

# road safety issues

July 2002

The Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA) has prepared this Road Safety Issues Report. It is based on reported crash data and trends for the 1997–2001 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 Southland district.

Road crashes in the Southland district over the five-year period killed 40 people and injured more than 600. There were 680 reported non-injury crashes during the same period.

Many of the graphs in this report show a sharp increase in the number of injury crashes in 2001. This is the result of a significant increase in reporting rates rather than an increase in crashes. In 2000 it was estimated that only 55 percent of injury crashes were reported to the LTSA. After much work that figure has risen to 78 percent for the Southland region as a whole.

The figures for hospital admissions have remained fairly static over the same time frame. The encouraging news is that this confirms the increase in reporting rates is not due to an increase in crashes, and allows more accurate information to be used to identify road safety issues.

The 191 recorded injury crashes in 2001 were the highest number ever recorded in the district. This increase in crash numbers can be attributed to the increase in reporting levels. It does, however, make it difficult to report on trends in this report with any great degree of accuracy.

## Major road safety issues:

Nationally

Speed

Alcohol

Failure to give way

Restraints



## 2001 road toll for Southland district



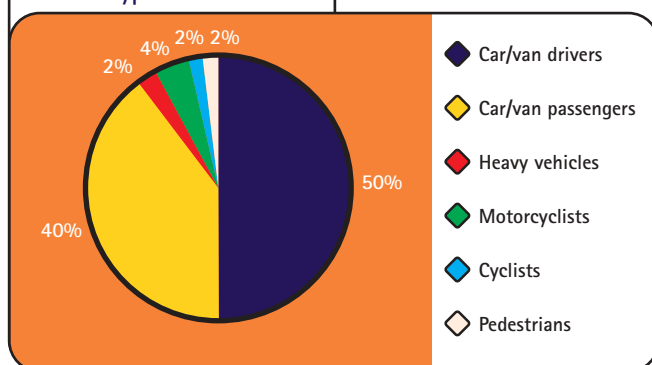
Deaths	10
Serious casualties	74
Minor casualties	229



Fatal crashes	10
Serious injury crashes	54
Minor injury crashes	127
Non-injury crashes	154

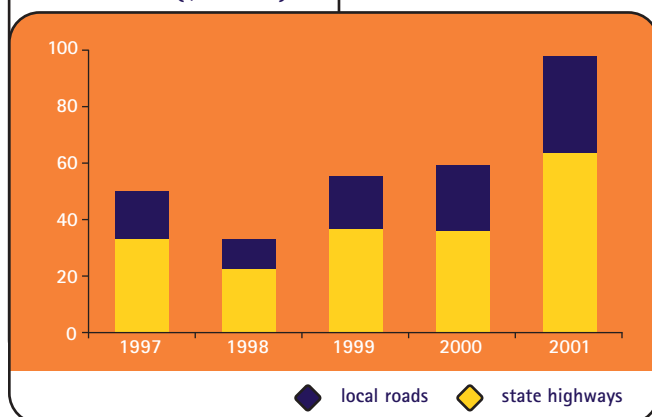
## Road user casualties 1997–2001

User type 1997–2001



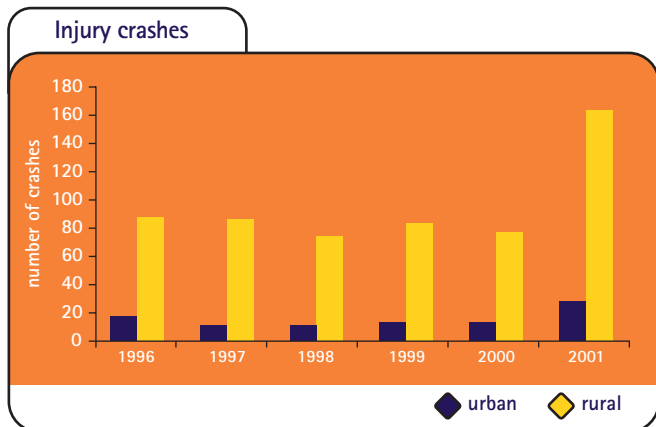
## Estimated social cost of crashes\*

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 2001 prices.

