

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 number of road deaths and injuries in the Transit New Zealand (TNZ) Wellington North Island region.

The 2001 crash statistics for state highways in the North Island part of TNZ Wellington continue their downward trend. There were 33 fewer injury crashes in 2001 than in 2000. This resulted in 80 fewer casualties, a reduction of 27 percent.

There is, however, a difference between the urban and rural state highway figures. On the urban sections of state highway, crashes and casualties have reached a plateau. The reduction was less than at the start of the decade. This, however, was offset by the crash reductions on rural roads which have been steady throughout the decade.

The most common types of crashes for both urban and rural state highways were the rear-end crash or hitting an obstruction. The rate of such crashes was significantly higher than the national average for state highways. Rural crashes of this type accounted for 30 percent of the crashes in the Wellington region whereas they averaged only 17 percent throughout the country.

There was also an over-representation of crashes between May and July. This pattern was present not only for the five-year period from 1997 to 2001 but also in the 10-year period from 1992 to 2001. It was slightly more evident in the rural crashes than in urban crashes.

Major road safety issues:

TNZ Wellington North Island

Cyclists

Pedestrians

Disabled, older or ill drivers

Nationally

Speed

Alcohol

Failure to give way

Restraints



2001 road toll for TNZ Wellington North Island



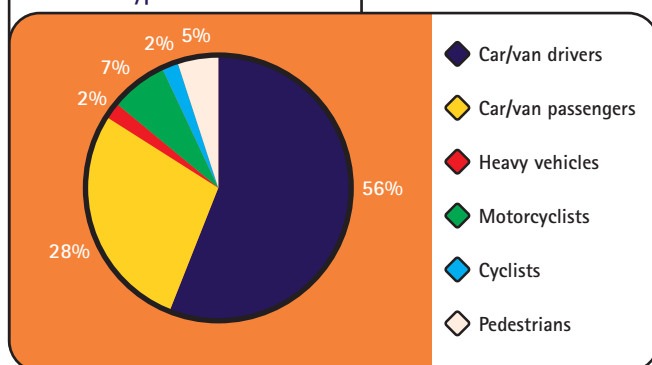
Deaths	14
Serious casualties	52
Minor casualties	250



Fatal crashes	12
Serious injury crashes	39
Minor injury crashes	168
Non-injury crashes	756

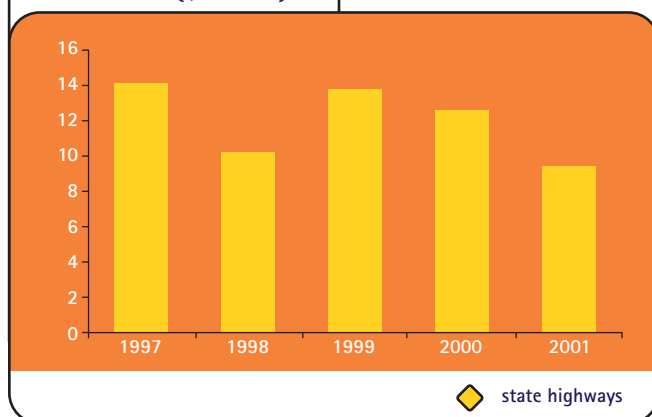
Road user casualties 1997–2001

User type 1997–2001



Estimated social cost of crashes*

Social cost (\$ million)



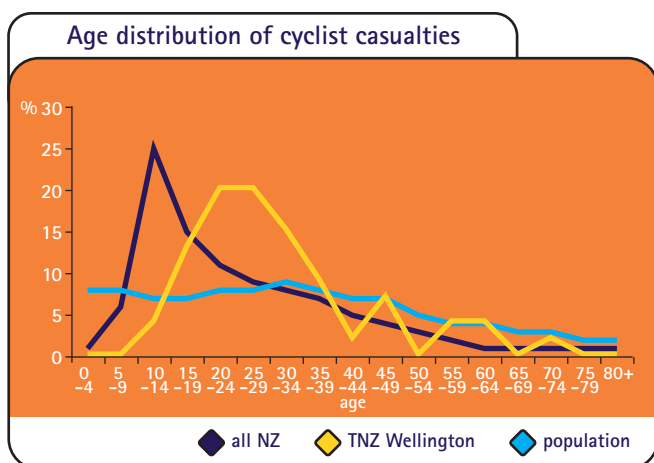
* The estimated social cost includes loss of life or life quality (estimated by the amount New Zealanders are prepared to pay to reduce their risk of fatal or non-fatal injury), loss of output due to injuries, medical and rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, and property damage. These costs are expressed at June 2001 prices.

