

# road safety issues

## Far North District

Land Transport New Zealand has prepared this road safety issues report. It is based on reported crash data and trends for the 2001–2005 period. The intent of the report is to highlight the key road safety issues and be a resource to identify possible ways to reduce the number of road deaths and injuries in the Far North District.

The issues in the Far North District cannot be compared to the issues of big cities but can be compared with a peer group of 21 similar authorities. Examples of some of the peer authorities are Franklin, Marlborough, Rodney and Tasman Districts.

Far North District had a population of 57,800 in 2005 and there were nine injury crashes for every 10,000 people compared to seven in similar authorities.

In the Far North District 80 percent of crashes were on higher speed rural roads compared to 74 percent for similar authorities.

### Crashes in Far North District 2001–2005

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	Non-injury
Urban roads	10	46	138	600
Rural roads	41	188	503	1,009
Total	51	234	641	1,609

### Major road safety issues

#### Far North District

Alcohol

Loss of control on curves

Passengers and pedestrians

Road and environment

#### Nationally

Speed

Alcohol

Failure to give way

Restraints



### 2005 road trauma for Far North District



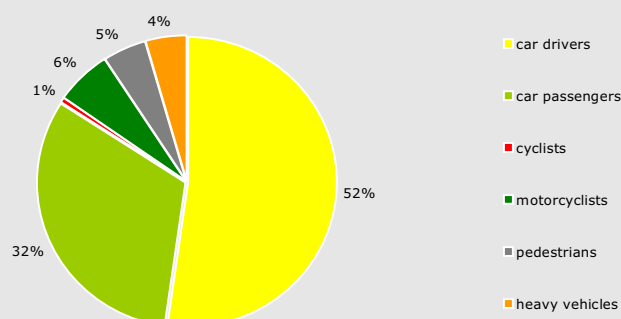
Deaths	12
Serious casualties	61
Minor casualties	206



Fatal crashes	11
Serious injury crashes	46
Minor injury crashes	121
Non-injury crashes	333

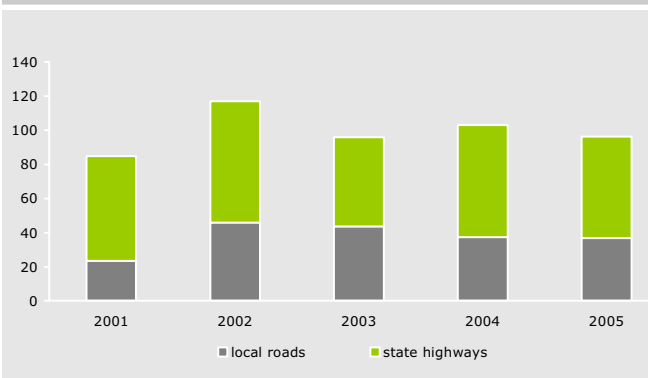
### Fatal and serious casualties

User type 2001–2005



### Estimated social cost of crashes\*

Social cost (\$ million)



\* 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 2005 prices.

## Alcohol

Alcohol and speed were the two most common reasons why crashes occurred in the Far North District. Many crashes involved both of these factors.

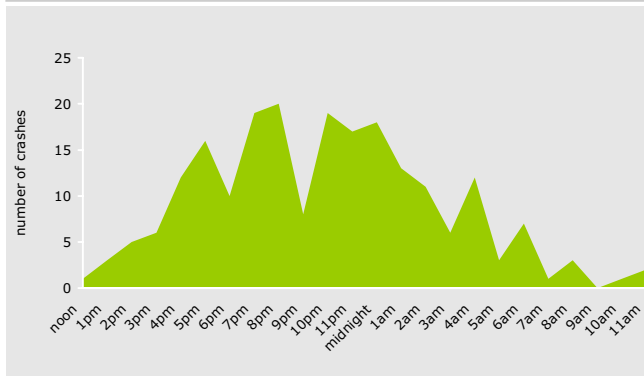
With 27 percent of crashes involving alcohol, the Far North District has the highest proportion of alcohol-related crashes in the country. Across Northland generally, surveys have shown that the number of drivers travelling late at night with excessive alcohol levels are the second highest in the country.

Northland is first equal in New Zealand for the percentage of crashes involving alcohol on the open road and second equal in urban areas. These percentages are increasing.

Alcohol-related crashes occurred throughout the district. Common areas were around Kaitiāia, Ahipara, and Awanui. Other areas included Taheke, Kerikeri and Kawakawa along with Mangonui, Rawene and Kaeo.

