



Eastern Bay of Plenty

Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2027

1 BACKGROUND

Road safety is a complex issue. Statistics illustrate that the Eastern Bay of Plenty is a vulnerable area in terms of road safety, with high social costs across the sub-region for fatalities and serious crashes amounting to over \$520 million over the last five years (2019-2023). A multifaceted approach to road safety is needed in the Eastern Bay along with clear operational policy, the development of community responsibility and integrated stakeholder involvement.

This Action Plan provides a framework for road safety. It essentially sets the direction and actions for the Eastern Bay cluster over the next three years.

The purpose of this document is to ensure that the road safety programme is strategically led and encourages communities to take greater responsibility for the driving behaviours of citizens. It aims to:

1. Provide high level strategic direction for road safety education in the Eastern Bay of Plenty.
2. Address local road safety needs by targeting risk areas and vulnerable populations and supporting other agencies working in road safety education and Police activities.
3. Link with other areas across councils' activities to identify opportunities for integrating road safety education and risk management initiatives.
4. Outline a set of realistic actions that support the Eastern Bay of Plenty road safety vision.

Road safety is an issue that involves a wide range of factors, including the engineering of roads and roadsides, quality of vehicle fleets, and changing driving, cycling, pedestrian and other road-user behaviours through education and promotion. It is acknowledged that all these factors are important for improving road safety. This Action Plan's focus, however, is on changing behaviours through education and promotion in the Eastern Bay.

2 ROAD TO ZERO STRATEGY 2020-2030

Vision - *A New Zealand where no one is killed or seriously injured in road crashes. This means that no death or serious injury while travelling on our roads is acceptable.*

Underpinning this vision are seven guiding principles:

Principle 1 We promote good choices but plan for mistakes.

Principle 2 We design for human vulnerability.

Principle 3 We strengthen all parts of the road transport system.

Principle 4 We have a shared responsibility for improving road safety.

Principle 5 Our actions are grounded in evidence and evaluated.

Principle 6 Our road safety actions support health, wellbeing, and liveable places.

Principle 7 We make safety a critical decision-making priority.

Principles are grounded in and build from the Safe System Approach, (the first four guiding principles were pillars of the Safe System Approach of Safer Journeys). As a step towards achieving this vision, central government proposes a target of a 40 percent reduction in deaths and serious injuries by 2030.

This will be achieved through actioning five key areas:

- Focus Area 1** Infrastructure improvements and speed management
- Focus Area 2** Vehicle safety
- Focus Area 3** Work-related Road travel
- Focus Area 4** Road user choices
- Focus Area 5** System management.

3 VISION

Working together to ensure a safe Eastern Bay of Plenty road system that is increasingly free of death and serious injury.

4 THE EASTERN BAY OF PLENTY CLUSTER

Eastern Bay communities are over-represented in terms of road safety risk. The Eastern Bay of Plenty cluster refers to Kawerau, Ōpōtiki and Whakatāne Districts. A map showing the cluster area and the related Police boundaries is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Map of the Eastern Bay area showing district council and policing boundaries.



4.1 Key characteristics

The Eastern Bay cluster has three main urban centres (Whakatāne, Ōpōtiki and Kawerau) and many small, rural, isolated communities scattered throughout, particularly along the coast. Key demographic factors characterising the Eastern Bay cluster, based on the last Census in 2018, include (refer to Table 1 for more detail):

- Low population numbers
- Slight increasing population
- High levels of deprivation
- Low employment levels
- High proportions of low-income earners
- High proportions of Māori and European ethnicities
- Low proportions of the population in the 20–30-year age group
- High proportions of the population in the under 15 year and over 65 year age groups.

Table 1: Demographic factors for Kawerau, Ōpōtiki and Whakatāne for 2018 (Census 2023 is not available yet)

