

South Australia's Road Safety Strategy to 2031

Issues Paper

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A new Road Safety Strategy for South Australia

The South Australian Government is seeking feedback from the community about how to reduce lives lost and serious injuries on South Australia's roads. This feedback will be used to help prepare a new Road Safety Strategy to guide decisions and actions over the next decade and to create improved road safety for everyone living in, and visiting, our state. So whether you drive, ride, walk or are a passenger – you can help to shape the actions needed to enable us to travel safely.

South Australia has made substantial gains in reducing lives lost and serious injuries on our roads since the early 1970s, when more than 300 people were killed and 3,500 were seriously injured each year. This has been achieved despite an increase in the number of people and vehicles using our roads.

Despite these gains, road trauma remains a significant problem. The social impacts are devastating to those affected, and the annual cost to the Australian economy has been estimated to be at least \$27 billion.

The road safety facts presented below consider road safety issues across the State, as well as highlighting some unique issues across four geographic contexts: Metropolitan Adelaide and the CBD; Regional Centres; Rural Towns and Remote Communities; and Regional Roads. For more information see the map at Appendix 1. Unless otherwise stated, the data used in this paper refers to the five years between 2015 and 2019.

To have your say on what more can be done to save lives on our roads please Think! road safety and complete the survey available on the website www.yoursay.sa.gov.au/sa-road-safety-strategy.

How we are developing the Strategy

Work is underway to develop a new road safety strategy to guide decisions and investment, with a focus on the safe movement of people throughout the State.

Road safety is a shared responsibility and input from communities and stakeholders across South Australia is critical for developing effective measures to reduce road trauma. The development of the Strategy will be guided by extensive consultation with stakeholders and the community.

The phases of engagement are outlined below:

PHASE 1 Engagement with key stakeholders

PHASE 2 Community consultation and regional sessions in areas associated with high levels of road trauma

PHASE 3 Release of the draft Strategy for comment

PHASE 4 Publication of the final Strategy

Modelling by the Centre for Automotive Safety and Research about what works to reduce lives lost and serious injury is also being used to help form the Strategy. We are also investigating issues that the statistics highlight as problems in South Australia, drawing on local, interstate and national research.

Achieving a major reduction in road trauma requires a unified approach between governments, industries, communities and road users. The Strategy will be developed in collaboration with Police, local government and key stakeholders.

What we know about road safety in South Australia

In 2019, 114 people lost their lives and another 833 people were seriously injured in road crashes in South Australia. Over the past five years, 482 people lost their life and a further 3482 people were seriously injured on our roads.

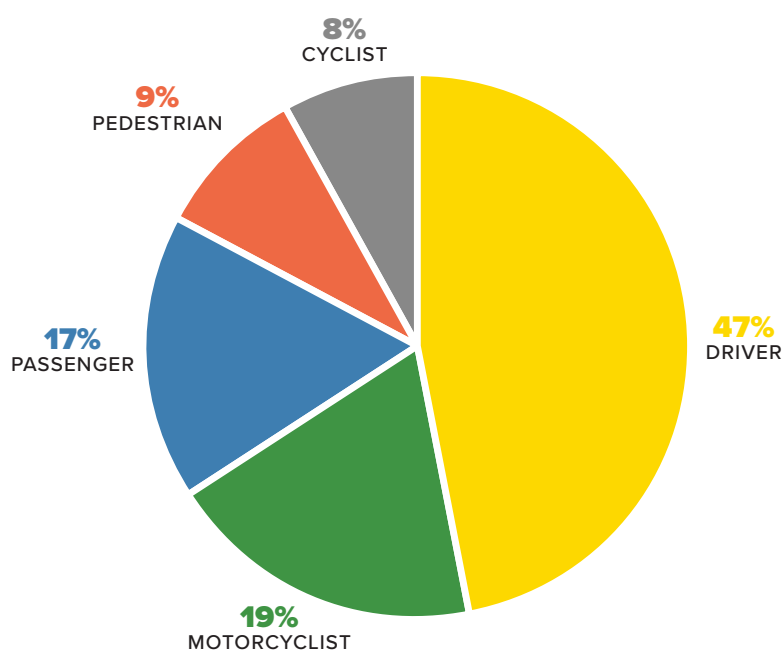
South Australia is a large state with a big road network — the southern, central state of mainland Australia with a total land area of 983,482 square kilometres. Most South Australians live in Metropolitan Adelaide. Of the state's population of more than 1.75 million people, 78% live in Adelaide and surrounding metropolitan areas.