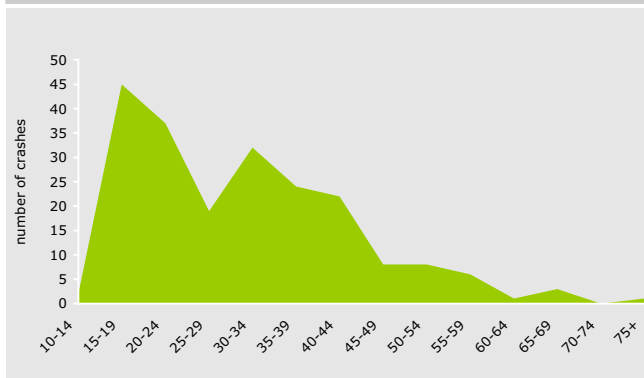
The number of alcohol-related crashes significantly increases on Saturdays and Sundays in the Far North District. Although they are spread throughout the day and night, more occur after 7 pm.

### Time of alcohol-related crashes



The age of drivers involved in alcohol crashes is spread over a wide range but crashes were more common for drivers aged from 15 through to 45 years.

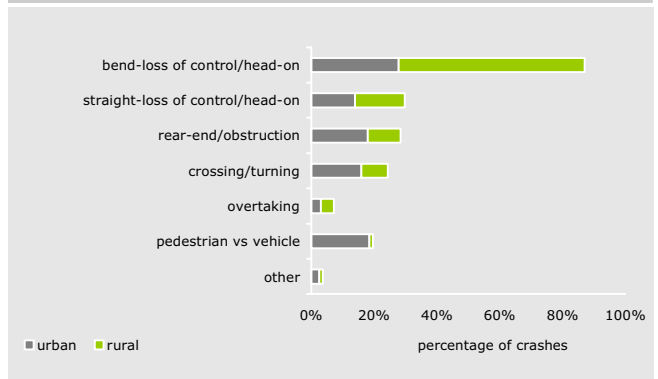
### Age of alcohol affected drivers



## Loss of control on curves

Loss of control crashes featured strongly in the Far North District. Between 2001 and 2005, there were 487 crashes where a driver lost control on a curve. Losing control on curves is common on the higher speed roads, and has increased in recent years accounting for over 60 percent of open road crashes. The national average is around 45 percent. Excluding the state highways, on Far North's rural local road network, 70 percent of crashes were caused by loss of control on curves. Loss of control crashes also made up a high proportion of urban crashes.

### Crash types 2001-2005



Speed-related crashes featured strongly in the Far North which has the second highest percentage of speed-related crashes in the country. Of all injury crashes in the district, 31 percent involved excessive speed for the conditions. The trend is not reducing with the percentage of speed-related crashes having increased over the past three years, particularly on urban roads.

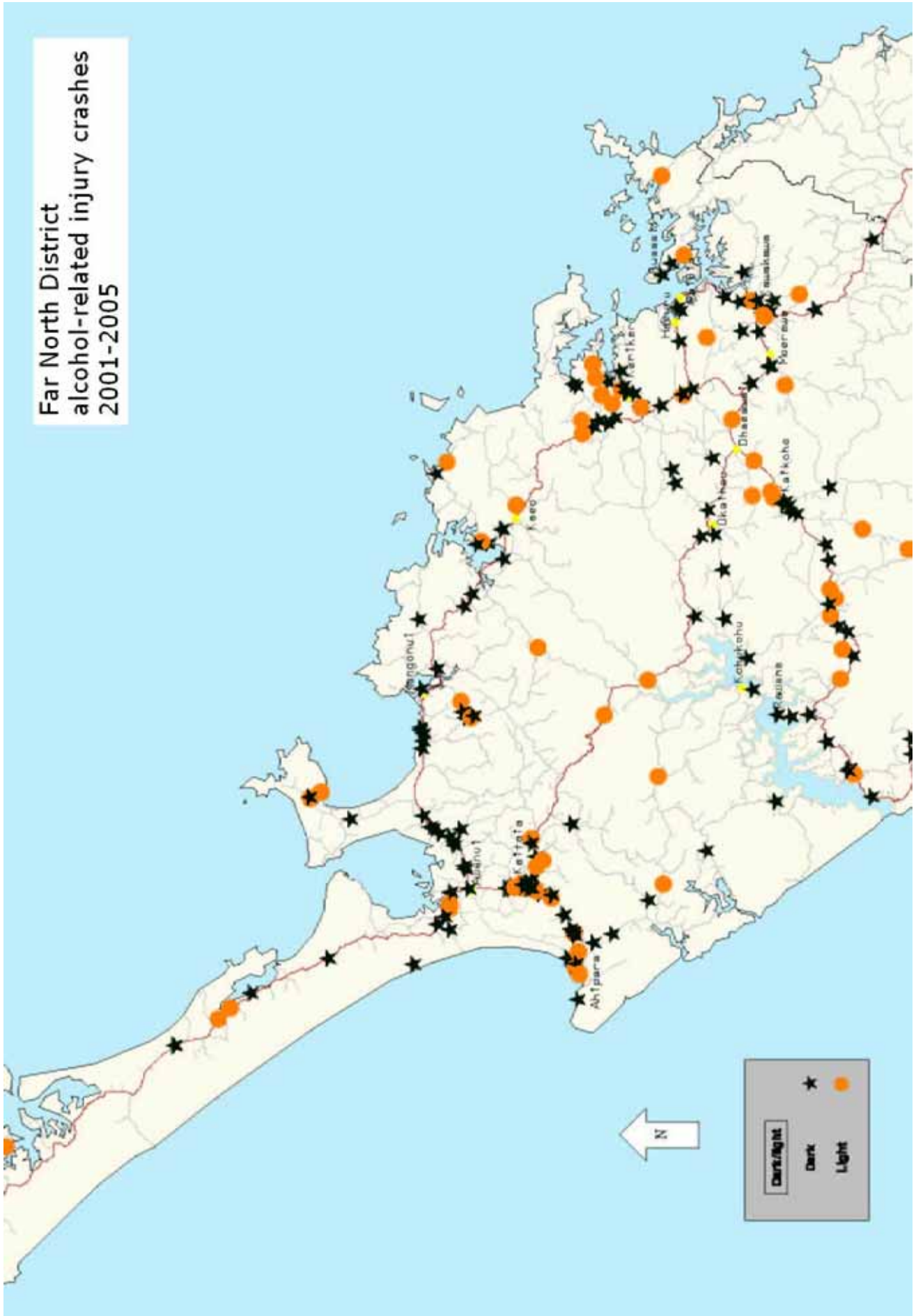
The whole of Northland generally has a high number of speed-related crashes not just on the open road but in urban areas too.

