

2024 preliminary lives lost in South Australia



Preliminary data as at midnight 31 December 2024 reports 91 lives were lost on South Australian roads during 2024. This is 22% less than the 117 recorded in 2023 and is 8% less than the previous five-year average (2019-2023) of 99 lives lost. However, is above the December 2024 target under *South Australia's Road Safety Strategy to 2031*, of 76 lives lost. The number of lives lost on our roads each year can be volatile, 2022 saw the lowest number of deaths on our roads for decades, yet only one year later, 2023 recorded the highest number of lives lost in the last ten years.

Table 1: Lives lost, South Australia, 2019-2024

Year	Lives lost
2019	114
2020	93
2021	99
2022	71
2023	117
2024	91 ¹

South Australia's preliminary fatality rate as at midnight 31 December 2024 is 4.8 lives lost per 100,000 population and is below the 6.3 recorded at the end of 2023.² This compares to the 2019-2023 five-year rate average of 5.5 (Table 2).

National data from the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics (BITRE) shows for the 12 months ending November 2024, South Australia recorded an 18.1% decrease in the number of deaths on our roads per 100,000 population compared to the previous 12-month period. In comparison, with the exception of Victoria, all other Australian states and territories recorded increases over this 12 month period, resulting in an overall national increase of 3.8%. Nationally the fatality rate as at end November 2024 was 4.8 lives lost per 100,000 population³.

Key points

- > **Location** – There were more lives lost on regional roads compared to metropolitan roads in 2024. There was a decrease in lives lost in 2024 in the metropolitan area with 34 people losing their life, a 44% decrease on the previous 61 killed in 2023. The number of lives lost on regional roads was 57 in 2024, which is one less compared to 56 lives lost in 2023 and is one more than the previous 5-year average of 55.

¹ 2024 fatalities are preliminary as of midnight 31 December 2024

² Based on preliminary fatalities as of midnight 31 December 2024 and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Estimated Resident Population June 2024

³ Source: Road deaths Australia – Monthly Bulletins, November 2024 – BITRE

- > **Young road users (16-24 years)** – The number of 16-19 year olds killed has increased from 5 in 2023 to 6 in 2024, while the number of 20-24 year old deaths decreased from 8 in 2023 to 5 in 2024. The 11 lives lost in these two age groups is 8 less than the previous 5-year average of 19 deaths.
- > **Older road users (70+ years)** – The number of lives lost for people aged 70+ has increased in 2024 when compared to last year and the past 5-year average. Older road user lives lost has increased by 26% in 2024 compared to 2023 and also increased by 46% than the last 5-year average. There were 29 lives were lost in this age group in 2024, up from 23 in 2023 and is 6 more than the previous 5-year average of 20. Most lives lost for people aged 70+ in 2024 were drivers, followed by motorcyclists and pedestrians.
- > **Road users** – The decrease in the number of lives lost in 2024 (from 2023) was seen across all road user groups apart from heavy vehicle drivers which has remained unchanged.

Table 2: Lives lost, South Australia, 2019-2024

Lives lost	2019-2023 average	2023	2024	Change from 2023 to 2024	Change from 5-year average to 2024
Total lives lost	99	117	91	-26	-8
Rate of lives lost per 100,000 population ⁴	5.5	6.3	4.8	-1.5	-0.6
Road user types					
Light vehicle drivers	45	51	41	-11	-4
Heavy vehicle drivers	4	2	2	0	-2
Passengers	12	12	12	-1	0
Motorcyclists ⁵	18	23	19	-4	1
Cyclists	5	8	6	-2	1
Pedestrians ⁶	14	19	11	-8	-3
Location					
Lives lost in metropolitan areas	44	61	34	-27	-10
Lives lost in regional areas	55	56	57	1	2
Age group					
Young road users (16-24 years)	19	13	11	-2	-8
Older road users (70+ years)	20	23	29	6	9
Behavioural factors					
Driver and passenger lives lost not wearing a seatbelt	28%	21%	14%	-7%	-14%
Speed a contributing factor in fatal crash	38%	36%	23%	-14%	-15%

⁴ Based on preliminary fatalities as of midnight 31 December 2024 and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Estimated Resident Population June 2024

⁵ Motorcyclists include scooter operators and pillion passengers

⁶ For 2024 reporting purposes, pedestrians include personal mobility device (PMD), gopher & wheelchair users. Separate reporting on PMD users will commence from 2025

