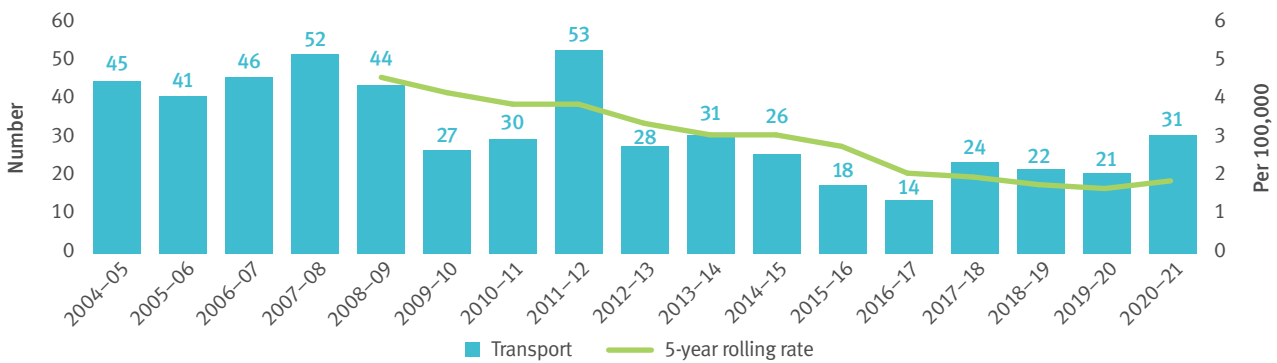


3 Transport-related deaths

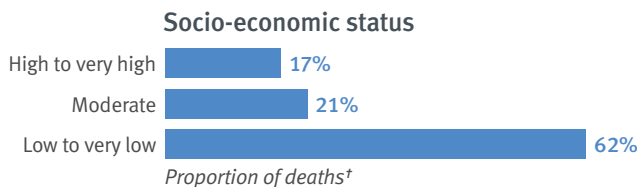
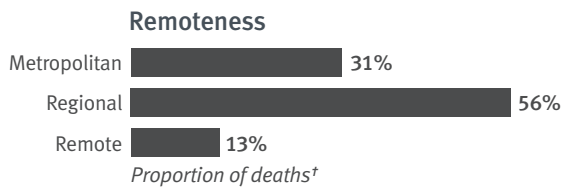
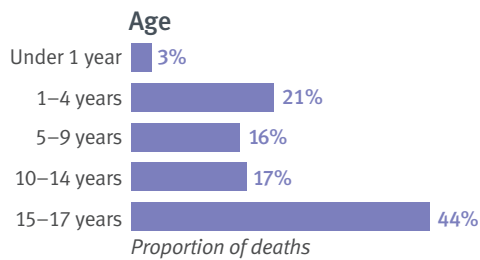
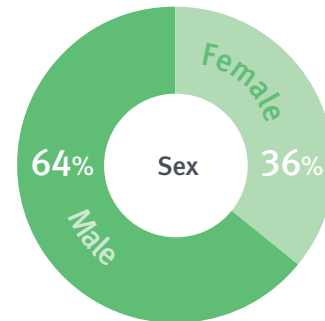
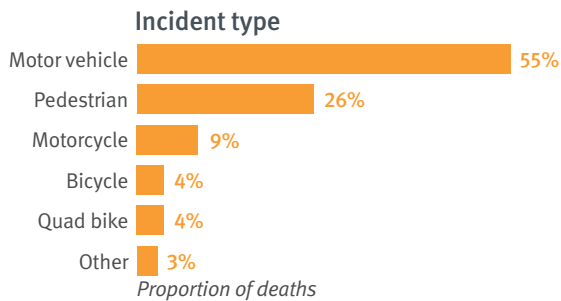
Overview

- 31 deaths from transport-related incidents in 2020–21.
- Over the last 5 years 55% of deaths were in motor vehicle incidents.
- Of the 112 transport-related deaths in the last 5 years, 9 were young people travelling in vehicles identified as stolen.
- Decreasing trend in transport deaths overall; however, 31 deaths this year is the highest number recorded in 7 years.

