

# 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 deaths and injuries in the Wellington region.

The number of injury crashes reported in 2001 in the region has increased slightly over the previous year. The major changes were an increase in urban crashes/casualties by 12 percent (567/722), a decrease in rural crashes by 22 percent (207) and a decrease in rural casualties by 28 percent (297), out of a total of 774 crashes and 1,019 casualties.

Car and van drivers and passengers remained the majority (68 percent) of the casualties in the region. Casualty rates for people between 25 and 40 years of age were marginally above national levels.

Pedestrian casualties increased and the proportion (16 percent of all casualties) also increased against a reduction in the New Zealand rate to eight percent.

Cyclist casualties increased in 2001 to 92. This represented nine percent of all casualties in the region and was almost twice the New Zealand rate of 5.5 percent.

Loss of control crashes (on straights or bends) remained the major crash type in the region, followed by rear-end and obstruction crashes and then intersection crashes.

## Major road safety issues:

### Wellington region

Pedestrians

Cyclists

Rear-end or obstruction

### Nationally

Speed

Alcohol

Failure to give way

Restraints



## 2001 road toll for Wellington region

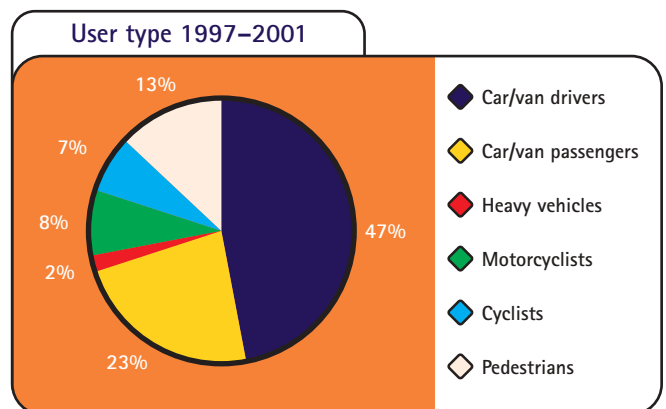


Deaths	30
Serious casualties	165
Minor casualties	824

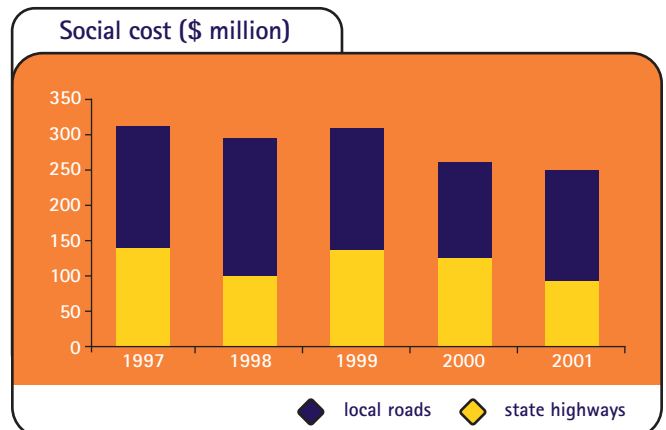


Fatal crashes	27
Serious injury crashes	143
Minor injury crashes	604
Non-injury crashes	2,430

## 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.

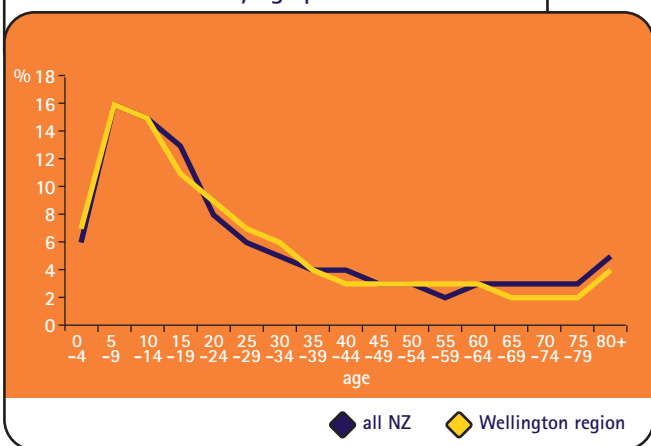


## Pedestrians

The number of pedestrian casualties increased last year. Pedestrians made up 16 percent of all casualties in the region. This was double the national rate of eight percent. In urban areas 23 percent of crashes involved pedestrians.

The age profile of pedestrian casualties in the region was similar to the national profile. However, two age bands were over-represented – these were the 20 to 39 year-olds and the 50 to 64 year-olds.