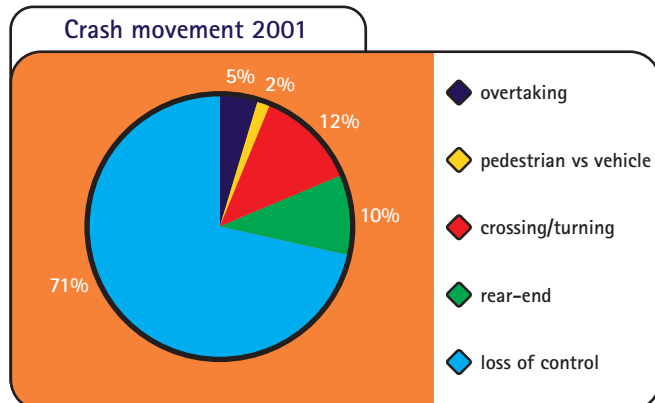
The main issue to note this year is the significant increase in crash reporting rates across the district. While numbers have gone up, it is still possible to look at the proportions of each type of crash and comment on trends.



As in previous years, the majority of injury crashes in Southland took place on rural roads. Higher speed environments are directly linked to the severity of crashes. In urban areas approximately 20 percent of injury crashes resulted in serious injuries. In rural areas the level was close to twice that. The graph above shows the number of injury crashes in both urban and rural areas of the district during the last few years. The increase in crash numbers is clear to see.

## Loss of control

The most common type of crash in Southland was a single vehicle losing control, either on a bend or straight section of road. Over the last five years there were 392 crashes where a vehicle lost control and someone was injured. In fact, 70 percent of all crashes in the district during the last five years involved loss of control, and resulted in 21 deaths and more than 600 other injuries. The following graph shows the types of crash movements that took place last year.



Road conditions do have an effect on this type of crash. In 2001 there were 15 crashes where ice was a factor and double that number on wet roads. The majority, however, took place on dry roads. Alcohol was a factor in less than 20 percent of the total number of loss of control crashes. However, of those crashes that occurred at night, nearly half involved alcohol.

Once a vehicle has lost control the result can be a head-on crash with another vehicle or, as is often the case, a collision with a fixed object. It is this part of the crash that often increases the severity. Over two thirds of rural crashes in Southland in 2001 ended up with a vehicle hitting a roadside object – anything from a fairly forgiving fence through to power poles and trees.

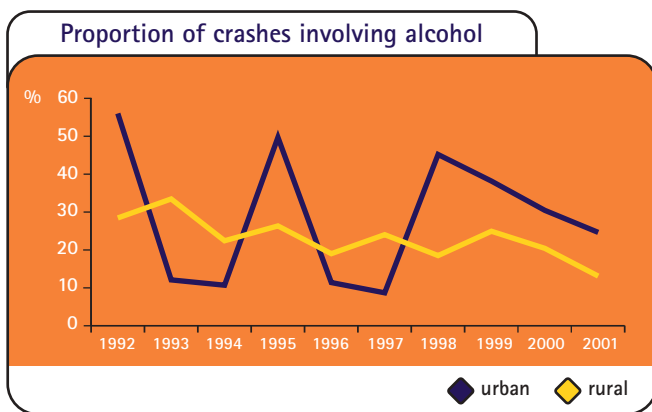
Half of all the drivers involved in this type of crash in the district were under the age of 30. Male drivers were more likely to have been involved than female drivers, but not to the same extent as found in other areas of the country.

## Recommended actions

- 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.
- Support campaigns on adjusting speed for different road and weather conditions and on the need to be fully alert when driving.

## 80 Speed and alcohol

In 2001 the number of speed and alcohol-related crashes increased in both urban and rural areas. As a proportion of all crashes, however, the numbers fell. This points to the increase being a by-product of the increased reporting rates. In urban areas in 2001 a quarter of all injury crashes involved alcohol. This is the third year that the proportion continued to fall from close to 50 percent in 1998. The rate is still above that found nationally, however. In rural areas the trend continued downwards. For the first time in 10 years the level of alcohol involvement fell to below that found nationally which is excellent news. The graph below shows the proportion of alcohol-related crashes in both urban and rural areas during the last 10 years. Note that the urban line jumps around due to the relatively low numbers compared with rural crashes.



The actual number of speed-related crashes in the Southland district remained relatively the same as in 2000. In urban areas the level remained around 30 percent which was significantly higher than that found elsewhere. In rural areas the proportion of crashes involving speed halved in 2001.