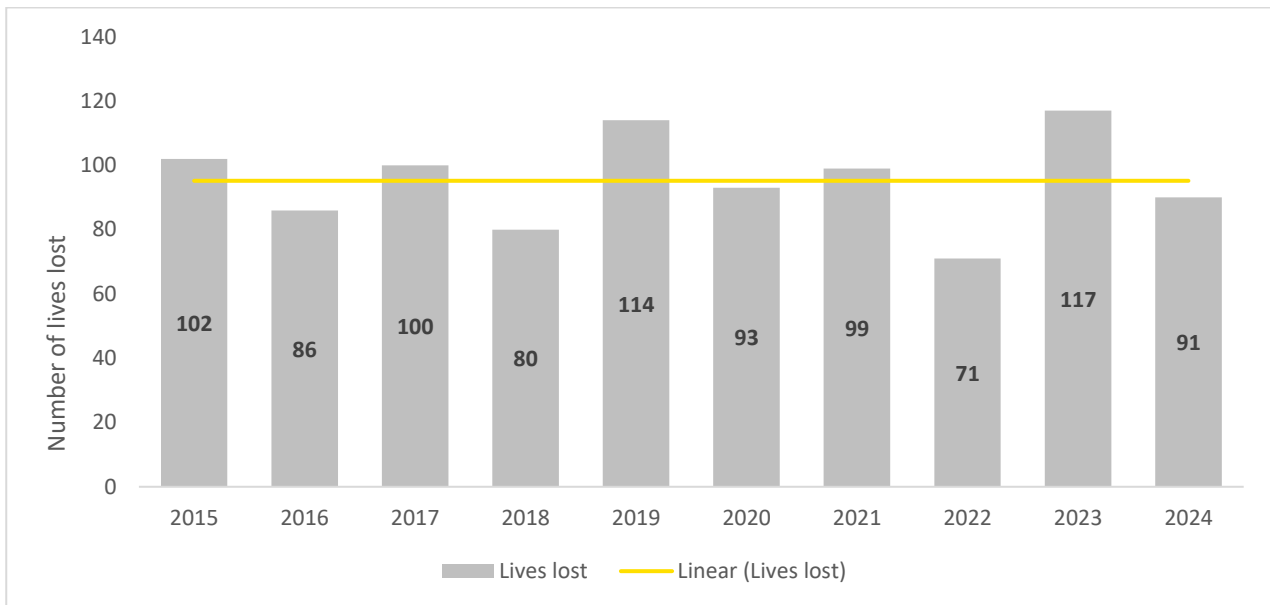


Figure 1: Lives lost, South Australia 2015-2024

Figure 1 shows the number of lives lost over the period from 2015 to 2024 in South Australia. The number of lives lost has decreased by an average of 0.1% per year over the past 10 years. The 5-year average for 2020-2024 now sits two lower at 94 compared to the 2015-2019 average which was 96 lives lost. 117 lives lost in 2023 was the highest number of lives lost seen on South Australian roads in the last ten years (Figure 1).

Road user types

Road users: The decrease in the number of lives lost in 2024 (from 2023) was seen across all road user groups apart from heavy vehicle drivers which has remained unchanged (Table 2).

- **Drivers** – The number of drivers (including heavy vehicle drivers) who lost their life decreased by 20% from 54 in 2023 to 43 in 2024.
- **Passengers** – Passenger deaths decreased from 13 lives lost in 2023 to 12 in 2024.
- **Motorcyclists** – 19 motorcyclists lost their life in 2024, this is 17% less than 2023 where 23 were killed.
- **Pedestrians** – 11 pedestrians lost their life in 2024, this is 8 lower compared to 19 lives lost in 2023.
- **Cyclists** – Six cyclists lost their lives in 2024 compared to eight in 2023.

Sex⁷

- > 65 males lost their lives in 2024 representing 71% of all lives lost. This is a 24% decrease from the 85 killed in 2023.
- > 26 females were killed in 2024, a 19% decrease from the 32 killed in the previous year

Table 3: Lives lost by sex, 2019-2024

Sex	Lives lost		
	2019-2023 average	2023	2024
Male	73	85	65
Female	25	32	26
Total	99	117	91

Age

- > Most of the road user age groups saw a decrease in lives lost in 2024 from the previous year apart from the 0-15, 16-19 and 90+ age cohort which recorded an increase (Table 4).

Table 4: Lives lost by age group, 2019-2024

Age group	Lives lost		
	2019-2023 average	2023	2024
0-15	2	0	3
16-19	9	5	6
20-24	10	8	5
25-29	8	15	4
30-39	15	15	7
40-49	12	18	11
50-59	13	18	12
60-69	11	15	14
70-79	9	13	18
80-89	8	9	7
90+	2	1	4
Total	99	117	91

Location

- > There were 34 crashes where lives were lost in the metropolitan area in 2024. This is 27 less crashes than the previous year (Table 5).
- > Within the metropolitan area in 2024, 35% of crashes where lives were lost occurred at intersections. This is higher than the 23% in 2023.
- > Crashes where lives were lost in regional areas was 57 in 2024 which is one higher compared to 56 in 2023 (Table 5).