As well as drivers travelling at speeds too fast for the conditions, speed can also relate to drivers exceeding the posted speed limit. Observance of open road speed limits in Northland has improved but a high percentage of drivers are exceeding the urban speed limits.

### Percentage of Northland vehicles travelling 10 km/h or more above the speed limit

	Northland	New Zealand
Urban speed limit	15%	7%
Rural speed limit	4%	5%

Far North District  
alcohol-related injury crashes  
2001-2005



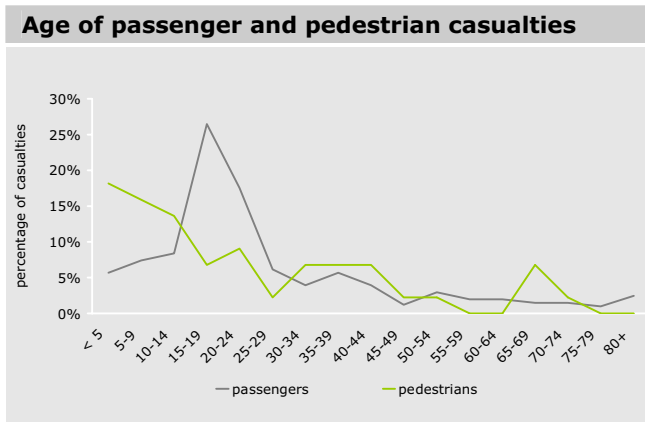




## Passengers and pedestrians

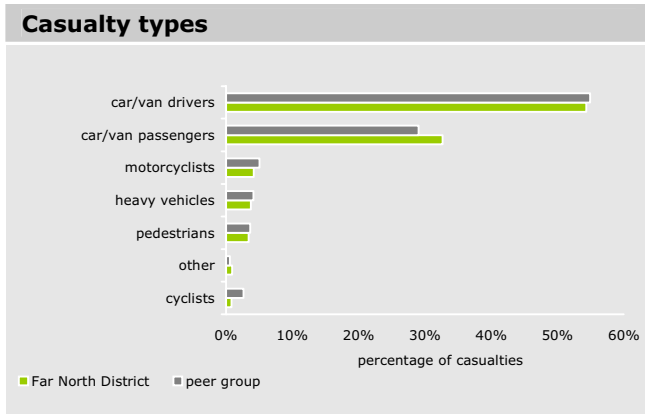
Two areas of concern in the Far North District involved casualties other than drivers. These were injuries to passengers in vehicles and to pedestrians. Passengers made up 32.7 percent of all casualties in the district and are over-represented in the younger age groups.

Pedestrians made up only 3.4 percent overall but when only urban crashes are considered, they made up 13.8 percent of the casualties in urban crashes. Child pedestrians, especially those under five years old were the most common pedestrian age group injured.



Over the five-year period, the proportion of passenger casualties was higher than for similar authorities. However, in recent years numbers have been reducing in the Far North District. Some drivers and passengers are still not wearing safety belts, which increases the chance of injury or death if a crash occurs.