Transport-related deaths in Queensland



Five-year summary (2016–21)



Risk factors in fatal motor vehicle crashes

56%
excessive speed

47%
no or inappropriate restraint

39%
driver aged ≤18 years with peer passenger/s

35%
inexperienced driver

31%
alcohol or substance use

31%
unlicensed, suspended or disqualified driver

Notes: Counting is by date of death registration. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

† of Qld resident deaths only

Key findings

In 2020–21, the deaths of 31 children and young people from transport-related incidents were recorded in Queensland, representing a 5-year average rate of 1.9 deaths per 100,000 children aged 0–17 years. **Table A.5** in **Appendix A** provides summary data and key characteristics for transport-related deaths in the last 5 years.

The rates of transport-related child fatalities have declined over the last 17 years, with the 5-year rolling rates dropping by 6.6% per year on average. Thirty-one deaths in 2020–21; however, is the highest annual number in the last 7 years.

Nature of transport incidents

During 2020–21, 19 deaths were in motor vehicle crashes, 5 were motorcycle incidents, 4 were pedestrian incidents, 2 were quad bike incidents and 1 was a bicycle incident.

As illustrated in Figure 3.1, over the last 5 years, the majority of transport-related fatalities were motor vehicle deaths (55%) followed by pedestrian deaths (26%).

Figure 3.1: Incident type (proportion), 2016–17 to 2020–21



Notes: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Sex

During 2020–21, 14 female children died from transport-related incidents, compared to 17 male children.

Over the last 5 years, the average annual transport-related mortality rate for males was 1.7 times the rate for females (2.4 per 100,000 males and 1.4 per 100,000 females respectively). Higher rates of death for males has been attributed to, in part, greater risk-taking behaviours displayed by young males—this includes risk-taking behaviours of male drivers.²⁷

Age

Of the 31 transport-related fatalities during 2020–21, 1 was a child aged under 1 year, 5 were of children aged 1–4 years, 4 were of children aged 5–9 years, 5 were of children aged 10–14 years and 16 were of children aged 15–17 years.

Over the last 5 years, children aged 15–17 years followed by 1–4 years had the highest rates of mortality from transport-related incidents compared to children from other age groups (5.3 and 1.8 per 100,000 children in each group respectively, compared to 1.2 per 100,000 children aged 10–14 years and 1.1 per 100,000 children aged 5–9 years).

²⁷ AIHW (2011) *Young Australians: Their health and wellbeing*, cat. no: PHE 140, AIHW, Australian Government.

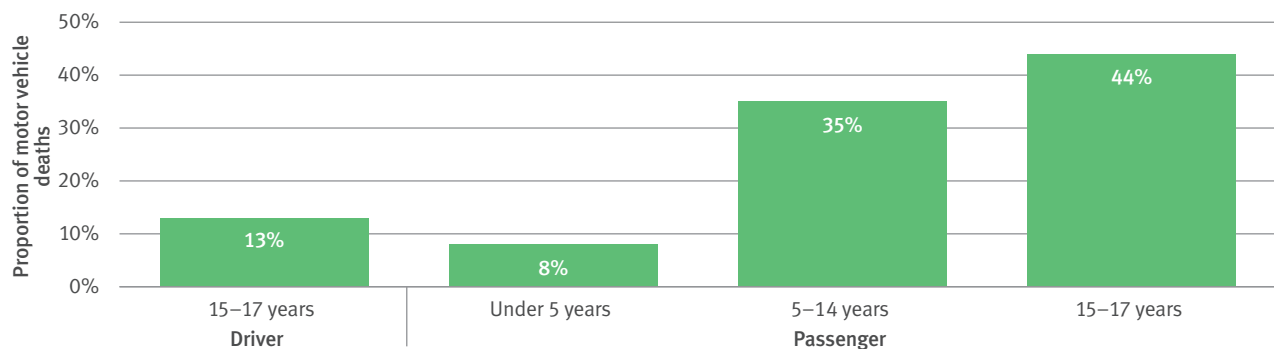
Transport-related characteristics

This section provides information about specific types of transport-related incidents and an overview of charges and criminal proceedings in relation to transport-related fatalities in Queensland.

