

# Pedestrians

## Involved in Road Crashes in South Australia 2017-2021

### Overview

Almost everyone is a pedestrian at some time and as such, is a vulnerable road user. Risks to safety are heightened because pedestrians are not surrounded by the protection of a vehicle and in the event of a crash, are more susceptible to the possibility of death or serious injury. As a pedestrian we are at greater risk of death and injury if hit at impact speeds above 30 km/h. The most vulnerable are children and older people.

Over the last five years (2017-2021) around 1 in every 7 road deaths in South Australia was a pedestrian. In addition to lives lost, there are on average 64 pedestrians seriously injured and 206 who received minor injuries on South Australian roads each year. Please note that users of wheelchairs, motorised wheelchairs and gopher/mobility scooters are also considered pedestrians and are included as pedestrians in this document.

**Figure 1: Pedestrian lives lost per year, South Australia, 2012-2021**

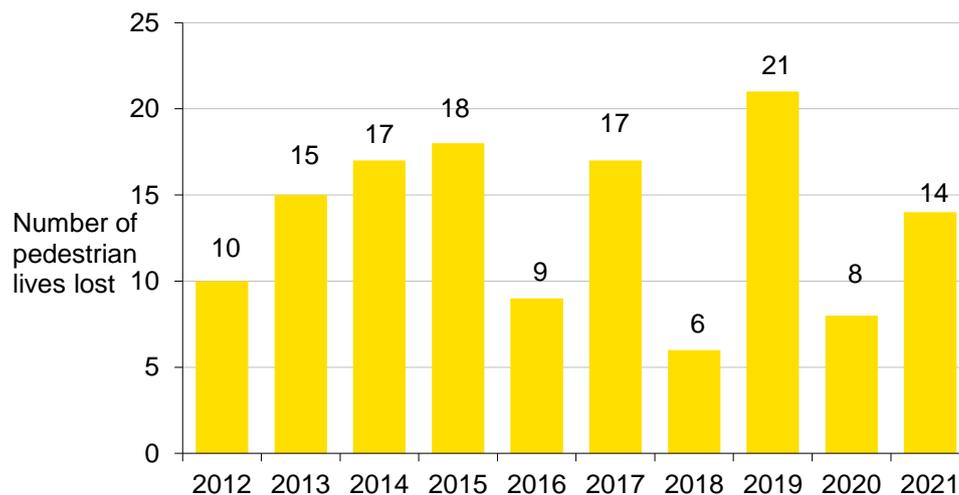


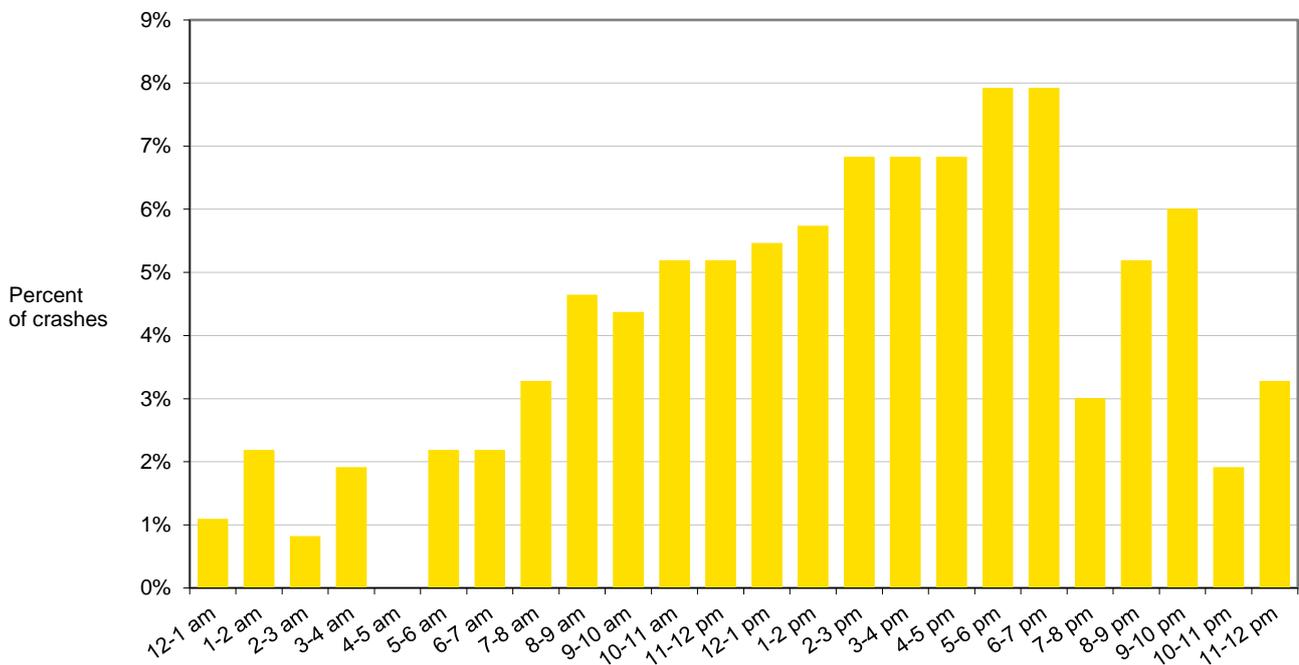