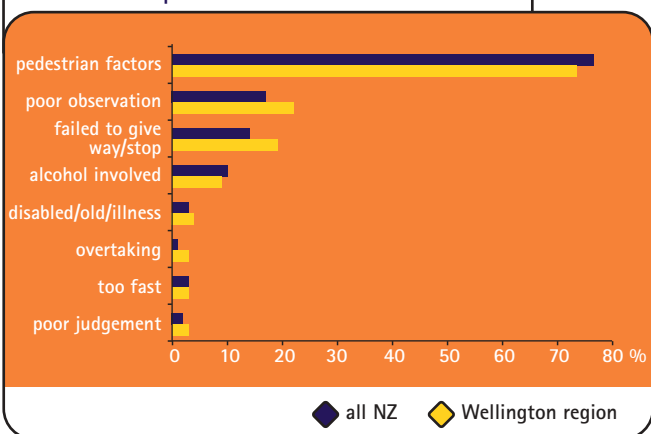
Pedestrian casualty age profile 1997–2001



Examination of the factors (walking or running heedless of traffic) involved in pedestrian crashes strongly suggests that pedestrians were often at fault. However, this behaviour may be influenced by urban environments that are generally designed for motor vehicles.

The factors also suggest that drivers were not always alert to the presence of pedestrians.

Factors in pedestrian crashes 1997–2001



These statistics may be influenced by the large number of pedestrians that come into the urban areas of the region for work and leisure-related activities.



## Recommended actions

- Conduct education programmes that:
  - outline safe walking and crossing techniques for pedestrians
  - encourage the use of pedestrian facilities
  - make drivers more aware of pedestrians.
- Carry out enforcement programmes that:
  - enforce legal use of crossing points by pedestrians
  - target inappropriate behaviour by motorists towards pedestrians.
- Design engineering programmes that:
  - prioritise pedestrian requirements over vehicles
  - remove vehicles from pedestrian areas
  - progressively upgrade pedestrian facilities.

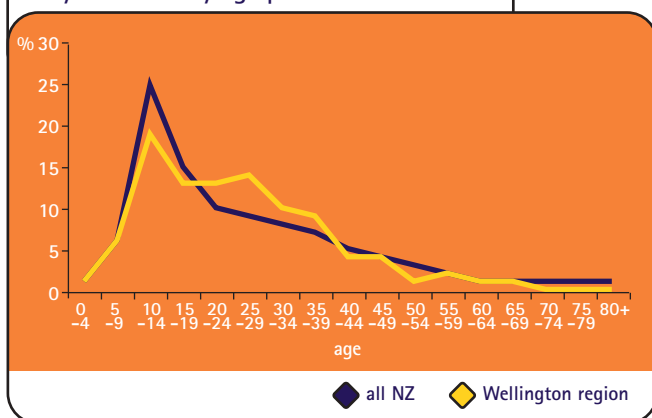


## Cyclists

Cyclists made up nine percent of all casualties in the region. Cyclist casualty numbers increased in 2001 to 92. As a percentage of all road casualties within the region cyclist casualties were almost twice the national figure.

The age profile of the cyclist casualties indicates that cyclists aged between 20 and 39 years of age were over-represented.

Cyclist casualty age profile 1997–2001

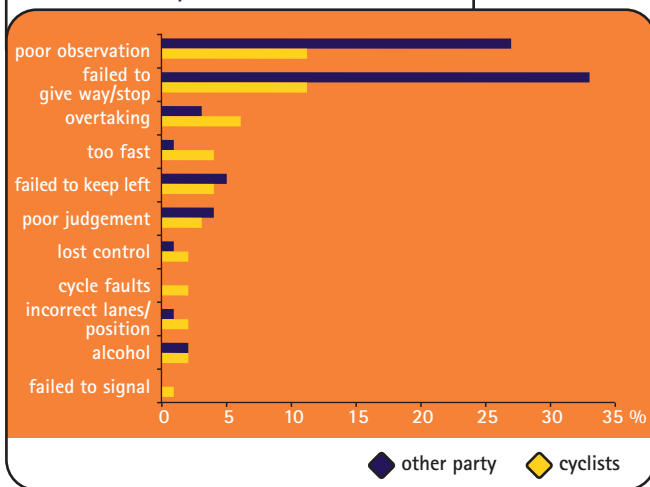


When the factors involved in cycle crashes are examined the evidence is that cyclists were just as likely to be at fault as the vehicle involved. However, at intersections drivers were three times more likely not to observe a cyclist and thus not give way. In these situations the cyclist often assumed that they had been seen.

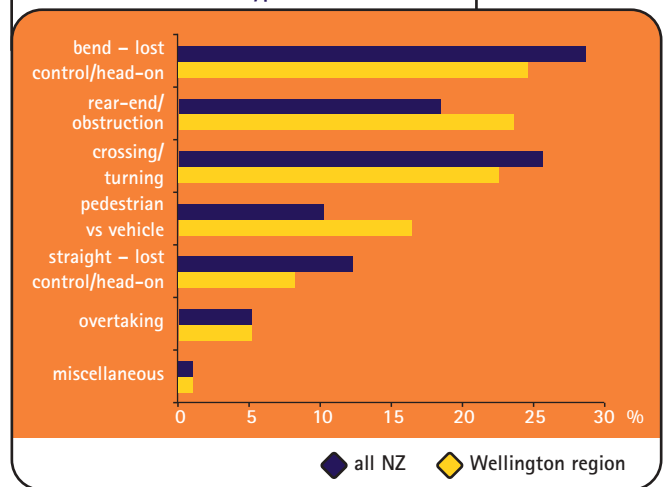
This should be tempered by the concern expressed by drivers that cyclists often do not comply with the traffic laws and cause problems by appearing unexpectedly in their path.

