

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 Queenstown Lakes district.

Road crashes in the Queenstown Lakes district over the five-year period killed 21 people and injured over 400. There were over 800 reported non-injury crashes over the same period.

Across most of the Otago region the number of crashes in 2001 rose sharply on previous years. In the region as a whole the number of injury crashes went from 370 in 2000 to 754 last year. This was the result of a significant increase in reporting rates rather than an increase in crashes. By comparing hospital admissions it was estimated that in 2000 only 56 percent of injury crashes were reported to the LTSA. After much work that reporting figure has risen to 89 percent for Otago.

Although the Queenstown Lakes district does not show the same increase in crash numbers as other districts, it is quite possible that there has been an increase in reporting rates here as well. The 67 recorded injury crashes in 2001 continued the climb from a low of 45 in 1997.

Major road safety issues:

Nationally

Speed

Alcohol

Failure to give way

Restraints



2001 road toll for Queenstown Lakes district



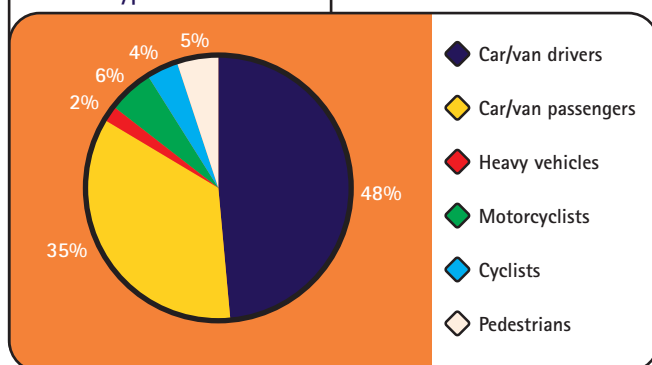
Deaths	5
Serious casualties	26
Minor casualties	66



Fatal crashes	4
Serious injury crashes	22
Minor injury crashes	41
Non-injury crashes	192

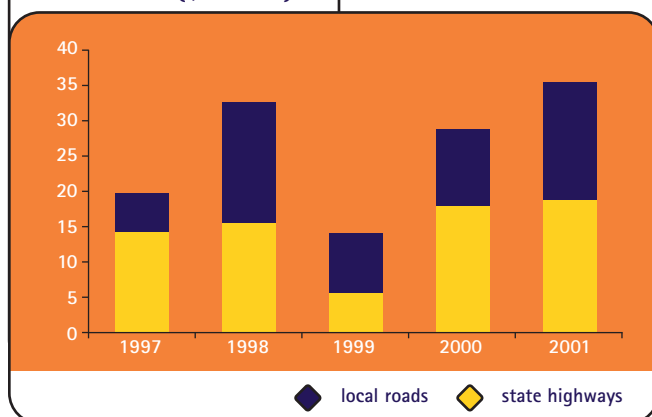
Road user casualties 1997–2001

User type 1997–2001



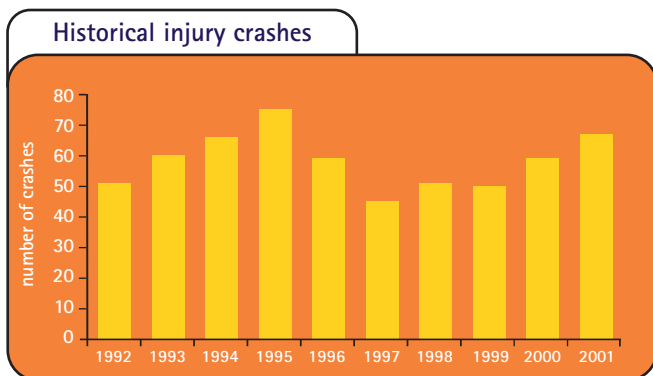
Estimated social cost of crashes*

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.

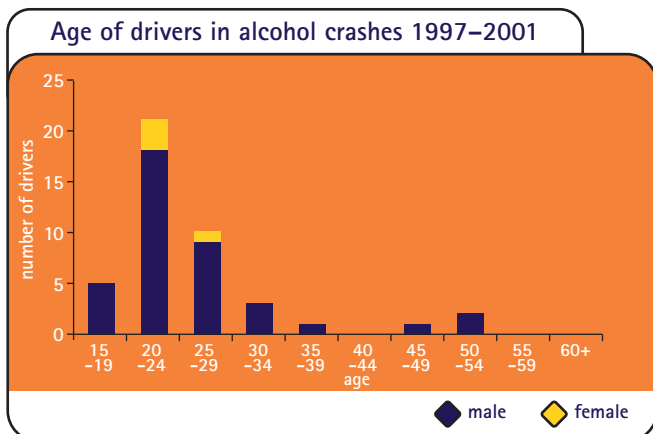
In the early 1990s there were significantly more crashes in the district per head of population than elsewhere in New Zealand. That figure declined quite sharply between 1995 and 1997 but is now creeping up again. The graph below shows how the number of injury crashes has continued to climb from a low five years ago.