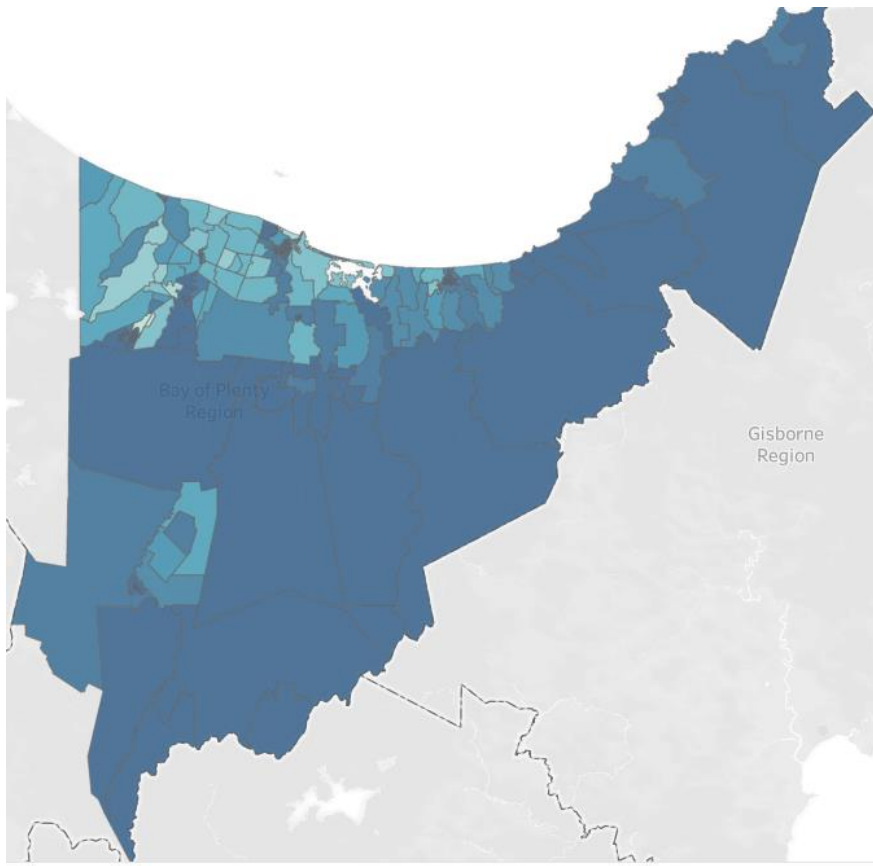
District	Summary of demographic factors
Kawerau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7,146 people usually live in Kawerau District • Total population has decreased by 783 people since 2013 Census • Females make up 50 percent of the total population • 500 people (7percent) of the labour force are unemployed • 3,633 people (51percent) of the labour force have an income of \$30,000 or less • 4,407 Māori usually live in Kawerau District (61 percent of the total population)¹ • 20 percent are aged 65 years and over • 24 percent are aged under 15 years • 46 percent of people over 15 years have a formal qualification and 5 percent hold a Bachelor's degree or higher as their highest qualification • 65 percent of households in occupied private dwellings owned the dwelling or held it in family trust • Median weekly rent paid was \$271.

¹ The Māori ethnic population is the count for people of the Maori ethnic group. It includes those people who stated Māori as being either their sole ethnic group or one of several ethnic groups.

Ōpōtiki	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9,276 people usually live in Ōpōtiki District • Total population has decreased by 840 people since 2013 Census • Females make up 51 percent of the total population • 464 people (5 percent) of the labour force are unemployed • 4,569 people (49 percent) of the labour force have an income of \$30,000 or less • 6,123 Māori usually live in Ōpōtiki (67 percent of the total population) • 18 percent of people are aged 65 years and over • 23 percent of people are aged under 15 years • 48 percent of people over 15 years have a formal qualification and 8 percent hold a Bachelor's degree or higher as their highest qualification • 62.1 percent of households in occupied private dwellings owned the dwelling or held it in family trust (2018) • Median weekly rent paid was \$279.
Whakatāne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35,700 people usually live in Whakatāne District • Total population has increased by 3,012 people since the 2013 Census • Females make up 51.1 percent of the total population • 1,587 people (6.7 percent) of the labour force are unemployed • 15,246 people (43 percent) of the labour force have an income of \$30,000 or less • 13,203 Māori usually live in Whakatāne District (36.9 percent of the total population) • 17.4 percent of people in Whakatāne District are aged 65 years and over • 22.4 percent of people are aged under 15 years • 72 percent of people over 15 years have a formal qualification and 11.4 percent hold a bachelor's degree or higher as their highest qualification • 66.1 percent of households in occupied private dwellings owned the dwelling or held it in family trust • Median weekly rent paid was \$354.

Source: Statistics New Zealand. Census data, 2018.

The deprivation index is an index of socioeconomic deprivation based on the area units from Statistics NZ. It combines nine variables from the census into a deprivation score for each area unit, reflecting the level of deprivation. The map (below) shows deprivation levels for all of the Eastern Bay of Plenty showing the high levels (10 is darkest colour and highest deprivation) throughout the three districts which puts the cluster amongst some of the most deprived communities in New Zealand.



4.2 Roading network and registered vehicles

The three districts are served primarily by the State Highway(SH) network (refer Figure 3), which includes:

- SH2 running from Tauranga to Gisborne via Whakatāne and Ōpōtiki districts
- SH30 between Rotorua and Whakatāne
- SH34 linking Kawerau with SH2 at Awaitei, west of Edgecumbe, and SH30 near the Rotomā hills
- SH35 which follows the coastal route around the East Coast between Ōpōtiki and Gisborne.

Other key local roads within the region include:

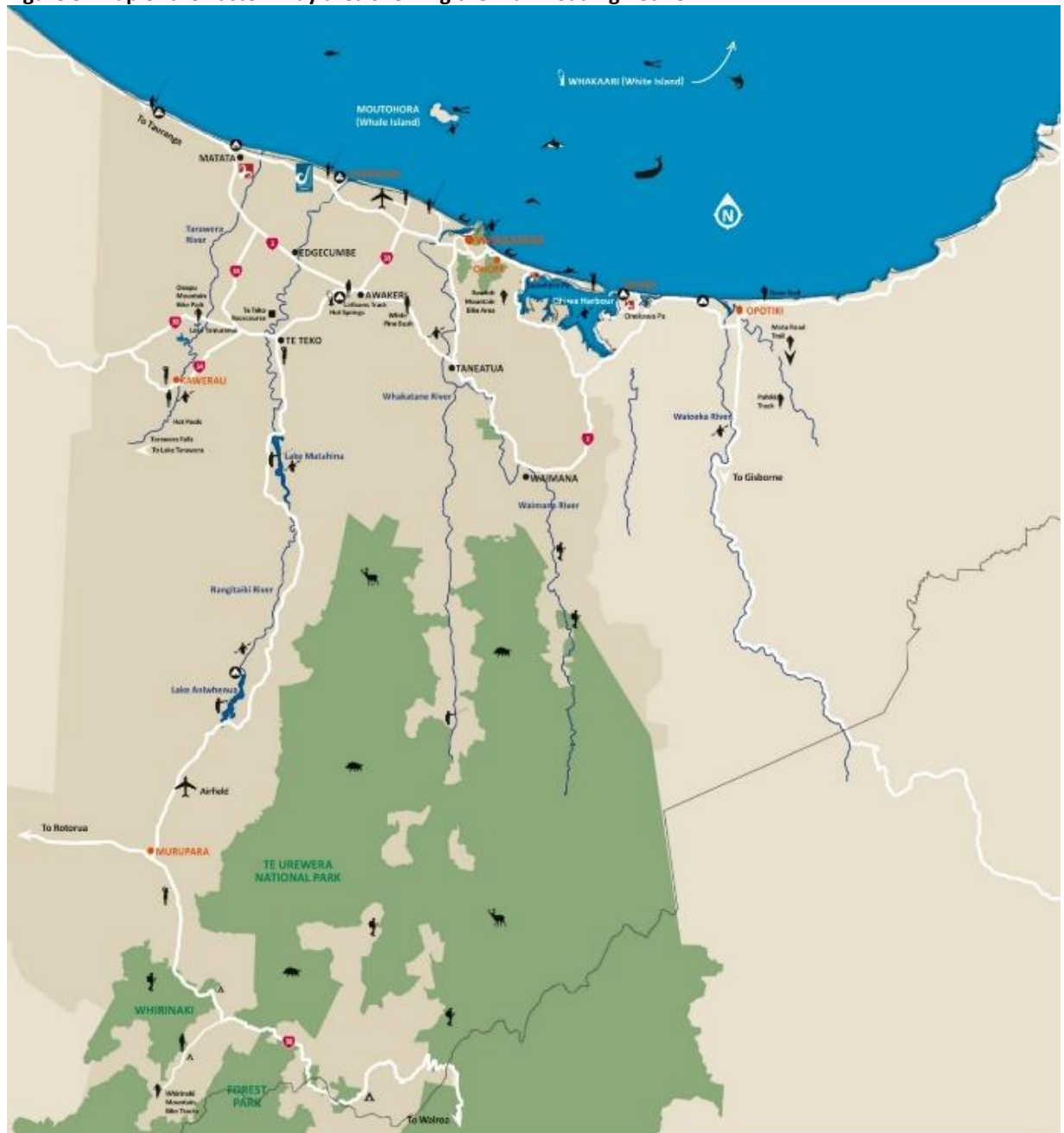
- Thornton Road / Wainui Road, which together form the Coastal Arterial Route through Whakatāne and Ōhope, along the coast from Matatā in the west and around the inner margins of the Ōhiwa Harbour to Matakerepu in the east
- Galatea Road, running from SH2 between Te Teko and Awakeri, south into the Kāingaroa hinterland, towards Murupara
- Pokairoa Road / Ngamotu Road, running from Galatea Road, just south of the Matahina Dam, southwest to the boundary with the Rotorua District at Rerewhakaaitu (an increasingly popular alternative route south)
- Ruatāhuna Road – Waikaremoana Road, the old SH38 which links the Bay of Plenty with Wairoa District via Ruatāhuna, Waikaremoana and the Te Urewera National Park.

Table 2: Registered vehicles in the Eastern Bay cluster

No. registered vehicles	
Whakatāne	10,209
Ōpōtiki	2,643
Kawerau	2,037
TOTAL	14,889

Source: Statistics New Zealand. Census data, 2018.

