

road safety issues

July 2003

The Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA) has prepared this road safety issues report. It is based on reported crash data and trends for the 1998–2002 period. The intent of the report is to highlight the key road safety issues and to identify possible ways to reduce the number of road deaths and injuries in the Tararua District.

During 2002, the Manawatu Wanganui Region experienced the lowest recorded number of road deaths in over 20 years (28 deaths from 27 fatal crashes). This result was largely due to the efforts of many motivated and keen individuals and organisations determined to improve road safety throughout the region. While the human cost of road deaths continues to be a major problem, it is hoped that 2002 saw the start of a sustained reduction in road trauma.

While the reduction in road deaths is welcomed, this report notes a small increase in injuries in most districts within the wider region. Planned implementation of road safety strategies would ideally lead to a reduction in all injury crashes. Practitioners should not, however, lose sight of the fact that reducing the severity of a crash can deliver significant safety benefits and is a legitimate measure of success.

The social cost of crashes in the Tararua District during 2002 was:

- \$20.54 million on state highways
- \$9.05 million on local roads.

Compared with 2001, this is a decrease from \$25.32 million on state highways and a decrease from \$10.33 million on local roads.

Major road safety issues

Tararua District

Loss of control

Motorcyclists

Speed

Cyclists and pedestrians

Nationally

Speed

Alcohol

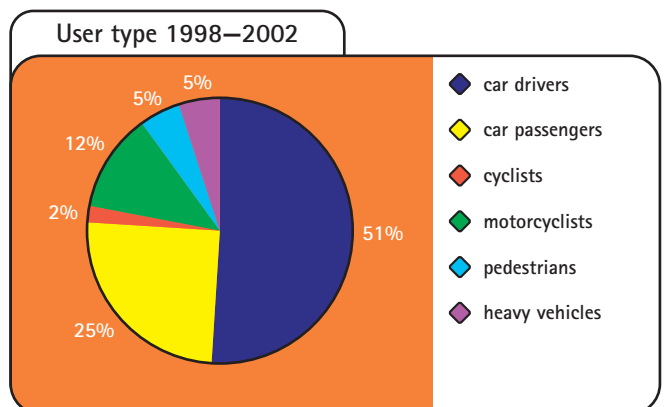
Failure to give way

Restraints

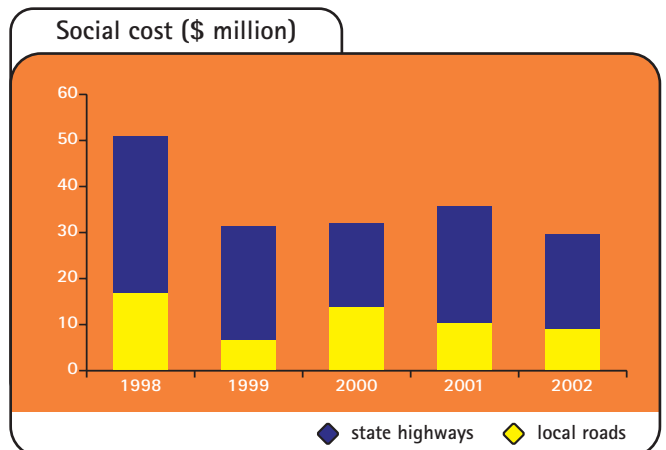
2002 road trauma for Tararua District

Deaths	4
Serious casualties	15
Minor casualties	75
Fatal crashes	4
Serious injury crashes	10
Minor-injury crashes	52
Non-injury crashes	127

Road user casualties 1998–2002



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 2002 prices.



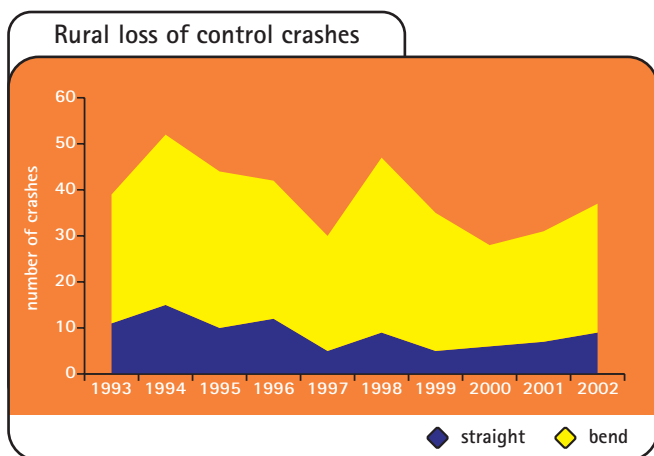
Loss of control

Over 75 percent of rural crashes in the Tararua District in 2002 involved drivers either losing control of their vehicle or colliding head-on with a vehicle travelling in the opposite direction. Most of these crashes occurred on bends, though there were about seven such crashes each year on straight sections of road.