Over the last 20 years 1995 had the highest number of injury crashes in the district – 2001 was second highest.

80 Speed and alcohol

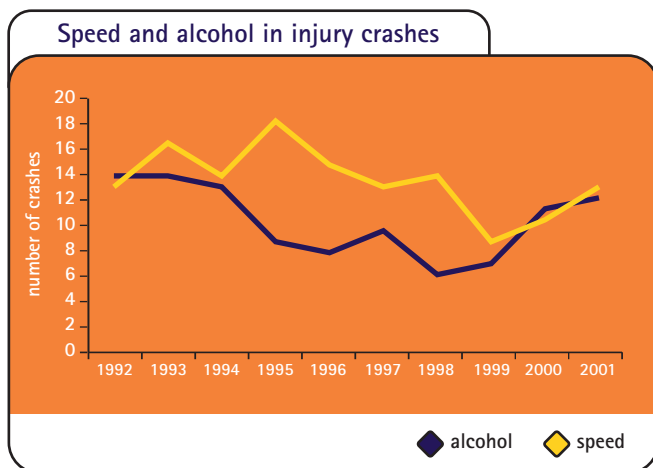
Alcohol remains one of the major national road safety issues and continues to be a problem in Queenstown. There were more alcohol-related crashes in 2001 than in any year since 1994. Although the numbers were fairly low, it appears that the trend is going up rather than coming down. In urban areas last year one in five of all injury crashes involved alcohol. In rural areas it was slightly less. Half of the fatalities in 2001 were alcohol-related. Over the last five years, one third of the people who died on the roads in Queenstown Lakes district died in crashes where alcohol played a part.



In Queenstown, alcohol-related crashes are very much a young male problem. The graph above shows the age and sex of drivers and pedestrians who were involved in alcohol-related crashes in the district over the last five years.

In 2001 two thirds of all the injury crashes took place on rural rather than urban roads. Around 20 percent of those crashes involved excessive speed. Generally, the more severe crashes occurred on rural roads due to the higher speeds involved. Between 1999 and 2001 all the fatalities in Queenstown occurred on roads with speed limits greater than 70km/h.

The graph below shows how both speed and alcohol involvement increased again in 2001 in Queenstown and compares injury crash numbers over the last 10 years.

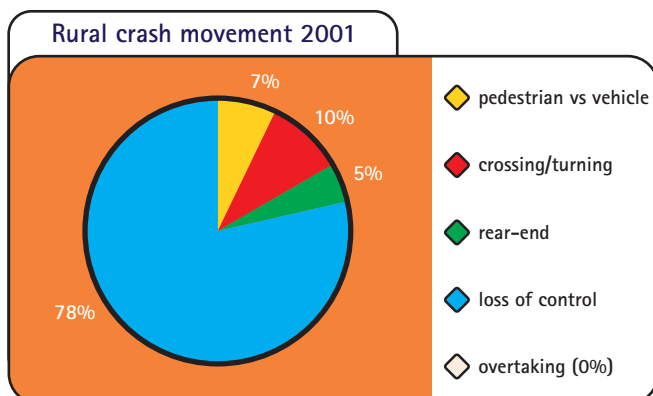


Recommended actions

- 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 types of crash that happened on rural Queenstown Lakes roads last year. By far the most common type of crash was a single vehicle losing control.



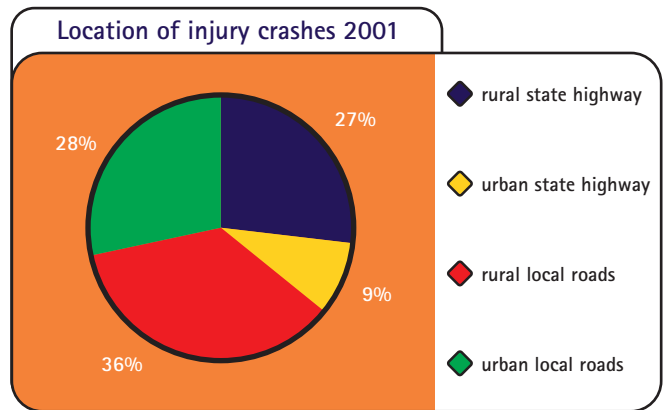
One factor that did increase the number of loss of control type crashes last year was that one quarter of all rural crashes occurred on icy roads, which is more than in previous years. This goes some way to explain why more crashes occurred in July than any other month in Queenstown.

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. More than half of the rural crashes in 2001 resulted in a vehicle hitting a roadside object, anything from a fairly forgiving fence through to power poles and trees.

