

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 Clutha district.

Road crashes in Clutha during the five-year period 1997–2001 killed 25 people and injured more than 500. There were more than 500 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 56 percent of injury crashes were reported to the LTSA in Otago. After much work that reporting figure has risen to 89 percent.

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 reported injury crashes in 2001 was double the previous year. 2001 was the first year where the number of injury crashes in the district ran to three figures. This increase 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 Clutha district



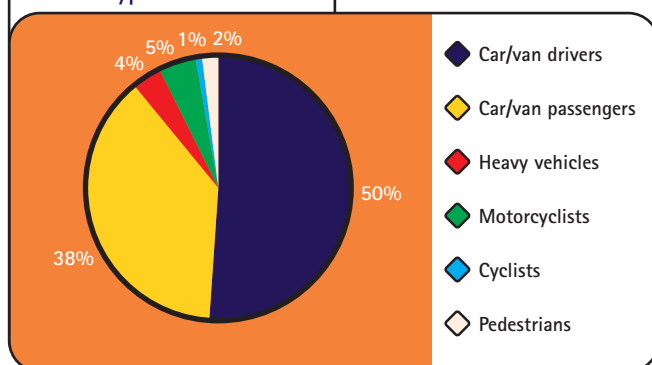
Deaths	6
Serious casualties	33
Minor casualties	119



Fatal crashes	5
Serious injury crashes	27
Minor injury crashes	70
Non-injury crashes	85

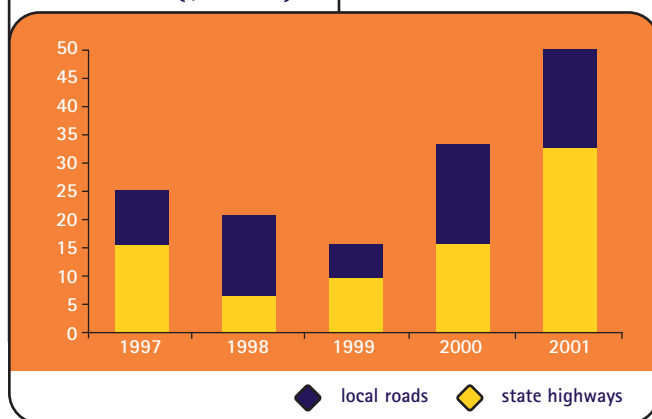
Road user casualties 1997–2001

User type 1997–2001



Estimated social cost of crashes*

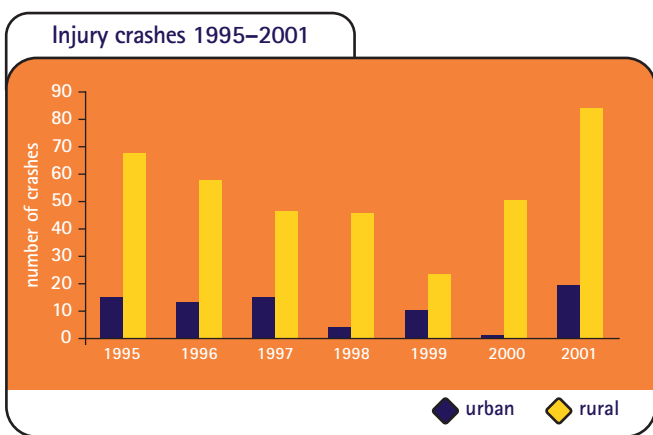
Social cost (\$ million)



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

In 2000 there was only one injury crash on urban roads within the whole of the Clutha district. In 2001 there were 19 crashes on urban roads resulting in 29 people being injured. The majority of crashes, including the more severe ones, continue to happen in the higher speed rural environment. The graph below shows the proportion of injury crashes that have occurred on urban and rural roads during each of the last seven years.



Loss of control

As in previous years, a single vehicle losing control on a bend or straight section of road was the most common type of crash in the district. This accounted for four out of every five rural crashes in 2001. While 15 percent occurred in icy conditions and 30 percent in the wet, the majority of these crashes took place in good driving conditions on dry roads during daylight hours.