⁷ Sex as captured by SAPOL officer or as recorded in the Department's Registration and Licensing system (TRUMPS). Gender data is not currently collected.

- > 53% of crashes in 2024 where lives were lost in the regional area were single vehicle crashes such as vehicle rollovers or hitting objects such as trees, an increase from 50% in 2023.

Table 5: Lives lost by location, 2019-2024

Location	Lives lost		
	2019-2023 average	2023	2024
Metropolitan area	44	61	34
Regional area	55	56	57
Total	99	117	91

Table 6: Fatal crashes by location, 2019-2024

Location	Fatal crashes		
	2019-2023 average	2023	2024
Metropolitan area	43	61	34
Regional area	50	48	49
Total	93	109	83

Young road users

- > There were 11 lives lost in 2024 within the 16-24 year old age group. Six 16-19 year olds were killed in 2024, compared to 5 in 2023. There were 5 lives lost within the 20-24 years old age group, a decrease of three life lost compared to 2023 (Table 7).
- > 16-24 year old fatalities for 2024 include:
 - 4 drivers.
 - 2 passengers.
 - 5 motorcycle riders.
 - 55% occurred in the regional area.
 - 8 were male, three females.

Table 7: Young road users lives lost, 2019-2024

Age group	Lives lost		
	2019-2023 average	2023	2024
16-19	9	5	6
20-24	10	8	5
Total	19	13	11

- > The 11 lives lost in 2024 is the lowest recorded in the last 5 years with young people aged 16-24 representing 11% of all lives lost. This age group make up 12% of licensed drivers and 11% of the total population in South Australia.

Older road users

- > 29 people aged 70 and over were killed in 2024, 6 more than in 2023 (Table 8).
- > Lives lost in this age group for 2024 include:
 - 18 drivers
 - 5 pedestrians
 - 5 motorcyclists
 - one cyclist
 - 72% were male
 - 52% occurred in the regional area

Table 8: Older road users lives lost, 2019-2024

Age group	Lives lost		
	2019-2023 average	2023	2024
70-79	9	13	18
80-89	8	9	7
90+	2	1	4
Total	20	23	29

- > In 2024 older road users aged 70+ represented 32% of all lives lost. This age group make up 15% of licensed drivers and 15% of the total population in South Australia.

Motorcyclists

- > 19 motorcycle riders lost their life in 2024, which is 4 lower than the 23 killed in the previous year (Table 9).
- > Of the 19 motorcyclists killed in 2024:
 - All were male.
 - 11 of the motorcyclists lives lost were in regional area.
 - 95% were wearing a helmet at the time of the crash.

Table 9: Motorcyclists lives lost, 2019-2024

User group	Lives lost		
	2019-2023 average	2023	2024
Motorcyclists	18	23	19

Table 10: Age of motorcyclists who lost their lives, 2024

Age group	Lives lost	Age group	Lives lost
0-15	0	40-49	2
16-19	2	50-59	2
20-24	3	60-69	3
25-29	0	70+	5
30-39	2	Total	19

Pedestrians and cyclists

- > 11 pedestrians lost their life in 2024 compared to 19 in the previous year.
- > 6 cyclists lost their life in 2024 compared to 8 in 2023.
- > 7 of the pedestrian lives lost occurred in metropolitan area.

Table 11: Pedestrians and cyclists lives lost, 2019-2024

User group	Lives lost		
	2019-2023 average	2023	2024
Pedestrians	14	19	11
Gopher/Wheelchair	0	0	0
Cyclists	5	8	6
Total	19	27	17

Table 12: Location where pedestrians and cyclists lost their life, 2024

User group	Lives lost	
	Metropolitan	Regional
Pedestrians	7	4
Cyclists	3	3
Total	10	7

Heavy vehicles

In general, heavy vehicle travel represents around 9% of travel across South Australia and have been involved in 14% of all crashes where a life is lost so far this year.

- > 12 lives lost in 2024 were involving heavy vehicles compared to 16 in the previous year and 17 for the 5-year average.

Table 13: Heavy vehicles involved lives lost, 2019-2024

User group	Lives lost		
	2019-2023 average	2023	2024
Heavy vehicles involved	17	16	12

Behavioural factors

When people engage in dangerous behaviour on the roads, they put themselves and other road users at risk. This continues to be an issue in 2024 with:

- > Speed was a contributing factor for 19 crashes where a life was lost that involved a driver or rider.
- > Seven lives lost were not wearing a seatbelt.
- > Three drivers/riders involved in a crash where a life was lost that was unlicensed.

Speed Limit

- > In 2024, 50% of crashes where lives were lost were on roads with a speed limit of 100 or 110 km/h compared to also 37% in 2023.
- > In 2024, 17% of crashes where lives were lost occurred on roads with a speed limit of 60km/h, compared to also 23% in 2023.