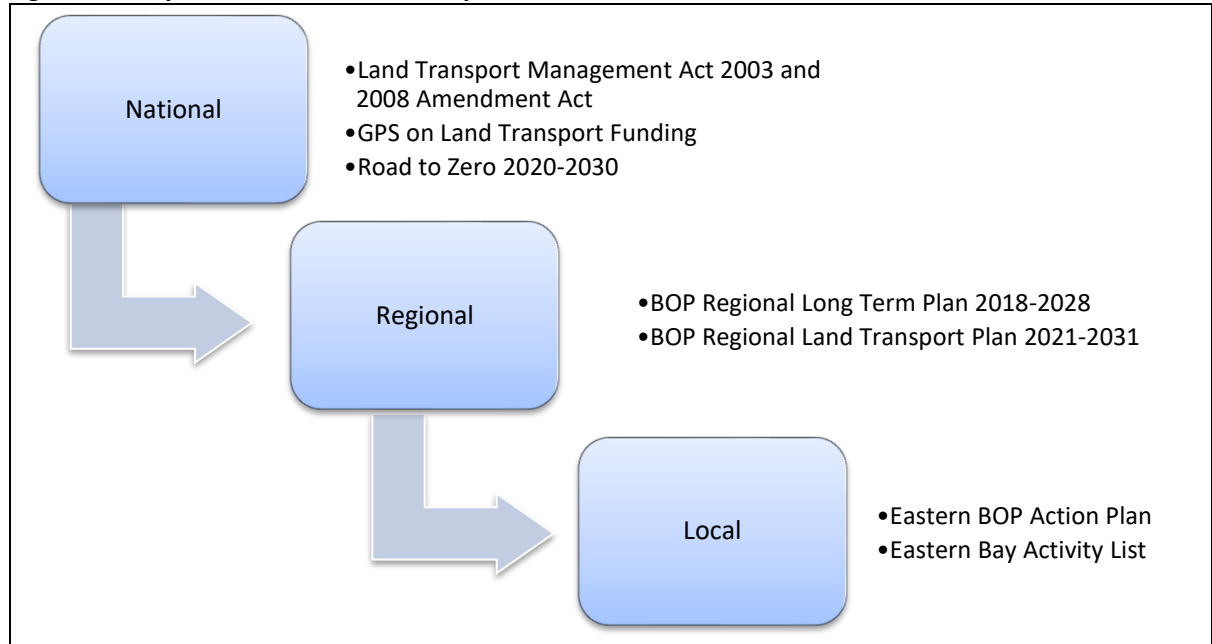
Figure 3: Map of the Eastern Bay area showing the main roading network



5 ROAD SAFETY POLICY FRAMEWORK

There are three tiers to the policy framework for road safety – national, regional, and sub-regional (local). Several relevant documents at each tier influence this road safety strategy. Figure 4 illustrates the policy framework and the relevant documents at each tier.

Figure 4: Policy framework for road safety



5.1 Communities at risk register

The Communities at Risk Register highlights two measures of risk on the road network - personal risk and collective risk:

- Personal risk is a count of deaths and serious injuries divided by distance or time travelled. Being a relative measure, personal risk allows comparison between different regions
- Collective risk is measured as the five-year average yearly deaths and serious injuries on the network. This shows where the biggest differences can be made in total numbers of deaths and serious injuries.

The table below shows the region's performance in the areas of concern that Waka Kotahi (NZTA) Crash Analysis System collect data on. These areas are identified in the 2020-2030 Road to Zero Focus Area has been identified for each area of concern.

6 COMMUNITIES AT RISK REGISTER 2022 (BASED ON CAS DATA 2017-2021 FIVE YEAR ROLLING AVERAGE)

Category	Road to Zero Focus area	Area of concern	Personal risk	
User behaviour	Infrastructure Improvements and Speed Management Road User Choices	Speed	High	16
		Alcohol & drugs	High	9
	Road User Choices	Distraction	High	6
		Fatigue	High	1
		Restraints	Medium	7
User type	Vehicle Safety Road User Choices	Young drivers	High	11
		Motorcyclists	Medium	8
		Older road users	New	3
	Infrastructure Improvements and Speed Management * ² Vehicle Safety Road User Choices	Cyclists	Above Mean	1
		Pedestrians	Medium	6
Road environment	Infrastructure Improvements and Speed Management	Urban intersections	High	5
		Rural intersections	High	5
		Rural roads	Medium	27

Regional authorities must include road safety in regional land transport strategies and plans and programmes. The Bay of Plenty Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) 2018 sets the direction for the region's land transport system for the next 30 years. The region's vision for transport is the best transport systems for a growing economy and a safe and vibrant Bay lifestyle. The RLTP identifies road safety as significant problem. The Safe System approach underpins the guiding principles of New Zealand's national road safety strategies, the previous Safer Journeys, (2010-2020) and the recently launched Road to Zero, (2020-2030). The Safe System approach will continue to provide the strategic response and direction for road safety in the Bay of Plenty, along with the Vision, focus areas and three new principles of Road to Zero strategic framework.

Within the region, the Communities At Risk Register identifies collective risk as high in the following areas:

- Speed
- Alcohol and Drugs

² Road to Zero Action Plan 2020-2022 Focus area Infrastructure and Speed Management - Action: enhance safety and accessibility of footpaths, bike lanes and cycleways

- Young drivers
- Motorcyclists
- Rural roads

Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Road Safety Action Planning for 2024-27 contributes to the Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) in improved road safety outcomes by aiming to seek to fully understand crash risks in the region, identify regional road safety priority areas, and collaboratively develop and deliver a regional road safety campaign.

6.1 Delivery model for the Eastern Bay cluster

Road safety is a shared responsibility across the Eastern Bay. The Eastern Bay cluster is made up of the Kawerau, Ōpōtiki and Whakatāne District councils as well as Bay of Plenty Regional Council. The Road Safety activity delivers a number of programmes to help promote the safety of the community on our roads. The existing model allows stakeholders to come together at all levels of planning and operations. For this structure to be successful, it needs to have strong collaboration, shared responsibility and ongoing buy-in from all parties. Road safety also needs to be strategically led, integrated and coordinated to be effective.

