

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 Gore district.

One person died and more than 200 were injured in road crashes in Gore over the five-year period. There were 320 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 55 percent of injury crashes were reported to the LTSA. After much work that reporting figure has risen to 78 percent for the Southland 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 45 recorded injury crashes in 2001 was the highest number in the district for 15 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 Gore district

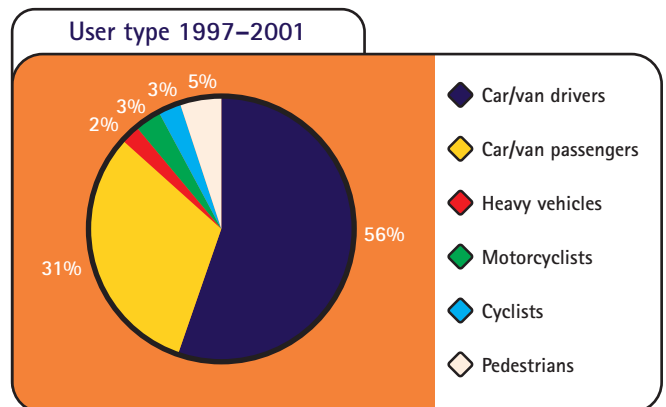


Deaths	0
Serious casualties	11
Minor casualties	55

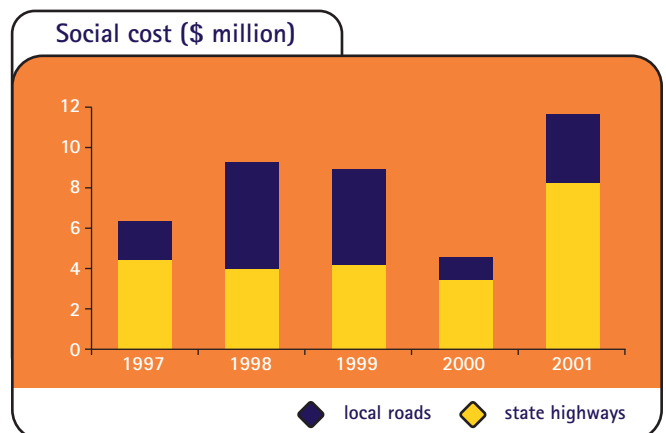


Fatal crashes	0
Serious injury crashes	8
Minor injury crashes	37
Non-injury crashes	65

Road user casualties 1997–2001

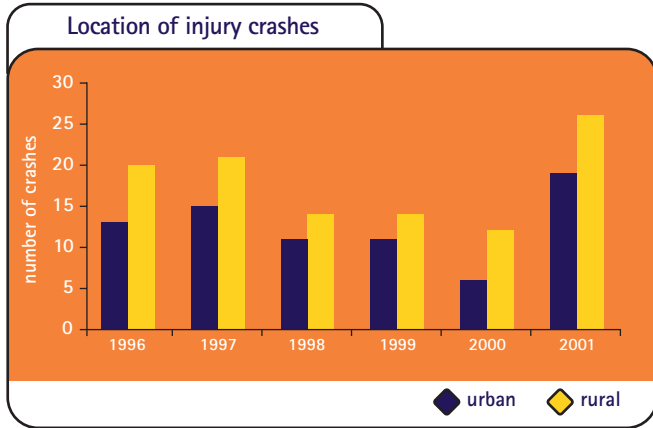


Estimated social cost of crashes*



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



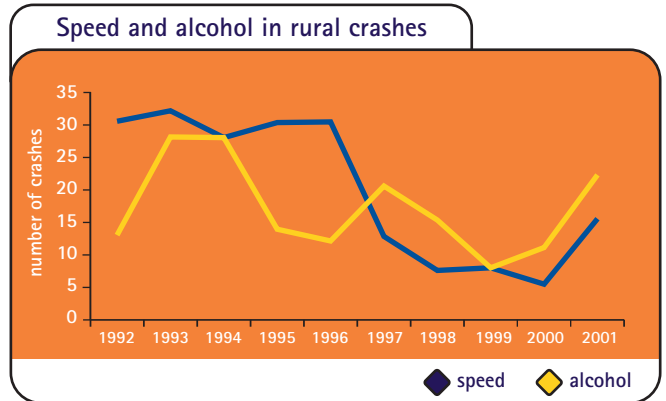
The graph above shows the increase in reported crash numbers in both urban and rural areas of Gore district.