When the increased reporting rate is taken into account it appears that both alcohol and speed involvement are starting to fall in Southland.

### Recommended actions

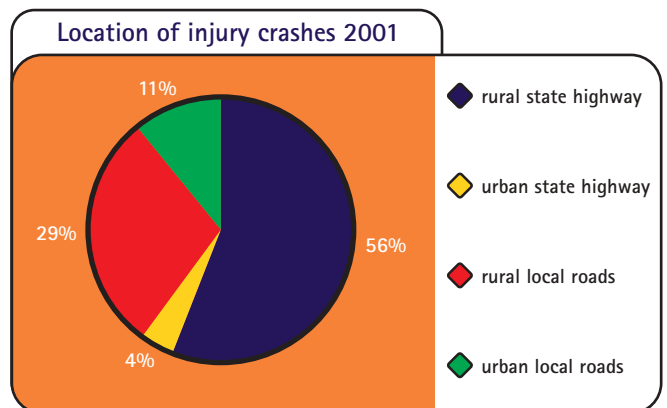
- Continue to support drink-driving strategic enforcement campaigns.
- Continue to support education campaigns aimed at drink-driving.
- Support host responsibility and designated driver programmes.
- Support enforcement campaigns aimed at speed control and education to make people more aware of the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

## Other issues

With a predominantly rural roading network, pedestrians and cyclists do not figure highly in the Southland crash statistics. In 2001, three pedestrians and two cyclists were reported injured.

The pattern of crashes on Southland roads generally followed that of the rest of the country. In the townships and on urban roads crashes occurred mainly at intersections. One point of note last year was that the proportion of urban crashes on wet roads nearly doubled to a 10-year high. This same pattern was not seen on rural roads where the level of wet road crashes has remained stable for some years. The actual number of rural crashes in the wet doubled in 2001, on a par with the reporting rate increase. It was noted that the number of crashes on icy roads in 2001 was more than the five previous years combined, and explains why there were more crashes in July than any other month last year.

Southland district has an extensive road network with several state highways running through it. The graph below shows a breakdown of where the injury crashes took place in 2001. Even with the greatly increased reporting rates previously mentioned, the proportions are roughly the same as seen in 2000.



The majority of injury crashes took place on rural state highways which is perhaps not unexpected due to the increased traffic volumes. Significantly more injury crashes occurred on State Highway 94 than any other major highway through the Southland district last year.

Although Southland has an extensive network of unsealed roads the proportion of crashes on them has been falling steadily and is now half the number of five years ago.

# New Zealand Road Safety Programme

Reducing trauma involves a multi-pronged approach, which includes education, engineering and enforcement. The New Zealand Road Safety Programme (NZRSP) provides funding to educate road users to change their behaviour through projects delivered by Road Safety Co-ordinators and community groups. The programme also funds the New Zealand Police for their targeted enforcement activities and support of community road safety projects. Transfund New Zealand provides funding to local authorities for roading projects through its National Land Transport Programme.

## Community projects

Community funding of road safety projects aims to encourage local involvement and ownership of issues, and target local resources and effort to local risks. Central to community programmes is the need to develop and motivate local partnerships in road safety to help reduce the number of deaths and injuries in the Southland district.

Funding for community projects in Southland from the New Zealand Road Safety Programme for the 2002/2003 year has been confirmed as follows:

Project	Funding	Police hours
Road safety co-ordinator (joint)	\$38,000	
Drive sober campaign	\$12,000	
Driver education	\$4,000	
Minor projects (Southland district)	\$19,000	190

The Southland district will also be involved this year in regionally funded projects to target high risk issues that occur throughout Otago and Southland:

Project	Funding
Regional Tourism	\$20,000
Regional Alcohol	\$30,000
Regional Speed	\$30,000
Regional Fatigue	\$20,000
Regional Industry	\$18,000

## Police enforcement

Police hours for enforcement of traffic issues are also allocated through the New Zealand Road Safety Programme. For the Southland district a further 17,380 hours will be delivered by the New Zealand Police as follows:

Project	Police hours
Strategic – alcohol/drugs, speed, restraints and visible road safety enforcement	14,780
Traffic management	1,920
School road safety education	500
Police community services	180

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