From 1998 to 2002 the main contributing factors leading to loss of control crashes on rural roads were:

Excessive speed	25 percent
Road conditions	23 percent
Poor vehicle handling	21 percent
Poor observation	18 percent
Alcohol	16 percent

Loss of control crashes involving either speed or alcohol have been relatively stable over the last four years, and were down on the period 1993 to 1997. In 2002 there were 10 speed-related crashes on rural roads and eight alcohol-related crashes.



Recommended actions

Education

- Highlight the need to drive to the conditions and to be fully alert while driving.
- Raise awareness of problems at crash black spots.
- Support public education campaigns.
- Advocate appropriate driving behaviour.
- Teach drivers techniques to handle differing road conditions.

Enforcement

- Target enforcement at high-risk sites.
- Support promotional activities and local campaigns.
- Focus enforcement on speed and alcohol.
- Identify best practice methods for enforcing overtaking and cross-centre line breaches.

Engineering

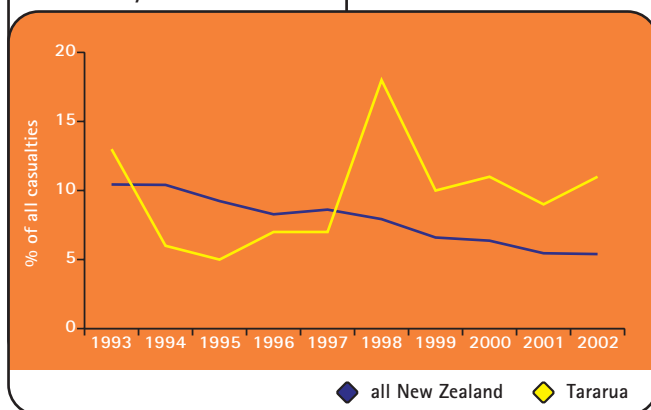
- Ensure advisory speed signs are of an appropriate and consistent standard.
- Consider safer road design and better delineation techniques where possible.
- Maintain good road surfaces and drainage.
- Support education programmes highlighting the need for care on bends and emphasising correct lane position and speed control.
- Ensure roadside areas are kept clear of solid objects.
- Provide sealed shoulders where appropriate.



Motorcyclists

In recent years the proportion of motorcycle casualties in the Tararua District has been relatively high compared with similar authorities and all New Zealand. Since 1997 casualty numbers have been trending downward, with the total in 2002 (10) being less than half the casualty numbers in 1998 (22). Motorcycle casualties now account for about 10 percent of all casualties, compared with about five percent for all New Zealand.

Motorcyclist casualties



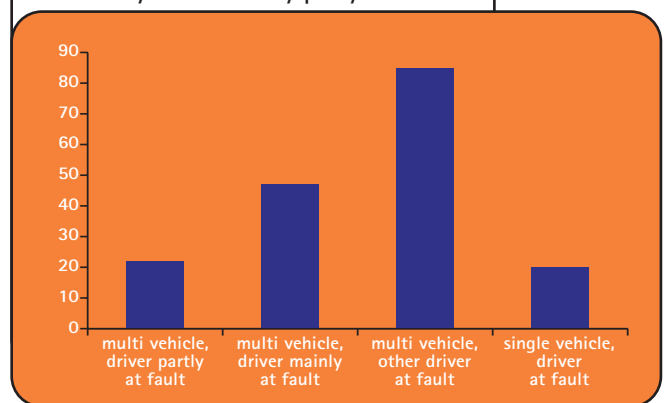
In common with similar areas, motorcycle casualty numbers were greatest for the 15 to 24 year age group. Most motorcycle crashes occurred at intersections. The next most frequent type was rear-end collisions, with loss of control on bends and overtaking crashes also prevalent in the crash data.

Most motorcycle crashes occurred under normal driving conditions, with only one crash in six on a wet road and one crash in 10 happening at night. Most crashes involved another vehicle, with about one crash in six being a single vehicle crash.

An important part of any effective road safety campaign is an understanding of which drivers are primarily responsible for crashes. This allows decisions to be made on the type of safety programmes that will be most effective.