Crashes resulting in lives lost are more common on Regional Roads in South Australia. While 22% of the State's population lives in regional South Australia, 56% of crashes where lives are lost on our roads occur in regional areas. This equates to 16.6 lives lost per 100,000 people compared to 3.6 lives lost per 100,000 people in Metropolitan Adelaide and the CBD.

Serious injury crashes are more likely to occur on metropolitan roads, where large numbers of people live and work. Two thirds of people who lose their lives or are seriously injured in road crashes are motor vehicle occupants, and the other one third are vulnerable road users - motorcyclists, pedestrians and cyclists.

FIGURE 1

Proportion of lives lost and serious injuries by road user type, 2015–2019, South Australia

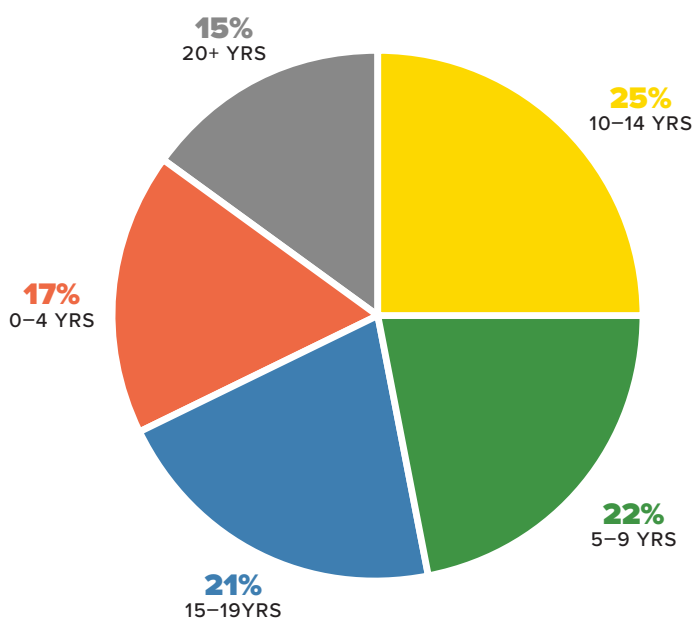


Newer vehicles are safer. This is because a vehicle's age reflects the incremental improvements in safety due to advancements in technology, design and mandatory safety standards over time. The average age of vehicles in South Australia is older than the national average. In 2020, the estimated average age of a South Australian vehicle is 11.8 years, whereas the average vehicle age across Australia is 10.4 years. In regional South Australia the average vehicle age is 13.8 years.

Older vehicles are more likely to be in a serious crash. In 2015–19, 36% of passenger vehicles involved in serious crashes in South Australia were 15 or more years old, whereas they represent only 28% of all passenger vehicles.

FIGURE 2

Percent of passenger vehicles involved in crashes resulting in lives lost by vehicle age group, South Australia, 2015–2019



Road user behaviour is also a factor in lives lost and serious injuries on our roads. This may include drink and drug driving, distraction, speeding, seatbelts and fatigue.

DRINK AND DRUG DRIVING

One in five drivers and riders killed on our roads recorded an illegal Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) while almost one in four was drug driving. The number of drivers and riders killed while drink driving has declined over the last decade, however the trend line has remained unchanged for drug driving.

FIGURE 3

Drivers and riders killed with an illegal BAC or drugs, South Australia, 2008–2019



DISTRACTION

Distraction (driver inattention) was a contributing factor in 41% of crashes resulting in lives lost and 48% of crashes resulting in serious injury. Inattention is a broad term covering mobile phone use, inadvertently not noticing other nearby road users, distractions from passengers and distractions from outside the vehicle.

