

Cyclists

Road crashes in South Australia, 2019-2023

Overview

Between 2019 and 2023 cyclists represented 5% of lives lost and 10% of serious injuries on South Australian roads. The trend in the number of reports to police where a cyclist has been seriously injured has been showing an upward trend, yet the number of minor injuries has seen a trend decline.

The majority of those injured are male and most crashes occurred in the Greater Adelaide area.

The cycling participation rate¹ has steadily declined both nationally and across most jurisdictions between 2011 and 2019. There was a spike in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic before declining again in 2023. The 2023 National Walking and Cycling Participation Survey suggests that 15.0% of Australians ride a bicycle in a typical week. South Australia has the lowest cycling participation rate (12.7%) compared to the national average. However, the Northern Territory, New South Wales and Victoria had a cycling participation rate higher than the national average in 2023.

¹ [National Walking and Cycling Participation Survey 2023 - Cycling and Walking Australia & New Zealand \(cwanz.com.au\)](https://www.cwanz.com.au)

For the 2019 to 2023 period, cyclist lives lost accounted for 5% of the total road deaths in South Australia, 10% of the total serious injuries and 8% of minor injuries. A total of 25 cyclists lost their life on South Australian roads. A further 402 were seriously injured and 1,584 had minor injuries. The number of cyclists lives lost has increased by an average of 7.0% per year over the past five years. However, minor injuries decreased on average by 7.0% per year, and serious injuries have also decreased by an average of 4.2% per year from 2019 to 2023 (Table 1).

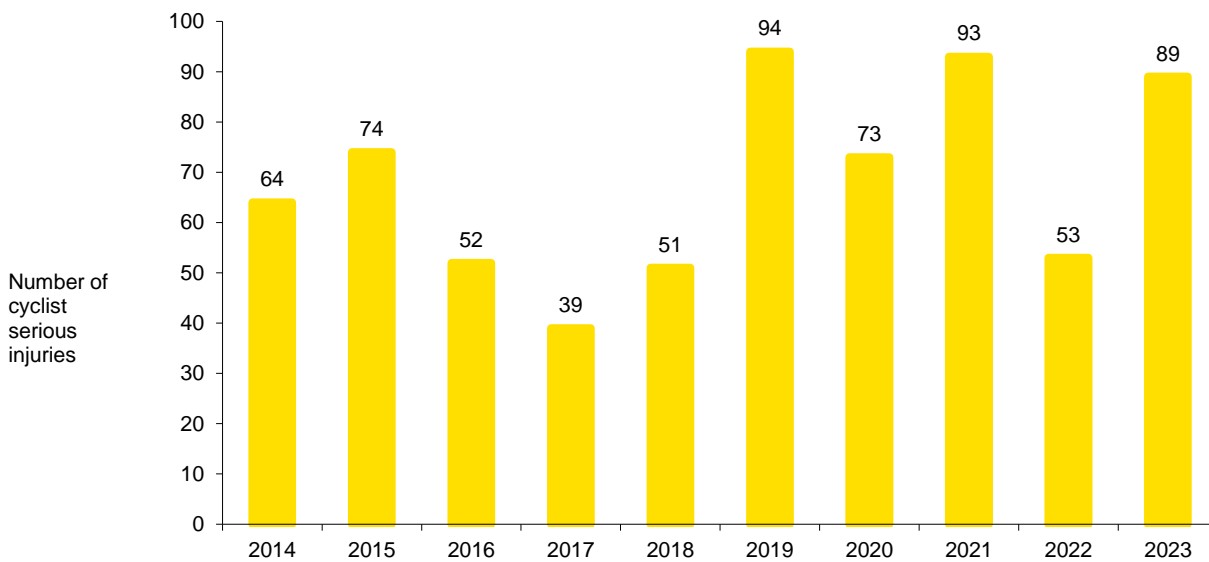
Table 1: Number of cyclist injuries by severity per year for the period 2019-2023

Year	Lives lost	Serious injuries	Minor injuries
2019	7	94	383
2020	2	73	336
2021	5	93	308
2022	3	53	246
2023	8	89	311
Average	5	80	317
% trend change	7.0%	-4.2%	-7.0%

