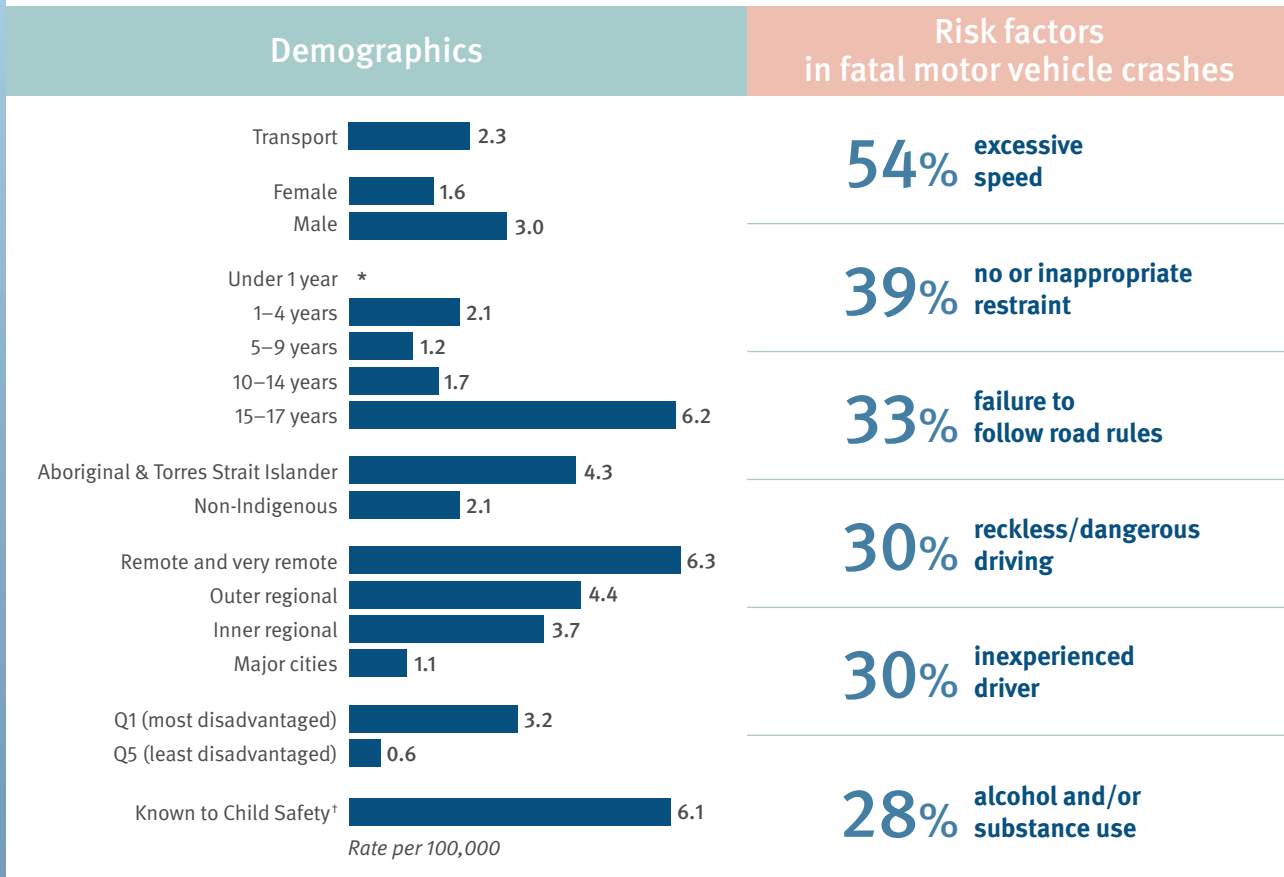
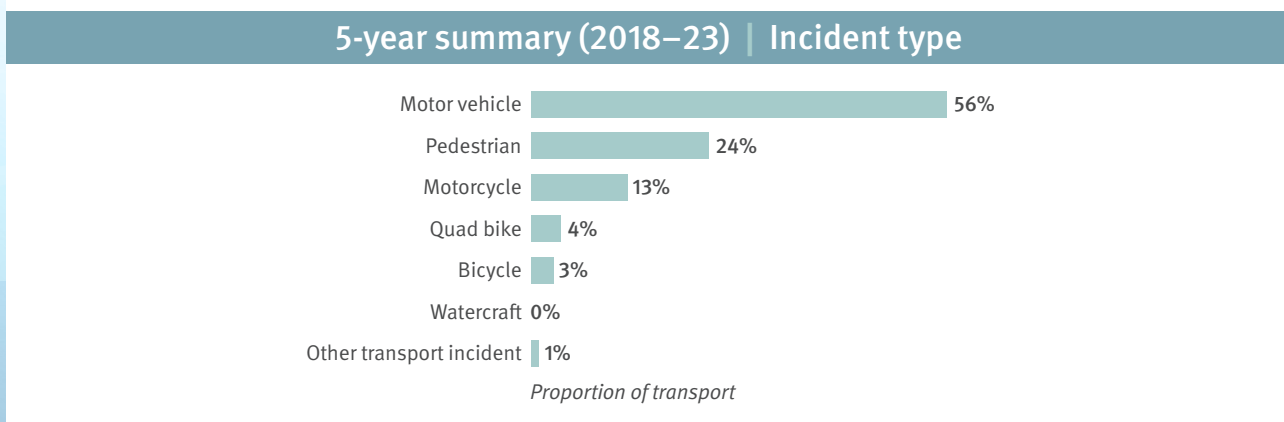
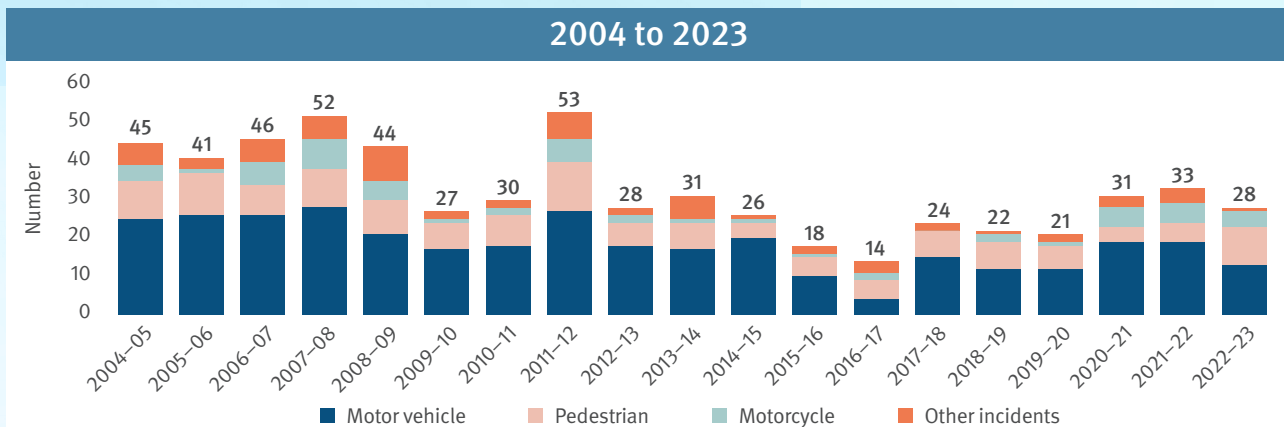