SPEEDING

Inappropriate or excess speed was a contributing factor in 30% of all fatal crashes and 23% of crashes resulting in serious injury. Results of a 2018 travel speed survey indicate between 12% and 37% of motorists state-wide are not complying with posted speed limits, dramatically increasing their risk of being involved in a crash.

SEATBELTS

Around one quarter of all drivers and passengers who lost their lives were not wearing a seatbelt at the time of the crash. Of these, 70% occurred in regional areas.

FATIGUE

Fatigue is often ranked as a major factor in road crashes although its contribution to individual cases is hard to measure and is often not reported as a cause of crash. Analysis of South Australian crash data suggests fatigue is on average a factor in around ten crashes resulting in lives lost each year. Fatigue is more likely to be a factor in crashes in rural areas as they can involve long trips and extensive periods of continuous driving, however anyone can be affected by fatigue.

Metropolitan Adelaide and the CBD

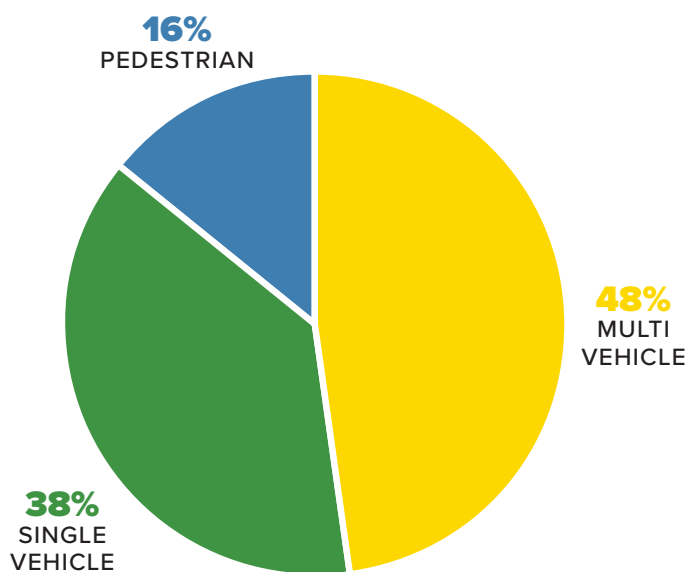
In South Australia, 44% of all fatal crashes and 61% of serious injury crashes occur in Metropolitan Adelaide and the CBD. This represents 41 lives lost and 409 serious injuries on roads in the metropolitan area each year.

In the metropolitan area, 31% of crashes resulting in lives lost, and 44% of crashes resulting in serious injury occur at intersections. Common crash types resulting in loss of life or serious injury at intersections are right turn and right-angle crashes.

As shown in Figure 4, almost half of fatal and serious injury crashes involve two or more vehicles (which includes motorcycles and bicycles). 38% are single vehicle crashes and 16% involve a pedestrian.

FIGURE 4

Types of fatal and serious crashes occur in Metropolitan Adelaide and the CBD, South Australia, 2015–2019



Pedestrians

81% of pedestrians who lose their lives or are seriously injured are within the Metropolitan Adelaide and CBD area.

Motorcyclists

Of the motorcyclist crashes that result in lives lost or serious injury, 64% occur in the Metropolitan Adelaide and CBD area.

Cyclists

44% of cyclists who lose their lives and 91% of serious injuries are within the Metropolitan Adelaide and CBD area.

