

40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Actuarial Education Conference

## **The Needs of Employers - Actuarial Degrees - about right or are there gaps?**

**Jenny Lyon, Qed Actuarial**

### Synopsis

I will approach my segment of this session from the perspective of graduate recruitment. While this process is usually conducted by companies themselves we have access to comments from employers and graduates and become aware of whether and where graduates are finding roles. I will cover the following in my presentation

- How the market has changed for actuarial graduates, and more generally for actuaries across their career, over the last ten to fifteen years with observations on the reasons for change and the impact on the profession.
- Graduate recruitment process - the expectations of employers when selecting graduates and consider which skills are sought and which are considered lacking.
- Finally I have some comments to make about;
  - the perception of the actuarial degree in the market
  - our position globally in terms of education,
  - why the Australian market can still struggle to fill positions in traditional roles, and
  - actuarial graduates working in non-traditional fields.

# **40th Anniversary Actuarial Education Conference**

## **The Needs of Employers Actuarial Degrees - about right or are there gaps?**

**Jenny Lyon, Qed Actuarial  
September 2008**

# Agenda

- History – how the market has changed
- Graduate recruitment – employer expectations
- Observations

# 20 Years Ago

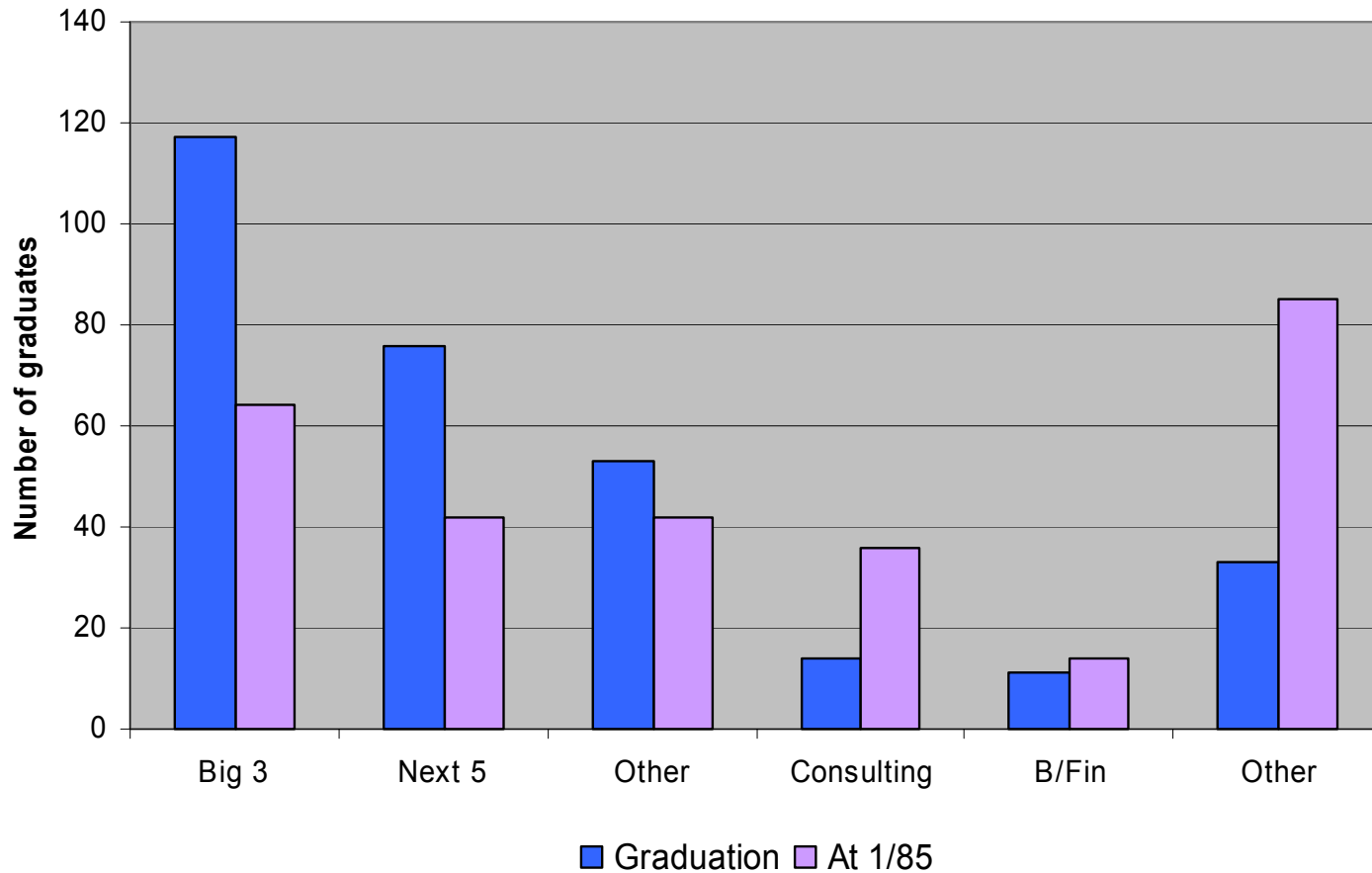
- Scholarships common, employers provided vacation experience and career management
- “Full” employment for actuarial graduates
- Good study support offered
- General management expectations for many

## Source

The Macquarie Programme, The Profession and Graduate Employment an Evaluation after Twenty Years