80 Speed and alcohol

There were five times as many alcohol-related crashes in the district in 2001 than the year before. Although an increased reporting rate may account for a small proportion of these, it would not be enough to increase the numbers to what is the highest level seen since 1994. Twenty percent of all injury crashes in Gore in 2001 had alcohol as a factor. All but one of the drivers involved were male and, of these, all but one were under the age of 27.

The proportion of crashes involving alcohol was higher in Gore last year than in comparable districts and higher than in New Zealand as a whole.

The proportion of speed-related crashes also rose in 2001. In rural areas the proportion of injury crashes that had speed as a causal factor more than doubled, from less than 10 percent in each of the preceding four years to over 20 percent last year. The following graph shows how both speed- and alcohol-related crashes increased last year after declining from highs in the early 1990s.

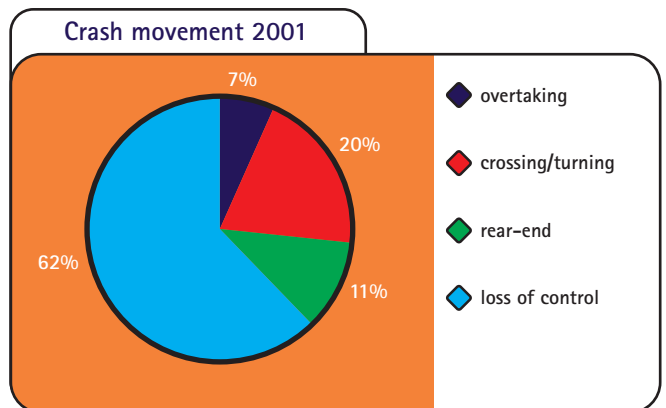


Recommended actions

- 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.

General issues

The graph below shows the breakdown of crash movement types for 2001. For the first time in 10 years there were no pedestrians injured in the district. One cyclist was injured during the year, which proportionally is less than found elsewhere in the country.



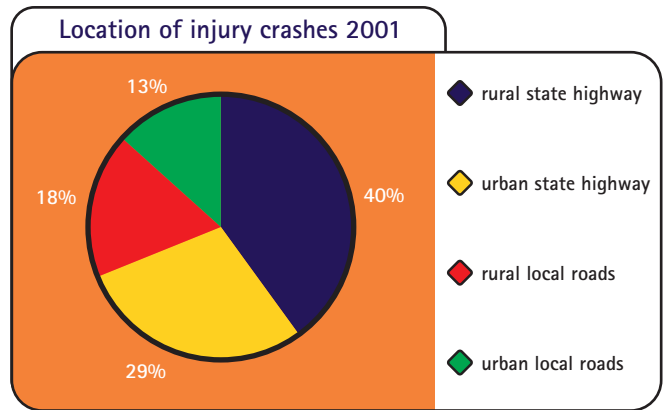
As is normally expected, the majority of crashes in urban areas of the district were at intersections, while in rural areas a single vehicle losing control was the most common type of crash. Due to the speeds involved, a rural crash is more likely to result in serious injury than an urban crash. In Gore, 10 percent of urban injury crashes in 2001 resulted in serious injuries. In rural areas the figure was closer to 25 percent.

Nearly half of all crashes in the district last year involved a vehicle losing control on a rural road. These resulted in 27 people being injured. Five of those crashes were on State Highway 1 and five on the Old Coach Road. The remainder were spread throughout the district. Two thirds of the crashes occurred at night, half of those were alcohol-related.