Figure 1 shows the number of pedestrian lives lost per year for the period 2011-2021. Whilst in the last ten years the number of pedestrian lives lost have fluctuated, in previous year (2019), 21 pedestrians were

killed. That was the highest number in the past 10 years and more than three times pedestrian lives lost from the previous year. Over the past five years an average of 13 pedestrians are killed each year.

**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 is particularly high. Nearly one quarter of all crashes resulting in a life lost or serious injury to a pedestrian were during the hours of 2 pm and 6 pm.

**Figure 2: Percentage of life lost and serious injury crashes involving a pedestrian by time of day, South Australia, 2017-2021**



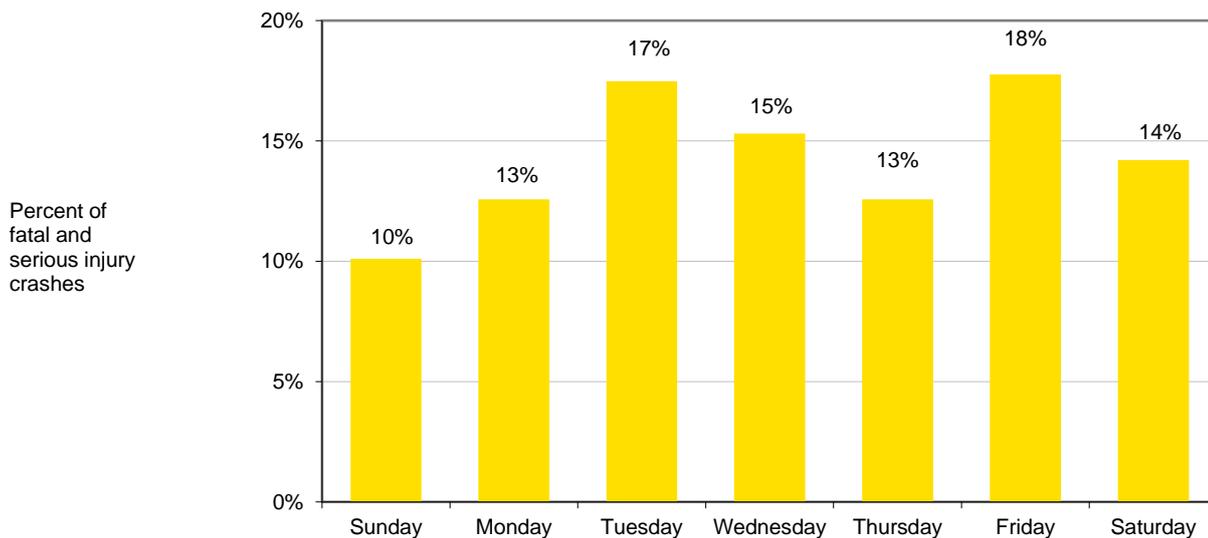
The risk of a crash involving a pedestrian resulting in a life lost serious injury outcome increases substantially at night. 28% of casualty crashes occur during the hours of 6pm to 6am and of these 35% resulted in a life lost or serious injury. By comparison, of the casualty crashes that occurred during day light hours (6am to 6pm), a quarter (25%) 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, 2017-2021**