# 3 Transport-related deaths



Notes: Counting is by date of death registration. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.  
 \* rate not calculated for numbers less than 4.  
 † in the 12 months prior to death.

## Key findings

In 2022–23, the deaths of 28 children and young people from transport-related incidents were recorded in Queensland. This represents a 5-year average rate of 2.3 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.<sup>36</sup>

The rates of transport-related child fatalities have declined over the last 19 years, with the 5-year rolling rates dropping by 3.6% per year on average (see Figure 1.2). Although there has been an overall decrease in the transport mortality rate since 2004, the rates increased marginally in the last few years following higher numbers of transport deaths in the last 3 years.

## Nature of transport incidents

During 2022–23, 13 children and young people died from motor vehicle crashes, 10 from pedestrian-related incidents, 4 from motorcycle and one from bicycle incidents.

Over the last 5 years, the majority of the 135 transport-related fatalities were motor vehicle deaths (75 or 56%), followed by pedestrian deaths (32 or 24%) and motorcycle incidents (17 or 13%).

## Sex

Twenty-two male children died from transport-related incidents in 2022–23, compared with 6 female children.

Over the last 5 years, the average annual transport-related mortality rate for males was almost twice the rate for females (3.0 per 100,000 males and 1.6 per 100,000 females). The pattern of male over-representation in transport mortality has been attributed to, in part, greater risk-taking behaviours displayed by young males, including young male drivers.<sup>37</sup>

## Age

Of the 28 transport-related fatalities during 2022–23, 7 were aged 1–4 years, 2 were aged 5–9 years, 6 were aged 10–14 years and 13 were aged 15–17 years.