Casualty trends

The number of cyclist serious injuries reported to the police has fluctuated over the last 10 years, from a low of 39 serious injuries reported in 2017 to 94 reported in 2019, which is the highest number of cyclists lives lost and serious injuries in the past 10 years. In 2023, 83 cyclist serious injuries were reported. Between 2019 and 2023, 80 serious injuries were reported per year on average. This is higher than the previous five-year average (2014-2018) of 56 serious injuries (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Cyclists with serious injuries reported to police, South Australia, 2014-2023



As can be seen in Figure 2 the number of cyclists with minor injuries has been trending down. The number of minor injuries in 2023 was 311, which was higher than 2021 and 2022, however is lower than all other past years.

Figure 2: Cyclists with minor injuries reported to police, South Australia, 2014-2023

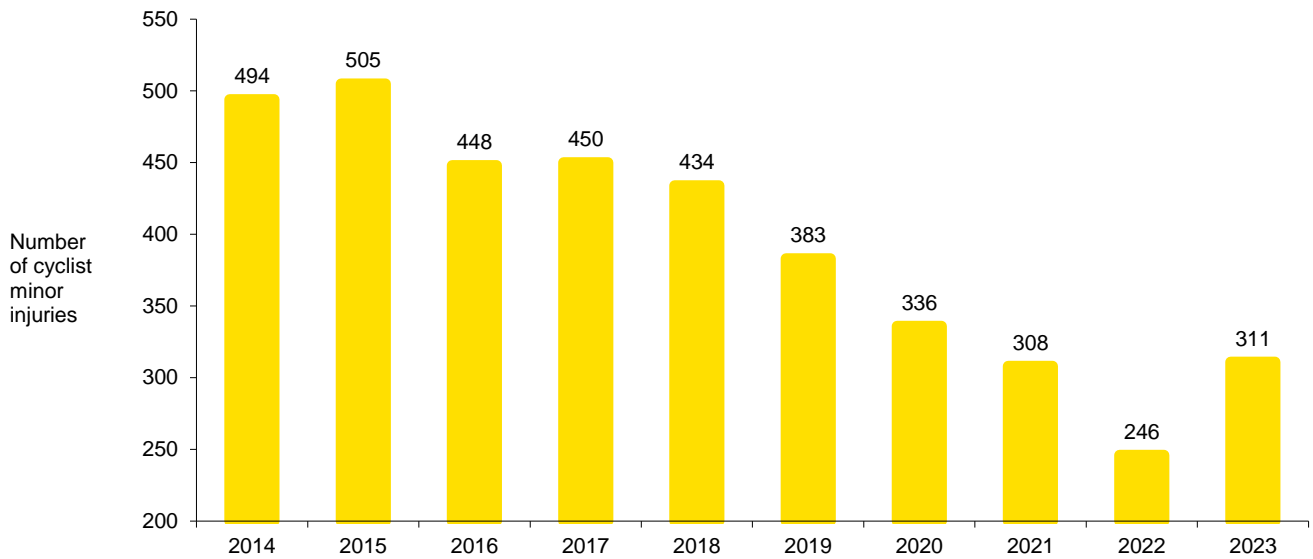
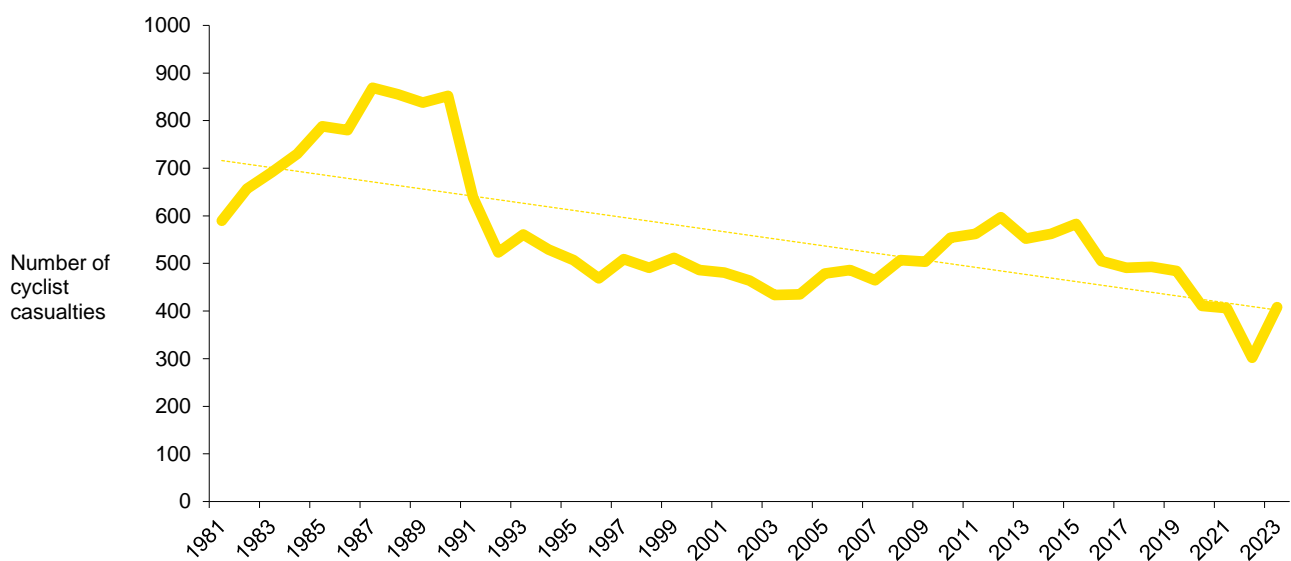


