

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 Dunedin.

Road crashes in Dunedin over the five-year period killed 21 people and injured over 1,700. There were nearly 3,500 reported non-injury crashes during the same period.

The graphs in this report show a sharp increase in the number of injury crashes in 2001. This is a result of a significant increase in reporting rates rather than an increase in crashes. In 2000 it was estimated that only 56 percent of injury crashes were reported to the LTSA. After much work that reporting figure has risen to 89 percent for the Otago region.

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 number of injury crashes in 2000 was the lowest it has been for more than 20 years. In 2001 the number increased to the same level it was in the late 1980s. This 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 Dunedin

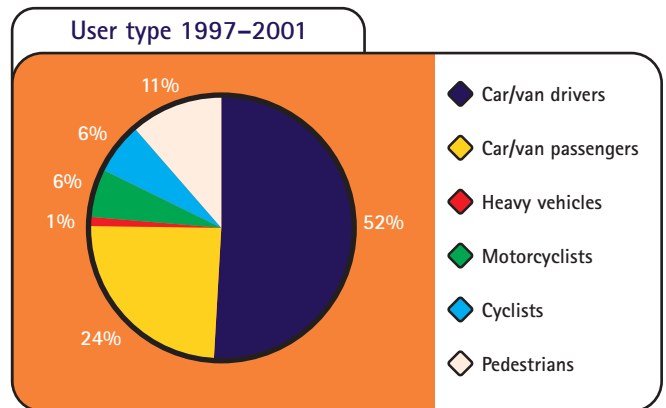


Deaths	4
Serious casualties	129
Minor casualties	477

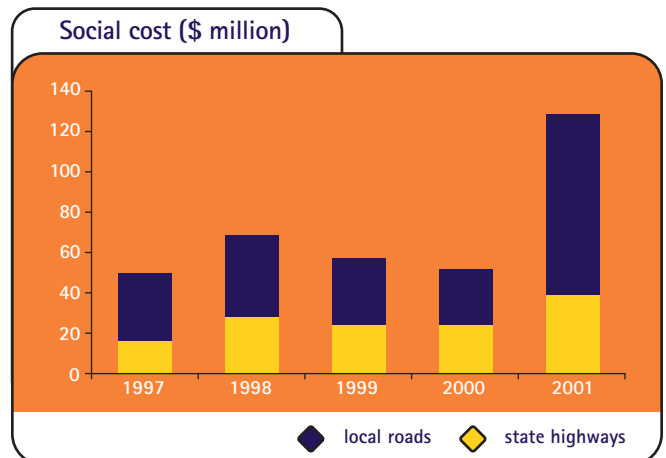


Fatal crashes	4
Serious injury crashes	116
Minor injury crashes	325
Non-injury crashes	801

Road user casualties 1997–2001



Estimated social cost of crashes*



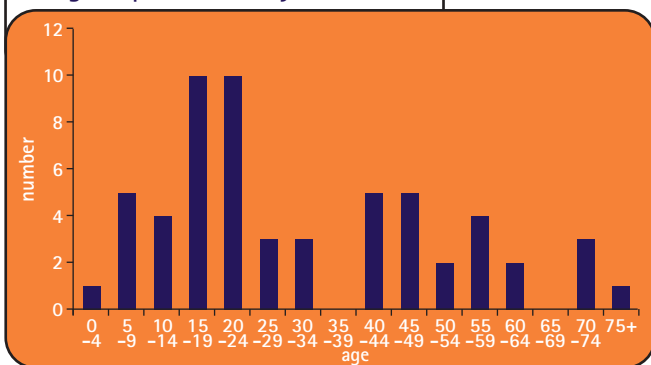
* The estimated social cost includes loss of life or life quality (estimated by the amount New Zealanders are prepared to pay to reduce their risk of fatal or non-fatal injury), loss of output due to injuries, medical and rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, and property damage. These costs are expressed at June 2001 prices.