Table 14: Lives lost crashes by speed limit, 2019-2024

Speed limit	Fatal Crashes		
	2019-2023 average	2023	2024
40 km/h or below	3	8	2
50 km/h	11	17	12
60 km/h	18	25	14
70-90 km/h	18	19	13
100 km/h	21	20	25
110 km/h	22	20	16
Total	93	109	82

Speed as a contributing factor

- > The identification of speeding as a contributing factor in road traffic crashes cannot always be directly determined and is often underreported in road crash data. However, analysis suggests that in 23% of crashes where a life was lost in 2024 speeding was considered a contributing factor. This is below the previous year (36%) and the previous five-year (2019-2023) figure of 38% (Table 2).

Non-restraint use

- > Of the drivers and passengers killed in 2024, 14% were not wearing a seatbelt at the time of the crash compared to 21% not restrained in 2023 and 28% in the past five-year period (Table 2).
- > Of the 7 vehicle occupants killed not wearing a seatbelt in 2024, all of them were drivers.

Age of passenger vehicles involved in crashes

- > In 2024, 65% of passenger vehicles involved in crashes where lives were lost were 10 or more years old, which is higher than the previous year when it was 61% (Table 15).

Table 15: Age of passenger vehicles involved in crashes, 2019-2024

Vehicle age	Passenger vehicles involved in fatal crashes		
	2019-2023 average	2023	2024
< 5 years	13	17	16
5-9 years	15	27	14
> 9 years	60	70	56
Total	89	114	86

Results from previous years

Year	Lives lost ¹	Lives lost per 100,000 population ²	Licences ²	Vehicle Registrations ²	BAC above legal limit [^]	Tested positive to drugs [^]	No Seatbelt ⁴	Location ⁵	
								Regional	Metro
1974 - highest lives lost	382	30.77	636,604	577,600	n/a	n/a	n/a	207	175
1980s³	252	20.56	757,974	708,600	46 (56%) ³	n/a	n/a	135	117
1990s	179	15.78	923,309	883,500	30 (35%)	n/a	26 (36%) ⁴	104	75
2000s	137	11.03	1,025,260	1,011,100	24 (32%)	n/a	24 (32%)	82	55
2021	99	5.6	1,305,364	1,545,535	15 (24%)	13 (21%)	14 (27%)	59	40
2022	71	3.9	1,327,113	1,588,048	14 (29%)	10 (20%)	15 (35%)	39	32
2023	117	6.3	1,349,764	1,628,074	13 (17%)	22 (29%)	12 (21%)	56	61
2024	91	4.8	1,372,725	1,664,464	n/a	n/a	7 (14%)	57	34

¹ Average per year over the decade where appropriate.

² Data is taken from the beginning of the decade.

³ Legal BAC limit was below .08 during the 1980's.

⁴ Seatbelt data only available from 1992. Percent is drivers and passengers with a known seatbelt status.

⁵ The boundary used for defining the Adelaide metropolitan area has been changed in this report to be consistent with the ABS Greater Adelaide Statistical Area definition (ABS Australian Statistical Geography Standard). For comparison purposes within this report, all crash and casualty data by region since 2010 have been updated to reflect the boundaries defining the metropolitan and regional regions. Data by region prior to 2010 cannot be directly related as it uses the previous metropolitan/regional boundaries. For the same reason, data by region presented in previous reports cannot be compared to data in this report.

[^]Drivers and riders

n/a= Data not available.

Fatalities, South Australia, 1940-2024

Year	Lives lost	Year	Lives lost
1940	126	1983	265
1941	112	1984	232
1942	127	1985	269
1943	106	1986	288
1944	71	1987	256
1945	61	1988	223
1946	97	1989	222
1947	101	1990	225
1948	128	1991	184
1949	119	1992	164
1950	170	1993	218
1951	197	1994	163
1952	172	1995	182
1953	136	1996	181
1954	153	1997	149
1955	173	1998	168
1956	167	1999	153
1957	185	2000	166
1958	200	2001	154
1959	185	2002	154
1960	234	2003	156
1961	203	2004	139
1962	194	2005	147
1963	223	2006	117
1964	238	2007	125
1965	243	2008	99
1966	270	2009	119
1967	253	2010	118
1968	275	2011	103
1969	251	2012	94
1970	349	2013	97
1971	292	2014	108
1972	312	2015	102
1973	329	2016	86
1974	382	2017	100
1975	339	2018	80
1976	307	2019	114
1977	306	2020	93
1978	291	2021	99
1979	309	2022	71
1980	271	2023	117
1981	222	2024	91
1982	270		

Definitions of police reported casualty types:

Casualty Crash – crash where a life is 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.

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

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