Figure 3 shows cycling casualties, including lives lost, serious injuries and minor injuries over the longer term. Since the late 1980s - when over 800 cycling lives lost and injuries were recorded on South Australian roads - there has been a substantial decline in the number of casualties over time.

Figure 3: Longer term cyclist casualties (includes lives lost, serious injuries and minor injuries), South Australia, 1981-2023



Cyclists in South Australia

The 2023 National Walking and Cycling Participation Survey² suggests that 12.7% of South Australian residents ride a bicycle in a typical week and just under one-third (31.8%) had done so over the past year. The cycling participation rate of South Australian residents riding a bicycle in a typical week has decreased from 17.4% in 2021 to 12.7% in 2023².

² [National Walking and Cycling Participation Survey 2023 - Cycling and Walking Australia & New Zealand \(cwanz.com.au\)](https://www.cwanz.com.au)

Five-year trend

An average of 402 casualties were reported each year between 2019 and 2023. Of these:

- 5 were lives lost
- 80 were seriously injured
- 317 received minor injuries
- 80% were male
- 93% were in metropolitan Adelaide
- 4% were not wearing helmets.

Intersections¹ and midblock²

There was a total of 434 crashes resulting in lives lost, serious or minor injuries between 2019 and 2023. Of these, 187 (43%) occurred at intersections and 247 (57%) occurred at a midblock section of the road (Table 2).

¹ A crash for which the first impact occurs at or within a 20-metre radius of an intersection.

² A crash that occurs between two intersections.

Table 2: Lives lost or serious injury crashes by road sections, South Australia, 2019-2023

	Serious	Life lost	Total
INTERSECTION			
Cross road	80	1	81
T-junction	99	5	104
Rail Crossing	1	1	2
Total Intersection	180	7	187
MIDBLOCK			
Divided Road	57	4	61
Not Divided Road	156	12	168
Pedestrian Crossing	3	0	3
One way	3	0	3
Total Midblock	228	19	247
Grand Total	408	26	434

Between 2019 and 2023, 56% of intersection crashes resulting in a life lost or serious injury of a cyclist occurred at T-junctions, the remaining 43% occurred at cross roads.

Traffic controls

Out of 434 crashes resulting in lives lost, or serious injuries between 2019 and 2023, 314 (72%) occurred where there was no traffic control, 47 (10%) occurred where there was a give way sign or stop sign, and 49 (11%) where there were traffic signals (Table 3).

