

# 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 number of road deaths and injuries on state highways in Transit New Zealand (TNZ) Region Nine covering the Wellington Region.

The number of crashes reported on state highways in the region increased in 2002 by 9.5 percent to 242 crashes and the casualties increased by almost 13 percent to 362 injuries.

Car drivers and passengers were the principal casualties in the region. Pedestrians and cyclists, however, were over-represented in urban areas and motorcyclists in rural areas.

Motorcyclist casualties continue to decline though there was a slight increase in 2002.

Pedestrian casualties are declining slowly but there was a 50 percent rise in numbers in 2002 to 23 casualties. Cyclist casualties have increased again this year to 17, showing an upward trend.

The most common crash type on TNZ Region Nine's state highways was due to loss of control (38 percent of crashes; 26 percent on bends and 12 percent on straight roads). Rear-end collisions and collisions with obstructions were responsible for 30 percent of crashes and this was above the national average for state highways.

Poor driver skills such as observation, judgement and vehicle handling were major factors in the crash statistics. However, in 14 percent of crashes, road factors were reported as contributing to the crash.

There was also an over-representation of crashes during the months of May to July (the dark and wet months).

Both local and national road safety issues are identified below. The specific issues for the state highways in TNZ Region Nine are considered in detail overleaf.

## Major road safety issues

TNZ Region Nine

Rear-end/obstruction

Pedestrians

Loss of control

Nationally

Speed

Alcohol

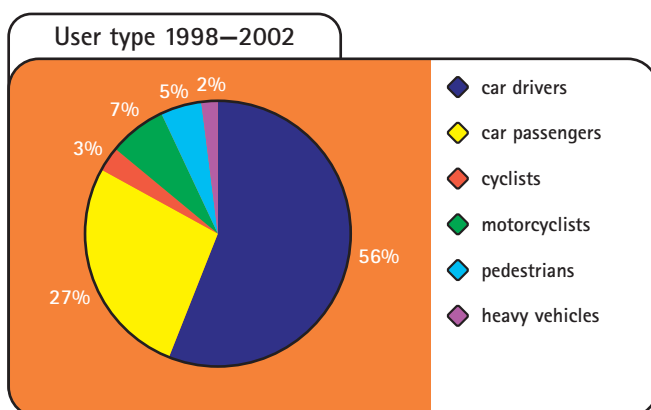
Failure to give way

Restraints

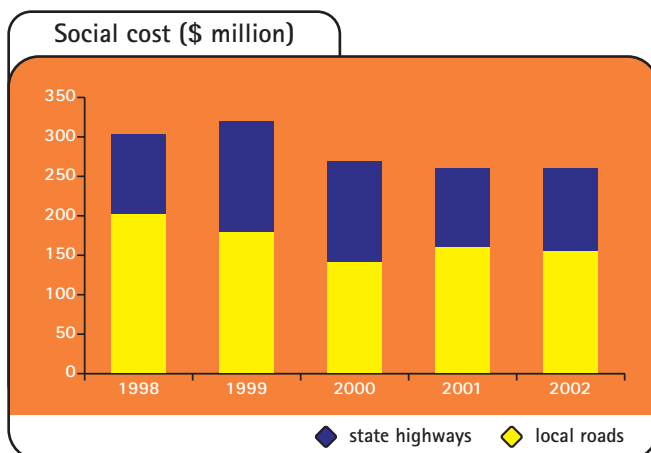
## 2002 road trauma for TNZ Region Nine

Deaths	13
Serious casualties	75
Minor casualties	274
Fatal crashes	11
Serious injury crashes	56
Minor-injury crashes	175
Non-injury crashes	692

## Road casualties 1998–2002

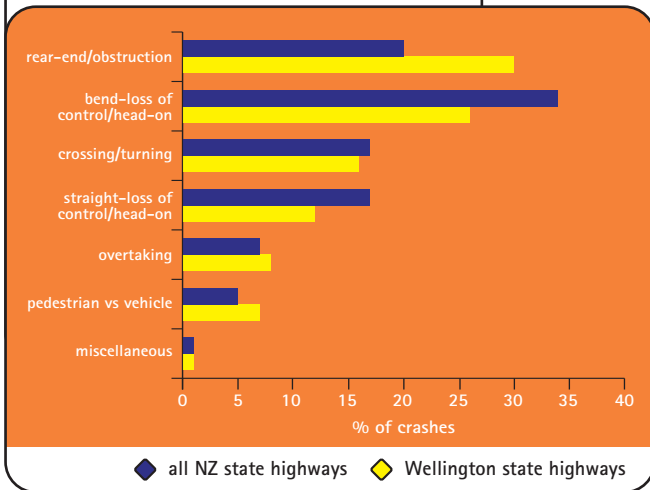


## Estimated social cost of crashes\*



\* 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.

