

# Pedestrians

## Road crashes in South Australia, 2019-2023

### Overview

Almost everyone at some point is a pedestrian. Pedestrians are known as vulnerable road users as safety risks are heightened because pedestrians are not surrounded by the protection of a vehicle. In the event of a crash, pedestrians are at greater risk of death or serious injury if hit at impact speeds above 30km/h<sup>1</sup>. The most vulnerable to injury or death in a crash are children and older people<sup>2</sup>.

In South Australia there were 70 pedestrian lives lost and 361 serious injuries over the past five years (2019-2023), representing approximately 14% of all road deaths and about 9% of all serious injuries.

<sup>1</sup>[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294330064\\_Proposed\\_vehicle\\_impact\\_speed\\_severe\\_injury\\_probability\\_relationships\\_for\\_selected\\_crash\\_types](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294330064_Proposed_vehicle_impact_speed_severe_injury_probability_relationships_for_selected_crash_types)

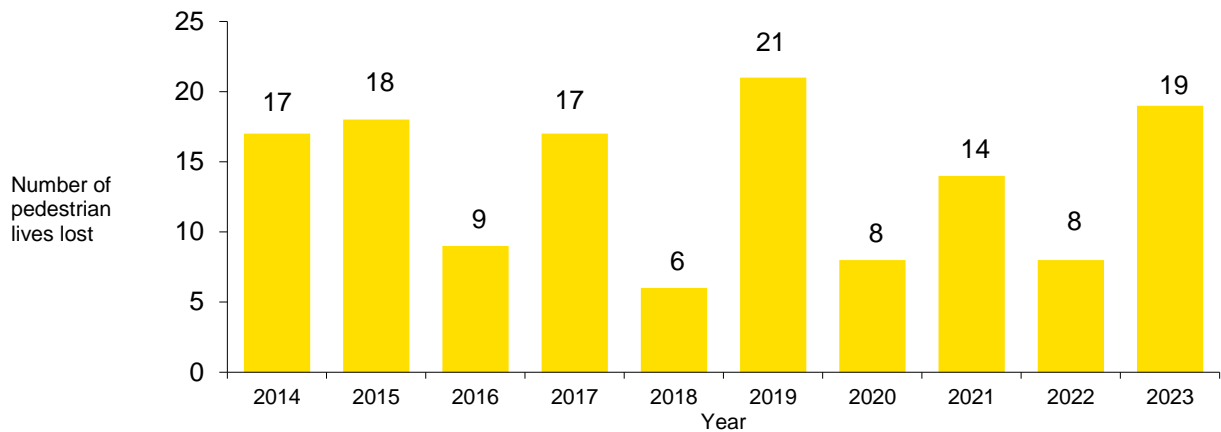
<sup>2</sup><https://www.victoriawalks.org.au/Assets/Files/Understanding-Pedestrian-Crashes.pdf>

**Note:** People using wheelchairs, motorised wheelchairs and gopher/mobility scooters are considered pedestrians and are included as pedestrians in this document. Separate reporting on personal mobility device (PMD) users will commence from 2025 to monitor and provide evidence for the design of the most effective interventions.

Between 2019 and 2023 around one in every seven road deaths in South Australia was a pedestrian. In addition to lives lost, there are on average 72 pedestrians seriously injured and 173 who received minor injuries on South Australian roads each year.

Figure 1 shows the number of pedestrian lives lost per year from 2014 to 2023. The number of pedestrian lives lost annually has fluctuated in the last 10 years. 19 pedestrians lost their lives in 2023. In comparison 21 pedestrians were killed in 2019, the highest number in the past 10 years. Over the last five years an average of 14 pedestrians were killed each year.