The highest rate of transport deaths was among young people aged 15–17 years (6.2 per 100,000) which was almost three times the rate for the 1–4 year age group, which had the next highest rate (2.1 per 100,000) (5-year averages).

While risk taking in adolescent drivers may contribute to the higher rates of death in the 15–17 age group, driver inexperience, without an intention to drive recklessly, may also contribute. Relatively new drivers may lack critical driving skills such as hazard perception, attentional control and managing multiple driving tasks.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Tables with data for 2004–2023 are available online at [www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/sector/child-death/child-death-reports-and-data](http://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/sector/child-death/child-death-reports-and-data)

<sup>37</sup> AIHW (2011) *Young Australians: Their health and wellbeing*, cat. no: PHE 140, AIHW, Australian Government, [www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/young-australians-their-health-and-wellbeing-2011/report-editions](http://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/young-australians-their-health-and-wellbeing-2011/report-editions)

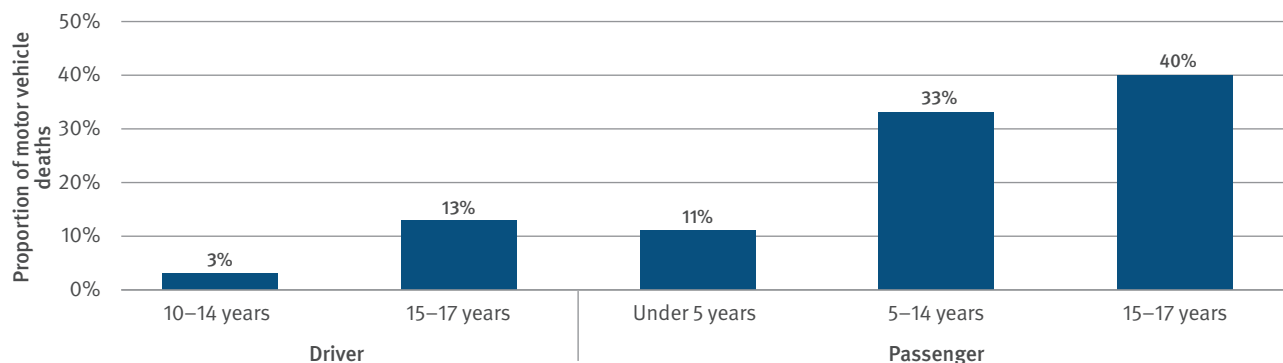
<sup>38</sup> Centre for Accident Research & Road Safety Queensland (2019) *Adolescent risk taking*, <https://research.qut.edu.au/carrs-q/wp-content/uploads/sites/296/2020/06/Adolescent-risk-taking.pdf>

## Transport-related characteristics

### Motor vehicle incidents

Figure 3.1 illustrates the role of the child or young person in motor vehicle fatalities over the last 5 years. Of the 75 children and young people who died in motor vehicle incidents between 2018–19 and 2022–23, 16% (12) were driving at the time of the incident while 84% (63) were passengers.

**Figure 3.1: Motor vehicle fatalities by role and age category (proportion), 2018–19 to 2022–23**



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

### Multiple fatalities

There was a total of 13 child deaths in 12 motor vehicle incidents in 2022–23. In addition to the child fatalities, 5 adults also died in incidents in which children died.

### Roadway type

Of the 13 children and young people who died in motor vehicle incidents in 2022–23, 5 died in crashes on highways (roadways with a speed limit equal or greater than 100km/hr) and 5 on major roads (speed limit between 60 and 100km/hr). Over the last 5 years, 37% (28 out of 75) of child deaths in motor vehicle crashes occurred on highways, 31% were on major roads, 15% on rural roadways and 12% on residential streets. Four deaths (5%) in the last 5 years occurred in off-road settings (i.e. not on public roadways).