While wearing of rear safety belts and child restraints has improved in Northland, front seat driver and passenger compliance has not improved, particularly in the Far North. The Far North District has the lowest rate in the country for wearing front seat safety belts with 13 percent non-compliance. Other parts of the country have this rate down to three percent or less.

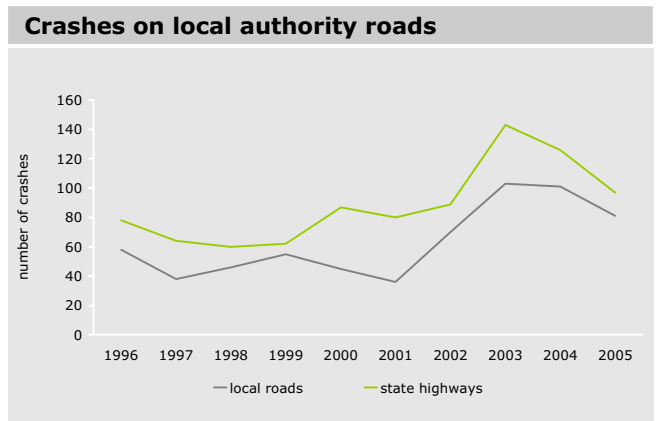


## Road and environment

One way of measuring risk on the road is to relate the number of crashes to the number of vehicles travelling on the road and the distance they travel.

Measured in this way, the crash rate per 100 million vehicle kms travelled in the Far North is significantly higher than the national average.

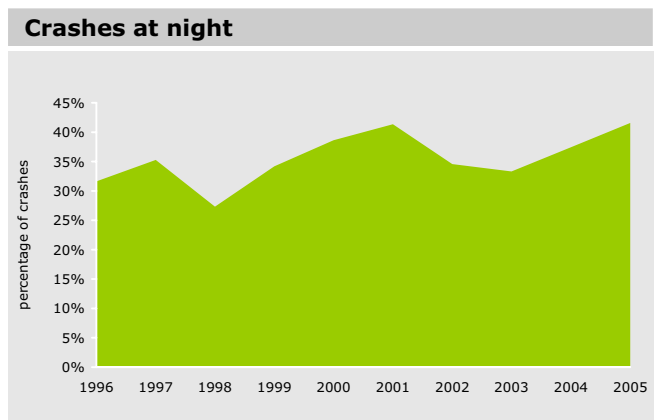
Although most of the traffic travelling through the Far North uses the state highway network, many crashes occurred on roads that are not non-state highways. In 2005 nearly half of the injury crashes (46 percent) were on local authority roads.



Crashes on unsealed roads were well above the average when compared to similar authorities, reflecting the high proportion of unsealed roads in the district.

While crashes at intersections do occur, they are not a dominant crash type in the Far North District compared to other districts.

Crashes at night were about 10 percent higher than average and 13 percent higher when considering crashes on the local authority rural road network.



Saturday is the most common day for crashes to occur in the Far North District. Wednesday afternoons and Saturday afternoons are the most common times and December is the most common month for crashes.

## Reporting crashes

### Crash reporting rate

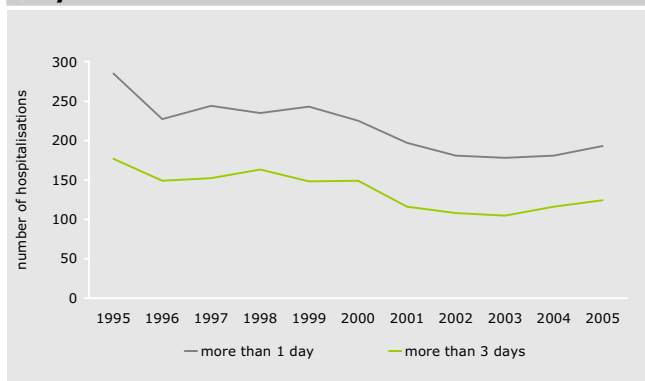
Not all crashes are reported to the Police, not even all the serious ones. The reporting rate measure compares the number of serious casualties reported to hospital with those that are reported by Police. The reporting rate of crashes in Northland has increased from 2001 when it was 56 percent up to 68 percent in 2006. The national rate is now 70 percent.

This means that more information on crashes is now available to use for targeting resources on improving roads, directing enforcement and developing community programmes.

### Hospitalisations

Crashes that result in admission to hospital are being measured. In Northland the hospitalisation rate had been reducing but started to increase again in 2005.

#### Northland crash hospitalisations of over one day



### Crash reduction studies

The Far North District has been conducting crash reduction studies to find and treat the high-risk crash locations on the local road network. Transit New Zealand has been conducting similar crash reduction studies on the state highway network.

The treated sites are being monitored for reductions of crashes and have shown impressive results.

In the Far North, crash numbers have reduced by 48 percent at state highway sites and by 46 percent at local road sites.

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