Cyclists

The number of cyclists injured has risen over the last five years. The total number of injured cyclists has doubled from six in 1997 to 12 in 2001.

The graph below shows the age distribution of injured cyclists on TNZ Wellington’s network in the North Island. It shows that most of the injured cyclists were in the 20 to 30 year-old age range. This might reflect the increasing popularity in recent years of cycling amongst adults, either as a leisure activity or as a form of commuting.

Most of the cyclist injuries occurred in the urban environment. Part of the explanation for this is that State Highway 1 runs through Wellington city to the airport. There were also a significant number of crashes involving cyclists along State Highway 2 in the Masterton district. On rural roads, the crashes were reasonably evenly distributed, although State Highway 2 between Petone and Wellington also had a high incidence of crashes.



Recommended actions

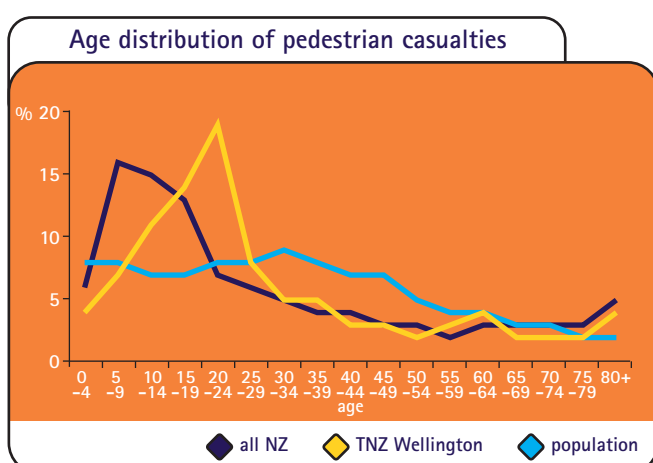
- Where cyclists share the road with vehicles, consider marked cycle lanes, and advanced stop lines at intersections. In other areas consider shared cycle/pedestrian facilities.
- Promote the establishment of safe cycle ways.
- Investigate using coloured pavement for cycle lanes.
- Promote drivers' awareness of cyclists (particularly at intersections).
- Consider making it compulsory to use designated cycleways to divert cyclists off busy roads.

Pedestrians

Pedestrians are a vulnerable group of road users. Over the past decade, the percentage of pedestrian casualties has been above the national average for nine out of the 10 years. This is despite the fact that the actual number of casualties is slowly moving downwards over time.

More than three quarters of all pedestrian injuries were in an urban environment. It was this component of the pedestrian injuries that was significantly above the national average. Wellington city was the area with the most crashes where pedestrians were injured. There were significant crashes of this sort in the Porirua City suburbs of Mana, Paremata and Whitby. In the Wairarapa, Masterton and Featherston had three crashes each while Carterton had four.

Young adult pedestrians appeared to be the most vulnerable age group. The group with the highest number of casualties was the 20 to 24 year age group, followed by the 15 to 19 year age group. The entire age distribution of injured pedestrians is shown below.



Recommended actions

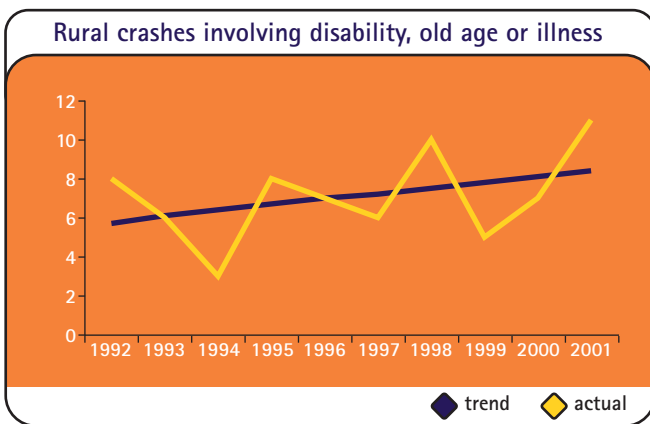
- Support enforcement activities directed at pedestrians and drivers who do not use traffic signals or other crossing facilities correctly.
- Continue to initiate and support reinforcement of the need for pedestrians to be careful entering traffic lanes, and the need for improved pedestrian discipline generally.
- Encourage the development of pedestrian and cycle-friendly arterial roads.
- Reduce pedestrian frustration in urban areas by reducing waiting times at signals.

