

road safety issues

July 2003

The Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA) has prepared this road safety issues report. It is based on reported crash data and trends for the 1998–2002 period. The intent of the report is to highlight the key road safety issues and to identify possible ways to reduce the level of road trauma in the Central Otago District.

Road crashes in the Central Otago District over the five-year period have killed 14 people and injured more than 380. There were more than 300 reported non-injury crashes over the same period.

In 2001 there was a significant increase in crash reporting rates throughout Otago and Southland. That trend has continued with better and more accurate reporting of the level of injuries from crashes in these areas. Comparisons with hospital admission data show that the recorded increase in road crash injuries is not due to a sudden increase in crash numbers but reflects improved reporting. While this helps to identify problem areas in the district it does mean that it is more difficult to report on trends over the last few years.

Major road safety issues

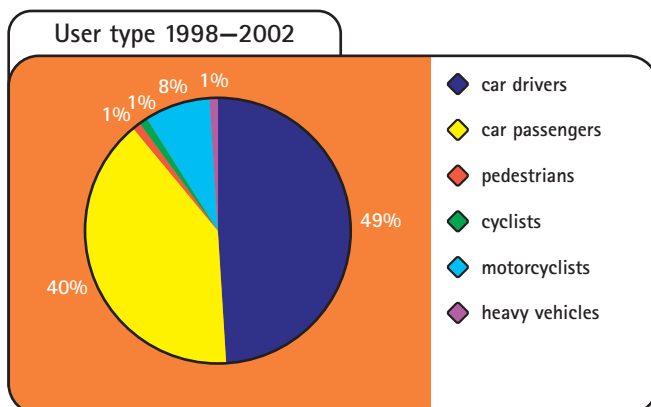
Nationally

Speed
Alcohol
Failure to give way
Restraints

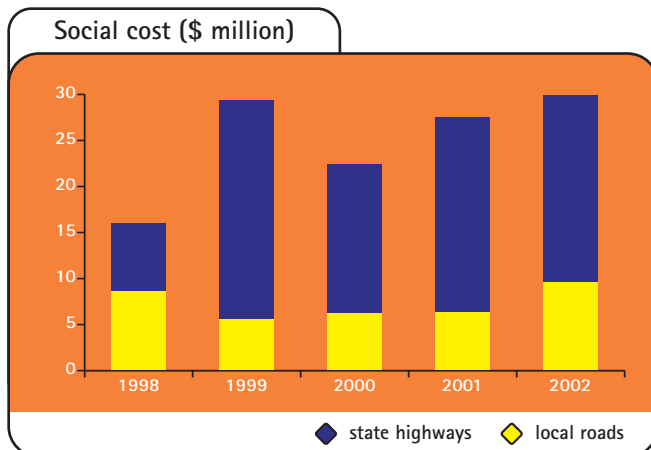
2002 road trauma for Central Otago District

Deaths	1
Serious casualties	36
Minor casualties	66
<hr/>	
Fatal crashes	1
Serious injury crashes	25
Minor-injury crashes	37
Non-injury crashes	73

Road casualties 1998–2002



Estimated social cost of crashes*



* The estimated social cost includes loss of life or life quality (estimated by the amount New Zealanders are prepared to pay to reduce their risk of fatal or non-fatal injury), loss of output due to injuries, medical and rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, and property damage. These costs are expressed at June 2002 prices.

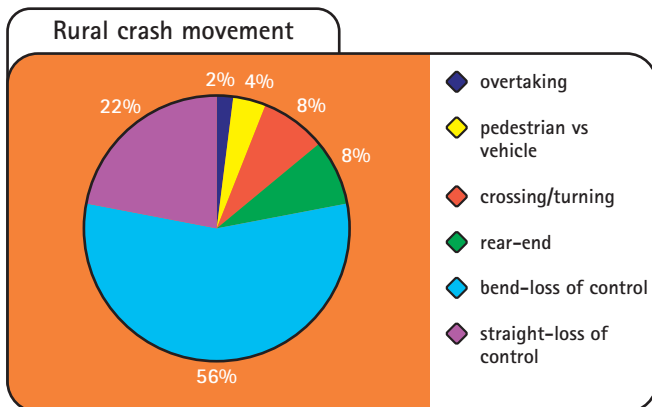
Rural crashes

In 2002 four out of five injury crashes took place on rural roads. While the sole fatality last year occurred on an urban road, the majority of serious and fatal injuries result from crashes away from built-up areas. Nearly half of all rural injury crashes last year resulted in serious injuries whereas that figure was around 15 percent in urban areas.

