

2024 lives lost in South Australia


**ROAD
SAFETY**

 Government of
South Australia

During 2024, 89 lives were lost on South Australian roads. This was 24% less than the 117 recorded in 2023 and 10% less than the previous five-year average (2019-2023) of 99 lives lost. However, this was above the 2024 target of 76 lives lost established under *South Australia's Road Safety Strategy to 2031*. 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 | 89 |

South Australia's fatality rate for 2024 was 4.7 lives lost per 100,000 population and represents a 25% decrease compared to 6.3 lives lost per 100,000 population in 2023 (Table 2). This was also a decrease compared to the five-year average (2019-2023) of 5.5 lives lost per 100,000 population. Data from the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics (BITRE)¹ showed that Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania also recorded decreases in this rate in 2024 while the remaining states and territories recorded increases. The overall national fatality rate for 2024 increased by 1.2% compared to the previous year with 4.8 lives lost per 100,000 population.

Key points

- > **Location** – There were more lives lost on regional roads compared to metropolitan roads in 2024. In 2024 there was a 44% decrease in the number of lives lost in metropolitan Adelaide compared to the previous year. There were 34 people that lost their life in 2024 in metropolitan Adelaide compared to 61 in 2023. The number of lives lost on regional roads was 55 in 2024, which was one less than the previous year and was the same as the five-year average of 55.
- > **Young road users (16-24 years)** – The number of 16-19 year olds that lost their life increased from five in 2023 to six in 2024, while the number of 20-24 year old deaths decreased from eight in 2023 to five in 2024. The 11 lives lost across these two age groups in 2024 was eight less than the five-year average of 19 deaths.

¹ Source: Road deaths Australia – Monthly Bulletins, December 2024 – BITRE

- > **Older road users (70+ years)** –There was a 17% increase in the number of older road users who lost their lives lost in 2024 compared to 2023 and a 35% increase compared to the five-year average. There were 27 lives lost in this age group in 2024, which was four more than the 23 recorded in 2023 and seven more than the five-year average of 20. In 2024, drivers were the road user type that represented the most lives lost for people aged 70 and over.
- > **Road user types** – The decrease in the number of lives lost in 2024 compared to 2023 was seen across all road user types apart from passengers and heavy vehicle drivers which remained unchanged.

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

| Lives lost | 2019-2023 average | 2023 | 2024 | Change from 2023 to 2024 | Change from five-year average to 2024 |
|--|-------------------|------|------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Total lives lost | 99 | 117 | 89 | -28 | -10 |
| Rate of lives lost per 100,000 population | 5.5 | 6.3 | 4.8 | -1.5 | -0.7 |
| Road user type | | | | | |
| Light vehicle drivers | 45 | 51 | 40 | -11 | -5 |
| Heavy vehicle drivers | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | -2 |
| Passengers | 12 | 12 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| Motorcyclists ² | 18 | 23 | 18 | -5 | 0 |
| Cyclists | 5 | 8 | 6 | -2 | 1 |
| Pedestrians ³ | 14 | 19 | 11 | -8 | -3 |
| Other ⁴ | 0 | 2 | 0 | -2 | 0 |
| Location | | | | | |
| Lives lost in metropolitan areas | 44 | 61 | 34 | -27 | -10 |
| Lives lost in regional areas | 55 | 56 | 55 | -1 | 0 |
| Age group | | | | | |
| Young road users (16-24 years) | 19 | 13 | 11 | -2 | -8 |
| Older road users (70+ years) | 20 | 23 | 27 | 4 | 7 |
| 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% | 31% | -5% | -7% |
| Drivers/riders killed with illegal BAC | 20% | 17% | 17% | 0% | -3% |
| Drivers/riders killed tested positive to drugs | 21% | 29% | 13% | -16% | -8% |

² Motorcyclists include scooter operators and pillion passengers

³ Pedestrians include gopher & wheelchair users

⁴ Other road users are occupants/controllers of animal drawn vehicles, ridden animals, railway vehicles, and trams