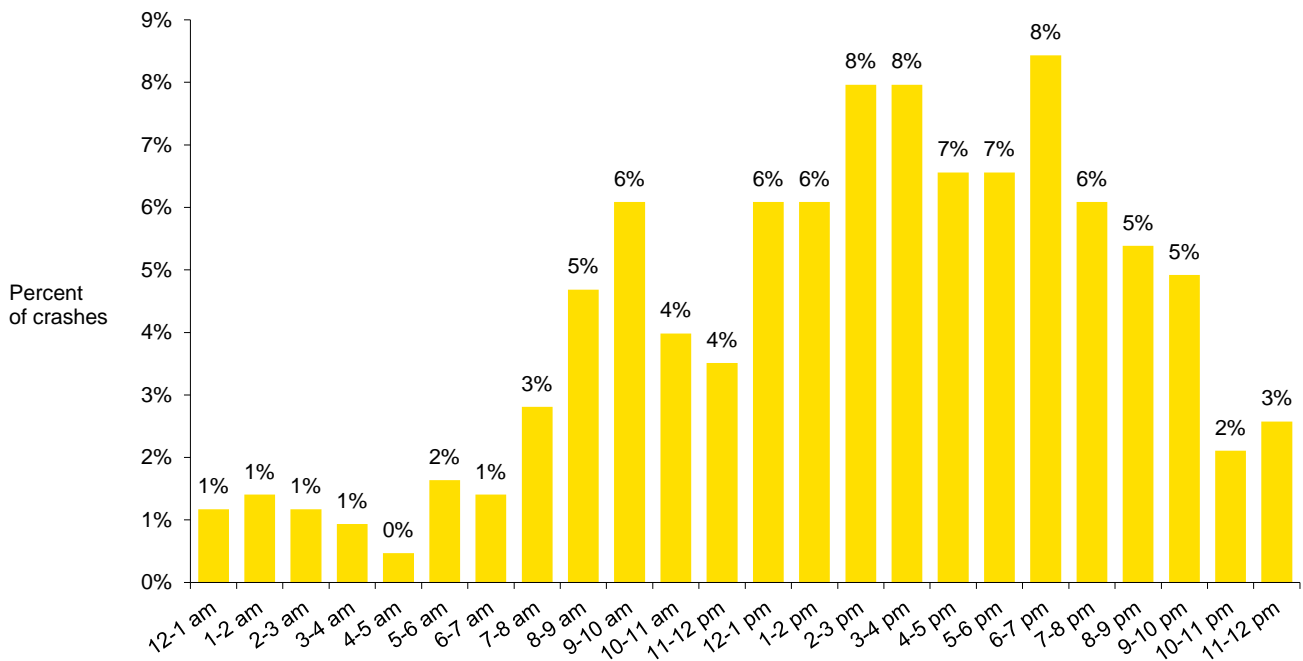
**Figure 1: Pedestrian lives lost per year, South Australia, 2014-2023**



**Time of day**

Crashes resulting in a life lost or serious injury to a pedestrian occur during all times of the day, however there are peak times when the number of lives lost and serious injuries are particularly high. More than a quarter (29%) of all crashes resulting in a life lost or serious injury to a pedestrian were during the hours of 2pm and 6pm (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Percentage of life lost and serious injury crashes involving a pedestrian by time of day, South Australia, 2019-2023**



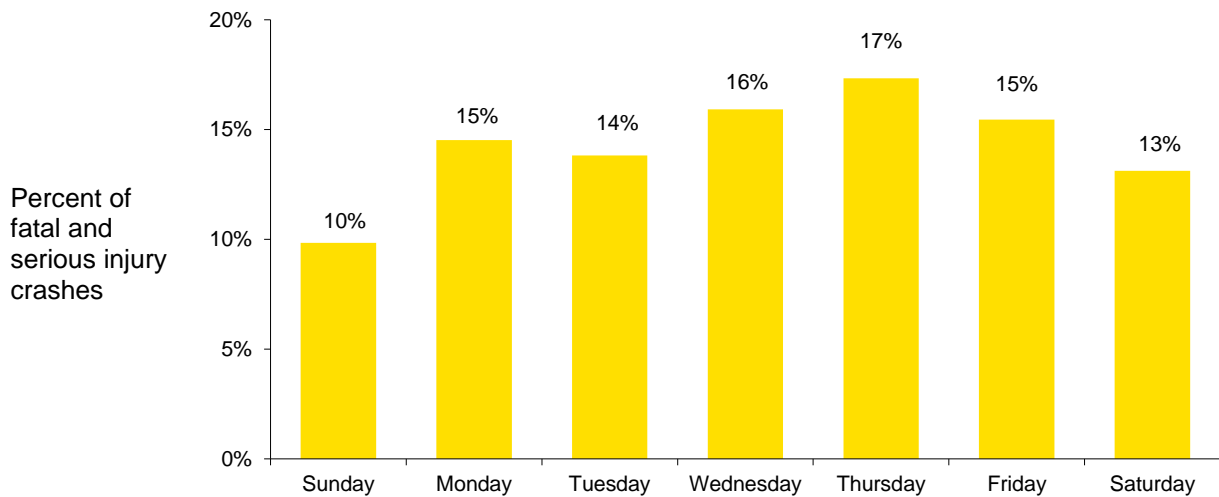
The risk of a crash involving a pedestrian resulting in a life lost or serious injury outcome increases substantially at night. 27% of casualty crashes involving a pedestrian occur during the hours of 6pm to 6am and of these 46% resulted in a life lost or serious injury. By comparison, of the 935 casualty crashes that occurred during day light hours (6am to 6pm), more than a quarter (29%) resulted in a life lost or serious injury as illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Percentage of casualty crashes in which a pedestrian was hit by time of day and severity, South Australia, 2019-2023**