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. Nearly three quarters of all rural crashes in the Clutha district in 2001 resulted in a vehicle hitting a roadside object – anything from a fairly forgiving fence through to power poles and trees.



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.

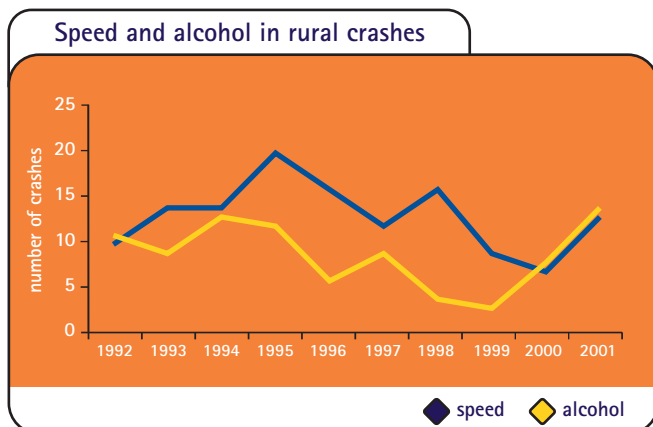


Speed and alcohol

Speed and alcohol continue to be two of the major issues nationally. However, as was the case in 2000, these types of crashes were not as prevalent in the Clutha district. The number of crashes in rural areas where speed was identified as a contributing factor continued to remain below the level found elsewhere in New Zealand. While the actual number of speed-related injury crashes increased from seven to 13, there was very little change when looking at the figures as a proportion of all crashes. Around 15 percent of rural crashes involved speed in 2001. Back in 1999 that figure was closer to 40 percent.

There was also an increase in crashes where alcohol was involved. Fifteen percent of urban crashes last year involved alcohol, which is on a par with national levels. In rural areas the proportion was slightly more than that and was just above the national level. In 2001 there were more alcohol-related injury crashes in rural areas than at any time in the previous 10 years.

The graph below shows the number of speed- and alcohol-related crashes over the last 10 years on rural roads in the Clutha district.



Recommended actions

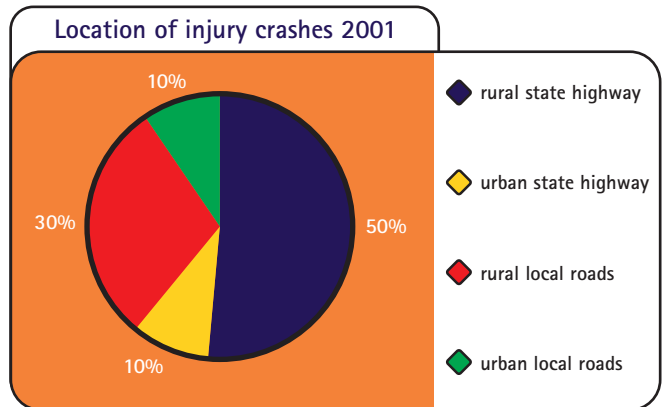
- Continue to support drink-driving strategic enforcement campaigns.
- Continue to support education campaigns aimed at drink-driving.
- Support host responsibility and designated driver programmes.
- Support enforcement campaigns aimed at speed control and education to make people more aware of the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

Other issues

The age of people injured in the district generally follows the same pattern as the rest of the country. While people under 20 years old are the most common age group to be injured nationally, in Clutha the difference in involvement between these and older drivers is much more pronounced.