Time	Minor injury crash	Life lost and serious injury crash	Total
6am - 6pm	75%	25%	100%
6pm - 6am	65%	35%	100%

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 with the highest number occurring on a Tuesday and Friday.

**Figure 3: Percentage of lives lost and serious injury crashes involving a pedestrian by weekday, South Australia, 2017-2021**



**Rural / Metropolitan**

For the 5 year period 2017-2021, 84% of all lives lost and serious injury crashes involving a pedestrian in South Australia occurred in metropolitan areas. This is not surprising given 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 rural South Australia.

Table 2 shows the Local Government Areas where the highest number of pedestrian life lost or serious injury crashes occurred over the past 5 years. These crashes represent 59% of all lives lost or serious injury crashes for the period 2017-2021.

**Table 2: Local Government Areas with the highest number of lives lost and serious injury crashes involving a pedestrian, South Australia, 2017-2021**

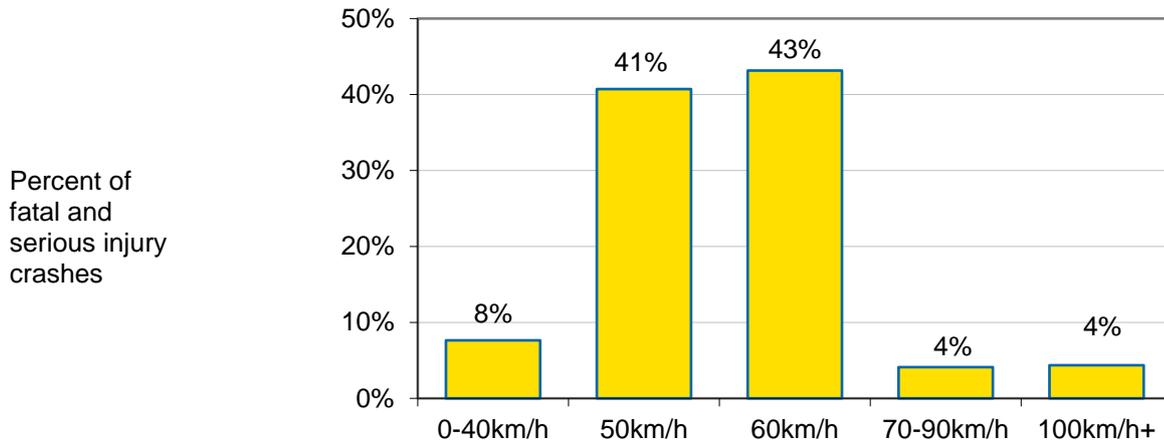
Local Government Area	Lives lost or serious injury pedestrian crashes
Adelaide	38
Port Adelaide Enfield	37
Onkaparinga	27
Charles Sturt	24
West Torrens	23
Playford	22
Norwood Payneham St Peters	20
Marion	17
Salisbury	16
Unley	13

### 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 60 km/h to 50 km/h. Studies found that on roads where the speed limit was reduced from 60 km/h to 50km/h the average travelling speed fell by 2.3km/h in the first year the 50 km/h default limit was introduced and the number of people injured in crashes fell by 24%. The number of hit pedestrian casualty crashes decreased by 21% in the 3 years after the limit was reduced to 50 km/h<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> From the report 'Further evaluation of the South Australian default 50 km/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, 2017-2021**



During the years 2017-2021, 41% of all crashes resulting in a life lost or serious injury involving a pedestrian in South Australia occurred on roads with a 50 km/h speed limit and a further 43% were on roads with a 60 km/h speed limit. This is to be expected as most of the pedestrian activity would occur on these metropolitan area roads.

