

# 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 Central Otago district.

Road crashes in Central Otago over the five-year period killed 13 people and injured nearly 350. There were 330 reported non-injury crashes over 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 56 percent of injury crashes were reported to the LTSA. After much work that reporting figure has risen to 89 percent for Otago 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 68 recorded injury crashes in 2001 were the highest number in the district for over 20 years. 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 Central Otago district

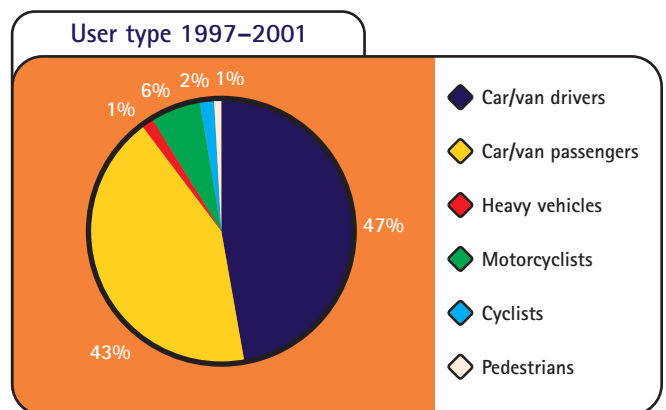


Deaths	1
Serious casualties	22
Minor casualties	83

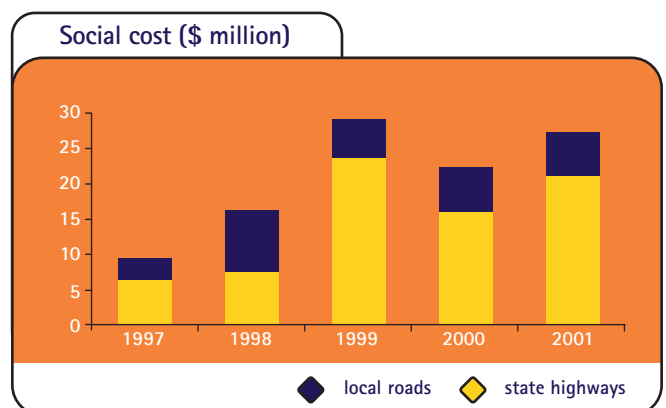


Fatal crashes	1
Serious injury crashes	20
Minor injury crashes	47
Non-injury crashes	65

## Road user casualties 1997–2001

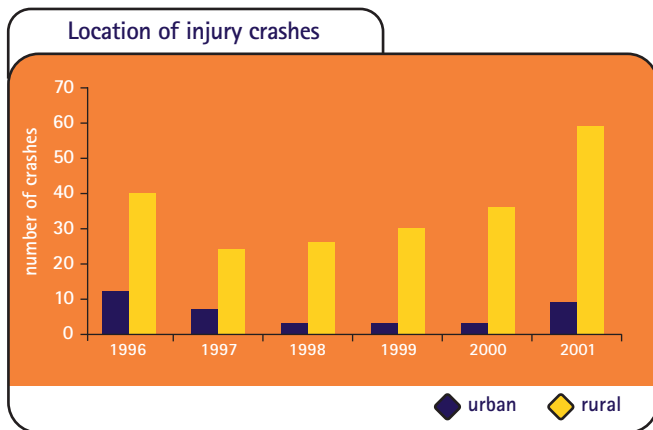


## Estimated social cost of crashes\*



\* 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 district. While numbers have increased, it is still possible to look at the proportions of each type of crash and comment on trends.

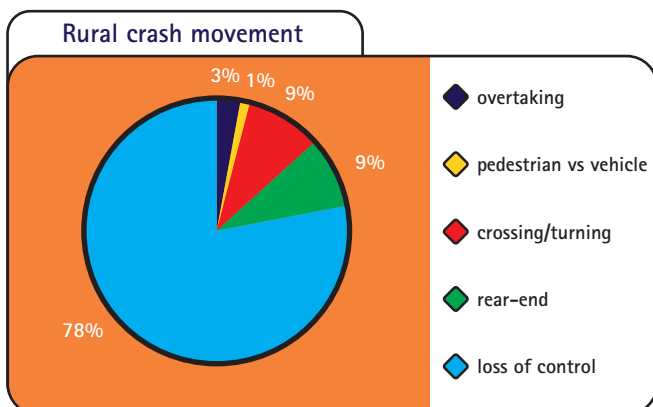


High speed environments are directly linked to the severity of crashes. In urban areas approximately 10 percent of injury crashes resulted in serious injuries. In rural areas the level was three times that amount. As in previous years, around nine out of 10 crashes in Central Otago took place on rural roads.