Road Safety Coordinator provides a report to the Eastern Bay Road Safety Committee directly and also liaises with programme providers. This role is pivotal in coordinating all road safety activities for the Eastern Bay cluster and includes the development of the road safety activity list. It does this through the development and delivery of education and promotion initiatives for road safety on behalf of the three represented authorities in the cluster (Kawerau, Ōpōtiki, Whakatāne District Councils). The Bay of Plenty Regional Council also has a Road Safety Coordinator and has an overview of the whole Bay of Plenty region. Coordination of external programme providers is also part of this role through the provision of funding support and monitoring of delivery outcomes.

Eastern Bay Road Safety Operations Group and its members are accountable for the outcomes of the Eastern Bay Road Safety activity. The group provides the strategic direction, oversight and leadership to ensure Eastern Bay roads are increasingly free of death and serious injury. The committee is made up from representatives from the following organisations:

- Whakatāne District Council
- Kawerau District Council
- Ōpōtiki District Council
- Bay of Plenty Regional Council
- Waka Kotahi (NZTA)
- Police
- Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)

The Eastern Bay of Plenty Road Safety Group's purpose is to provide a forum to contribute and plan the coordinated delivery of road safety actions in the Eastern Bay cluster. This group is made up of the list above and focuses on pragmatic solutions for improving safer roads and roadsides.

Road safety programme providers are those external stakeholders that deliver programmes related to road safety that can be funded through the Eastern Bay road safety activity, for example, Iwi and hapu organisations, marae, service providers, community organisations and Police. These are typically independent programmes developed and implemented by external stakeholders.

6.2 Implementing the delivery model

Eastern Bay Road Safety objectives aim to deliver a collaborative and integrated road safety activity through three key strands of work:

1. Promotion and education programmes developed and implemented by the Road Safety Coordinator for the Eastern Bay cluster.
2. Road safety programmes developed and implemented through external providers with funding support from the Eastern Bay cluster.
3. Road safety work in the engineering area that focuses on road improvements to help reduce the crash risk.

First, to achieve Road to Zero goal of reducing fatalities and serious crashes, there is an ongoing need to provide road safety education at the local level for people of all ages. Road user educational campaigns and programmes are a core component of the approach to road safety. Education and promotional programmes aim to support Waka Kotahi and Police national campaigns as well as targeting specific local issues. Road safety campaigns developed and implemented through the Road Safety Coordinator for the cluster will inform road users about priority local issues and encourage people to become 'safe road users' – a key component of a safe system.

Second, building knowledge, capacity, and ownership across the Eastern Bay in road safety is an important focus. This second strand of work acknowledges that a lot of positive road safety initiatives occur outside of the cluster councils. Funding support and coordination of these activities allows for a wider and more effective road safety programme. In addition, often those vulnerable groups for road safety are often 'at risk' in terms of other social issues, such as alcohol and drug use and crime. It is therefore important to make linkages with other councils' work programmes and across partner agencies to enable the delivery of integrated road safety messages to target communities regarding road safety along with other 'at-risk' behaviours.

Third, improving the safety of Eastern Bay of Plenty roads and roadsides to reduce the likelihood of crashes occurring and to minimise the consequences of those crashes that do occur is paramount. This component of the programme is provided through programme promotions and the Bay of Plenty Regional Council targeted billboard campaign. The Eastern Bay has a small population base with challenging geography. Both these factors, along with the high costs associated with road engineering, contribute to the difficulty of investing in safe roads. A key challenge is finding ways to cost-effectively improve roads with high crash rates.

The three strands of work will be complementary, and opportunities to partner wider stakeholder groups will be harnessed.

7 ROAD SAFETY ISSUES IN THE EASTERN BAY CLUSTER

The Eastern Bay is a high-risk area for road crashes. This section summarises the extent of the road safety issue.

7.1 Crash numbers and casualties

During the four-year period 2019-2023, there were 1503 crashes with 42 deaths, 188 serious injuries, 639 minor injuries and 842 non-injuries in the Eastern Bay of Plenty (refer Table 3). This is compared to 1426 in 2016-2020 of 29 deaths and 121 serious injuries.

Table 3: Crash list fatal and serious crashes 2019-2023: Eastern Bay of Plenty

Overall crash statistics				Overall casualty statistics		
Crash severity	Number	%	Social cost (\$m)	Injury severity	Number	% all casualties
Fatal	36	2.40	210.55	Death	42	4.83
Serious	153	10.18	223.41	Serious	188	21.63
Minor	472	31.40	49.34	Minor	639	73.54
Non-injury	842	56.02	36.85			
	1503	100	520.15		869	100

Source: Waka Kotahi (NZTA) Crash Analysis Data (CAS) 2019-2023

The number of crashes and the numbers of resulting casualties for each of the four years are illustrated in the table above. Encouragingly, these figures show that the numbers of fatal, serious, and minor crashes have declined slightly, and the numbers of non-injury crashes have declined steadily over the last five years. This is consistent with the trend nationally.

