

## CHAPTER 3

# Transport-related deaths

This chapter provides details of child deaths from injury as a result of transport incidents.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Eighteen children and young people died in transport-related incidents in Queensland during 2015 – 16, at a rate of 1.6 deaths per 100 000 children aged 0–17 years. This is the lowest number and rate of transport-related fatalities since reporting commenced in 2004.
- Motor vehicle incidents accounted for 56% of the transport-related fatalities during 2015 – 16 (10 of 18 cases), with 7 of these fatalities being males aged 15–17 years.
- For 6 deaths of 15–17 year-olds in motor vehicles during 2015 – 16, the vehicle was operated either by the young person or another male driver aged under 21.
- Three children aged 1–4 years died in low speed vehicle run-overs during 2015 – 16.
- Over the most recent three-year period, the transport-related fatality rate for male children was 1.8 times the rate for females.
- Over the most recent three-year period, young people aged 15–17 years were the most likely age group to be involved in a transport-related fatality.
- Over the most recent three-year period, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from remote and regional areas were over-represented in transport-related deaths.

## TRANSPORT-RELATED DEATHS 2013 – 16

An expanded version of Table 3.1 containing data since 2004 is available online at [www.qfcc.qld.gov.au](http://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au).

**Table 3.1: Summary of transport deaths of children and young people in Queensland 2013 – 16**

	2013 – 14		2014 – 15		2015 – 16		Yearly average
	Total n	Rate per 100 000	Total n	Rate per 100 000	Total n	Rate per 100 000	Rate per 100 000
<b>All transport deaths</b>							
Transport	31	2.8	25	2.2	18	1.6	2.2
<b>Incident type</b>							
Motor vehicle	17	1.5	19	1.7	10	0.9	1.4
Pedestrian	7	0.6	4	0.4	5	0.4	0.5
<i>Low speed vehicle run-over</i>	4	0.4	2	*	4	0.4	0.3
Motorcycle	1	*	1	*	1	*	*
Quad bike	3	*	0	0.0	0	0.0	*
Watercraft	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0
Other	3	*	1	*	2	*	0.2
<b>Sex</b>							
Female	11	2.0	11	2.0	4	0.7	1.6
Male	20	3.5	14	2.4	14	2.4	2.8
<b>Age category</b>							
Under 1 year	0	0.0	1	*	0	0.0	*
1–4 years	4	1.6	9	3.5	5	2.0	2.4
5–9 years	12	3.9	3	*	1	*	1.7
10–14 years	5	1.7	3	*	3	*	1.2
15–17 years	10	5.5	9	4.9	9	4.9	5.1
<b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status</b>							
Indigenous	5	5.8	7	8.1	4	4.6	6.2
Non-Indigenous	26	2.5	18	1.7	14	1.4	1.9
<b>Geographical area of usual residence (ARIA+)</b>							
Remote	6	11.2	3	*	2	*	6.9
Regional	18	4.4	12	2.9	10	2.4	3.2
Metropolitan	6	0.9	10	1.5	3	*	1.0
<b>Socio-economic status of usual residence (SEIFA)</b>							
Low to very low	12	2.7	9	2.0	8	1.8	2.2
Moderate	13	6.0	8	3.7	0	0.0	3.2
High to very high	5	1.1	8	1.8	7	1.5	1.5
<b>Known to the child protection system</b>							
Known to the child protection system	9	5.4	8	8.3	2	*	..

Data source: Queensland Child Death Register (2013 – 16)

\* Rates have not been calculated for numbers less than four.

.. Average across the three-year period has not been calculated due to the break in series (see note 3).

1. Data presented here is current in the Queensland Child Death Register as at August 2016 and thus may differ from those presented in previously published reports.
2. Rates are based on the most up-to-date denominator data available and are calculated per 100 000 children (in the sex/age/Indigenous status/ARIA+ region/SEIFA region) in Queensland each year. Rates for the 2013 – 14 period use the ERP data as at June 2013 and rates for the 2014 – 15 and 2015 – 16 periods use the ERP data as at June 2014.
3. For 2013 – 14, the number of children known to the child protection system represents the number of children whose deaths were registered in the reporting period, who were known to the DCCSDS within the three-year period prior to their death. From 2014 – 15 on, this relates to the deaths of children known to the DCCSDS within the one-year period prior to their death. The denominator for calculating rates is the number of children aged 0–17 who were known to the DCCSDS, through either being subject to a child concern report, notification, investigation and assessment, ongoing intervention, orders or placement, in the one-year period prior to the reporting period.
4. ARIA+ and SEIFA exclude the deaths of children whose usual place of residence was outside Queensland.
5. Yearly average rates have been calculated using the ERP data as at June 2014.
6. Low speed vehicle run-over is a subset of the 'pedestrian' category; hence, summing categories will exceed the total.
7. The 'other' incident type category includes deaths involving bicycles, motorised go-carts, horse riding incidents, and specialised industrial vehicles.