The increase in cyclist casualty statistics may reflect the number of cyclists that commute into the cities for employment and the increasing popularity of recreational cycling, particularly mountain biking.

Factors in cycle crashes 1997–2001



Crash movement types 1997–2001

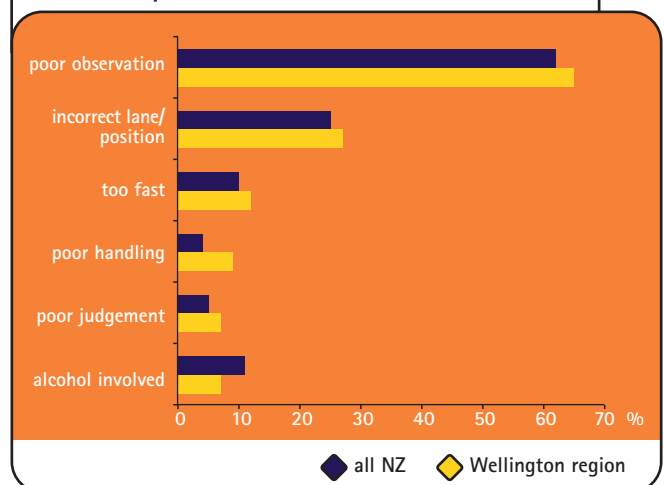


## Recommended actions

- Devise education programmes that:
  - provide the 20 to 40 year age group of cyclists with defensive riding techniques
  - encourage and inform cyclists of correct lighting and clothing to make them more visible
  - increase drivers' awareness of cyclists.
- Conduct enforcement programmes that:
  - enforce legal lighting requirements and helmet use by cyclists
  - target inappropriate behaviour by both motorists and cyclists.
- Design engineering programmes that:
  - progressively improve cycle facilities in vehicle shared environments
  - provide shared cycle/pedestrian facilities where appropriate.

Factors in these crashes were principally poor observation of the traffic ahead, associated with incorrect lane or position choices on the road. Further examination of the factors also indicates that following too closely was often a problem.

Rear-end/obstruction crash factors 1997–2001



## Rear-end or obstruction

Rear-end collisions or collisions with obstructions contributed to 23 percent of the crash types in the Wellington region, and were the second most common type of crash after loss of control crashes.

Two thirds of these crashes occurred in urban areas, and in both rural and urban areas the numbers were above similar authority levels. The numbers in the rural area (principally on the state highways) were double similar authority levels.

The obstructions struck most often were parked or stationary vehicles.

## Recommended actions

- Conduct education programmes that assist drivers to:
  - be more aware of the risks of following too closely, particularly on arterial routes.
- Carry out enforcement programmes that:
  - enforce safe following distances at high-risk times
  - support education campaigns to increase driver alertness.
- Design engineering programmes that:
  - provide good skid resistant road surfaces on approaches to traffic signals, roundabouts and pedestrian crossings
  - provide good guidance as to positioning on the road
  - progressively improve sight lines.

# 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 Roading 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 Wellington region.

Funding for Wellington region community projects from the NZRSP for the 2002/2003 year has been confirmed as follows:

Project	Funding	Police hours
Road Safety week	\$15,000	0
Straitroad newsletter	\$12,000	0
Road Safety forum	\$10,000	0

Further community projects have also been funded within individual local authorities in the region from whom the details can be obtained.

## Police enforcement

In addition to the 195 New Zealand Police hours to support community projects throughout the region, a further 172,590 hours will be delivered by the police as follows:

Project	Police hours
Strategic – alcohol/drugs, speed, restraint and visible road safety enforcement	121,590
Traffic management including crash attendance, incidents, emergencies and events	42,400
School road safety education	6,250
Police community services	2,350

## Where to get more information

For more specific information relating to road crashes in Wellington region, 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:

Wellington region comprises the following authorities: Wellington City, Hutt City, Porirua City, Upper Hutt, Kapiti Coast district, South Wairarapa district, Carterton district and Masterton district.

Land Transport Safety Authority

Regional Manager  
Demetra Kennedy

Regional Educational Advisor  
Roy Hitchcock

Senior Road Safety Engineer  
James King

See LTSA staff contact details at bottom of page

New Zealand Police

Strategic Traffic Manager  
Inspector Dave Allo  
Wellington Central  
PO Box 693, Wellington  
Phone 04 381 2000

Wellington Regional Council  
Manager Transport Policy  
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