The graph above shows the number of injury crashes in both urban and rural areas of the district during the last few years. What appears to be a rising trend is more pronounced with the increased reporting rate.

## Loss of control

The most common type of crash in Central Otago is a single vehicle losing control, either on a bend or straight section of road. Over the last five years there have been 136 crashes where a vehicle lost control and someone was injured. In fact, three quarters of all crashes in the district during the last five years involved loss of control and resulted in eight deaths and more than 220 other injuries.



Road conditions can have an effect on loss of control crashes. While the majority last year happened on dry roads, one third occurred in either wet or icy conditions. Alcohol was a factor in 20 percent of all loss of control crashes – this figure rose to 50 percent for the crashes that happened during night-time hours. Speed was thought to be a factor in at least one third of all loss of control crashes over the last five years.

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 Central Otago in 2001 resulted in a vehicle hitting a roadside object – anything from a fairly forgiving fence through to power poles and trees.

Male drivers were nearly three times as likely to be the driver in a loss of control crash than a female. Age was another factor, with half of all drivers being under the age of 30.

## 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.

## Speed and alcohol

In 2001 there were no crashes in urban areas of the district involving speed or alcohol, for the first time in over 10 years. In rural areas 10 percent of all crashes last year involved a driver or pedestrian who was under the influence of alcohol. This is the lowest rate of alcohol-related crashes seen in the district for some time.

The number of speed-related crashes more than doubled compared with the preceding year. While the increased reporting rate may have some bearing on that, as a proportion of all rural crashes the number also increased. Nine out of 10 of the speed-related crashes happened on the state highway network, with the majority being on State Highway 8. While inclement weather does affect the road surface in Central Otago, especially during the winter months, most of the speed-related crashes in the district over the last five years have occurred in good driving conditions on dry roads during daylight hours.