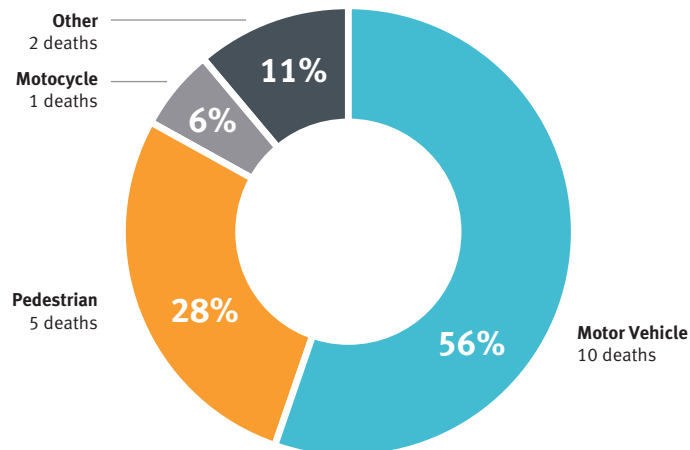
## TRANSPORT-RELATED DEATHS: FINDINGS 2015 – 16

During 2015 – 16, the deaths of 18 children and young people from transport-related incidents were registered in Queensland, at a rate of 1.6 deaths per 100 000 children aged 0–17 years. This is the lowest number and rate of transport-related fatalities since reporting commenced in 2004. The number of transport-related fatalities ranges from 18 to 52 per year, with an average of 36.6 per year.<sup>16</sup>

### Nature of transport incident

As illustrated in Figure 3.1, the majority of transport-related fatalities during 2015 – 16 occurred in motor vehicles (56%), followed by pedestrian deaths (28%). This pattern is similar to that observed in previous years.

**Figure 3.1: Nature of transport fatality 2015 – 16**



Data source: Queensland Child Death Register (2015 – 16)

1. Due to rounding, the percentages may not sum to 100%

### Sex

During 2015 – 16, there were 4 deaths of female children from transport-related incidents, compared to 14 male children.

Over the last three reporting periods, the average annual transport-related mortality rate for males was 1.8 times the rate for females (2.8 deaths per 100 000 male children aged 0–17 years, compared to 1.6 deaths per 100 000 female children). Research has established that higher rates of death for males can, in part, be attributed to greater risk-taking behaviours displayed by young males—this includes risk-taking behaviours of male drivers.<sup>17</sup>

### Age

Of the 18 transport-related fatalities during 2015 – 16, 5 were of children aged 1–4 years, 1 was of a child aged 5–9 years, 3 were of children aged 10–14 years and 9 were of children aged 15–17 years. In 6 of the 9 fatalities of young people aged 15–17 years, the vehicle was operated either by the young person or another driver aged under 21 years.

Over the last three reporting periods, the average annual transport-related mortality rate for children aged 15–17 years was more than twice the rate for children from all other age categories (5.1 deaths per 100 000 children aged 15–17 years, compared to 2.4, 1.7 and 1.2 deaths per 100 000 children from the other age groups).

<sup>16</sup> Tables with data for 2004 – 16 are available online at [www.qfcc.qld.gov.au](http://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au)

<sup>17</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2011). *Young Australians: Their health and wellbeing*. Cat no PHE 140, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra.

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status**

Of the 18 transport-related fatalities during 2015 – 16, 4 were of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Over the last three reporting periods, the average annual transport-related mortality rate for Indigenous children was 3.3 times the rate for non-Indigenous children (6.2 deaths per 100 000 Indigenous children aged 0–17 years, compared to 1.9 deaths per 100 000 non-Indigenous children).

## **Geographical area of incident location (ARIA+)**

Of the 18 transport-related fatalities during 2015 – 16, 2 were of children who resided in remote areas of Queensland, 10 were of children from regional areas and 3 were of children from metropolitan areas.

Over the last three reporting periods, the average annual transport-related mortality rate for children from remote areas was considerably greater than other rates (6.9 deaths per 100 000 children aged 0–17 years from remote areas, compared to 3.2 deaths per 100 000 children from regional areas and 1.0 deaths per 100 000 children from metropolitan areas).

Of the 18 transport-related fatalities during 2015 – 16, 1 occurred in a remote area of Queensland, 12 occurred in regional areas and 3 occurred in metropolitan areas. Thirteen of the 18 transport fatalities (72%) occurred in regional and remote areas of Queensland. The higher mortality rates of children from remote and regional areas and the high incidence of transport-related fatalities in these areas may be due to a combination of factors including poorer road conditions and fatigue due to driving long distances.<sup>18</sup>

## **Socio-economic status of incident location (SEIFA)**

Of the 18 transport-related fatalities during 2015 – 16, 8 were of children residing in low to very low SES areas of Queensland, none were of children from moderate SES areas and 7 were of children from high to very high SES areas.

Over the last three reporting periods, the average annual transport-related mortality rates for children from low to very low and moderate SES areas were greater than the rate occurring in high to very high SES areas (2.2 and 3.2 deaths per 100 000 children aged 0–17 years from low to very low or moderate SES areas, compared to 1.5 deaths per 100 000 children in high to very high SES areas).