Over two thirds of rural injury crashes in the Central Otago District last year were single vehicles losing control and leaving the road. Thirty people were seriously injured and 39 received minor injuries in crashes of this type. Seventy percent of these rural crashes resulted in a vehicle striking a roadside object, something that often increases the severity of a crash.

Winter road conditions usually play a significant part in road crashes but there was a relatively mild winter last year and only four crashes occurred in icy conditions. This compares with 2001 when nearly one quarter of all rural injury crashes had winter conditions noted as a contributing factor.

The graph below outlines the types of crashes that occurred on rural roads last year.



Fatigue appears more often as a factor in the Central Otago District crashes than it used to. Over the last five years more than 10 percent of injury crashes were believed to have been partly caused by fatigue. This is lower than both speed and alcohol involvement but the combination of any of these three can become a problem. Fatigue is often difficult to prove after the event, and therefore the LTSA believes that this figure is greatly under-reported.

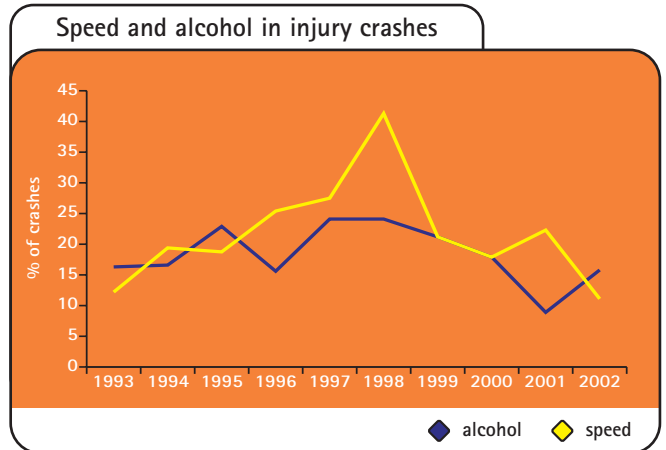
Recommended actions

- Support campaigns on adjusting speed for different road and weather conditions and on the need to be fully alert when driving.
- Continue enforcement of and education on the issues of speed and alcohol to reduce crash numbers. These issues both play a part in loss of control type crashes.



Speed and alcohol

Last year's report stated that there had been no speed or alcohol-related injury crashes in urban areas of the district for the first time in 10 years. In 2002 only one crash involved both of these factors and that resulted in the only fatality for the year. The following graph shows the trend for both speed and alcohol involvement over the last 10 years.



The number of speed-related crashes fell to just over 10 percent, the lowest figure for at least 10 years. In 1998, 40 percent of injury crashes in the district had speed noted as a factor so this was a significant reduction. The number of single vehicle loss of control type crashes in fine weather and with no road problems does point to excessive speed being under-reported in the district.

The number of alcohol-related crashes increased compared with 2001, which was a record year, to slightly over 15 percent. In rural areas the level of alcohol involvement was above the national average.

Recommended actions

- Continue to support strategic enforcement campaigns as well as education campaigns aimed at drink-driving.
- Support host responsibility and designated driver programmes.
- Support enforcement campaigns aimed at speed control and education to make people more aware of the consequences of excessive speed.



Overseas drivers

There has been a lot of discussion about the problem of overseas drivers on roads in the Central Otago area. In 2002 the proportion of drivers with overseas licences involved in injury crashes fell slightly but was still above 10 percent. In the Queenstown Lakes District area the figure was twice that. This number is only likely to increase as more tourists are encouraged to visit New Zealand.

Twenty overseas drivers were involved in injury crashes during the last two years. All but one of these crashes took place on rural state highways, with the majority on SH 6. The type of crash generally follows the same pattern as those involving other drivers, with single vehicle loss of control being the most common. Where more than one vehicle was involved, poor driving skills or an error of judgement was the main factor behind the crash. There have been two crashes in five years caused by an overseas driver on the wrong side of the road.

