

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 number of road deaths and injuries in Wellington.

The number of injury crashes reported in 2001 in Wellington has increased by eight percent on the 2000 figure and has resulted in a 10 percent increase in casualties.

Fatal crashes have not increased, although there were six in total. Serious crashes increased by 30 percent and minor crashes by four percent.

The crash and casualty rates on Wellington roads were lower than those on the roads in similar authorities.

Pedestrian casualties increased in 2001 and were considerably over-represented, contributing to 24 percent of all casualties in Wellington. Pedestrian problems were further emphasised by pedestrians being involved in over 30 percent of the urban crash incidents.

Rear-end and obstruction collisions were the next most common type of crash, particularly in rural areas, where they were above comparable levels for similar authorities.

There was also the expected number of intersection crashes, but at rates less than the levels of similar authorities.

Cyclist casualty numbers increased again in 2001, representing 12 percent of the casualties in the city. This was a higher percentage than similar authorities.

The proportion of loss of control crashes on bends was higher than that for similar authorities.

Major road safety issues:

Wellington

Pedestrians

Cyclists

Loss of control on bends

Rear-end/obstructions

Nationally

Speed

Alcohol

Failure to give way

Restraints



2001 road toll for Wellington

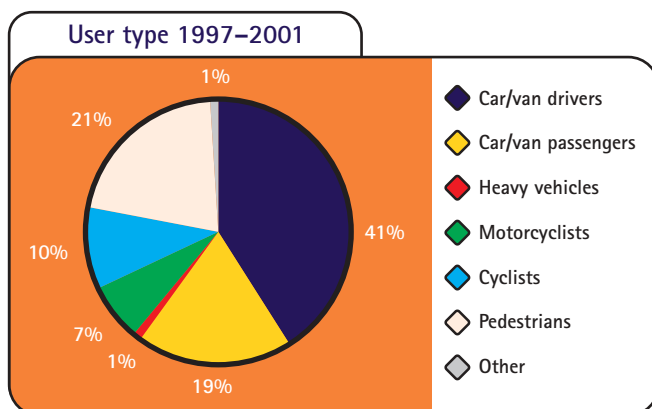


| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Deaths | 6 |
| Serious casualties | 59 |
| Minor casualties | 329 |

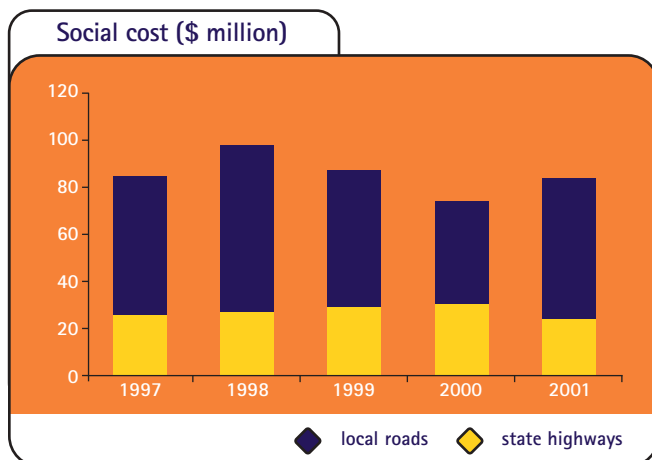


| | |
|------------------------|-------|
| Fatal crashes | 6 |
| Serious injury crashes | 57 |
| Minor injury crashes | 240 |
| Non-injury crashes | 1,019 |

Road user casualties 1997–2001



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 2001 prices.



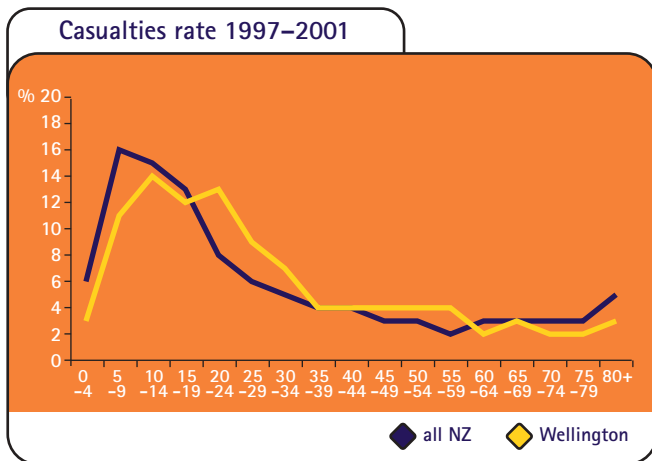
Pedestrians

Pedestrians made up 24 percent of all casualties on urban roads in the city. The numbers increased in 2001 and were still over-represented as a proportion of all casualties when compared with other similar authorities.