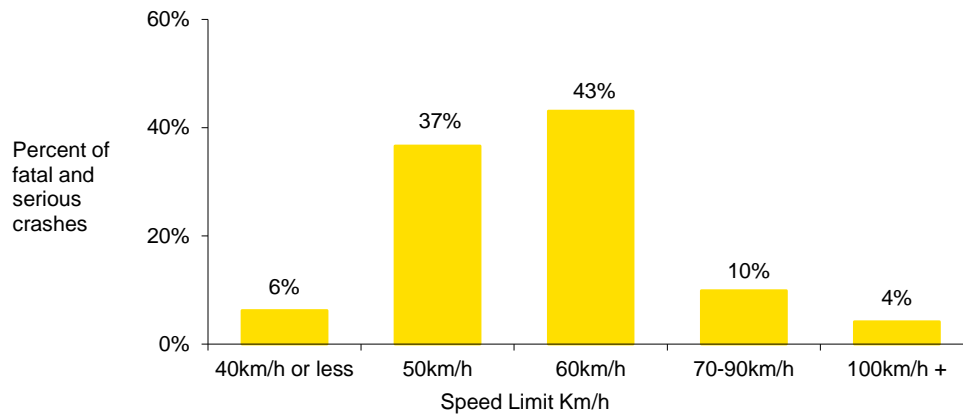
Table 3: Life lost or serious injury crashes by traffic controls, South Australia, 2019-2023

Control type	Serious	Life lost	Total
Traffic signals	48	1	49
Rail Xing - Boom	0	1	1
Stop sign	15	0	15
Give way sign	31	1	32
No traffic control	291	23	314
Roundabout	23	0	23
Total	408	26	434

Speed limit of roads

Figure 4 shows a breakdown of crashes by the speed limit of the road they were travelling on. It is evident that most lives lost or serious injury crashes occur on roads with a speed limit of 60km/h or less. This is likely to be due to more bicycle traffic in these areas. Between 2019 and 2023, of the 434 life lost or serious injury crashes, 373 (86%) of the them occurred on roads with a speed limit of 60km/h or less (Figure 4).

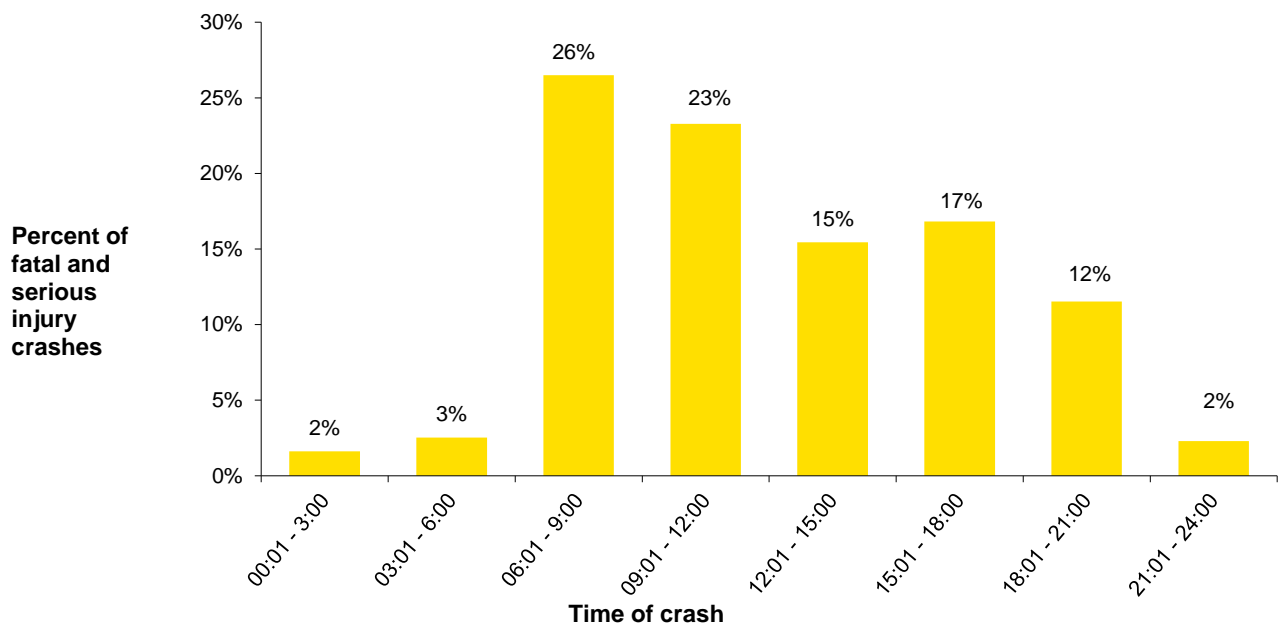
Figure 4: Percentage of crashes resulting in a life lost or serious injury by speed limit of road, South Australia, 2019-2023



Time of crash

The majority of crashes resulting in serious injuries or death occur at peak times of the day. About 67% of these crashes occurred between 6am and noon or 3pm to 6pm (Figure 5).