Figure 1: Lives lost, South Australia 2015-2024

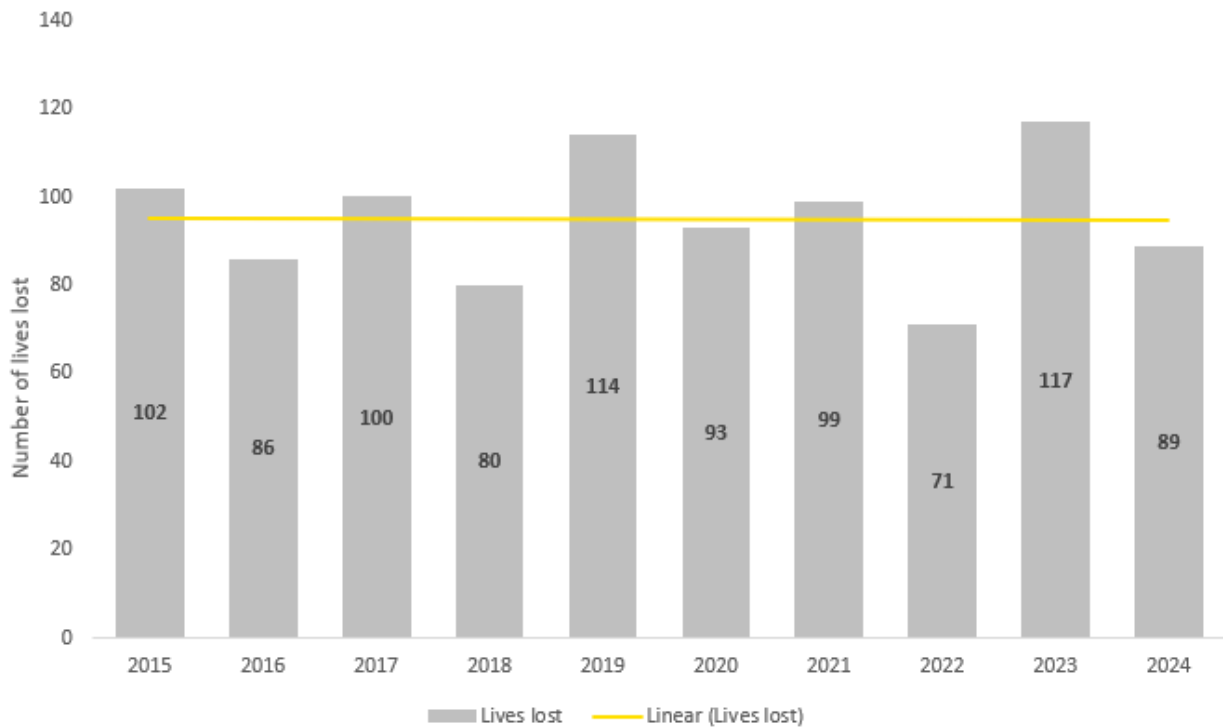


Figure 1 shows the number of lives lost over the ten-year period from 2015 to 2024 in South Australia. The number of lives lost has decreased by an average of 0.2% per year over the past 10 years. The five-year average of 94 lives lost for 2020-2024 sits two lower compared to the 2015-2019 average which was 96 lives lost. The highest number of lives lost seen on South Australian roads in the last ten years was 117 recorded in 2023.

Road user type

- > The decrease in the number of lives lost in 2024 compared to 2023 was seen across all road user types apart from passengers and heavy vehicle drivers, which remained unchanged (Table 2).
 - **Light vehicle drivers** – The number of drivers who lost their life decreased by 22% from 51 in 2023 to 40 in 2024.
 - **Heavy vehicle drivers** – Two heavy vehicle drivers lost their life in 2024, this was the same number as the previous year and less than the five-year average of four.
 - **Passengers** – In 2024 there were 12 passengers that lost their life, which was the same as the previous year and the five-year average.
 - **Motorcyclists** – 18 motorcyclists lost their life in 2024, this was 22% less than 2023 when 23 were killed.
 - **Pedestrians** – 11 pedestrians lost their life in 2024, this was eight lower compared to 19 lives lost in 2023.
 - **Cyclists** – Six cyclists lost their lives in 2024 compared to eight in 2023.