Disabled, older or ill drivers

The number of crashes that were partly caused by ill, disabled or older road users in a rural environment has increased. While it is not dramatic, the trend is rising. This is shown in the graph below.

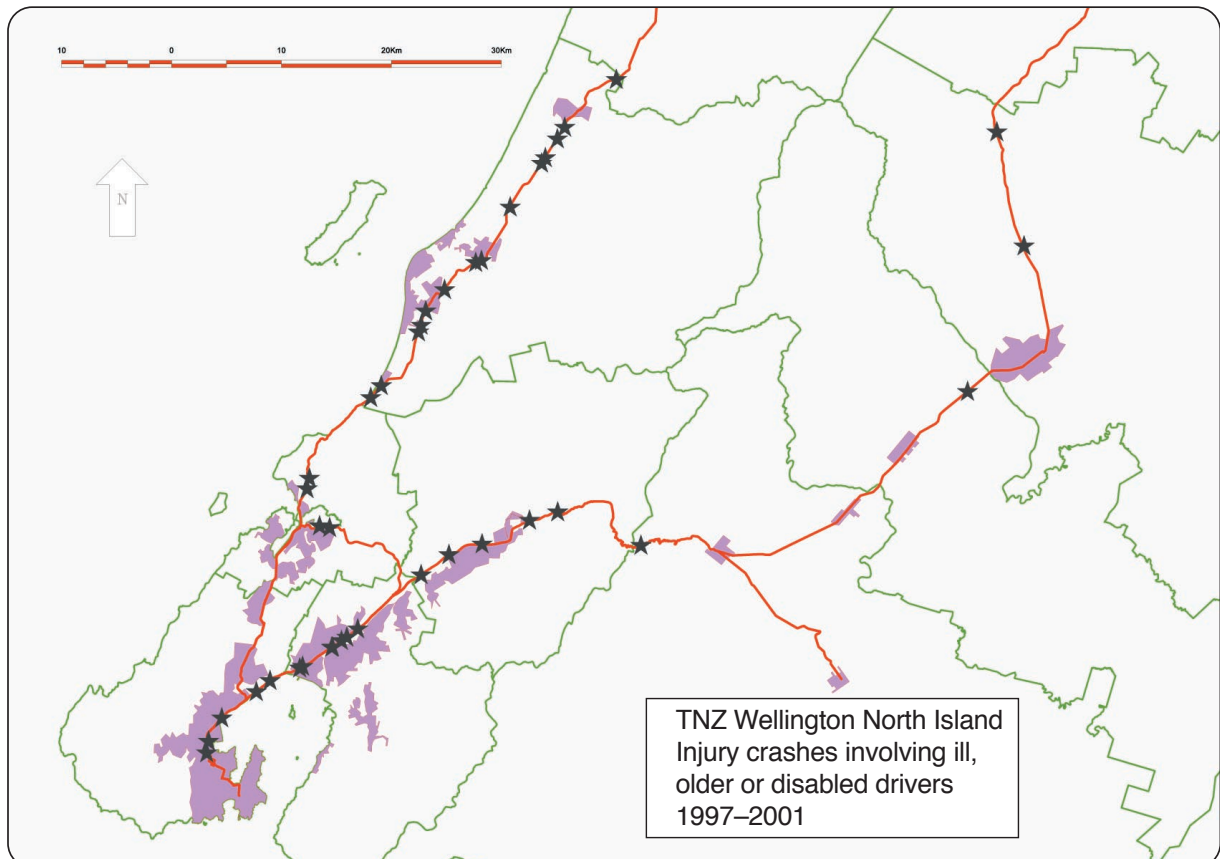
In the five years between 1997 and 2001, 39 crashes were partly attributed to ill, disabled or older road users. Of this total, only three cases involved physical disability. Two cases of attempted suicide were reported.

The largest subgroup for crashes involving ill, disabled or older drivers was the 15 crashes involving impaired ability due to old age. A further 10 were caused by illness with no warning, such as heart attacks. Such illnesses were more common with older people. Many of the crashes occurred in the short stretch of state highway between Otaki and Raumati South. The map below shows the location of injury crashes partly attributed to disability, illness or age factors.



Recommended actions

- Consider additional engineering features to make the highways more friendly for disabled and older drivers.
- Conduct campaigns to advise older drivers how to improve their safety on the road.



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.

Where to get more information

For more specific information relating to road crashes on state highways in TNZ Wellington, North Island, please refer to the 1997 to 2001 Road Safety Data Report or the Land Transport Safety Authority Accident Investigation System, or contact the people or organisations listed below:

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