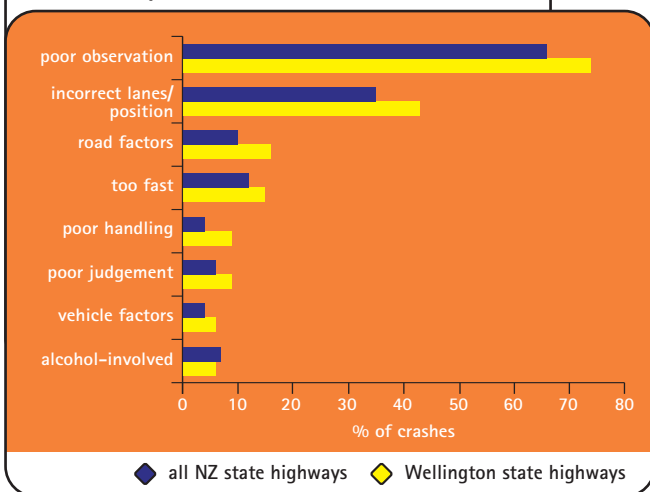
Crash movement types 1998–2002



## Rear-end/obstruction

Rear-end/obstruction crashes were the second most common crash type on state highways in the region after loss of control crashes. They were over-represented as a crash type in the region. These collisions usually involved running into the back of the vehicle ahead that was stopping for a variety of reasons, eg queues, pedestrians, intersections or turning.

Rear-end/obstruction factors 1998–2002



There were two main factors in these crashes, namely poor observation of the traffic around the driver and incorrect positioning on the road.

Five percent of the crashes involved hitting a guard rail and eight percent involved hitting parked or stationary vehicles.

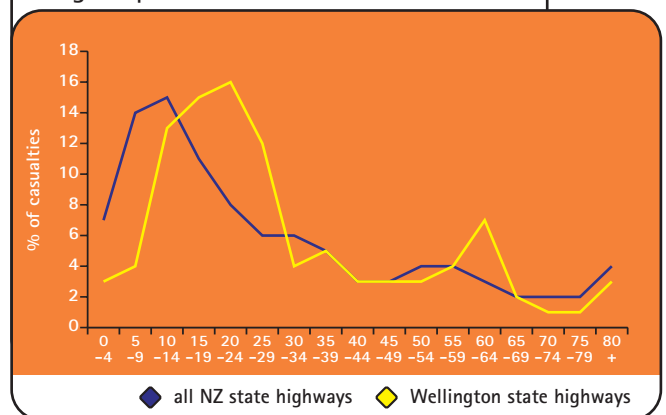
## Recommended actions

- Conduct education programmes that:
  - increase the awareness of the risks of following too closely particularly on arterial routes.
- Support enforcement programmes that:
  - enforce safe following distances at high-risk times
  - enforce signalling and correct lane use.
- Promote engineering programmes that:
  - provide good skid resistant road surfaces on approaches to traffic signals, roundabouts and pedestrian crossings
  - provide good guidance on positioning a vehicle on the road
  - improve sight lines and increase run-off clearances.

## Pedestrians

Crashes involving pedestrians were primarily an urban problem as 85 percent of these occurred in urban zones. Most of these incidents occurred where the state highways traverse towns and city centres.

Age of pedestrian casualties 1998–2002



Pedestrian casualties in the 15 to 29 and 60 to 64 year age groups are above the comparison group levels.

## Recommended actions

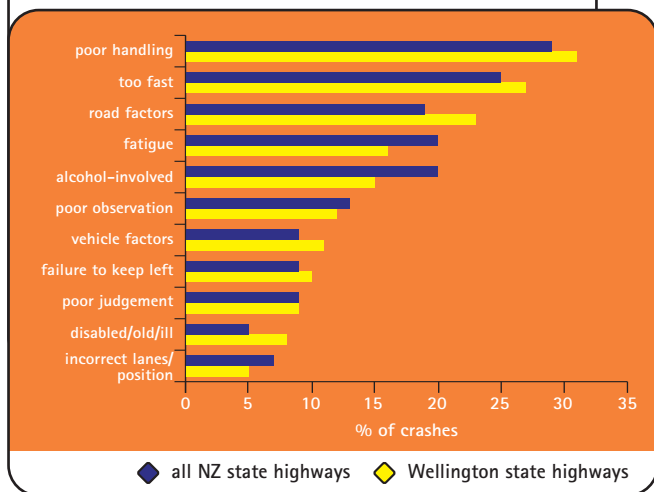
- Conduct education programmes that:
  - target pedestrians in the 15 to 29 and 60 to 64 year age groups with safe walking and crossing techniques on state highways
  - make drivers more aware of pedestrians.
- Carry out enforcement programmes that:
  - enforce legal use of crossing points by pedestrians
  - target inappropriate behaviour by motorists towards pedestrians.
- Design engineering programmes that:
  - progressively upgrade pedestrian crossing facilities
  - prioritise requirements for pedestrians.