Communities at Risk Register 2022 (Based on CAS Data 2017-21 five year rolling average) – Collective risk in the Bay of Plenty region and by local authority.

For the five years to the end of 2021 an average 50 people annually have either died or been seriously injured in crashes on Eastern Bay roads. In 2018 the five year rolling average was 41. The number of people being hurt on our roads is increasing (22%). This is reflective of the whole of Bay of Plenty trend (17%).

			Collective risk (5yr AVG DSI)						
Category	Area of concern	Kawerau	Ōpōtiki	Whakatāne	Total EBay	Rotorua	Western Bay of Plenty District	Tauranga	All of Bay of Plenty
User behaviour	Speed (too fast for the conditions)	0	4	12	16	16	15	12	58
	Alcohol &/or drugs	0	2	7	9	10	14	4	39
	Distraction	0	2	4	6	3	3	4	15
	Fatigue	0	0	1	1	7	4	1	13
	Restraints	0	2	5	7	4	6	2	19
User type	Young drivers (16-24 yrs)	0	2	9	11	12	14	10	49
	Motorcyclists	0	3	7	10	10	6	14	39
	Older road users	0	1	2	3	2	7	8	21
	Cyclists	0	0	1	1	2	2	8	12
	Pedestrians	0	2	4	6	4	3	8	21
Road environment	Urban intersections	1	1	3	5	8	1	16	30
	Rural intersections	0	1	4	5	3	6	2	17
	Rural road loss of control/and or head on (speed zone > 70 km/hr)	0	6	21	27	22	31	4	84
Collective risk 5-year DSI average		2	13	35	50	48	53	49	200

8 EASTERN BAY ROAD SAFETY RISK AREAS

Analysis of crash information has identified nine risk areas plus vehicles for the Eastern Bay cluster. These are a mixture of high-risk behaviours and high-risk groups. They are:

1. Speed
2. Rural roads and Intersections
3. Alcohol and drug Impairment
4. Distraction
5. Young drivers
6. Restraints
7. Fatigue
8. Motorcyclists
9. Cycling

8.1 Speed

Speed affects the likelihood and impact of all crashes. Small reductions in impact speeds greatly increase the chances of surviving a crash. The Safe System goal is to reduce the number of speed-related crashes and the severity of all crashes if they do occur, with three long term objectives:

- People will increasingly understand what travelling at safer speeds means.
- Speed limits will better reflect the use, function and safety of the network.
- Travel speeds will support both safety and economic productivity.

As reported by the Centre for Road Safety Intelligence (2013), along with alcohol, speed is the one of the most common single crash factors in fatal and serious injury crashes in the cluster. These two factors are leading to a loss of control causing crashes.

From 2019 to 2023, speed in the Whakatane District contributed to 19 percent (2 percent decrease), Opotiki 24.6 percent (3 percent increase) and Kawerau 33 percent (11 percent increase) of all DSI crashes compared to the national average of 15.43% (CAS, 2023). This highlights that speed and/or not driving to conditions is a major factor in the Eastern Bay.

Speed (too fast) is listed as one of the most common factors for all DSI crashes in the cluster. Most crashes (52 percent) were single party crashes with multiple party (37%), occurred on a bend with poor handling, alcohol and road factors being identified as attributing factors. 27.37 percent (a decrease of 2 percent) were in the 15–24-year age group and 13.3 percent 25-29 years.

The high proportion of speed-related crashes illustrates the importance of drivers needing speed management guidance on how to drive to the conditions on open and rural roads.

8.2 Alcohol and drug impairment

The effect of alcohol on driving has been comprehensively researched, and there is extensive evidence to show that driving starts to be impaired with very low alcohol levels.

While the number of alcohol/drug-related fatal and serious injury crashes, especially for youth, has declined nationally, the problem remains a significant one. Any level of alcohol increases driving errors and affects alertness, skill, and judgements. Alcohol use also correlates with failure to wear restraints, which remains a relatively common factor in fatal crashes, particularly in the Eastern Bay.

Although alcohol availability is not proportionally high compared with the rest of the nation, the adverse impacts of drinking behavior and/or culture in the cluster are significant. These are also not evenly distributed throughout the population. The *Local Alcohol Policy Research Report* (2022/23) provides insight into the drinking behaviours in the Eastern Bay. Findings from this report included that:

- Evidence shows that Māori are 1.7 times and Pacific people are 1.3 times more likely to be hazardous drinkers than their non-Māori and non-Pacific counterparts, after adjusting for age and gender (Hazardous drinking 2020/21 in New Zealand).
- Research has shown that people living in areas of high socio-economic deprivation, Māori and Pasifika peoples are disproportionately affected by alcohol-related harm. Given the Eastern Bay of Plenty has very high levels of deprivation and a high proportion of Māori residents, this shows that the region is at risk of higher levels of harm compared to the rest of the country.
- The health impacts of alcohol use in the Eastern Bay are high. The rates for alcohol-related deaths and hospital discharges nearly all exceed national figures, as does the number of alcohol-related injury hospital discharges for each of the three districts.