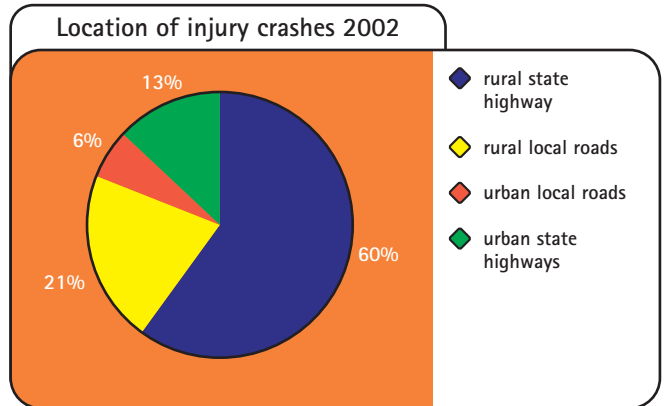
Because of growing concerns about this group of road users, the LTSA is embarking on a project to identify ways of improving the delivery of road safety information to overseas tourist drivers. It will also look at whether current road safety information is meeting the needs of this group. A pilot study to be undertaken as part of this project is likely to be carried out in this region because of the presence of a large number of tourist drivers.

The map below shows the location of all fatal and serious injury crashes in the district last year.