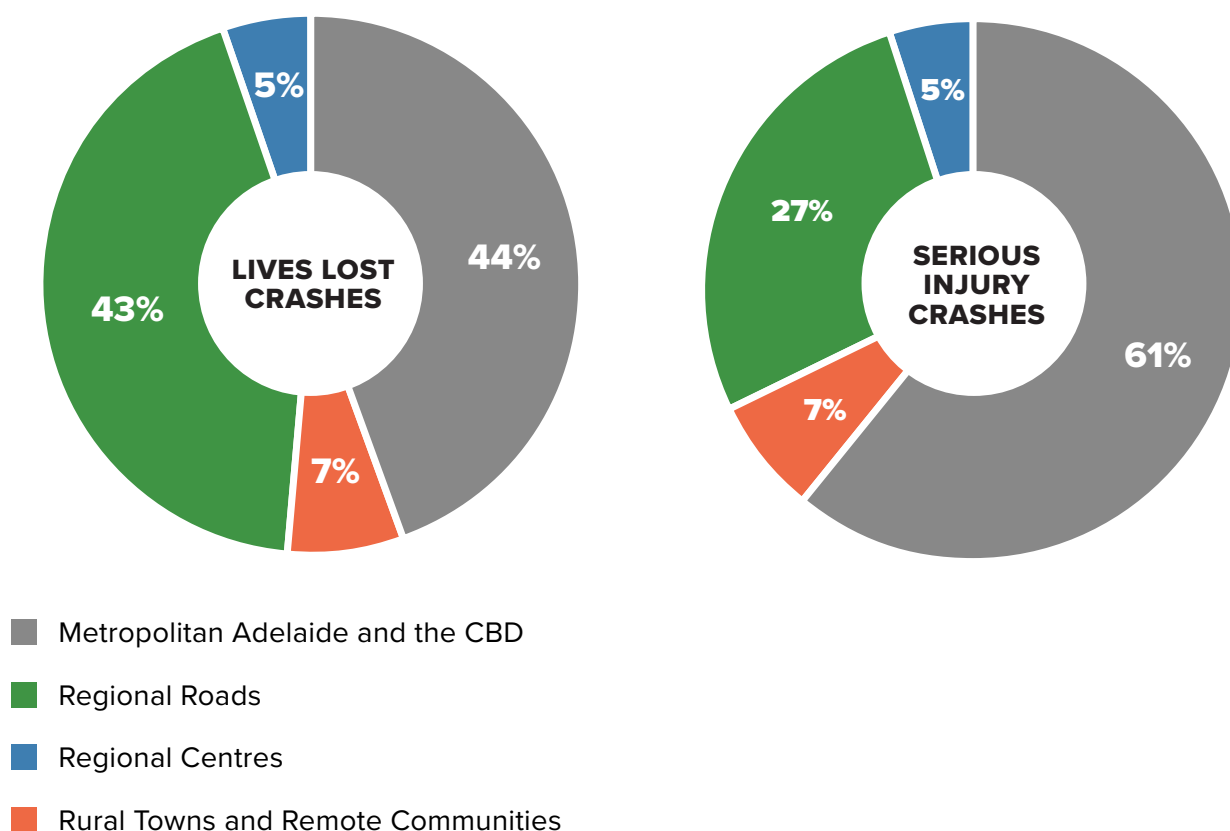
Regional South Australia

The rate of lives lost per 100,000 people is now four-times higher in regional SA compared to metropolitan Adelaide. Regional areas account for about 22% of the State's population, however, 56% of crashes where lives were lost and 39% of serious injury crashes were on roads outside of Metropolitan Adelaide. Two thirds of the drivers who lose their life or are seriously injured in regional areas are local to regional South Australia.

Most of these lives are lost on regional roads with a speed limit at 90 km/h or above. These crashes are mostly single vehicle run-off-road incidents, where the vehicle leaves the road at speed and hits the closest fixed object. Head-on crashes are another common crash type on regional high-speed roads. These can occur when a driver has either lost control after leaving the road, has over-corrected, drifted across the road, or attempted to overtake another vehicle.