## **Children known to the child protection system**

Of the 18 transport-related fatalities during 2015 – 16, 2 were of children known to the Queensland child protection system within the year before their death.

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<sup>18</sup> Australasian College of Road Safety (2012). *Rural and Remote Road Safety: Fact Sheet*.

## 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 during 2015 – 16.

### Motor vehicle incidents

Table 3.2 illustrates the role of the child or young person in motor vehicle fatalities during 2015 – 16. In 7 of the 10 fatalities, the child or young person was a passenger in the motor vehicle and for the remaining 3 fatalities, the young person was the driver.

**Table 3.2: Motor vehicle incidents by role, age category and sex 2015 – 16**

Age category	Female <i>n</i>	Male <i>n</i>	Total <i>n</i>	Rate per 100 000
<b>Drivers</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>*</b>
15–17 years	0	3	3	*
<b>Passengers</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0.6</b>
Under 1 year	0	0	0	*
1–4 years	0	1	1	*
5–9 years	0	0	0	*
10–14 years	0	0	0	*
15–17 years	2	4	6	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0.9</b>
<b>Rate per 100 000</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>0.9</b>	

Data source: Queensland Child Death Register (2015 – 16)

\* Rates have not been calculated for numbers less than four

1. Rates are based on the most up-to-date denominator data available and are calculated per 100 000 children (in the sex/age category) in Queensland each year. Rates for the 2015 – 16 period use the ERP data as at June 2014.

### Pedestrians

Five children and young people died as pedestrians during 2015 – 16, with 4 fatalities resulting from low-speed vehicle run-over and 1 fatality from a road or railway crossing (see Table 3.3 below).

‘Low speed vehicle run-over’ 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 younger children 1–4 years of age (3 of 4 children during 2015 – 16). Drivers tend to be family members, with vehicles reversing at the time of impact. In 2015 – 16, 4 deaths occurred due to low speed vehicle run-overs. In one instance, the vehicle was reversing at the time. The number of low speed vehicle run-overs has remained relatively stable across the last decade, with between 2 and 4 deaths reported each year since 2005 – 06. In 2004 – 05, there were 7 deaths from low speed vehicle run-overs.

**Table 3.3: Pedestrian incidents by type, age category and sex 2015 – 16**

Age category	Female <i>n</i>	Male <i>n</i>	Total <i>n</i>	Rate per 100 000
<b>Low speed vehicle run-over</b>				
1–4 years	1	2	3	*
5–9 years	0	1	1	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.4</b>
<b>Road or railway crossing</b>				
1–4 years	0	1	1	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>*</b>

Data source: Queensland Child Death Register (2015 – 16)

## Motorcycles and quad bikes

One child (male) died in a motorcycle incident during 2015 – 16. The fatality occurred on a dirt carriageway with the child solely operating the motorcycle. No children or young people died in quad bike incidents during 2015 – 16. There have been 3 quad bike child fatalities in the last three years and 12 child fatalities during the 12 years since 2004.

In August 2015, the Queensland Deputy State Coroner handed down findings for an inquest into 9 quad bike deaths, including those of four children and young people.<sup>19</sup> The Deputy State Coroner made 15 recommendations, one of which specifically related to the appropriate usage of quad bikes by children and young people.

## Other transport

Two children (aged 10–14 years) died during 2015 – 16 in other transport incidents. Both of these incidents were farming accidents.

## Multiple fatalities

Of the 10 motor vehicle incidents where young people died in 2015 – 16, 2 of these involved multiple fatalities. In both cases, the other fatalities were adults.

## Highway fatalities

Of the 10 children and young people who died in motor vehicle incidents, 4 died on highways (speed limit greater than or equal to 100 kilometres per hour). There was 1 fatality on an unsealed road with a speed limit up to 100 kilometres per hour, 1 fatality on a rural roadway and 4 on major roads (speed limit up to 70 kilometres per hour).

## Off-road fatalities

Five children died in off-road transport environments in Queensland during 2015 – 16. Three were pedestrian incidents, and 2 occurred on farming properties. The deaths of children and young people that occur in an off-road environment are not included in the official road toll.

## Charges and criminal proceedings

Of the 18 transport-related fatalities in 2015 – 16, driving-related charges were laid for 2 incidents (based on information available at the time of reporting). These charges included dangerous operation of a motor vehicle causing death and grievous bodily harm, and dangerous operation of a motor vehicle causing death while excessively speeding. In some incidents, a criminal offence may have taken place, however the driver of the vehicle also died and therefore no charges were laid.

## RISK FACTORS

The most prevalent risk factors for children and young people in transport-related fatalities in Queensland during 2015 – 16 were:<sup>20</sup>

- having a driver or operator who was aged 21 years or younger (8 cases)
- excessive speed (5 cases)
- limited driver experience (4 cases)
- drug and/or alcohol use (2 cases)
- reckless use of a vehicle or dangerous driving (1 case)
- driver distraction (1 case)
- failure to drive to conditions (1 case)

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19 Queensland Courts (2015). Office of the State Coroner Findings of Inquest: *Inquest into nine (9) deaths caused by Quad Bike accidents*.

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