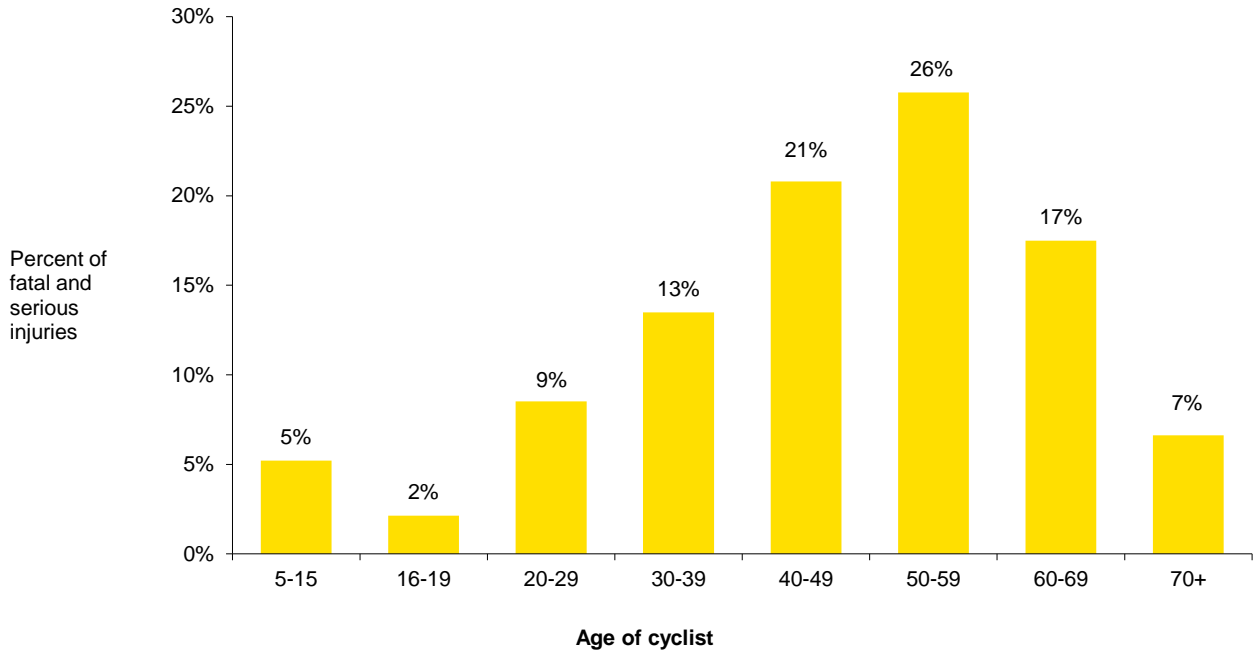
Figure 5: Percentage of crashes resulting in a life lost or serious injury by time of crash, South Australia, 2019-2023



Age of cyclists

Figure 6 represents the breakdown of lives lost and serious injuries by age. The 5 to 15-year age group represents 5% of the cyclist lives lost and serious injuries. No lives lost and serious injuries of cyclists under the age of six were reported in the last five years. The youngest casualty reported was six years of age.

Figure 6: Age distribution of cyclist lives lost and serious injuries, South Australia, 2019-2023



Definitions of police reported casualty types:

Casualty crash – A 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 duration of at least 24 hours 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 admitted to hospital 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 does not die as a result of those injuries within 30 days of the crash.

Property damage only crash – A crash resulting in property damage in excess of the prescribed amount in which no person is injured or dies 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.

Enquiries

For further information, contact:

Department for Infrastructure and Transport
GPO Box 1533
Adelaide SA 5001

Email: dit.roadcrashdata@sa.gov.au

Website: thinkroadsafety.sa.gov.au/

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