburn	0	116,907	$1,388,810
Slater Gordon	0	65,051	$966,533
TAL	11	55,525	$1,923,344
H&R; Block	8	162,181	$216,933
Gordon Legal	8	36,465	$322,769
Johnston Withers	0	18,235	$282,767
Blackwood Family Lawyers	0	17,590	$150,374
William Buck	9	13,491	$24,736

- 9 of 13 firms show no paid keywords in Semrush's AU sample.
- Semrush captured no ads for "personal injury lawyer" ($22.66 CPC) or "family lawyer melbourne" ($12.47), and a single advertiser on "small business accountant", "financial planner" and "income protection insurance".
- The 13 firms' organic traffic is worth $5.41 million a month at paid prices, against roughly $147,000 of observed paid spend.

NOTE

Semrush samples paid results and under-counts geo-targeted and dayparted campaigns. Read this as light observed paid presence, then confirm with auction insights from a live account.

OPPORTUNITY

Where competitors are absent, a geo-fenced, matter-type paid programme captures share in weeks, and its search term data tells the organic team what to build next.

07 CONVERSION

What the leaders do once the buyer lands

Firm	Primary CTA	Fees shown	Distinctive device
Slater Gordon	"Start your free claim check"	No Win, No Fee with conditions	Claim-check tools per claim type
Blackwood Family Lawyers	"Get in touch with us"	Not published	Accredited Specialist badges; states no free first consultations
Hudson Financial Partners	"Book your free call"	$550 SOA implementation; $7,700 Division 296 modelling	Calculators, AI plan check, example SOA
Max Accountants	"Contact Us", free quotation	"From $140" in one news item	Referral claim, professional body badges

Patterns

- **Tools beat forms.** The strongest footprints let the buyer self-qualify before asking for details.
- **Fees are rarely published.** One of four pages showed real prices. AI answers to cost questions need a source, and published fee ranges give Google one.
- **Accreditation is the trust currency.** Specialist accreditation, AFSL and professional body marks appear on every page that converts well.
- **The phone still leads** in law and accounting. Every page sampled has click-to-call in the header.

08 WHAT IS CHANGING

Five forces reshaping discovery in 2026 and 2027

Force	What it means
AI Mode in Australia	Rolled out 8 October 2025, a year after AI Overviews. Longer, conversational questions, answered on Google.
ASIC RG 234 re-issued	9 June 2026. Advertising guidance consolidated (RG 53 withdrawn). Financial content written to win AI answers still has to meet it.
Adviser supply squeeze	15,050 advisers in July 2026 after a register low of 14,984. Discoverability now fills capacity, not just growth.
A growing legal profession	97,500 solicitors in 2024. More small competitors crowd local search faster.
Comparison sites keep consolidating attention	Canstar, Moneysmart and iSelect already out-traffic 13 firms five to one.

INSIGHT

Both the rules of discovery (AI answers) and the rules of promotion (RG 234) shifted in the last 13 months. Firms that adapt content to both will be the ones AI search trusts.

09 OPPORTUNITY SURFACE

Ranked opportunities for firms in the category

#	Gap	Move	Outcome
1	Firms cited in 9.1% of AI Overviews	Answer-first rewrites of top 20 pages	Presence inside AI answers
2	3.3% map pack presence	GBP per office and service, review velocity	Enquiries on "near me" searches
3	Thin paid presence, CPCs to $24.54	Geo-fenced matter-type paid	Fast share capture
4	Advice firms near-invisible in AI	Fee pages, calculators, RG 234-safe explainers	Citations on cost questions
5	Intermediaries own head terms	Target specific, local, matter-led long tail	Better return per content dollar
6	Low-difficulty terms	Dedicated pages with direct answers	Wins within two to three quarters
7	Few firms publish fees	Fee range pages per matter	Qualified leads, AI citations
8	Forms underperform tools	Claim checkers and calculators	Conversion and links

The next 90 days

- **Weeks 1 to 2:** benchmark your AI Overview citation rate and map pack share against this report.
- **Weeks 3 to 6:** rewrite the ten pages that rank for the most AI Overview keywords; fix GBP categories and reviews.
- **Weeks 4 to 8:** launch paid on the two or three matter types where the auction is thin.
- **Weeks 8 to 12:** publish fee ranges and one self-qualification tool; start tracking AI answers monthly.

10 METHOD AND SOURCES

How we built this report

Search data: Semrush AU database, pulled 6 November 2026. Keyword volumes, cost per click and difficulty for 52 terms; top 10 organic results for eight head terms; domain-level organic, paid, AI Overview and local pack metrics for 16 domains selected from page one of six category head terms plus two national accounting brands. Semrush figures are modelled estimates, best used for comparison rather than as absolute counts.

Sample: 13 practitioner firms (Maurice Blackburn, Slater Gordon, Gordon Legal, Johnston Withers, Blackwood Family Lawyers, Mills Oakley, H&R Block, BDO, William Buck, PKF, Hudson Financial Partners, SuperGuy, TAL) and three intermediaries (Canstar, iSelect, Moneysmart). This is a visibility sample, not a census.

Public sources

- Riskinfo, "Adviser Numbers Top 15,050", 17 July 2026, citing Padua Wealth Data: riskinfo.com.au
- QLS Proctor, "Profession booms over past decade", July 2025 (2024 National Profile of Solicitors): qlsproctor.com.au
- Law Society of NSW, 2020 National Profile of Solicitors release: lawsociety.com.au
- IBISWorld, Accounting Services in Australia, number of businesses 2026: ibisworld.com
- ASIC, "ASIC updates guidance on advertising financial products and services", 9 June 2026: asic.gov.au
- Think with Google, Google AI Mode for Australian marketers: business.google.com
- AdNews, "Google rolls out AI Mode in Australia", October 2025: adnews.com.au
- Firm pages reviewed 6 November 2026: slatergordon.com.au, blackwoodfamilylawyers.com.au, hudsonfinancialplanning.com.au, maxaccountants.com.au

This report is general information about search visibility. It is not legal, financial or regulatory advice. Firm names are used to describe publicly observable search data only.

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