Time	Minor injury crash	Life lost and serious injury crash	Total casualty crashes
6am - 6pm	71%	29%	935
6pm - 6am	54%	46%	340

Figure 3 shows the frequency of lives lost and serious injury pedestrian crashes by weekday and indicates the lowest number of crashes occur on a Sunday, and the spread across weekdays is relatively even.

**Figure 3: Percentage of lives lost and serious injury crashes involving a pedestrian by weekday, South Australia, 2019-2023**



**Metropolitan/regional**

Between 2019 and 2023, 83% of all lives lost and serious injury crashes involving a pedestrian in South Australia occurred in metropolitan areas. This is correlated to the higher volume of pedestrians and traffic. Pedestrian crashes accounted for 14% of all lives lost and serious injury crashes in the metropolitan area, compared to 5% in regional South Australia.

Table 2 shows the 10 Local Government Areas with the highest number of pedestrian life lost or serious injury crashes which have occurred over the past five years. These crashes represent 65% of all lives lost or serious injury crashes involving a pedestrian between 2019 and 2023.

**Table 2: Local Government Areas with the highest number of lives lost and serious injury crashes involving a pedestrian, South Australia, 2019-2023**

Local Government Area	Live lost or serious injury pedestrian crashes
Port Adelaide Enfield (C)	42
Adelaide (C)	42
Onkaparinga (C)	32
Playford (C)	31
Marion (C)	30
Norwood Payneham St Peters (C)	27
West Torrens (C)	19
Charles Sturt (C)	19
Campbelltown (C)	18
Salisbury (C)	17