David M Knox BA PhD FIA FIAA

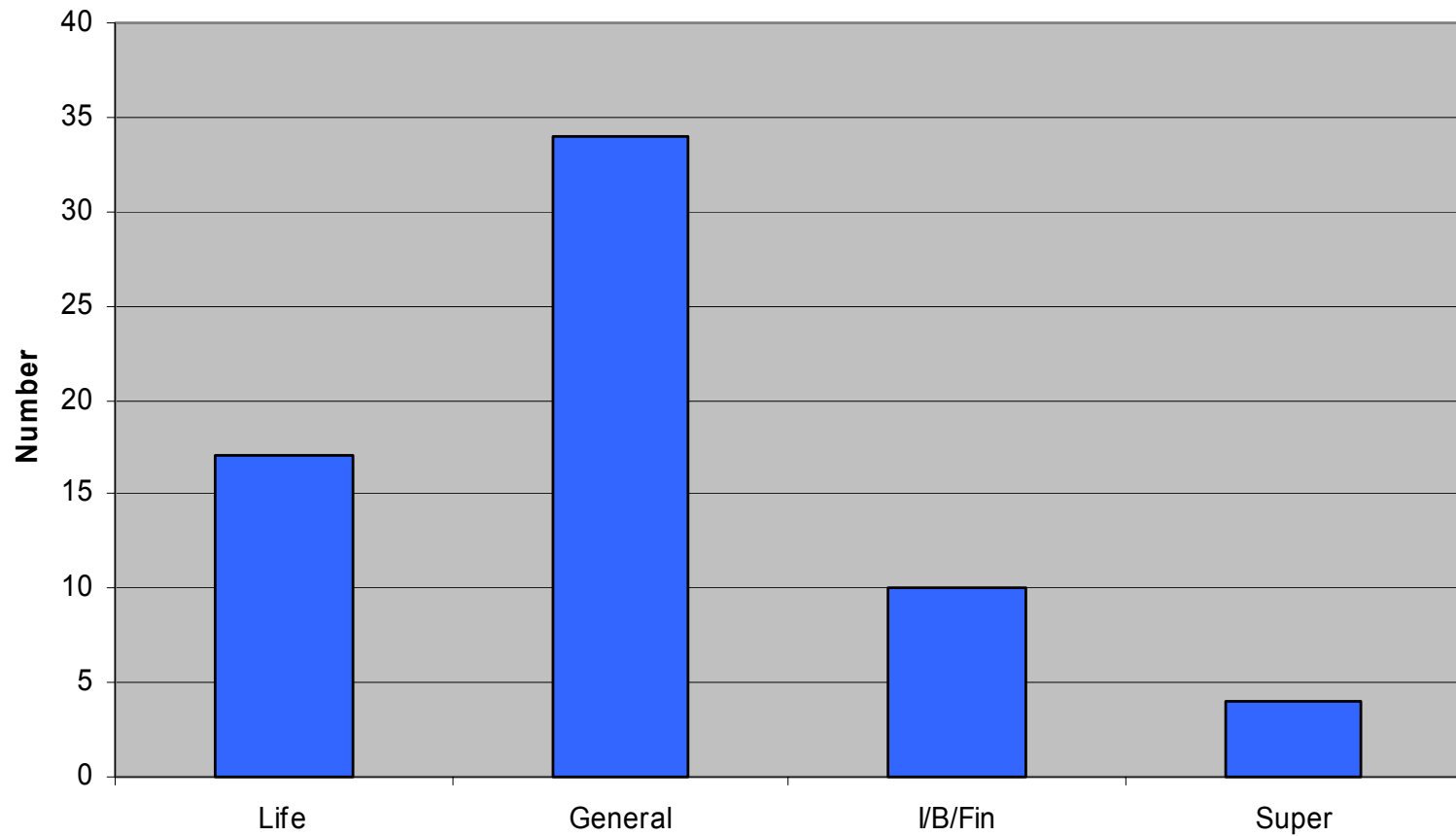
# Employment Pattern for Graduates



## Source

The Macquarie Programme, The Profession and Graduate Employment an Evaluation after Twenty Years  
David M Knox BA PhD FIA FIAA

# Employment of New Qualifiers 2008



Source : Qed Actuarial salary survey of newly qualified actuaries, Professionalism courses 2008

# Next 20 Years

- Scholarships phased out
- More universities offer actuarial degrees
- Increased number of graduates
- Difficult for all actuarial graduates to find jobs
- Reduced number of traditional employers
- Responsibilities of actuarial teams narrower – often lower down the organisation
- Changed attitudes of employers
- Investment/Finance positions - cyclical
- Salaries for graduates

# Graduate Recruitment Process

- Competitive
- Early in the final year
- Online application process
- Resume needs to stand out
- Interview
- Assessment centre
- Psych testing

# What are employers looking for ?

- Excellent academic performance
- More than just study
- Communication skills – written and verbal
- Interpersonal skills
- Motivation and commitment
- Common sense
- Potential – leadership, future development

# What are Graduates looking for?

- A successful career
- Support for their study – qualification
- Want to learn from “actuaries”
- Career development/variety – GenY and beyond
- Open to non traditional work (once qualified)

# Observations

- Universities - a good job of marketing the actuarial degree
- Entrants have strong expectation of becoming an actuary
- The degree is perceived as “technical” both by potential students and employers
- Work experience makes a difference

# Observations

- High number of overseas students – many wish to train/live in Australia post graduation
- Working overseas
  - Expectation
  - Range of opportunities
  - Returning can be difficult
  - A challenge for employers
- International recognition but are we losing ground in Asia
- Market size

# Observations

- Narrower role for “actuaries” in traditional employers
- Training and career management by companies is low
- Non traditional roles
- Disillusion amongst students about finding a role – expectations not met

# 2008 New Fellows



Source : Qed Actuarial salary survey of newly qualified actuaries, Professionalism courses 2008