As reported by the Centre for Road Safety Intelligence (2013), alcohol along with speed is the most common single crash factor in fatal and serious injury crashes in the cluster (2016-2020), and these two factors are leading to a loss of control, causing crashes. Loss of control was a factor in more than half of all fatal and serious injury crashes.

The table below shows the number of drink driving infringement notices issued in EBOP stations and Murupara in the past five years. This has fluctuated, with the numbers issued in Whakatāne almost halving between 2017 and 2021. The impact of COVID-19 on police resourcing in 2020/21 has contributed to the reduction of ticketing.

Drink driving infringements in Eastern Bay of Plenty	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Edgecumbe	10	6	8	11	14	49
Kawerau	13	19	15	4	7	58
Ōpōtiki	37	39	29	23	38	166
Taneatua	6	3	4	5	4	22
Te Kaha	5	1	0	1	0	7
Te Teko	2	1	3	4	4	14
Whakatane	102	93	77	91	54	417
Total	175	162	136	139	121	733

Source: Drink driving infringements within Whakatāne, Ōpōtiki, and Kawerau Districts where the breath alcohol is over 250 but under 400, which would have resulted in prosecution (Eastern Bay Local Alcohol Policy Research Report 2022/23).

Over the 2019 to 2023 period, alcohol and drug DSI crashes in the Eastern Bay were 53.97 percent, compared to 61 percent in 2020 (CAS, 2023). Most crashes (65.9 percent) were single party drivers. In addition, younger drivers were also over-represented, with 30.63 percent in the 15-24 year age group followed by 25-29 years with 14.41 percent (CAS, 2023).

The region has considerable ongoing issues with drink drivers reoffending. Recidivist drink drivers are associated with significant and avoidable health costs. Over the 2021 to 2023 years, four two-day marae based repeat drink drive programmes have been delivered within a post covid environment, which impacted participation. A total of 55 offenders participated with a 94% success (non-reoffending) rate.

The Centre for Road Safety Intelligence (2013) reported that 74 percent of all cluster fatal and serious injury crashes involved local residents, and that these crashes occurred closer to their home area than outside of their home area. The report identifies the possibility that drivers are becoming intoxicated at their own homes or the homes of friends, then driving afterwards. Some crash reports have stated that prior to a crash driver were drinking with friends, and in one case that some had been drinking for a considerable amount of time, then drove to get more alcohol. This supports the finding from the LAP report discussed above, with high proportions of alcohol offenders having their last drink at a private residence.

Impairment related to drug use (legal and illegal) when driving is not as closely monitored or enforced compared with alcohol use. Improving information around driving and drug impairment and a move towards an approach to random roadside drug screening and testing would be useful.

8.3 Rural Roads

A rural road is defined by Waka Kotahi (NZTA) as a motorway, state highway, expressway, local road or private road with a speed limit of 80km/h or more. As the cluster is predominately rural, this accounts for much of the roading network in the Eastern Bay.

The total number of DSI crashes from 2019 to 2023 is relatively unchanged compared to 2016 to 2020 with 33 fatal and 109 serious. Of these, 48 percent were on bends and a third 15-24 years. Poor handling and speed were the common crash factor in crashes (CAS, 2023).

8.4 Distraction

Driving safely means giving driving your full attention. Driver distraction is a serious road safety issue and includes a range of activities where the driver's attention is directed away from the primary task of driving towards events, objects, or people, inside or outside of the vehicle. Distraction includes a range of activities where drivers' attention is directed away from safe driving, such as talking with passengers, using cell phones, eating, and drinking, reaching or searching for objects in the vehicle, adjusting vehicle controls, adjusting the radio/in-vehicle entertainment system and changing CDs/cassettes, being emotionally upset/angry, smoking, and looking at other activity/events outside of the vehicle.

For this cluster, a total of 15 fatality and serious crashes were attributed to distracted drivers in the 2019-2023 period resulting in a reduction of eight since 2018. Of these, 58 percent occurred on a bend, 33 percent on a straight road and eight percent involved the car rear-ending another or hitting an obstacle. A total of 66 percent occurred in daylight hours, 75 percent involved a single party, and most were spread reasonably evenly over the age groups (CAS, 2023).

8.5 Young drivers

Increasing the safety of young drivers aged 15-24 years is a high strategic priority. The licensing changes mean that young drivers enter the system slightly older and with higher skill levels when they start driving on a restricted licence. Other actions already taken to address alcohol-impaired driving include lowering the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limits to zero for drivers under the age of 20 years.

Given these changes, young drivers are still significantly over-represented in fatal and serious injury crashes where the driver was at part or prime fault. Young drivers have a lower level of road safety due to factors such as age, maturity, and inexperience. Working with community leaders to engage with young drivers and facilitating education and training is likely to reduce their involvement in fatal and serious injury crashes (Centre for Road Safety Intelligence, 2013).

The Centre for Road Safety Intelligence (2013) identified alcohol as being particularly evident in crashes involving young drivers in the cluster. While they stated that fatal and serious injury crashes linked to alcohol were dropping, the young drivers were frequently very intoxicated with very high blood-alcohol results.