FIGURE 5

Lives lost and serious injury crashes by location, South Australia, 2015–2019



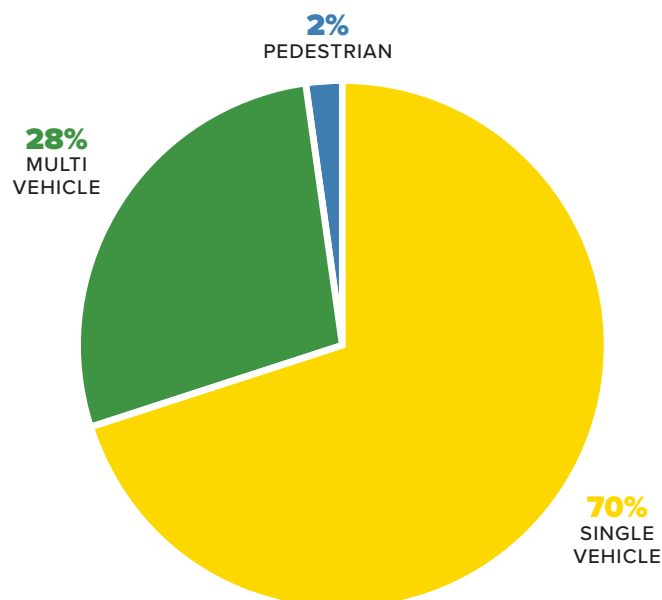
Regional Roads

In South Australia, 43% of all crashes where lives are lost and 27% of serious injury crashes occur on Regional Roads with a speed limit at 90km/h or above. This equates to an average of 44 lives lost and 206 people being seriously injured each year.

70% of crashes involve a single vehicle. Many of these run off the road and collide with an object or roll.

FIGURE 6

Types of fatal and serious crashes occurring on Regional roads, South Australia, 2015–2019

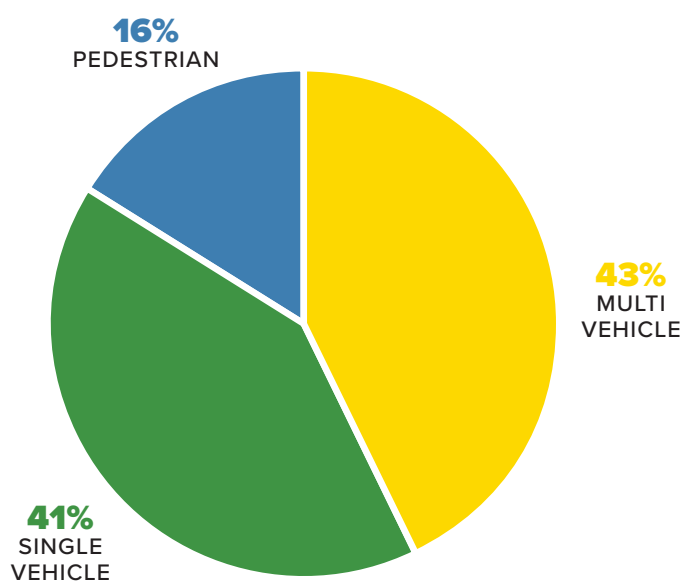


Regional Centres

5% of lives lost and serious injury crashes occur in Regional Centres. This equates to an average of five lives lost and 36 people suffering a serious injury each year.

FIGURE 7

Types of fatal and serious injury crashes occur in Regional Centres, South Australia, 2015–2019



Pedestrians

16% of these crashes in Regional Centres involve a pedestrian.

Cyclists

4% of serious injuries to cyclists occur in Regional Centres, yet crashes in Regional Centres account for 20% of all cyclists lives lost.

Intersections

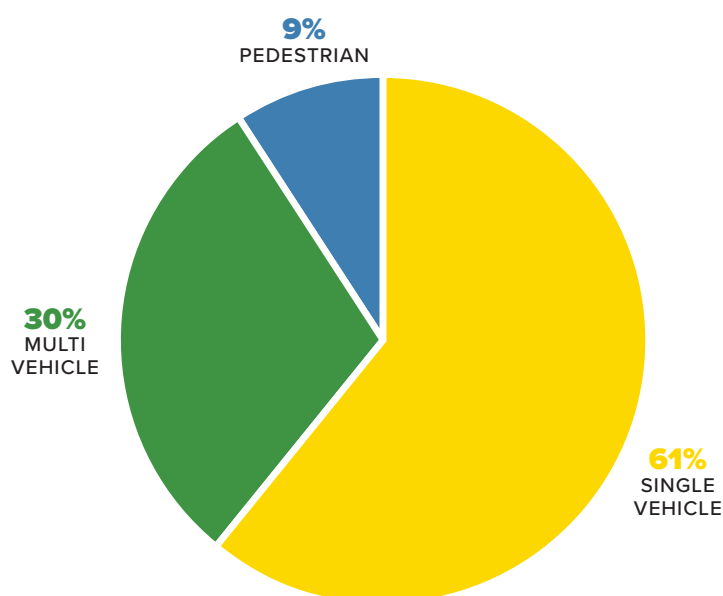
Intersection crashes account for 29% of lives lost and 43% of serious injuries.