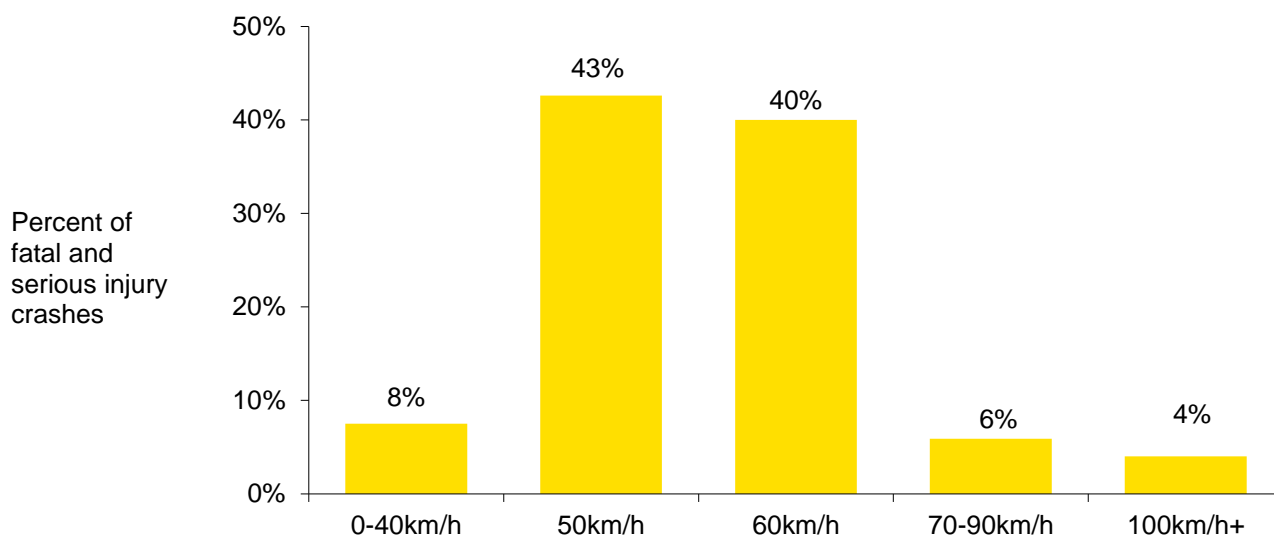
### Speed limit of road

There is evidence that small reductions in urban travel speeds can markedly reduce the number of pedestrian crashes resulting in a life lost. On 1 March 2003, the default urban speed limit in South Australia was reduced from 60km/h to 50km/h. Studies found that on roads where the speed limit was reduced from 60km/h to 50km/h the average travelling speed fell by 2.3km/h in the first year since the 50km/h default speed limit was introduced. The number of casualty crashes fell by 24%, and the number of hit pedestrian casualty crashes decreased by 21% in the three years after the limit was reduced to 50km/h<sup>1</sup>.

Between 2019 and 2023, 43% of all crashes resulting in a life lost or serious injury involving a pedestrian in South Australia occurred on roads with a 50km/h speed limit and a further 40% were on roads with a 60km/h speed limit (Figure 4).

<sup>1</sup> From the report 'Further evaluation of the South Australian default 50km/h speed limit' CN Kloeden, JE Woolley, AJ McLean CASR report serious CASR034, December 2006

**Figure 4: Percentage of life lost and serious injury crashes involving a pedestrian by speed limit of road, South Australia, 2019-2023**



### Pedestrian crossings and traffic signals

In the past five years, the majority of pedestrian lives lost and serious injury crashes (72%) occurred at mid-block sections of road (i.e. where there are no intersecting roads). The remaining 20% occurred at intersections with 4% of these occurring at pedestrian crossings.

The majority (56%) of pedestrian lives lost and serious injury crashes that occurred at intersections occurred where there was no pedestrian crossing or traffic control device present (Table 3). Attempting to cross the road where there are no traffic control facilities is more risky when pedestrians are impaired by the presence of alcohol or drugs. Younger and older people can also have difficulty making speed and gap judgements when crossing roads.

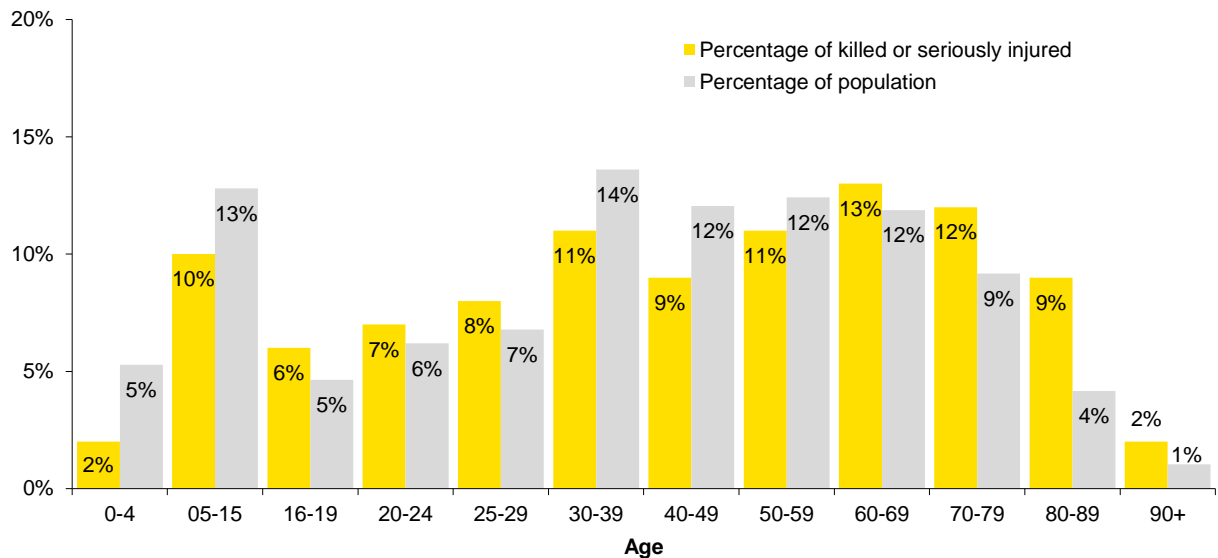
**Table 3: Life lost and serious injury crashes at intersections involving a pedestrian, by traffic control, South Australia, 2019-2023**