In the Tararua District, motorcyclists are known to have been primarily or partly at fault in 89 cases, compared with 85 cases where another driver was at fault. Improved observation of priority driving rules and adoption of safe driving speeds are critical to ensuring improved safety among this group. Working to promote awareness of motorcycle safety issues among other road users is also likely to be beneficial.

Motorcycle crashes by party at fault



Recommended actions

Education

- Promote awareness of the use of driving lights and other aids to visibility.
- Emphasise the need to be fully alert when driving.
- Raise the profile of education courses for motorcyclists, particularly novice riders.
- Raise awareness of problems at crash black spots.
- Support campaigns aimed at raising awareness of motorcycle safety issues.

Enforcement

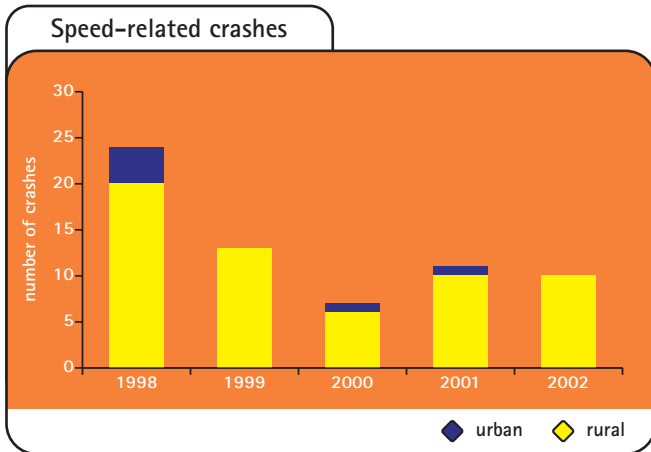
- Support education programmes aimed at motorcyclists.
- Maintain high-visibility patrolling at identified high-risk locations.
- Undertake periodic monitoring of driver behaviour at intersections.
- Discourage unsafe driving practices among motorcyclists.

Engineering

- Maintain signs and roadside delineation to an appropriate standard.
- Ensure roadside areas are kept clear of solid objects.
- Maintain good skid resistant road surfaces.
- Provide a 'no surprises' driving environment.

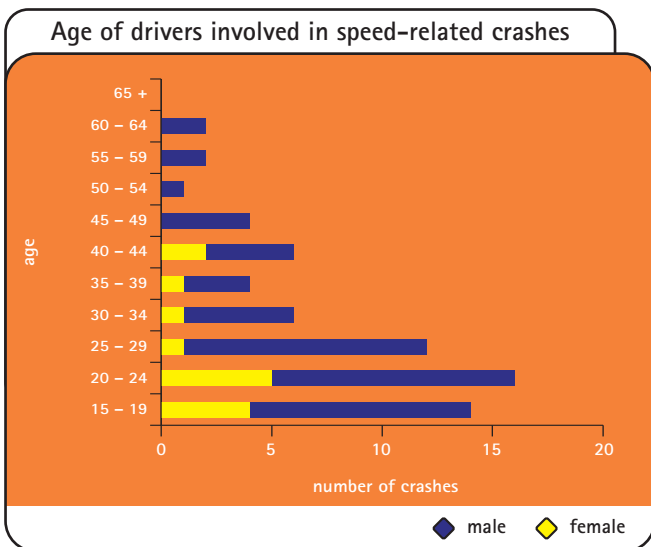
80 Speed

Travelling at a speed too fast for the conditions was a significant factor in rural crashes in the Tararua District for the period 1998 to 2002. It contributed to 59 rural crashes (over 20 percent) and six urban crashes (eight percent). While rural speed-related crashes have fallen, in line with the reduction in all crashes in the region, the proportion of such crashes remains at the same level experienced in similar regions and all New Zealand.



Speed is more likely to be a contributing factor for young drivers than older drivers. Most crashes where speed is a factor involve a driver younger than 30 years of age. Males tend to be most heavily over-represented in speed crashes, with four male drivers involved in a speed crash for every one female. Younger females, those aged between 15 and 24 years, are most likely to be involved in a speed crash.

Vehicle speed is a major determinant of the outcome of a crash. Research has shown that as speed increases, the likelihood of a crash also increases. Where a crash occurs, faster speeds will result in more severe injuries.



Recommended actions

Education

- Promote awareness of the risks of speed.
- Identify appropriate speeds for conditions and the need to be fully alert when driving.
- Improve attitudes to fast driving.