Rural Towns and Remote Communities

7% of lives lost and serious injury crashes occur in rural and remote communities. This equates to seven lives lost and 51 people suffering a serious injury each year.

FIGURE 8

Types of fatal and serious injury crashes occurring in Rural Towns and Remote Communities, South Australia, 2015–2019



There may be greater challenges in equitable access to services because of distance and location.

Road infrastructure may vary in quality and may be sealed or unsealed.

There may be limited or no public transport.

Intersection crashes account for over one third of lives lost and serious casualty crashes.

What road safety looks like for different road users

Whether you drive, ride, walk or are a passenger, you have the opportunity to shape the actions needed to enable us to travel and interact safely on our roads.



MOTORCYCLISTS

Compared to kilometres travelled, motorcyclists have a much higher risk of losing their life than those travelling in other motor vehicles. Motorcyclists represent 15% of all lives lost yet only 4% of all registered vehicles on South Australian roads.

CYCLISTS

Most (90% of) serious injuries involving a cyclist occur in Metropolitan Adelaide while just over half (56%) of lives lost are outside the metropolitan area. On average 80% of lives lost are in crashes that involved another vehicle.





PEDESTRIANS

On average 14 pedestrian lives are lost each year, with 81% on metropolitan roads. Around two thirds of pedestrian serious casualties occur on roads where there are no intersecting roads (known as a midblock section of road). 25% of pedestrians who lose their lives or who are seriously injured are aged 70 years or older.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

Aboriginal people comprise approximately 3% of South Australia's population but are generally 2-3 times more likely to have a fatal injury and 30% more likely to have a serious injury than non-Aboriginal people¹. This overrepresentation extends across many public health issues including involvement in road crashes. Contributing factors include vehicle overcrowding, poor vehicle quality and not wearing a seatbelt or child restraint. Other factors include high risk driver behaviour.



YOUNGER ROAD USERS

People aged 16 to 24 years make up 11% of the population, but account for 18% of all lives lost and 20% of serious injuries in South Australia.