The percentage of 5 to 14 year-old pedestrian casualties in Wellington showed the same upward trend as the figures from similar districts and New Zealand as a whole.

Pedestrian casualties remained above both national and similar authority group levels up to age 35 years.

These statistics may be influenced by the large number of pedestrians that come into the city for work and leisure-related activities.



Recommended actions

- Conduct education programmes that:
 - target 15 to 35 year-old pedestrians with safe walking and crossing techniques
 - 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.

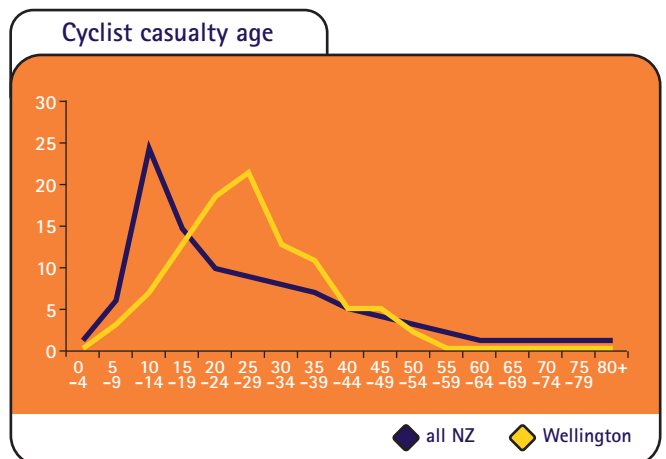


Cyclists

Cyclists make up 12 percent of all casualties in the city. Cyclist casualty numbers increased again in 2001 by 30 percent. As a percentage of all road casualties within the city, they remain over-represented compared with similar authorities and national figures.

The percentage of 5 to 14 year-old cyclist casualties in Wellington showed the same upward trend as similar authorities and national figures. Wellington differed from similar authorities in that this upward trend continued and peaked in the 25 to 29 year age group and continued to stay above the national percentages until after the age of 39 years.

These statistics may reflect the number of cyclists that commute into the city for employment and the increasing popularity of recreational cycling, particularly mountain biking.



Recommended actions

- Devise education programmes that:
 - provide the 20-40 year age group of cyclists with defensive riding techniques
 - encourage and inform cyclists of correct lighting and clothing to make them more visible
 - increase drivers' awareness of cyclists.
- Conduct enforcement programmes that:
 - enforce legal lighting requirements and helmet use by cyclists
 - target inappropriate behaviour by both motorists and cyclists.
- Design engineering programmes that:
 - progressively improve cycle facilities in vehicle shared environments
 - provide shared cycle/pedestrian facilities where appropriate.



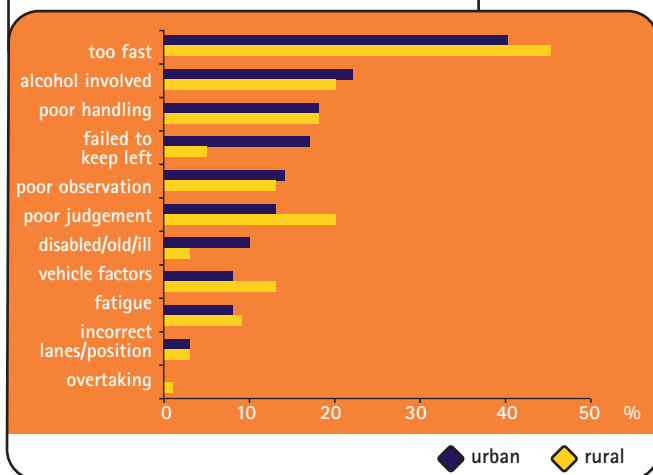
Loss of control on bends

Loss of control crashes on Wellington roads were greater than similar authority group averages. These crashes occurred most frequently on bends due to one of the vehicles not following the correct line through the bend and either running off the road or hitting a vehicle coming the other way, often head on.