### **Pedestrian Crossings and Traffic Signals**

In the past 5 years, the majority of pedestrian lives lost and serious injury (70%) occurred at mid-block sections of road (i.e. where there are no intersecting roads). The remaining 30% occur at intersections with only about 3% of all these occurred at pedestrian crossings.

The majority (64%) of pedestrian lives lost and serious injury crashes that occurred at intersections occurred where there was no pedestrian crossing or traffic control device present. Attempting to cross the road where there is 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 control, South Australia, 2017–2021**

Intersection Control	Life lost and serious injury crashes	Percent
Traffic signals	40	36%
No control	44	40%
Stop sign	13	12%
Give way sign	13	12%
Roundabout	1	1%
Total	<b>111</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Pedestrians Affected by Alcohol and/or Other Drugs**

The consumption of alcohol or drugs by a pedestrian can also impair their ability to safely negotiate roads and traffic. Of the pedestrian deaths that were tested between 2017 and 2021, 41% were found to have a BAC of more than 0.05.

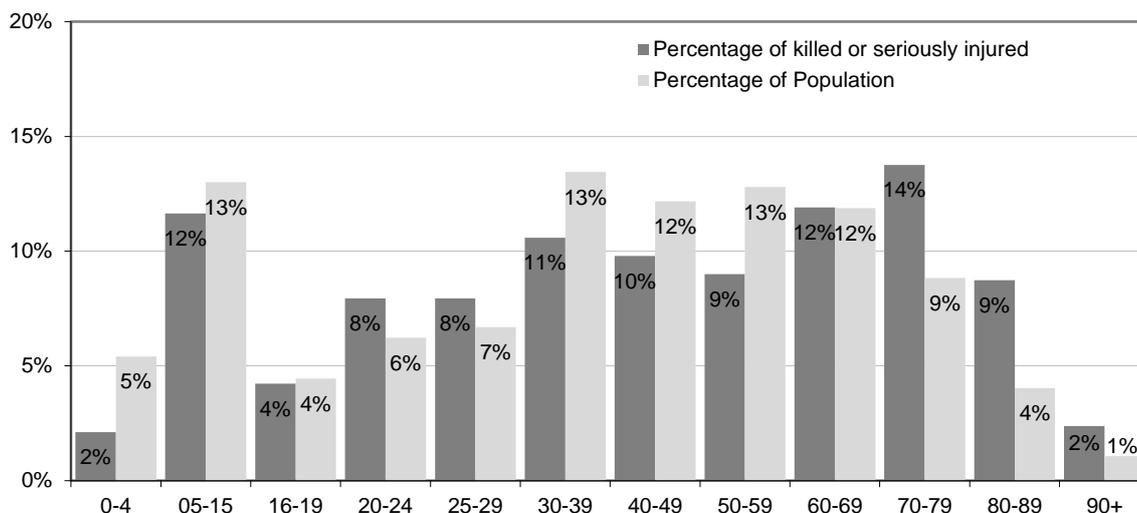
Of the pedestrian road deaths who were tested for drugs, 16% tested positive to THC, MDMA, methamphetamine or a combination of these drugs.

### **Age of Pedestrians**

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 70+ age group are the most over-represented.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Demographic Statistics, Cat no. 3101.0', Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories, Dec 2021.