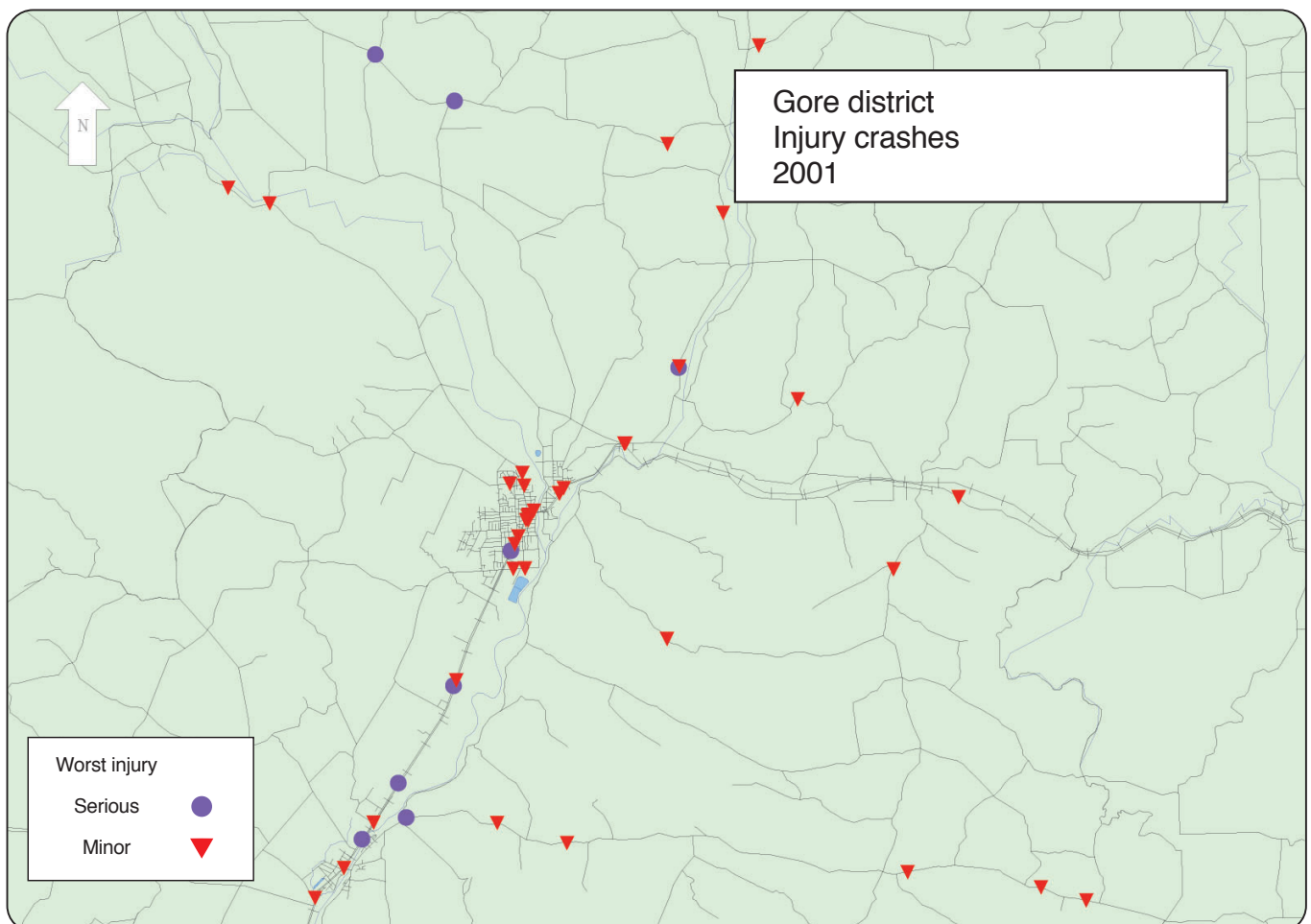
Once a vehicle has lost control the result can be a head-on crash with another vehicle or, as is often the case, a collision with a fixed object. It is this part of the crash that often increases the severity. Over two thirds of rural crashes in 2001 resulted in a vehicle hitting a roadside object, anything from a fairly forgiving fence through to powerpoles and trees.

Road conditions can have an effect on loss of control crashes. While the majority happened on dry roads, one third occurred in either wet or icy conditions. This is on a par with the level found throughout the country for this type of crash. The number of crashes at night, however, was significantly higher in Gore than anywhere else. Half of all the rural crashes last year occurred in the dark and that figure was even higher in urban areas. This increase is quite likely to be linked to the increase in alcohol involvement.

The highest volumes of traffic are obviously on the state highways. The graph below shows the proportion of crashes that occurred on both those and local roads last year.



The map below shows the location of all injury crashes within the district in 2001. The majority of minor injury crashes were within Gore itself, while all but one of the serious injury crashes occurred on rural roads.



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 injuries in the Gore district.

Funding for community projects in Gore 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	
Minor projects (Southland region)	\$19,000	190

Gore 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 Gore district a further 6,830 hours will be delivered by the New Zealand Police as follows:

Project	Police hours
Strategic – alcohol/drugs, speed, restraints and visible road safety enforcement	5,640
Traffic management	830
School road safety education	290
Police community services	70

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