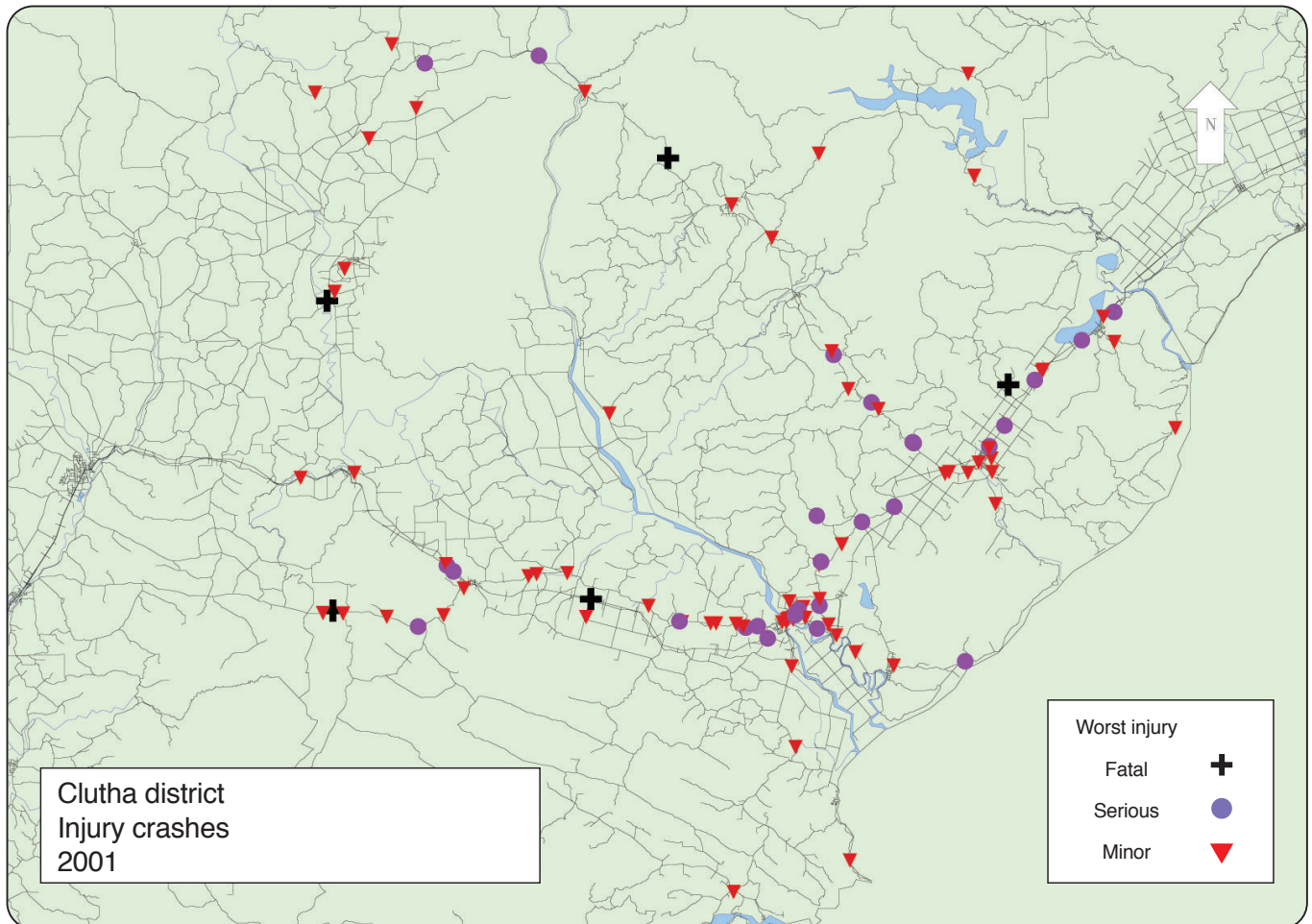
In 2001, for the second year in succession, no cyclists were injured in the district. Motorcyclist casualties were also at a 10-year low. Five pedestrians were injured, however, equalling the 1995 high.

Clutha District Council has an extensive road network with several state highways running through it. The following graph shows a breakdown of where crashes occurred during 2001.



As can be seen on the graph, half of all injury crashes last year took place on rural state highways. Another 30 percent were on rural local roads. Just over one third of the rural crashes last year occurred on State Highway 1 with the same number happening on local roads. The rest were split between State Highways 8 and 93 and a couple on State Highway 90.

The map below shows the location and severity of all crashes that occurred in the Clutha district in 2001.



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 Clutha district.

Funding for community projects in Clutha 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	60
CAAP (joint)	\$14,500	
Minor projects	\$2,500	

The Clutha 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 Clutha district a further 7,600 hours will be delivered by police as follows:

Project	Police hours
Strategic-alcohol/drugs, speed, restraints and visible road safety enforcement	6,470
Traffic management	780
School road safety education	300
Police community services	100

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