**Figure 5: Percentage of pedestrians killed or seriously injured by age group and population proportion, South Australia, 2017-2021**



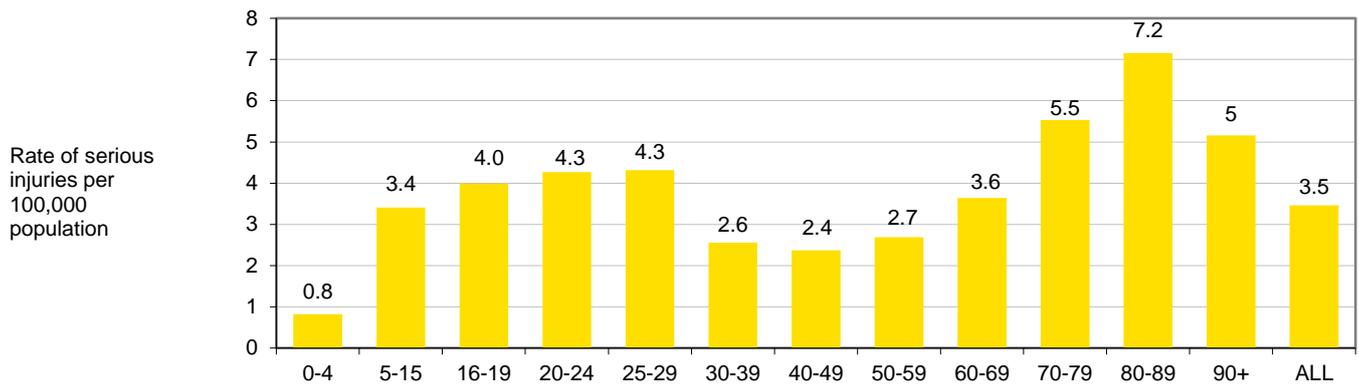
Elderly pedestrians have an elevated risk of injury from a collision due to the perceptual, cognitive and physical deterioration associated with ageing. If an older person is hit by a car, the outcome is likely to be more severe resulting in a life lost or serious injury. The higher involvement of older 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.

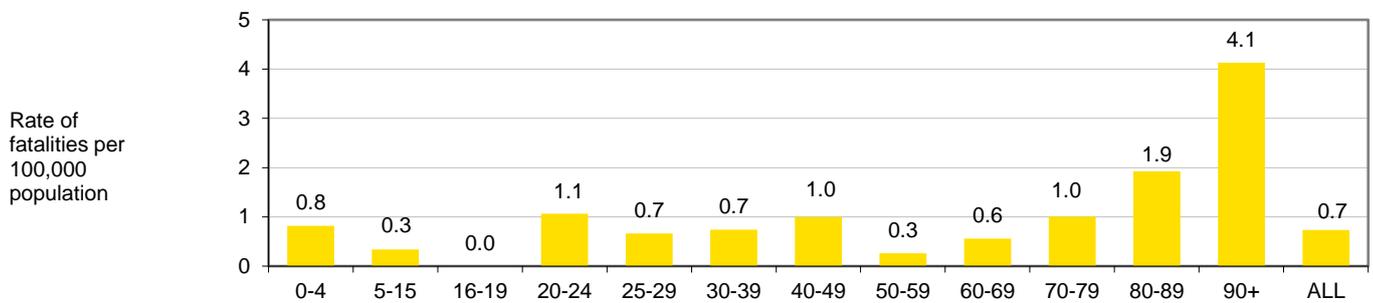
Figures 6 and 7 show the number of pedestrian serious injuries and lives lost per 100,000 population in each respective age group and highlights that the most over-represented pedestrian casualties are in the 70+ age groups.