In addition, the Centre for Road Safety Intelligence (2013) reported that nearly 50 percent of the drivers of motorcycles at fault in fatal and serious crashes were aged 15-24, and only one

motorcycle had a current Warrant of Fitness. The report suggests that it is possible that the physical condition of unwarranted motorcycles is contributing to their involvement in at-fault fatal and serious injury crashes in the cluster. This may also reflect the high proportion of motorcycles used for farming purposes by young people in the cluster.

During the four-year period 2019-2023, 73 DSI crashes were attributed to young drivers, including 12 fatal and 61 serious crashes. Of these, 36 percent held a full licence and 16 percent a restricted licence. 21 percent held no licence. Alcohol and speed were the two most common crash factors (CAS, 2023).

8.6 Restraints

In the Eastern Bay, a restraint not being worn is identified as high concern. It is often linked to alcohol impairment. Ten fatalities and 30 serious DSI crashes occurred during 2019-2023 due to not wearing a restraint (CAS, 2023).

As reported by the Centre for Road Safety Intelligence (2013), for the fatal and serious crashes where restraint data was available, restraints were not used in 28 percent of crashes. Restraint use for rear seat occupants is considerably lower in the cluster (78 percent) than nationally (90 percent), whereas front seat use is like the national rate (around 90 percent).

Every child under seven years of age must be properly restrained by an approved child restraint when travelling in cars, vans, and trucks. Children aged seven years must use an appropriate child restraint if one is available, or else use an adult safety belt. Older children (aged eight and over) must use a safety belt if available, and if no restraint is available, they must travel in the rear seat. It is the driver's responsibility to make sure all child passengers are correctly restrained (Ministry of Transport, 2023).

During the 2022 to 2023 financial year, five child restraint clinics were held in Edgecumbe, Taneatua, Te Teko, Kutarere and Murupara. In Edgecumbe 31 checks were made with 39 percent of those being incorrectly restrained. A total of 29 checks were made in Taneatua, with 59 percent incorrectly restrained. Eighteen checks were made in Te Teko, with 72 percent incorrectly restrained. Twenty-two checks were made in Kutarere, with 59 percent incorrectly restrained. Thirty checks were made in Murupara, with 70 percent incorrectly restrained. Clinics in Opotiki and Kawerau township are being planned.

Research into the reasons why and development of programmes to encourage appropriate restraint use is needed to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes involving no restraint use or the inappropriate use of restraints.

8.7 Fatigue

During the four-year period 2019 to 2023, 10 DSI crashes were attributed to fatigue, including 2 fatal and 10 serious crashes. Of these, over a third (37 percent) were 15-24 years of age. Alcohol (30 percent) was the most common crash factors (CAS, 2023).

8.8 Motorcyclists

During the four-year period 2019-2023, nine fatalities and 40 serious crashes occurred. Poor handling and observation, too fast/speed and alcohol were the three most common crash factors. Causal factors may include other road users' sight of motorcyclists.

8.9 Cycling

During the four-year period 2019-2023, there was four serious crashes (a reduction from one fatality and six serious crashes). Alcohol, poor observation, failing to give way and incorrect lane and speed were common crash factors. January, February, and October were the highest months with dry, light/overcast conditions (CAS, 2023).

8.10 Other contributing factors

Offending

Centre for Road Safety Intelligence (2013) identified previous traffic offenders as a vulnerable group. They reported that there were 169 drivers at fault in a fatal or serious injury crash with a driver's licence recorded. Of these drivers, approximately 39 percent were detected committing at least one traffic offence in the 18 months preceeding the sample crash period. This compares to approximately 21 percent of the current national licensed population committing at least one traffic offence in the last 18 months.

Aged vehicle fleet

Centre for Road Safety Intelligence (2013) reported that the cluster fleet is older on average than the rest of the country and less likely to have a current WoF. Older and unwarranted cars were over-represented in fatal and serious injury crashes. The report suggests that a community project to assist with maintenance and Warrant of Fitness compliance would likely reduce the occurrence and/or severity of crashes.

ACC data

A number of crashes are not recorded in CAS. This is evident based on the higher number of ACC claims in this cluster than are matched with CAS records. It is likely investigation into non-CAS matched ACC claims would provide further information to support existing road safety initiatives and/or identify new opportunities (Centre for Road Safety Intelligence, 2013).

Local issues

Local issues that are community specific also influence road safety in the Eastern Bay. Stock on roads is an example of this.

9 COLLABORATION

Many positive road safety initiatives occur outside of the cluster councils. Funding support and coordination of these activities allows for a wider and more effective road safety programme. For example, strong links have been developed and maintained with Police, Plunket, iwi and hapu, service providers and community organisations.

Stronger links with stakeholders who can distribute road safety messages, such as licensed premises, is going to be beneficial. These links help to build knowledge, capacity, and ownership of road safety in the Eastern Bay.

10 MONITORING

Monitoring is used to measure the progress of this Action Plan to consider emerging issues and to assist in the development of further actions. Consideration will be also given to how we can supplement the crash data used for analysis.

In addition to monitoring the results, the sector's ability to deliver the plan needs to be monitored.

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