Seventy percent of these crashes occurred on urban roads and, while it is noted that this type of crash has been reducing over the last 10-year period, there was a slight increase last year.

The higher incidence of this type of crash may be partly due to the nature of the roads within the city. Hilly, narrow and winding roads can make driving difficult in some parts of the city. Parked vehicles and other obstructions can result in drivers making sudden movements leading to loss of control. Drivers, therefore, need to adjust their speed to be able to stop within their available sight distance.

Loss of control factors 1997–2001



Recommended actions

- Conduct education programmes that assist drivers to:
 - be more aware of the risks of speed
 - identify appropriate speeds for conditions.
- Carry out enforcement programmes that:
 - target enforcement at high-risk times such as peak commuting
 - target drivers travelling too fast for conditions.
- Design engineering programmes that:
 - maintain signs and roadside delineation to an appropriate standard
 - install thresholds and traffic calming in urban areas where warranted
 - install advisory speed signs where required
 - install on-street parking restrictions and safe parking zones
 - encourage the provision of off-street parking.



Rear end/obstructions

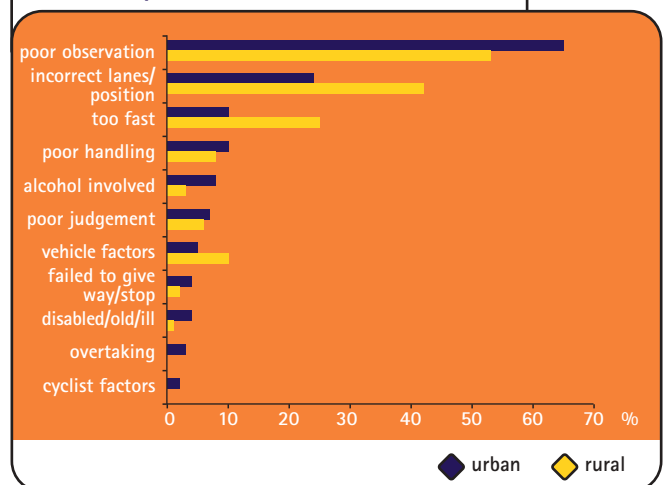
Rear-end collisions or hitting an obstruction were the second most common crash type in Wellington.

Seventy percent of these crashes occurred in urban zones, but only those in the rural zone, principally the state highways, were above the numbers for similar authority levels.

Factors in these crashes were principally poor observation of the traffic ahead associated with incorrect lane or position choices on the road.

The obstructions most often struck were parked or stationary vehicles.

Rear-end/obstruction factors 1997–2001



Recommended actions

- Conduct education programmes that assist drivers to:
 - be more aware of the risks of following too closely, particularly on arterial routes.
- Carry out enforcement programmes that:
 - enforce safe following distances at high-risk times
 - support education campaigns to increase driver alertness.
- Design engineering programmes that:
 - provide good skid resistant road surfaces on approaches to traffic signals, roundabouts and pedestrian crossings
 - provide good guidance as to positioning on the road
 - progressively improve sight lines
 - encourage off-road parking.

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 Roding 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 Wellington.

Funding for community projects in Wellington from the NZRSP for the 2002/2003 year has been confirmed as follows:

| Project | Funding | Police hours |
|---|----------|--------------|
| Road safety co-ordinators | \$76,000 | 0 |
| Love everybody | \$2,000 | 0 |
| Safe with age | \$2,000 | 0 |
| Absolutely positively pedestrian friendly | \$40,000 | 0 |
| Cycling safety | \$15,000 | 0 |
| Intersection | \$5,000 | 0 |
| Theatre and driving youth | \$10,000 | 0 |

Police enforcement

A total of 72,820 hours will be delivered by police as follows:

| Project | Police hours |
|--|--------------|
| Strategic – alcohol/drugs, speed, restraint and visible road safety enforcement | 50,300 |
| Traffic management including crash attendance, incidents, emergencies and events | 20,050 |
| School road safety education | 1,500 |
| Police community services | 970 |

LTSA and the Wellington Council will liaise with the New Zealand Police to ensure risk targeted patrol plans are implemented.

Where to get more information

For more specific information relating to road crashes in Wellington, please refer to the 1997 to 2001 Road Safety Data Report, or the Land Transport Safety Authority Accident Investigation System, or contact the people or organisations listed below:

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