Enforcement

- Focus on speed enforcement at high-risk times and places.
- Ensure a low enforcement tolerance is observed.
- Investigate thoroughly crashes where speed is suspected.
- Target enforcement at high-risk sites by monitoring:
 - speed at bends with advisory speed signs
 - speed at identified crash black spots
 - travelling speeds and following distances during wet weather.

Engineering

- Maintain a clear delineation of curves.
- Ensure advisory speed signs are of an appropriate and consistent standard and are in the correct position.
- Maintain good road surfaces and drainage.
- Ensure roadside areas are kept clear of solid objects.
- Provide sealed road shoulders where appropriate.
- Continue realignment projects where possible.

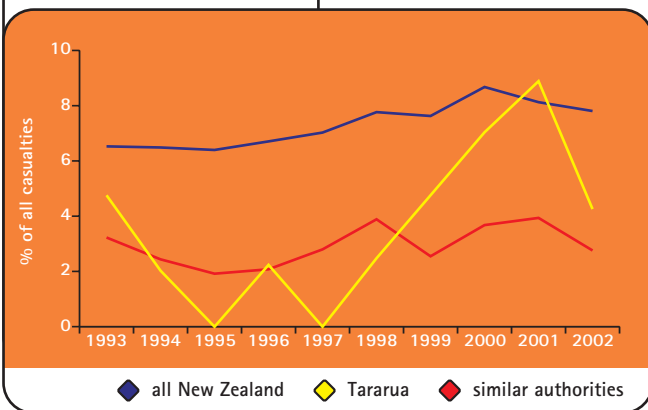
Cyclists and pedestrians

Of all road users, cyclists and pedestrians are particularly vulnerable and are most likely to suffer death or serious injury when in conflict with a motor vehicle. Safety issues for these road users are largely confined to urban centres in the Tararua District, particularly on the main road through Dannevirke. In recent years cyclist and pedestrian safety has been recognised as an important and often neglected road safety issue.

The proportion of pedestrian casualties in the Tararua District has been relatively high. In 2002, four pedestrian casualties were reported, down from eight the previous year. This is above the level experienced in similar authorities but has now reduced below the level experienced in all New Zealand.

Pedestrian casualties tend to be very young, or older adults. Night-time crashes involving intoxicated pedestrians are also a problem.

Pedestrian casualties

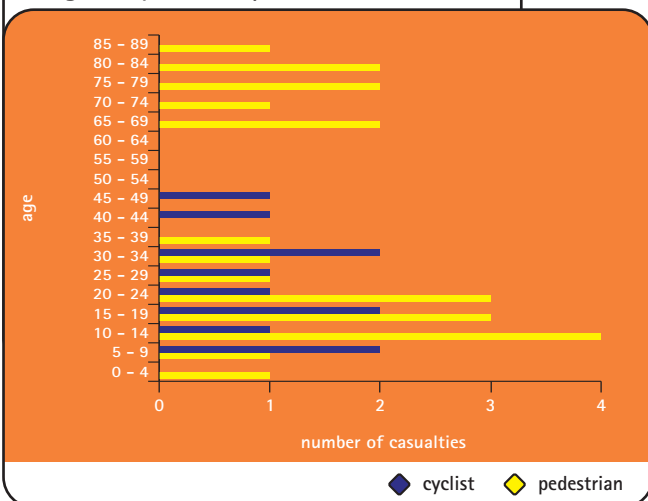


In common with similar areas, the percentage of cycle casualties is high for the 15 to 24 year age group. The 10 to 14 year age group also remains a risk group, but their involvement has declined recently and is now below the level experienced in similar authorities.

Most cycle crashes occurred at intersections, with T junctions, crossroads and roundabouts being most common. Mid-block collisions were less common.

Leading contributory factors in cycle crashes were similar to those found with other road users, with failure to give way and poor observation being leading causes. Overtaking on the left at intersections was a problem among cyclists.

Age of cyclist and pedestrian casualties



Recommended actions

Education

- Raise the profile of education courses for older road users such as Safe with Age and Road Rules Refreshers.
- Raise awareness of problems at pedestrian crossings.
- Promote road safety education aimed at school age children.
- Promote awareness of the use of cycle lights and other aids to visibility.
- Emphasise the need to be fully alert when driving.
- Raise the profile of education courses for cyclists, particularly novice riders.
- Continue with school-based education programmes.
- Continue with programmes supporting helmet use.