Intersection control	Life lost and serious injury crashes	Percent
Traffic signals	50	42%
No control	45	38%
Give way sign	10	8%
Stop sign	8	7%
Roundabout	5	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Pedestrian age

Figure 5 shows the percentage of pedestrians killed or seriously injured by age group along with the proportion of the population<sup>2</sup> they represent. This indicates that 60+ age group are the most over-represented.

**Figure 5: Percentage of pedestrians lives lost or seriously injured by age groups and population proportion, South Australia, 2019-2023**



Elderly pedestrians have an elevated risk of injury from a collision due to the perceptual, cognitive and physical deterioration associated with ageing. If an older person is hit by a car, the outcome is likely to be more severe resulting in a life lost or serious injury. The higher involvement of older people in pedestrian deaths is indicative of the relative frailty of older people. Many elderly people also have a greater reliance on walking and are therefore more likely to be exposed to traffic as pedestrians than younger age groups<sup>3</sup>.

Younger pedestrians are generally smaller and therefore harder for drivers to see and tend to be less predictable than other pedestrians. Children are also more likely to have serious injuries when hit by a car because their whole body is more likely to be hit by the vehicle frontage, compared with adult pedestrians whose legs are more likely to be hit and the upper body thrown up onto the bonnet<sup>4</sup>.

Figures 6 and 7 shows the number of pedestrian serious injuries and lives lost per 100,000 South Australian population in each respective age group and highlights that the most over-represented pedestrian casualties are in the 70+ age groups.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Demographic Statistics, Cat no. 3101.0', Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories, June 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Page 203 of 'Road Safety in Australia. A publication commemorating World Health Day 2004' Australian Transport Safety Bureau.

<sup>4</sup> <https://casr.adelaide.edu.au/publications/list/?id=230>

Figure 6: Pedestrian serious injuries per 100,000 population<sup>5</sup> by age, South Australia, 2019-2023