### Risk factors associated with motor vehicle crashes

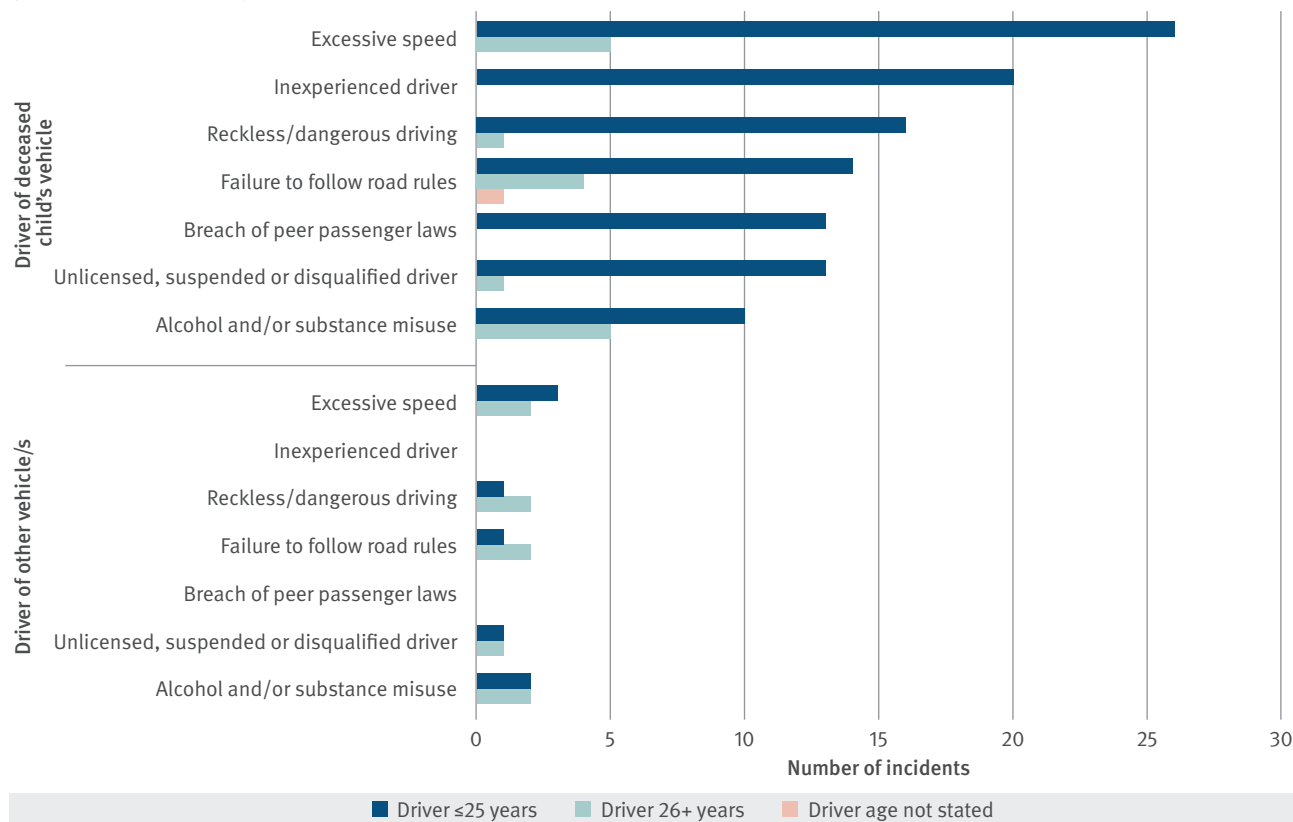
Of the 12 motor vehicle incidents in 2022–23, speed was the most commonly identified risk factor (7 incidents), followed by driver inexperience (4 incidents) and failure to follow road rules (3 incidents).

Over the last 5 years, 75 children died in 67 motor vehicle incidents (6 incidents involved multiple child fatalities). Single-vehicle accidents accounted for 58% (39) of those incidents. Two-thirds of the incidents (66%) involved a young driver (up to 25 years of age) driving the vehicle in which the child/ren was/were travelling. Twenty-nine children (39%) were either not wearing a restraint or were inappropriately restrained.

Risk factors identified in 67 incidents over the last 5 years are illustrated in Figure 3.2. The most common driver risk factors were:

- excessive speed (54%)
- failure to follow road rules (33%)
- inexperienced driver (30%)
- reckless/dangerous driving (30%)
- alcohol and/or substance use (28%).

**Figure 3.2: Most common driver risk factors in motor vehicle incidents, by role of vehicle and age of driver (number of incidents), 2018–19 to 2022–23**



Notes: The role of the vehicle applies to the vehicle in which the deceased child was travelling and, where applicable, any further vehicles involved in the incident. Multiple risk factors may be present in each incident.

### Pedestrians

Ten children and young people died in pedestrian incidents during 2022–23, with 8 incidents occurring in the context of a low-speed vehicle run-over.