Enforcement

- Target enforcement at high-risk sites through:
 - intersection enforcement at regular intervals
 - monitoring driving at pedestrian crossings.
- Support promotional activities and local campaigns.
- Report and remove obstacles to vision at intersections and crossings.
- Support education programmes aimed at cyclists.
- Maintain high-visibility patrolling at identified high-risk locations.
- Undertake periodic monitoring of driver behaviour at intersections.
- Discourage unsafe driving practices among cyclists.

Engineering

- Ensure sight lines at road crossing points are maintained.
- Ensure crossings are appropriately sited and remain conspicuous.
- Ensure crash trends are reviewed regularly. Consider safer crossing design or controls where possible.
- Support education programmes highlighting the need for care at intersections and emphasising correct signalling, lane position and give way rules.
- Consider curb extensions at crossings to improve visibility.
- Support the use of cycle lanes where possible.
- Provide cycle facilities at intersections.
- Continue work with urban schools to support safe cycling facilities.

New Zealand Road Safety Programme

Reducing road trauma involves a multi-pronged approach, which includes education, engineering and enforcement. The New Zealand Road Safety Programme (NZRSP) is the primary planning and funding programme for road safety activity undertaken by the New Zealand Police, LTSA and community groups. Transfund New Zealand provides funding to Transit New Zealand and local authorities for roading projects through its National Land Transport Programme.

Community Road Safety Programme

Through the Community Road Safety Programme (CRSP), the NZRSP provides funding for community development and community programmes to support road safety and to bring about positive and sustainable changes in community attitudes and behaviours. CRSP funding of community development aims to encourage local involvement in and ownership of road safety issues. This year's review of the programme initiates a re-focus of effort and funding into community development. This involves working with and within different communities of people to assist them in becoming aware of their own local road safety issues and developing solutions to achieve better road safety outcomes.

There is a community development general fund allocation for the Manawatu Wanganui Region of \$271,500, as well as a community development dedicated fund of \$61,500. Road Safe Central, the inter-agency group responsible for regional road safety, has developed a road safety action plan for 2003/2004, where projects and initiatives will be developed and funding will be allocated to them during the year.

CRSP programmes are established, community-based road safety initiatives which meet community needs. They address road safety issues and enhance road safety in the community, eg Safe with Age, child restraints and driver licence schemes. The LTSA's general and dedicated programme allocation for the Manawatu Wanganui Region is \$178,000. The LTSA allocates funds upon application.

Road policing

Police enforcement hours to support community projects are now allocated to police community services hours rather than to individual projects. The delivery of these hours to support community initiatives will need to be negotiated by the road safety co-ordinator.

In 2003/2004 the Police are funded to deliver 8,080 hours of road policing in the Tararua District (the same as in 2002/2003) as follows:

Project	Police hours
Strategic – alcohol/drugs, speed, restraints and visible road safety enforcement	6,260
Traffic management including crash attendance, incidents, emergencies and events	1,330
School road safety education	260
Police community services	230

Road environment

The Tararua District has an allocation for minor safety projects on local roads in Transfund New Zealand's National Land Transport Programme 2003/2004.

Where to get more information

For more specific information relating to road crashes in the Tararua District, please refer to the 1998 to 2002 Road Safety Data Report or the LTSA Crash Analysis System, or contact the people or organisations listed below:

Contacts

Land Transport Safety Authority

Regional Manager
Darryl Harwood
Phone 06 350 1889

Road Safety Engineer
David Lane
Phone 06 350 1883

CRSP Regional Liaison Officer

Barbara Broederlow
Phone 06 350 1899

Regional Road Safety Co-ordinator

(Manawatu, Horowhenua, Palmerston North and Tararua)

Sharon Vera
Public Health Unit
Mid Central Health
PO Box 2056
Palmerston North
Phone 06 350 8463

New Zealand Police
Strategic Traffic Manager
Inspector Neil Wynne
Central District
Headquarters
Private Bag 11-040
Palmerston North
Phone 06 351 3600

Transit New Zealand
Regional Manager
Errol Christiansen
Seddon House
Park Place
PO Box 345, Wanganui
Phone 06 345 4173

Tararua District Council
Roading Manager
Trevor Bennett
PO Box 115, Dannevirke
Phone 06 374 4080

Palmerston North Regional Office

71 Queen Street

PO Box 1947, Palmerston North

Phone 06 356 5016, Fax 06 356 5017

www.ltsa.govt.nz

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