Motor vehicle incidents

Figure 3.2 illustrates the role of the child or young person in motor vehicle fatalities over the last 5 years. Of the 62 motor vehicle incident deaths, 13% (8) were driving at the time of the incident while 87% (54) were passengers.

Figure 3.2: Motor vehicle incidents by role and age category (proportion), 2016–17 to 2020–21



Multiple fatalities

Of the 17 motor vehicle incidents where 19 children and young people died in 2020–21, 7 incidents involved multiple fatalities (including children and/or adults). One incident resulted in the deaths of 4 children, in 1 incident 2 children died, and in 5 incidents there were adult fatalities in addition to a child fatality.²⁸

Roadway type

Of the 19 children and young people who died in motor vehicle incidents in 2020–21, almost half (8) died on major roads (speed limit between 60 and 100km/hr). However, over the last 5 years, 45% (28 out of 62) of child deaths in motor vehicle crashes occurred on highways (greater than or equal to 100km/hr), compared to 18% on major roads and 16% on residential streets.

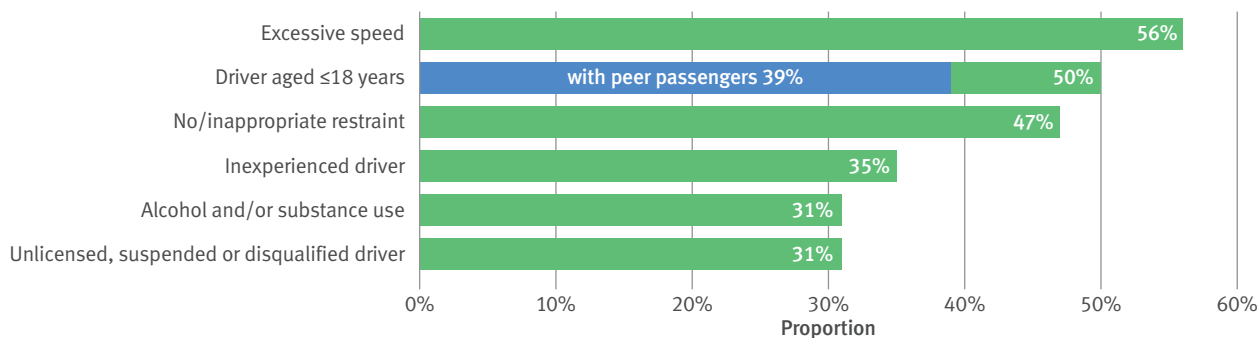
²⁸ Two child deaths in multiple fatality incidents were recorded in 2019–20 based on the date of death registration.

Risk factors associated with motor vehicle crashes

Of the 19 motor vehicle fatalities in 2020–21, 18 were children and young people travelling as passengers. Speeding was identified as a risk factor in just over half of the deaths, coupled with other risk factors such as driver inexperience and alcohol or substance use.

The most common risk factors in motor vehicle crashes over the last 5 years are illustrated in Figure 3.3.²⁹

Figure 3.3: Most common risk factors in motor vehicle incidents (proportion), 2016–17 to 2020–21



Pedestrians

Four children and young people died in pedestrian incidents during 2020–21, with 3 incidents occurring in the context of a low-speed vehicle run-over and 1 during a road or railway crossing.

Over the last 5 years, there have been 29 pedestrian incidents, the majority of which were low-speed vehicle run-overs (55%) followed by road and railway crossings (31%).

‘Low-speed vehicle run-over’ (LSVR) is a term used to describe incidents where a pedestrian is injured or killed by a slow-moving vehicle in a non-traffic area or whilst entering or exiting a traffic area. Most of these incidents involve children under the age of 5. Over the last 5 years there have been 16 LSVR incidents, most commonly occurring at the child’s home or the home of a person known to the child (88%), with the driver most frequently identified as a parent or other close relative (63%).

Children aged between 5–14 years accounted for 5 pedestrian deaths over the 5-year period, 4 of which occurred while travelling on or crossing a roadway. Two deaths involved self-propelled kick scooters.³⁰

Young people aged 15–17 years were identified in 4 deaths, with alcohol and/or substance misuse at the time of the incident identified as the most common risk factor.

²⁹ It should be noted individual transport-related fatalities may have had multiple risk factors present.