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

Pedestrians

Pedestrians have always figured strongly in the Dunedin crash statistics. In 2001, 58 pedestrians were injured on Dunedin roads – more than one a week. This is a greater number than in any year since 1992, which was itself a particularly bad year. As a proportion of all road users injured the number fell, but that was more a reflection of the improved reporting rates. There were still more pedestrians injured as a proportion of all road users in Dunedin than across New Zealand as a whole.

Age of pedestrians injured 2001



The above chart shows the age of pedestrians injured in Dunedin in 2001. Nationally, the peak age group for pedestrian injuries was five to nine years old, followed closely by the 10 to 14 year-old group. The 20 to 24 year-old age group is normally half the level of the younger groups. However, due to the large student population in the city the difference shown in the graph is perhaps not unexpected. The number of injured pedestrians was split exactly 50/50 between male and female.

During the last five years 196 pedestrians were injured in Dunedin, one quarter of these at traffic signals. The majority of the crashes were the fault of a car driver failing to give way to a pedestrian who was crossing with a green pedestrian signal, but there were also several caused by pedestrians crossing against the signals.

Nearly a third of all pedestrian crashes in Dunedin occurred during the hours of darkness. Friday and Saturday were the most common days, with less than half as many crashes occurring on a Sunday.

Recommended actions

- Support initiatives and education campaigns that help improve awareness of pedestrians.
- Initiate and support reinforcement of the need for pedestrians to be careful when entering traffic lanes.
- Consider providing safer crossing opportunities in areas of greatest need.

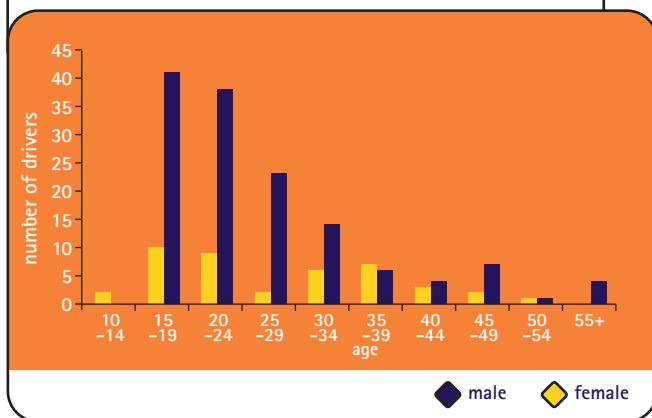


Alcohol

In urban areas of Dunedin the number of alcohol-related injury crashes in 2001 was nearly three times that of 2000. With 30 crashes reported, the total was the highest since 1995. There was also a slight rise in alcohol-related crashes in rural areas. Nearly 10 percent of injury crashes in urban areas of Dunedin last year involved somebody who was under the influence of alcohol. With better reporting rates we can now see the extent of drink-driving in the city.

In 2001, one person died and nearly 60 were injured in crashes where alcohol played a part. During the last five years that figure rose to over 200. In Dunedin these crashes often involved young males. The graph below shows the age and sex of all drivers who were involved in an injury crash during the last five years and who were found to be affected by alcohol.

Drivers in alcohol-related crashes 1997–2001



The graph speaks for itself. Nearly one quarter of all alcohol-related injury crashes during the last five years were caused by a male driver under the age of 20.

Recommended actions

- Continue to support drink-driving strategic enforcement campaigns including use of the Stop Bus.
- Continue to support education campaigns aimed at drink-driving.
- Support host responsibility and designated driver programmes.

80 Speed

In 2001 the number of speed-related injury crashes rose from 23 to 60. This increase was on a par with the increase in reporting rates seen across the region. As a proportion of all crashes the figure was much the same as the national level – approximately 10 percent in urban areas and 20 percent in rural areas. This is a much lower level than was seen in the 1990s.

Road factors do play a part in the number of speed-related crashes and Dunedin occasionally suffers from icy roads in winter. However, weather and road conditions were not a factor in the majority of these crashes.

In the last five years seven people were killed, 70 were seriously injured and 232 suffered minor injuries in speed-related crashes.