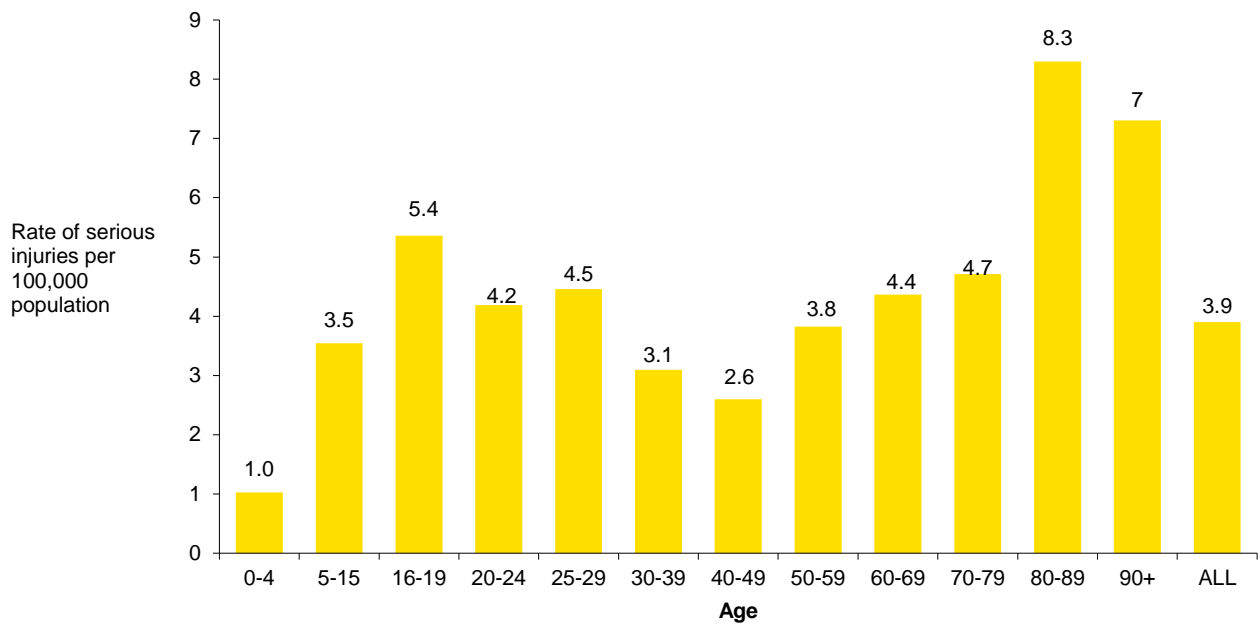
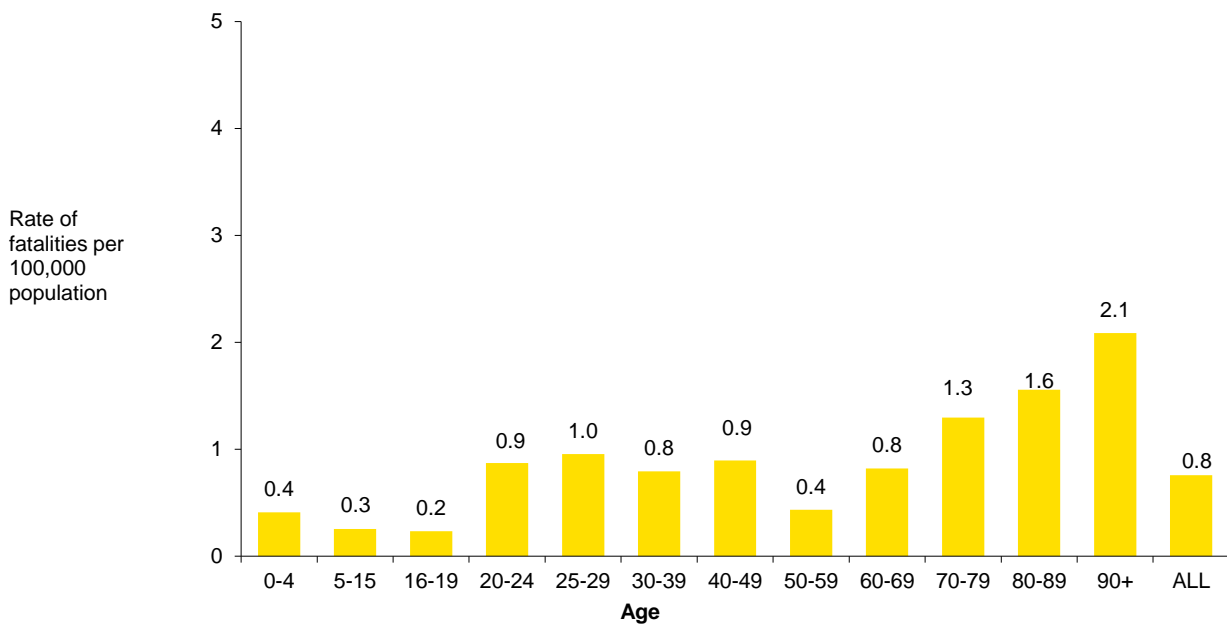


Figure 7: Pedestrian lives lost per 100,000 population by age, South Australia, 2019-2023