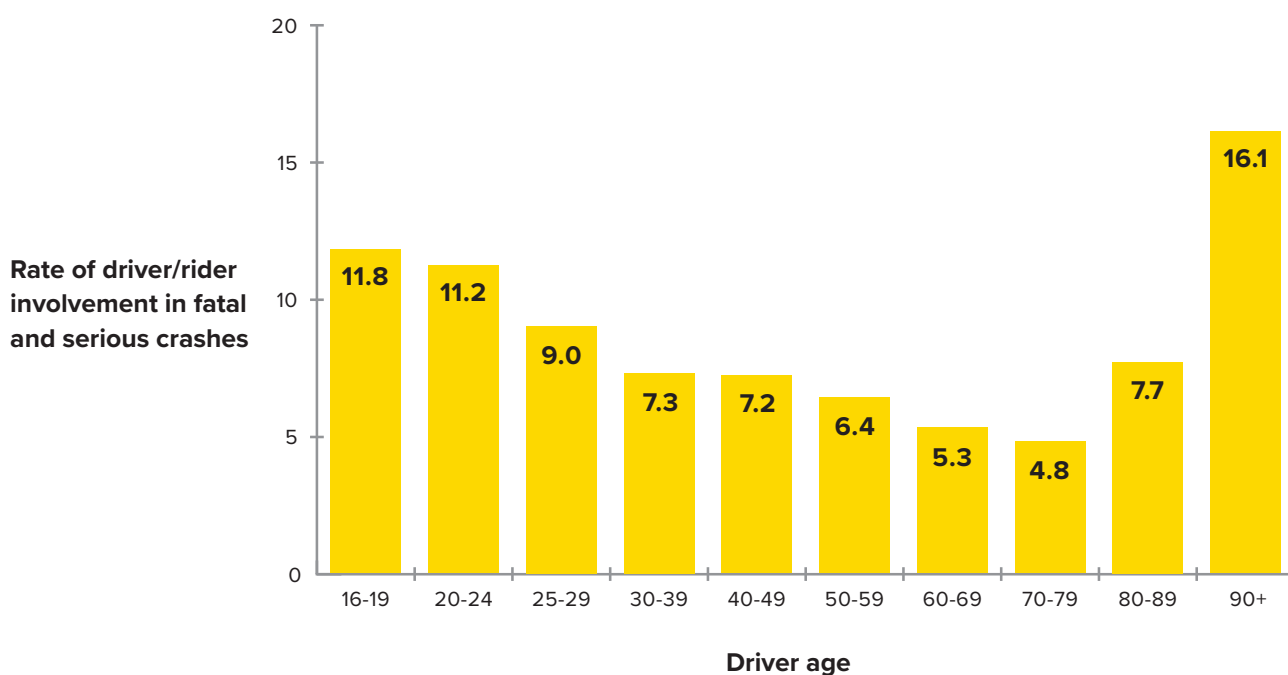
OLDER ROAD USERS

Older road users (70+) make up 13% of the population yet account for 23% of all lives lost and 13% of serious injuries. Older drivers are involved in a small number of crashes, however these crashes are of higher severity due to the frailty of these older users. As drivers get older they are more likely to be responsible for the crash they are involved in. As seen in the graph below a drivers rate of involvement in a serious crash reduces until around the age of 80, when it rises sharply. For pedestrians their rate of death or serious injury increases after the around the age of 70.



FIGURE 9

Rate of driver/rider involvement in crashes resulting in lives lost and serious injury per 10,000 licences held by age group, South Australia, 2015–2019



WORK-RELATED TRAVEL

Safe Work Australia data indicates that more workers lose their lives as a result of vehicle-related incidents than any other cause of work related death. It has been estimated that work-related road crashes in Australia account for approximately half of all occupational lives lost and 15% of lives lost nationally. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2018, light passenger vehicles were driven 2,344 million kilometres for work travel (excluding the commute) in South Australia.



HEAVY VEHICLES

Heavy vehicles require more room to make turns and their blind spots are much larger than light vehicles. Light vehicle drivers are generally responsible for most casualty crashes involving a heavy vehicle.

Heavy vehicles are involved in an average of 18 fatal and 43 serious injury crashes per year in South Australia. Heavy vehicles represent 7% of the kilometres travelled across the State, yet they were involved in 20% of crashes where lives were lost and 7% of serious injuries.

Have your say

Have your say by:

- Completing the online survey at www.yoursay.sa.gov.au/sa-road-safety-strategy
- Emailing us at DIT.RoadSafety@sa.gov.au

Sharing the link to this page can encourage your friends, family and others to provide their input.