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

**Figure 6: Pedestrian serious injuries per 100,000 population<sup>4</sup> by age, South Australia, 2017-2021**



**Figure 7 – Pedestrian lives lost per 100,000 population by age, South Australia, 2017-2021**

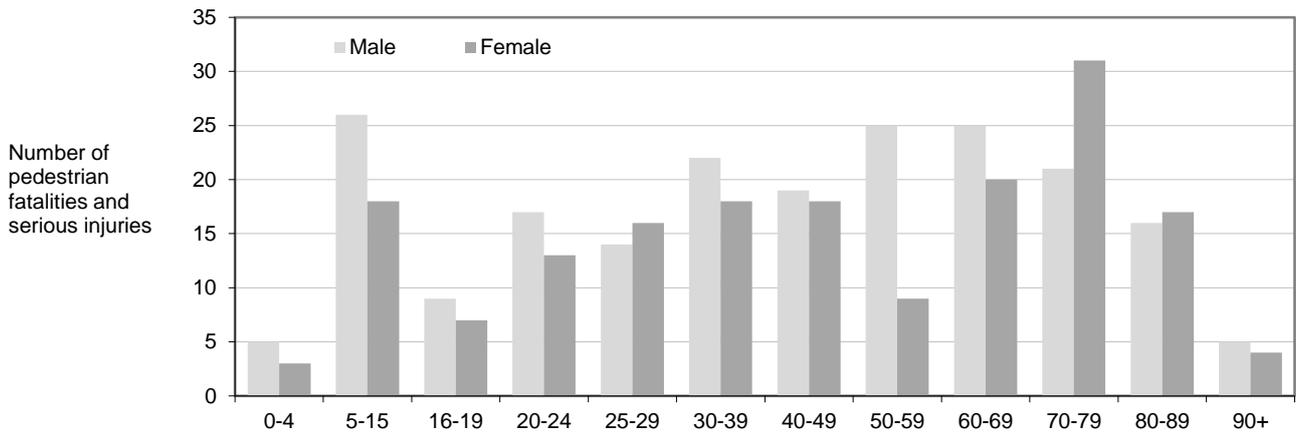


### Gender of Pedestrians

Figure 8 shows that over the last five years a higher proportion of male pedestrians have been involved in lives lost and serious injury crashes than female. Of the total number of pedestrians killed and seriously injured between 2016 and 2020, 59% were male. This is indicative of the overall road toll, where males are over-represented in more serious crashes. Even though males represent the majority of pedestrian lives lost and serious injuries for 20-69 year olds, the difference is less prominent for the older and very young age groups.

<sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Demographic Statistics, Cat no. 3101.0', Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories, Dec 2021.

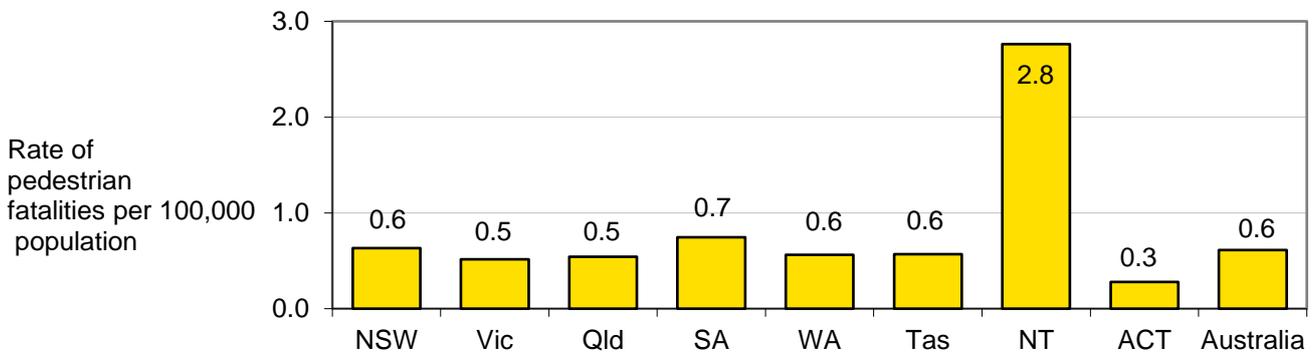
**Figure 8: Pedestrian life lost and serious injury by age group and gender, South Australia, 2016-2020**



**National Comparison**

Figure 9 shows the average rate of lives lost per 100,000 population for the 5 year period 2017-2021 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 0.7 deaths for Australia.

**Figure 9 – Pedestrian Lives lost <sup>5</sup> per 100,000 population for states and territories, 2017-2021**



<sup>5</sup> Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, Road Trauma Australia – 2021 Statistical Summary

## 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 requiring 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.

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## Enquiries

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