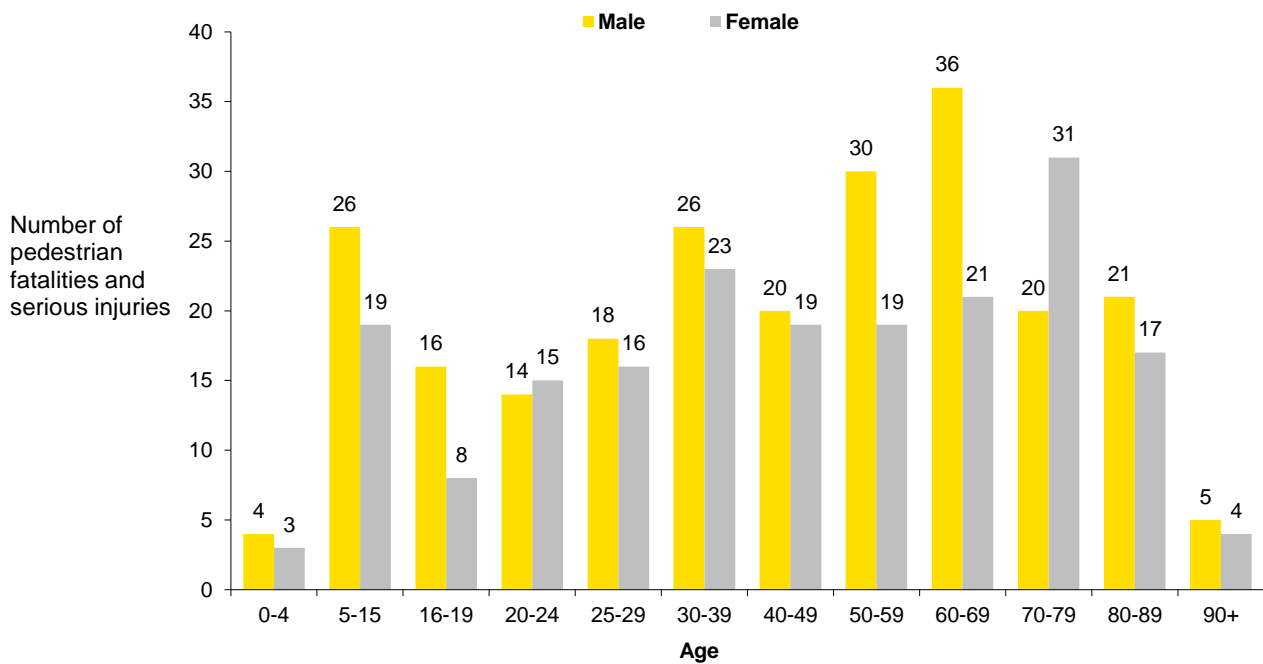


<sup>5</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Demographic Statistics, Cat no. 3101.0', Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories, June 2022.

### Sex<sup>6</sup> of pedestrians

Figure 8 shows that over the last five years a higher proportion of male pedestrians have lost their life or been seriously injured than female pedestrians. Of the total number of pedestrians killed and seriously injured between 2019 and 2023, 55% were male and 45% were female. This is reflective of all road crashes, where males are over-represented in serious casualties. Even though males represent the majority of pedestrian lives lost and serious injuries for 20 to 69 year olds, the difference is less prominent for the older and very young age groups.

**Figure 8: Pedestrian serious casualties by age group and sex, South Australia, 2019-2023**



### Pedestrians affected by alcohol

The consumption of alcohol by a pedestrian can also impair their ability to safely negotiate roads and traffic. Of the pedestrian deaths that were tested between 2019 and 2023, 31% were found to have a BAC of 0.05 or above.

<sup>6</sup>Sex as captured by SAPOL officer or as recorded in the Department’s registration and licensing system (TRUMPS). Gender data is not currently collected.



## Electric powered scooters (e-scooters)

Table 4 shows the number of e-scooter rider casualties in the past five years by severity of injury. In South Australia there were 19 e-scooter rider serious injuries and 41 minor injuries between 2019 and 2023. However, there were no lives lost for the e-scooter riders over the past five years.

Of the 60 e-scooter rider casualties (serious and minor injuries) occurred over the past five years, 72% were male and 28% were females. More than half (57%) of the e-scooter rider casualties were in the 25 to 49 age group.