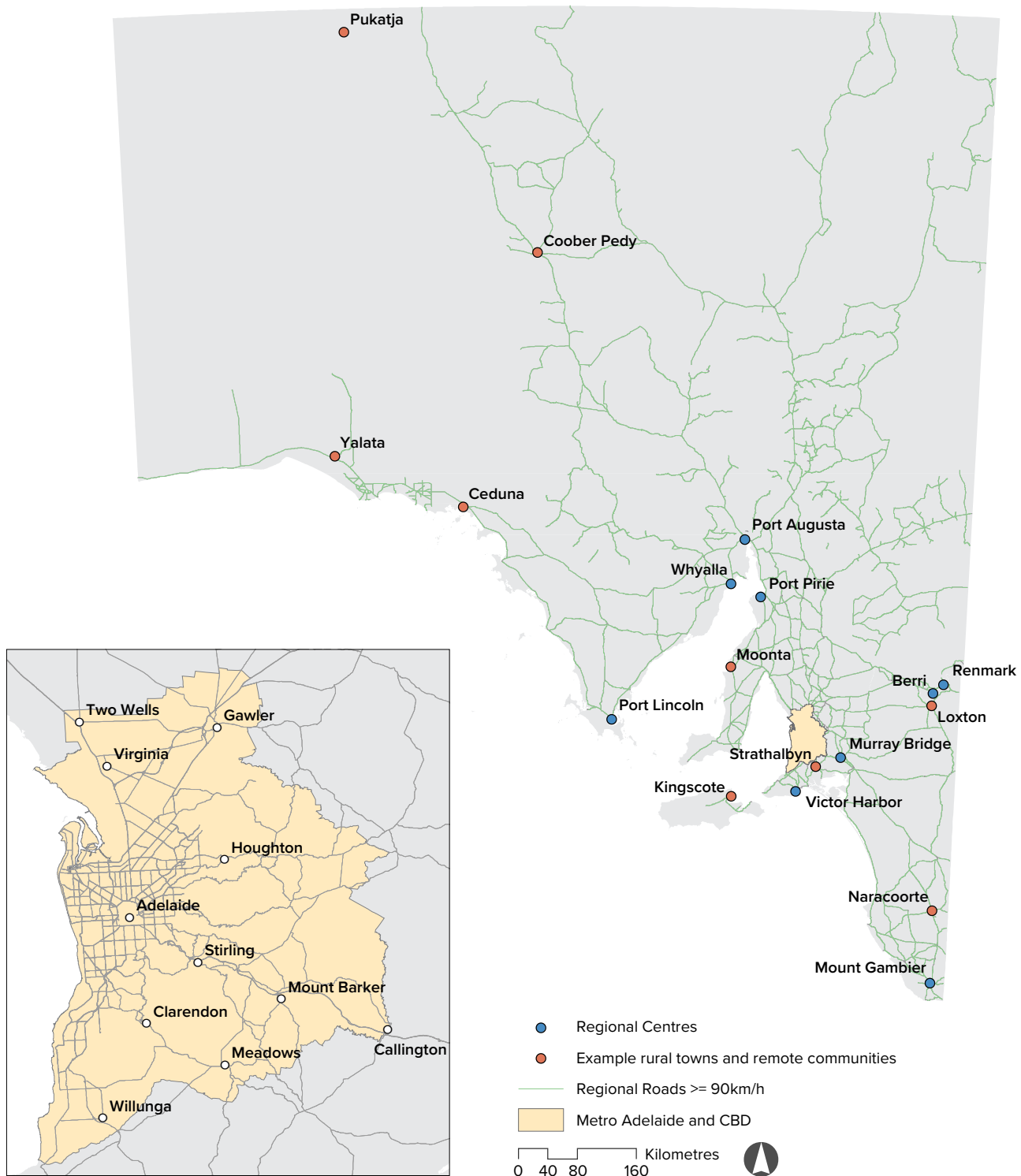
More information

For further information about key road safety data visit www.towardszerotogether.sa.gov.au/road_crash_facts.

Appendix

APPENDIX 1

Example – 4 Areas Map





Definitions

Metropolitan Adelaide and the CBD

The Metropolitan and CBD area extends from Roseworthy in the north, to Sellicks Hill in the South, and Harrogate in the East.

Regional Roads

A regional road is defined as a road speed limited at 90 km/h or above, in the rural area and that connect Metropolitan Adelaide, Regional Centres, Rural Towns and Remote Communities.

Regional Centres

Population over 10,000 or a population density of more than 300 people per km².

Rural Towns and Remote Communities

Rural Towns and Remote Communities are defined as population less than 10,000 or a population density of less than 300 people per km² and having a speed limit 80km/h or less.

ⁱ 2019 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data online at:

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/injury/injury-indigenous-aus-transport-2010-11-2014-15/contents/table-of-contents>