Recommended actions

- Support enforcement campaigns aimed at speed control and education to make people more aware of the consequences of excessive speed.
- Support education and publicity campaigns on adjusting speed for different road and weather conditions and on the need to be fully alert when driving.
- Investigate black spots and routes where loss of control accidents are occurring.

Other issues

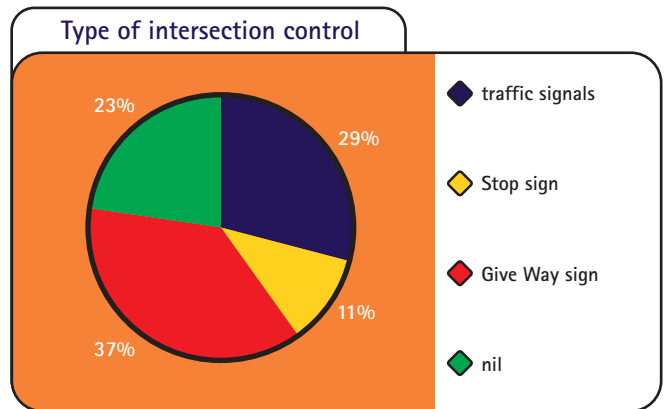
Injuries suffered by the second group of vulnerable road users, cyclists, also showed an increase in 2001. The number of cyclists hurt was nearly double the previous year, up from 16 to 31. As with pedestrians, the age range most commonly involved in these crashes was the 15 to 25 year-old group.

In 2001 these crashes were generally on the busier roads in the city. There were five on the one-way system and three each on George Street and Macandrew Road. Most of the crashes occurred during daylight hours on dry roads. Driver or rider error was the main cause, with the most common reason being the failure of one party to see the other.

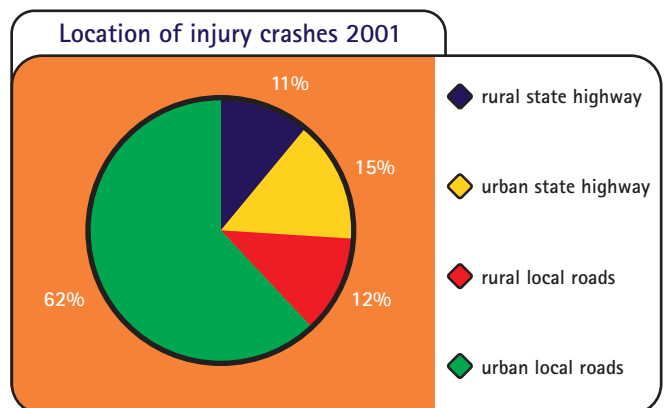
In common with all large urban centres, the majority of crashes occurred at intersections. In 2001 there were over 50 intersections with three or more reported injury crashes. The five intersections with the most crashes in the city, including non-injuries, were:

		Number
King Edward Street	Hillside Road	10
George Street	St Andrew Street	9
Hillside Road	Burns Street	8
Rattray Street	Princes Street	8
Cumberland Street	Albany Street	8

All but one of those intersections is controlled by traffic signals, which should theoretically be reducing the number of crashes. The majority of intersection crashes, however, occurred at those controlled by Give Way signs. The graph below shows the type of intersection control at those sites where injury crashes occurred in 2001.



Three quarters of all injury crashes in Dunedin last year occurred on local roads rather than on state highways. The following graph shows the proportion of crashes that happened on both classes of roads in urban and rural areas. The proportions are very much the same as in the previous year, which confirms that the increased reporting rates occurred across all classes of road.



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 Dunedin.

Funding for community projects in Dunedin 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	\$38,000	
Rural driving	\$15,000	50
Alcohol	\$12,000	80
Urban road users	\$16,000	50
Minor projects	\$8,000	20

Dunedin 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 Dunedin city area, a further 55,400 hours will be delivered by the New Zealand Police as follows:

Project	Police hours
Strategic – alcohol/drugs, speed, restraints and visible road safety enforcement	43,000
Traffic management	7,170
School road safety education	3,400
Police community services	1,830

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