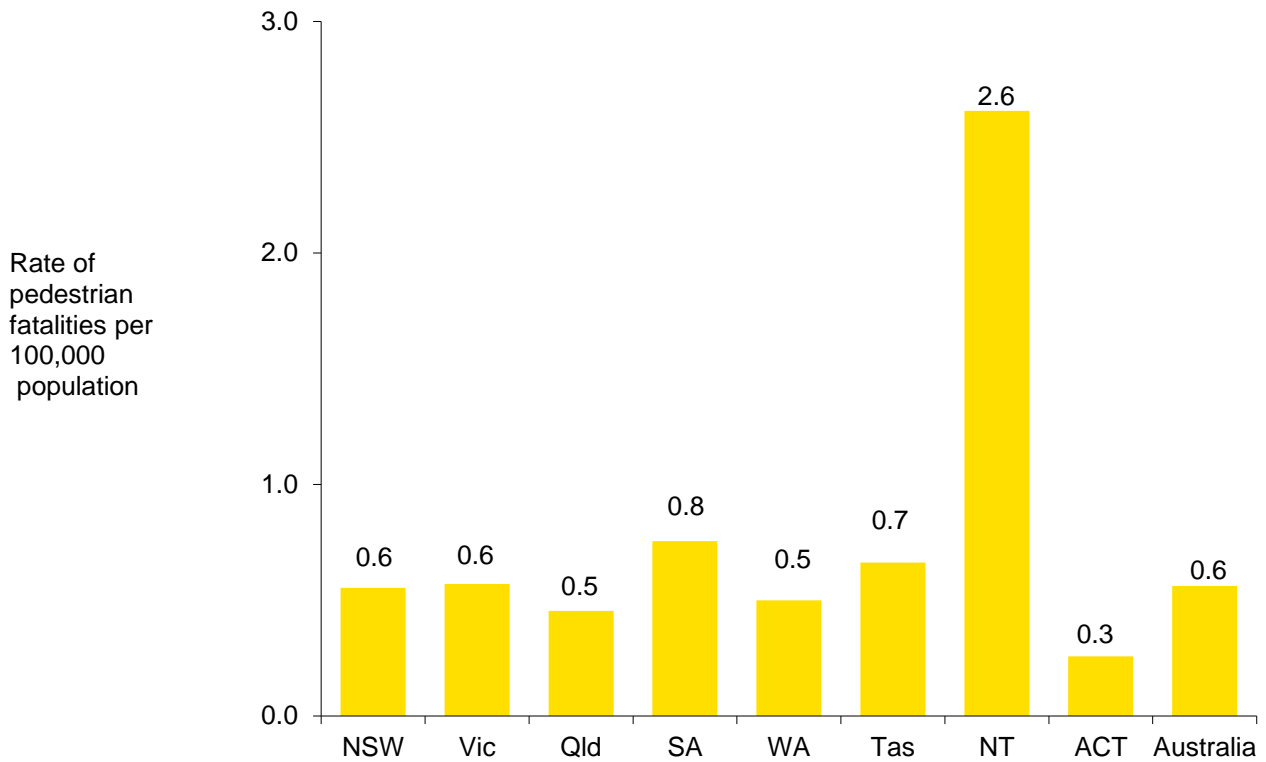
**Table 4: E-scooter casualties, South Australia, 2019-2023**

Year	E-scooters serious injuries	E-scooters minor injuries	Total casualties
2019	1	6	7
2020	2	2	4
2021	6	8	14
2022	2	10	12
2023	8	15	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>5-year average</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>

**National comparison**

Figure 9 shows the average rate of lives lost per 100,000 population between 2019 and 2023 for Australian states and territories. South Australia’s rate of 0.8 pedestrian deaths per 100,000 population is slightly higher than the rate of 0.6 deaths for Australia.

**Figure 9: Pedestrian lives lost<sup>7</sup> rates per 100,000 population for states and territories, 2019-2023**



<sup>7</sup> Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, Australian Road Deaths Database – ARDD  
[https://www.bitre.gov.au/statistics/safety/fatal\\_road\\_crash\\_database](https://www.bitre.gov.au/statistics/safety/fatal_road_crash_database)

**Definitions of police reported casualty types:**

**Casualty crash** – crash where at least one life lost, serious injury or minor injury occurs.

**Casualty** – A life lost, serious injury or minor injury.

**Fatal crash** – A crash for which there is at least one life lost.

**Life lost** – A person who dies within 30 days of a crash as a result of injuries sustained in that crash.

**Serious injury crash** – A non-fatal crash in which at least one person is seriously injured.

**Serious injury** – A person who sustains injuries and is admitted to hospital for a minimum period of an overnight stay as a result of a road crash and who does not die as a result of those injuries within 30 days of the crash.

**Minor injury crash** – A crash in which at least one person sustains injury but no person is seriously injured or dies within 30 days of the crash.

**Minor injury** – A person who sustains injuries that require medical treatment, either by a doctor or in a hospital, as a result of a road crash and who was not admitted to hospital and who does not die as a result of those injuries within 30 days of the crash.

**Data sources**

The data presented in this report was obtained from the Department for Infrastructure and Transport Road Crash Database. The information was compiled from police reported road casualty crashes only.

**Note-** Percentage totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

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