

# Road Traffic Fatalities

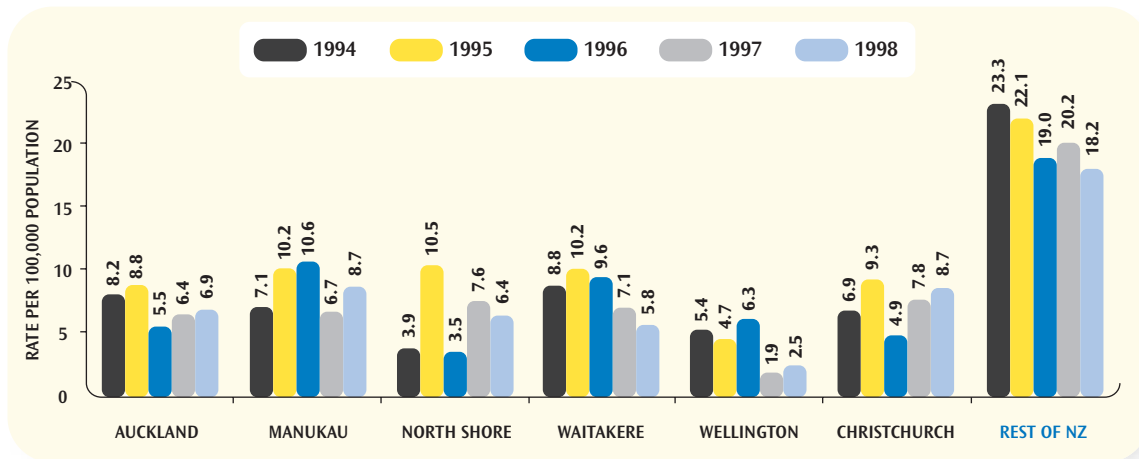
## What this is about...

The increasing numbers of cars on city roads brings greater risk of injury and fatality from motor vehicle incidents. The six largest cities in New Zealand are designed around motor vehicles, increasing the risks for pedestrians and cyclists. Measuring road traffic fatalities per 100,000 population helps assess this risk for occupants of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.

## What did we find ?

- Nationally, traffic fatalities are falling - 508 people died on New Zealand roads in 1999 compared to 729 in 1990.
- The graph indicates that the rate of road fatalities within the six cities is variable between 1994 and 1998. The highest number of road fatalities within nearly all the cities occurred in 1995.

RATE OF TRAFFIC FATALITIES PER 100,000 POPULATION, BY CITY (1994 TO 1998)<sup>154</sup>



Data Source: Land Transport and Safety Authority

Rates may be higher in the rest of New Zealand due to the higher incidence of fatalities on open roads and motorways compared to urban roads.

Overall, more males than females are involved in traffic fatalities. A total of 342 males were involved in traffic fatalities between 1994 and 1998 in the six largest cities compared to 138 females. Of the total number of males fatalities, 142 (42%) were aged between 15 to 24 compared to 40 (29%) females fatalities.

Nationally, young drivers are over-represented in minor, serious and fatal crashes. Figures from driver licence statistics and crash reports indicate that 15 to 19 year old drivers make up 6% of the licensed population, yet between 1996 and 1998 this group accounted for 15% of drivers involved in minor and serious crashes, and 12% of those involved in fatal crashes. The majority of these drivers are male. In 1998, it was estimated that the social cost of crashes where 15 to 24 year old drivers were at fault was about \$650 million (about a quarter of the social cost associated with all injury crashes).<sup>155</sup>

In 1998 it was reported that speeding was the major contributing factor to road crashes, and it contributed to 140 fatalities, 394 serious injury crashes and 1034 minor injury crashes.<sup>156</sup> Other key contributors to fatalities are drinking and driving, and not wearing seat belts. Additional factors include poor observation, failing to give way, poor handling, vehicle factors, weather conditions and fatigue.

154 Rate calculated using 1991 Census data for 1994 to 1995, and 1996 data for 1996 to 1998.

155 Land Transport Safety Authority. Young driver statistics. [www.ltsa.govt.nz](http://www.ltsa.govt.nz)

156 Land Transport Safety Authority. National Speed statistics. [www.ltsa.govt.nz](http://www.ltsa.govt.nz)