³⁰ Incidents involving wheeled toys without the involvement of another motor vehicle are not considered transport accidents. Falls from wheeled toys or collisions with stationary objects are examined in other non-intentional injury. Where a vehicle collides with a child riding a wheeled toy, these incidents are classified as pedestrian incidents.

Motorcycles, quad bikes and bicycles

There were 5 motorcycle deaths in 2020–21. Over the last 5 years, there have been 10 deaths of children and young people riding motorcycles. Almost all of the motorcycles were being driven by the child or young person with excessive speed being identified as the most commonly reported risk factor.

There were 2 quad bike³¹ deaths in 2020–21. Over the last 5 years, there have been 4 deaths of children and young people riding quad bikes. Three of the 4 deaths were children under the age of 16, driving or riding as passengers.

There was 1 death of a child in a bicycle incident in 2020–21. Over the last 5 years, there have been 4 deaths of children and young people riding bicycles. Three of the 4 incidents involved older children riding on or crossing major roads.

Introduction of new quad bikes safety standard

The *Consumer Goods (Quad Bikes) Safety Standard* was introduced in 2019, and the first stage of the mandatory requirements came into force in October 2020 and related to information affixed to the vehicles.

In the second and final stage, from October 2021 new general use quad bikes will need to conform with minimum standards for stability on slopes as well as to have an operator protection device or rollover bar to reduce the risk of serious crush injuries and deaths in the event of a rollover. The new standards do not apply to second-hand quad bikes other than those imported into Australia.

Off-road fatalities

Eleven children died in off-road transport environments in Queensland during 2020–21. Four deaths were motorcycle incidents, 3 were pedestrian incidents and 2 deaths each in motor vehicle and quad bike incidents. The deaths of children and young people occurring in off-road environments are not included in the official road toll. Over the last 5 years, a total of 37 children and young person died in off-road environments.

Charges and criminal proceedings

Of the 31 transport-related fatalities in 2020–21, 6 resulted in driving-related criminal charges (i.e. dangerous operation of a motor vehicle causing death). Those charged were all identified as friends driving the vehicle in which the child was travelling, in single vehicle motor vehicle accidents.

Over the last 5 years, there were criminal charges in relation to 27 of the 112 transport incident-related deaths. The persons charged were identified as either friends (59%); persons unknown to the child (26%) or parents, siblings or other family members (15%).

Traffic infringements, as opposed to criminal charges, were identified in relation to the death incident for 1 death in 2020–21 and 15 deaths over the 5-year period. The most common infringement identified was careless driving of a motor vehicle (driving without due care and attention).

Over the 5-year period, 9 young people in 5 distinct incidents were travelling in a vehicle that was identified as having been stolen.

³¹ Also known as all-terrain vehicles or ATVs. Includes side-by-side vehicles (SSVs) (also known as utility task vehicles (UTVs)).

Queensland Ambulance Service data

Injury data can be used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the risks posed to children by vehicles and machinery. The Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) has provided data on the number of ambulance responses to transport incidents involving children. Table 3.1 outlines the QAS responses to almost 5,000 transport incidents in the last year, including both fatal and non-fatal injuries. The majority involved motor vehicles, followed by bicycle and motorcycle incidents. The highest number of incidents involved young people aged 15–17 years.

Table 3.1: Queensland Ambulance Service responses to transport incidents (number), 2020–21

Type of incident	Under 1 year	1–4 years	5–9 years	10–14 years	15–17 years	Total
Motor vehicle	134	442	536	712	1,284	3,108
Bicycle	0	38	104	319	179	640
Motorcycle	0	16	90	295	234	635
Scooter	0	12	37	87	32	168
Pedestrian	*	16	17	37	18	88
Quad bike	0	*	17	23	16	56
Watercraft	0	*	*	8	22	30
Other (e.g. go kart, skateboard)	*	*	11	31	19	61
Unknown type	7	23	31	39	50	150
Total	141	547	843	1,551	1,854	4,936

Source: Queensland Ambulance Service (Aug-2021)

* Not reported for numbers less than 5 and excluded from totals.

Notes: Excludes data for children and young people whose gender was not recorded (n = 18).