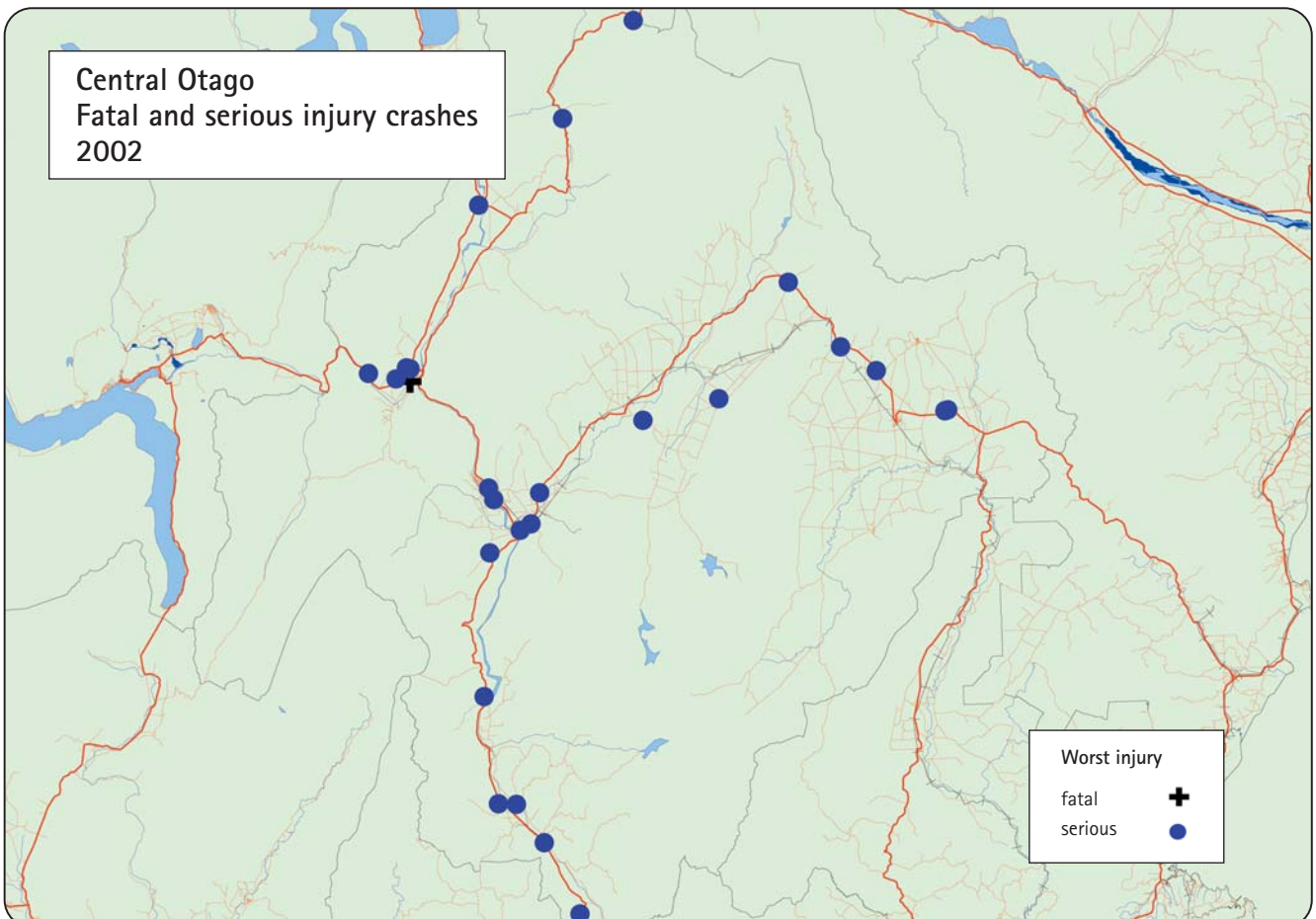
Other issues

As in previous years, pedestrians and cyclists do not feature highly in local crash figures. Two pedestrians and one cyclist were injured in 2002. This is well below the national average and also below the level found in a peer group of similar local authorities.

More motorcyclists were injured on the roads in 2002 in the Central Otago District than in any previous year. This was mainly due to one crash in October that involved six motorcycles.



The graph above shows a breakdown of where crashes occurred in the district last year. As detailed earlier, the majority of crashes in the Central Otago District take place on rural roads, with three quarters of those being on the state highway network.



New Zealand Road Safety Programme

Reducing road trauma involves a multi-pronged approach, which includes education, engineering and enforcement. The New Zealand Road Safety Programme (NZRSP) is the primary planning and funding programme for road safety activity undertaken by the New Zealand Police, LTSA and community groups. Transfund New Zealand provides funding to Transit New Zealand and local authorities for roading projects through its National Land Transport Programme.

Community Road Safety Programme

Many community groups in the south have good road safety ideas to help reduce road trauma, but are often unsure of where to go for advice and funding to make these ideas a reality.

This is where the Community Road Safety Programme (CRSP) can assist. It provides funding, subject to certain criteria being met, to allow community groups to develop and run initiatives to deal with local road safety issues, in ways that meet the needs of their community.

As a guide, some of the following activities could qualify for funding:

- An activity meeting a clearly identified local road safety issue.
- Training sessions, seminars, public meetings.
- Brochures supporting a road safety activity.
- Localised advertising campaigns.
- Fees for contracting providers.
- Road safety displays.
- Small-scale survey and information gathering.

The community advisor, road safety, at the local district or city council will be able to advise if a road safety idea might qualify for CRSP assistance.

To receive a CRSP information pack contact the LTSA on the number below or alternatively email crsp@ltsa.govt.nz for an electronic copy.

Road policing

Police enforcement hours to support community projects are now allocated to police community services hours rather than to individual projects. The delivery of these hours to support community initiatives will need to be negotiated by the community advisor, road safety.

In 2003/2004 the Police are funded to deliver 8,850 hours of road policing in the Central Otago District as follows:

Project	Police hours
Strategic – alcohol/drugs, speed, restraints and visible road safety enforcement	7,260
Traffic management including crash attendance, incidents, emergencies and events	850
School road safety education	440
Police community services	300

Road environment

Central Otago District has an allocation for minor safety projects on local roads in Transfund New Zealand's National Land Transport Programme 2003–2004.

Where to get more information

For more specific information relating to road crashes in Central Otago, please refer to the 1998 to 2002 Road Safety Report or the Land Transport Safety Authority Crash Analysis System (CAS), or contact the people or organisations listed below:

Contacts

Land Transport Safety Authority
Regional Manager
John Doesburg
Phone 03 477 7789

Regional Education Advisor
Graeme Rice
Phone 03 477 7789

Senior Road Safety Engineer
Jeremy Byfield
Phone 03 477 7789

Community Advisor, Road Safety
Margaret Smith
Phone 03 448 6979

New Zealand Police
Inspector Dave Cliff
Phone 03 471 4800

Dunedin Regional Office
AA Building, Moray Place
PO Box 5245, Dunedin
Phone 03 477 7789, Fax 03 474 1434
www.ltsa.govt.nz