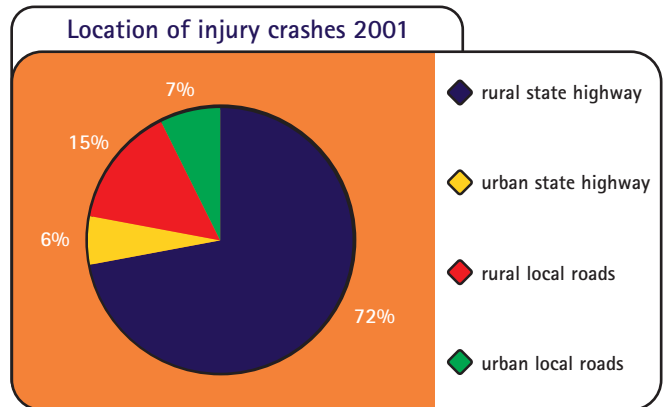
## Recommended actions

- 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

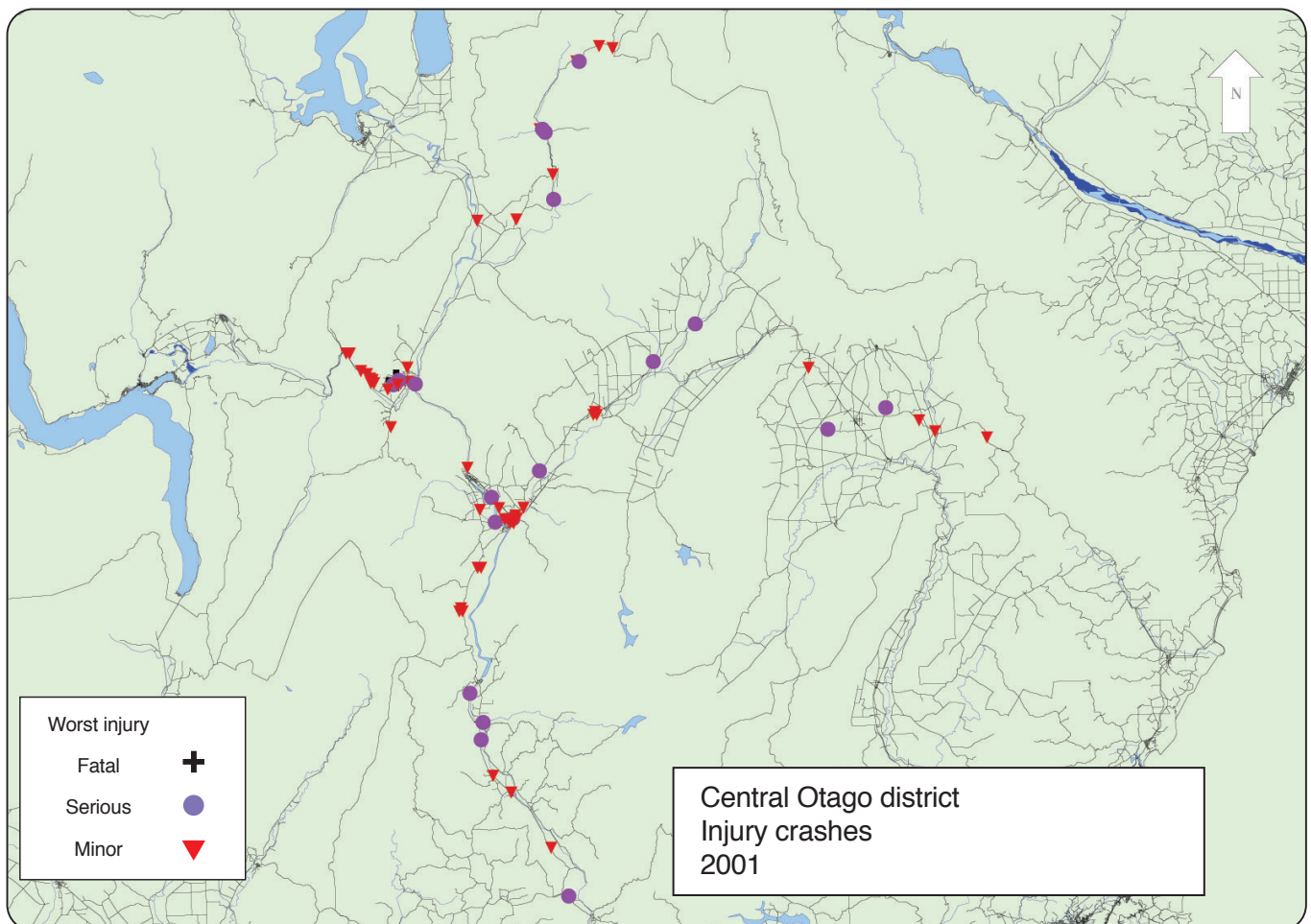
With a predominantly rural road network, pedestrians and cyclists do not feature highly in the crash statistics for Central Otago. In 2001, one pedestrian and two cyclists were reported injured.

In 2001, road conditions played more of a part in crashes than usual. During the last five years around 10 percent of all the crashes in the district occurred in icy conditions. That figure jumped to 20 percent in 2001 and in fact there were more crashes due to the road being icy than being wet. Even so, January was the most common month for a crash in the district, followed by the winter months. Nationally more crashes happened on a Friday than any other day of the week. This statistic was even more pronounced in Central Otago.



The graph above shows a breakdown of the number of crashes that occurred on local roads and state highways in 2001. As outlined earlier, a large number of these took place on State Highway 8 which is not unexpected considering its length.

The map below shows the location of all injury crashes in the district last year.



# 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 Central Otago.

Funding for community projects in Central Otago 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	
Road users	\$9,000	
CAAP (joint)	\$14,500	
Minor projects	\$3,500	

The Central Otago 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 Central Otago District area, a further 8,850 hours will be delivered by the New Zealand Police as follows:

Project	Police hours
Strategic – alcohol/drugs, speed, restraints and visible road safety enforcement	7,260
Traffic management	850
School road safety education	440
Police community services	300

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