Sex⁵

- > 63 males lost their lives in 2024, representing 71% of all lives lost. This was a 26% decrease from the 85 males killed in 2023.
- > 26 females lost their life in 2024, a 19% decrease from the 32 killed in the previous year.

Table 3: Lives lost by sex, 2019-2024

| Sex | Lives lost | | |
|--------------|----------------|------------|-----------|
| | 5-year average | 2023 | 2024 |
| Male | 73 | 85 | 63 |
| Female | 25 | 32 | 26 |
| Total | 99 | 117 | 89 |

Age

- > Most age groups saw a decrease in lives lost in 2024 from the previous year apart from the 0-15, 16-19, 70-79 and 90+ age groups which recorded increases (Table 4).

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

| Age group | Lives lost | | |
|--------------|----------------|------------|-----------|
| | 5-year 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 | 17 |
| 80-89 | 8 | 9 | 6 |
| 90+ | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Total | 99 | 117 | 89 |

Location

- > There were 34 crashes where lives were lost in the metropolitan area in 2024, this was 27 less than the previous year (Table 6).
- > Within the metropolitan area in 2024, 35% of crashes where lives were lost occurred at intersections. This was higher than the 23% recorded in 2023.

⁵ Sex as captured by SAPOL officer or as recorded in the Department's Registration and Licensing system. Gender data is not currently collected.

- > There were 47 crashes where lives were lost in regional areas in 2024 which was one less as compared to 2023.
- > 49% 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, this was 1% less than 2023.

Table 5: Lives lost by location, 2019-2024

| Location | Lives lost | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------|-----------|
| | 5-year average | 2023 | 2024 |
| Metropolitan Adelaide | 44 | 61 | 34 |
| Regional SA | 55 | 56 | 55 |
| Total | 99 | 117 | 89 |

Table 6: Fatal crashes by location, 2019-2024

| Location | Fatal crashes | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------|-----------|
| | 5-year average | 2023 | 2024 |
| Metropolitan Adelaide | 43 | 61 | 34 |
| Regional SA | 50 | 48 | 47 |
| Total | 93 | 109 | 81 |

Young road users

- > There were 11 lives lost in 2024 within the 16-24 year old age group, which was the lowest number of lives lost recorded in this age group in the last five years.
- > Six 16-19 year olds were killed in 2024, compared to five in 2023. There were five lives lost within the 20-24 years old age group in 2024, a decrease of three compared to the previous year (Table 7).
- > 16-24 year old lives lost for 2024 include:
 - Five motorcyclists
 - Four drivers
 - Two passengers
 - 55% occurred in regional South Australia
 - 73% were male
- > In 2024, young people aged 16-24 represented 12% of all lives lost. This age group make up 12% of licensed drivers and 11% of the total population in South Australia.

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

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

Older road users

- > In 2024 there were 27 people aged 70 and over that lost their life, four more than in 2023 (Table 8).
- > Lives lost in this age group for 2024 include:
 - 17 drivers
 - Five pedestrians
 - Four motorcyclists
 - One cyclist
 - 71% were male
 - 48% occurred in regional South Australia
- > In 2024 older road users aged 70 and over accounted for 30% of all lives lost in South Australia. This age group make up 15% of licensed drivers and 15% of the total population in South Australia.