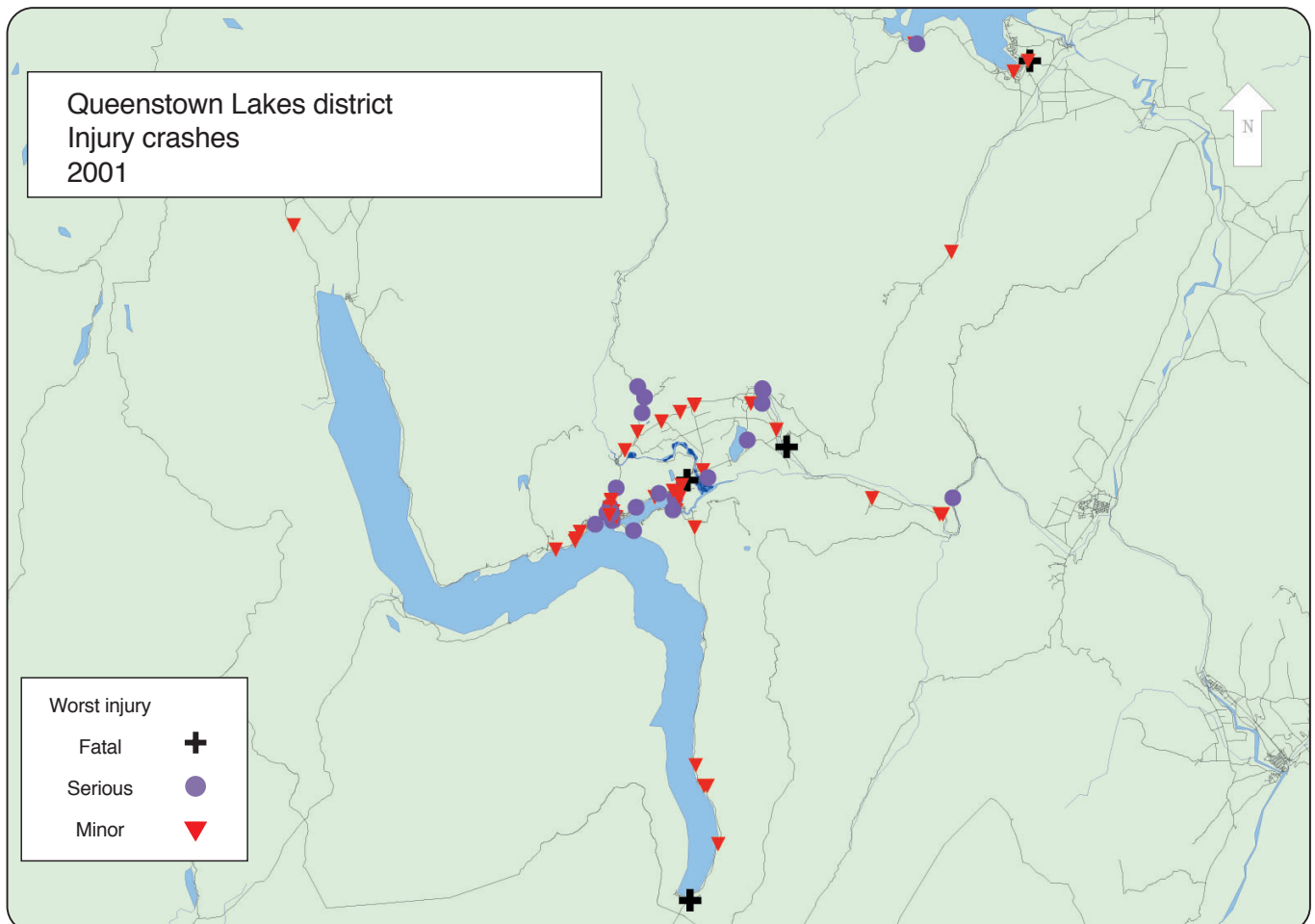
More pedestrians were injured in 2001 than ever before, including two who died. Nearly 10 percent of all casualties for the year were pedestrians, which is more than twice the rate of comparable districts.

As in previous years, the age of road users injured in the district followed a different pattern from the rest of the country. Those under the age of 35 were much more likely to appear in the crash statistics than those who were older. This is perhaps no great surprise in Queenstown and is also the reason why a high number of tourists featured in the crash statistics. Around 20 percent of drivers involved in injury crashes in the district last year were holders of overseas driving licences.

Another unusual pattern is seen in the location of injury crashes last year. Outside large urban areas the majority of crashes tend to occur on the state highway network, due in part to the higher traffic volumes. The graph below shows that this was not the case in Queenstown Lakes where over 60 percent of the crashes were on local roads last year. This compares to 40 percent in the Southland district and only 22 percent in Central Otago.



The map below shows the location of all injury crashes within 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 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 level of deaths and injuries in the Queenstown Lakes district.

Funding for community projects in Queenstown 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	\$3,000	

The Queenstown Lakes 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 Queenstown Lakes district area a further 7,330 hours will be delivered by the New Zealand Police as follows:

Project	Police hours
Strategic – alcohol/drugs, speed, restraints and visible road safety enforcement	6,020
Traffic management	900
School road safety education	300
Police community services	110

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