Over the last 5 years, there have been 32 pedestrian incidents, the majority of which were low-speed vehicle run-overs (63%) followed by road and railway crossings (25%):

- Children under 5 years are most at risk from pedestrian incidents, accounting for 59% (19 of 32) of the pedestrian deaths over the 5-year period.
- Children aged between 5 and 14 years accounted for 7 pedestrian deaths, 4 of which occurred while travelling on or crossing a roadway.
- Six young people aged 15–17 years died in pedestrian incidents, with alcohol and/or substance misuse at the time of the incident identified as the most common risk factor (3 of the 6 deaths).

### Low-speed vehicle run-overs

'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 while 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 20 LSVR incidents, most commonly occurring at the child's home or the home of a person known to the child (80%), with the driver most frequently identified as a parent or other close relative (80%).

### E-scooters

Incidents involving E-scooters and other personal mobility devices are classified as pedestrian incidents in the Child Death Register, in line with coding rules in ICD-10 (coded to V09). As of November 2022, changes to Queensland's general road rules also include E-scooters within the scope of rules applying to personal mobility devices.<sup>39</sup> One death recorded within the last year was an E-scooter incident, with none recorded in the preceding years.<sup>40</sup>

### Motorcycles, bicycles and quad bikes

There were 4 deaths from motorcycle incidents in 2022–23. Over the last 5 years, there have been 17 deaths of children and young people riding motorcycles. Almost all of the motorcycles were being driven by the child or young person (16), with excessive speed the most commonly reported risk factor.

There was one death in a bicycle incident in 2022–23. Over the last 5 years, there have been 4 deaths of children and young people riding bicycles with 3 incidents occurring on roadways.

There have been 5 quad bike-related fatalities in the last 5 years, although none occurred in 2022–23.

### Off-road fatalities

Ten children died in off-road environments in Queensland during 2022–23. Eight deaths were pedestrian incidents and 2 children died in motorcycle incidents. Over the last 5 years, a total of 42 children and young people died in off-road environments.

### Charges and criminal proceedings

Of the 27 transport-related incidents in 2022–23, 2 resulted in driving-related criminal charges (e.g. dangerous operation of a motor vehicle causing death). Over the last 5 years, there were criminal charges in relation to 39 of the 126 transport-related incidents.

Over the last 5 years, 11 young people who died were travelling in stolen vehicles in 8 distinct incidents.

<sup>39</sup> [www.qld.gov.au/transport/safety/rules/wheeled-devices/personal-mobility-devices](http://www.qld.gov.au/transport/safety/rules/wheeled-devices/personal-mobility-devices) accessed 4 September 2023.

<sup>40</sup> Incidents involving wheeled toys (e.g. kick scooters), without the involvement of a transport 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.

## 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 over 4,900 transport incidents in the last year, including both fatal and non-fatal injuries. The majority involved motor vehicles, followed by motorcycle and bicycle incidents. The highest number of incidents involved young people aged 15–17 years.

Ambulance callouts for young people injured in scooter incidents increased 70% in the last year, from 158 in 2021–22 to 268 in 2022–23. Further analysis of the 2022–23 data indicates 154 of the 268 scooter-related injuries involved E-scooters (57%).<sup>41</sup> Most of the 154 E-scooter injuries occurred in older children (72 were aged 10–14 years and 72 were aged 15–17 years).

**Table 3.1:** Queensland Ambulance Service responses to transport incidents (number), 2022–23

Type of incident	Under 1 year	1–4 years	5–9 years	10–14 years	15–17 years	Total
Motor vehicle	149	489	677	704	1,327	3,346
Motorcycle	0	10	58	255	246	569
Bicycle	*	16	69	279	118	482
Scooter	0	*	29	133	106	268
Pedestrian	*	12	24	48	29	113
Quad bike	0	8	12	32	14	66
Watercraft	0	0	0	*	11	11
Other (e.g. go kart, skateboard)	0	5	10	18	26	59
Unknown type	*	10	9	8	7	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>888</b>	<b>1,477</b>	<b>1,884</b>	<b>4,948</b>

Source: Queensland Ambulance Service (Aug 2023).

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

Notes: Excludes data for children and young people whose gender was recorded as missing or indeterminate (n=47). Numbers in the table do not add to the total number of transport incidents attended by QAS (n=4,962) as cells with less than 5 are not shown, and are excluded from table totals.

<sup>41</sup> All scooter incidents were manually reviewed by QAS. Incidents were only identified as E-scooter incidents where the type of scooter was recorded somewhere in the record. QAS advise that E-scooter incidents may therefore be an under-estimate.