# Loss of control

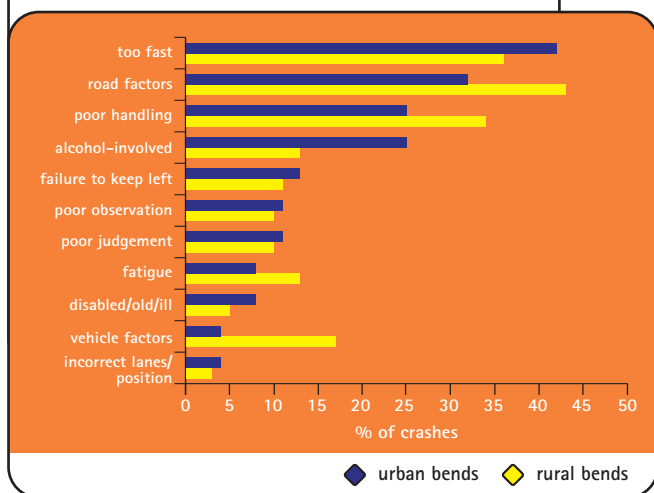
Loss of control on a straight road or on a bend is the most common crash type on the state highways in the region. These crashes represent 38 percent of the region’s crashes (26 percent on bends and 12 percent on the straight).

Factors in loss of control crashes 1998–2002



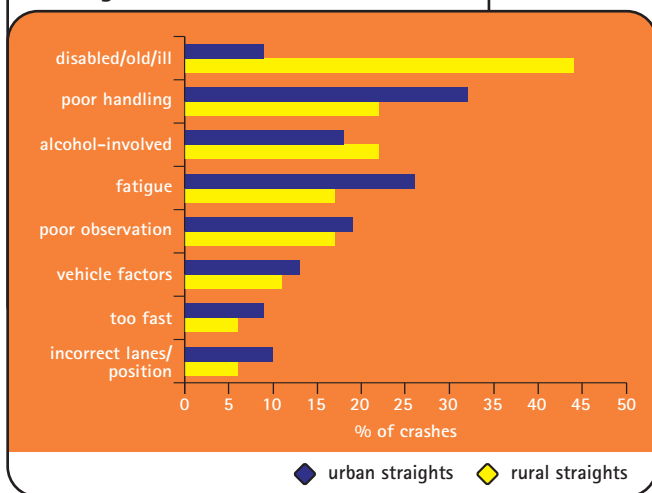
Poor handling, too fast for the conditions, fatigue and alcohol were significant factors in loss of control crashes in the region. Road factors were also above national levels in the region’s crashes.

Factors in loss of control crashes on bends



Crashes in rural areas involving loss of control indicates that drivers are travelling too fast for the conditions, not observing the road conditions and have poor vehicle control. Alcohol was also reported as a factor in loss of control crashes on urban bends.

Factors in loss of control crashes on straight roads



On straight roads fatigue becomes a factor.

## Recommended actions

- Conduct education programmes that:
  - improve cornering skills
  - encourage drivers to adjust their speed for different driving conditions
  - encourage campaigns on the need to be fully alert when driving.
- Support enforcement programmes that:
  - target speed and alcohol
  - target high-risk areas.
- Promote engineering programmes that:
  - conduct crash reduction studies of known black spots and routes
  - conduct safety audit/safety survey of roading factors
  - improve road markings – both edge lines and centre lines
  - ensure advisory signs are appropriate, consistent and in the correct position
  - maintain good road surfaces and drainage.

# 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) 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

Through the Community Road Safety Programme (CRSP) the NZRSP provides funding for community development and community programmes to support road safety and to bring about positive and sustainable changes in community attitudes and behaviours. CRSP funding of community initiatives aims to encourage local involvement and ownership of road safety issues, and to target local resources and effort to local risks. This year's review of the programme initiates a re-focus of effort and funding into community development. This involves working with and within different communities of people to assist them in becoming aware of their own local road safety issues and developing solutions to achieve better road safety outcomes.

Funding for community projects in the Wellington Region from the NZRSP for the 2002/2003 year has been allocated through individual local authorities in the region. These may have outcomes relevant to the state highways and details can be obtained from the relevant local authorities.

## Road policing

The Police expect to deliver 172,590 hours related to road policing on both local and state highways in the Wellington Region as follows:

Project	Police hours
Strategic – alcohol/drugs, speed, restraints and visible road safety enforcement	121,590
Traffic management including crash attendance, incidents, emergencies and events	42,400
School road safety education	6,250
Police community services and projects	2,350

## Where to get more information

For more specific information relating to road crashes on state highways in TNZ Region Nine, please refer to the 1998 to 2002 Road Safety Data Report or the LTSA Crash Analysis System, or contact the people or organisations listed below:

### Contacts

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