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

| Age group | Lives lost | | |
|--------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| | 5-year average | 2023 | 2024 |
| 70-79 | 9 | 13 | 17 |
| 80-89 | 8 | 9 | 6 |
| 90+ | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Total | 20 | 23 | 27 |

Motorcyclists

- > 18 motorcycle riders lost their life in 2024, which was five lower than the 23 killed in the previous year (Table 9).
- > Of the 18 motorcyclists killed in 2024:
 - All were male
 - 56% occurred in regional South Australia
 - 94% were wearing a helmet at the time of the crash

Table 9: Motorcyclists lives lost, 2019-2024

| User group | Lives lost | | |
|---------------|----------------|------|------|
| | 5-year average | 2023 | 2024 |
| Motorcyclists | 18 | 23 | 18 |

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+ | 4 |
| 30-39 | 2 | Total | 18 |

Pedestrians and cyclists

- > 11 pedestrians lost their life in 2024 compared to 19 in the previous year.
- > Six cyclists lost their life in 2024 compared to eight in 2023.
- > 64% of the pedestrian lives lost occurred in metropolitan Adelaide.

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

| User group | Lives lost | | |
|--------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| | 5-year average | 2023 | 2024 |
| Pedestrians | 14 | 19 | 11 |
| 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 vehicle crashes

- > In general, heavy vehicles represent around 9% of all vehicle kilometres travelled across South Australia. In 2024, heavy vehicles were involved in 16% of all crashes where a life was lost.

- > 13 lives lost in 2024 were in crashes involving a heavy vehicle compared to 16 in the previous year and 17 for the five-year average.

Table 13: Lives lost in crashes that involved heavy vehicles, 2019-2024

| Crash Involvement | Lives lost | | |
|------------------------|----------------|------|------|
| | 5-year average | 2023 | 2024 |
| Heavy vehicle involved | 17 | 16 | 13 |

Behavioural factors

- > When people engage in dangerous behaviour on the roads, they put themselves and other road users at risk. This continued to be an issue in 2024 with:
 - Speed identified as a contributing factor in 23 crashes involving a motor vehicle where a life was lost.
 - Seven vehicle occupants that lost their lives were not wearing a seatbelt.
 - Three drivers/riders involved in a crash where a life was lost were unlicensed.
 - Eight drivers/riders who lost their life in road crashes tested positive for drugs.
 - 10 drivers/riders who lost their life in road crashes had an illegal BAC.

Speed Limit

- > In 2024, 52% of crashes where lives were lost occurred on roads with a speed limit of 100 or 110 km/h compared to 37% in 2023.
- > In 2024, 17% of crashes where lives were lost occurred on roads with a speed limit of 60 km/h, compared to 23% in 2023.

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

| Speed limit | Fatal Crashes | | |
|------------------|----------------|------------|-----------|
| | 5-year average | 2023 | 2024 |
| 40 km/h or below | 3 | 8 | 3 |
| 50 km/h | 11 | 17 | 10 |
| 60 km/h | 18 | 25 | 14 |
| 70-90 km/h | 18 | 19 | 12 |
| 100 km/h | 21 | 20 | 26 |
| 110 km/h | 22 | 20 | 16 |
| Total | 93 | 109 | 81 |

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 speeding was considered a contributing factor in 31% of crashes where a life was lost in 2024. This was below the 36% identified in 2023 and the 38% identified over the last five-years.

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% in 2023 and 28% over the past five-years (Table 2).
- > Of the seven vehicle occupants killed not wearing a seatbelt in 2024, all of them were drivers.

Age of passenger vehicles involved in crashes

- > In 2024, 66% of passenger vehicles involved in crashes where lives were lost were 10 or more years old, which was 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 | | |
|--------------|--|------------|-----------|
| | 5-year average | 2023 | 2024 |
| < 5 years | 13 | 17 | 16 |
| 5-9 years | 15 | 27 | 13 |
| > 9 years | 60 | 70 | 56 |
| Total | 89 | 114 | 85 |

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 | 89 | 4.7 | 1,372,725 | 1,664,464 | 10 (17%) | 8 (13%) | 7 (14%) | 55 | 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 | 89 |
| 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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