WGA

Colac Otway Council

Colac Otway Shire Road Safety Strategy

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30 July 2026

Revision History

REV	DATE	ISSUE	ORIGINATOR	CHECKER	APPROVER
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Objectives

This Road Safety Strategy aims to facilitate the improvement of road safety for all road users within Colac Otway Shire by defining an action plan for the next 10 years. The strategy will form part of Council's suite of documents including the Road Management Plan and other relevant guidelines and strategies identified in Section 3.

The Road Safety Strategy vision is to reduce the number of people killed or injured in road crashes in the Colac-Otway Shire to zero, and to reduce the severity of injuries.

This vision aligns with the National and Victorian Road Safety Strategies (discussed in Section 3.1 and Section 3.2, respectively).

A Road Safety Strategy should primarily concentrate on reducing road trauma by addressing key risk factors for all road users. This road safety strategy includes consideration of the following key items:

- Enhance road safety for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists and motorists
- Identify high-risk locations and propose intervention methodology
- Implementing speed management measures
- Improving road design and infrastructure
- Promoting education and awareness programs
- Strengthening enforcement of road rules
- Engage stakeholders and community in shaping road safety priorities

1.2 Approach

The Road Safety Strategy has been developed based on the following:

- Review of relevant government policies and local projects
- Formal community and stakeholder consultation, and review of key issues identified
- Review of Colac Otway Shire demographics, statistics and crash history across the Shire
- Adoption of a 'Safe System Approach' and identification of key issues and actions

1.2.1 Community & Stakeholder Consultation

In consultation with Council, community and stakeholder engagement and consultation strategies were initially prepared to ensure there were appropriate opportunities for the community to provide input to the Road Safety Strategy.

Summaries of the community and stakeholder consultation process, and issues identified as part of the process, have been prepared separately and provided to Council and are not included in this document. These have been considered in preparing the Road Safety Strategy.

Community Consultation

- Online consultation between 8 September 2025 to 3 November 2025 (91 responses)
- Open House Sessions (64 comments)
  - Birregurra Open House Session – Friday 10 October 2025
  - Colac Open House Session – Friday 10 October 2025
  - Apollo Bay Open House Session – Saturday 11 October 2025

As part of the community consultation process, a number of site inspections were undertaken concurrently to investigate some of the issues raised.

Stakeholder Consultation

A number of stakeholders were identified with Council as summarised below. Various levels of stakeholder engagement was sought and completed on the basis of stakeholder engagement requirements developed with Council (e.g. email, phone call, online meeting, in-person), with a total of 62 comments/issues collated.

It is noted that not all stakeholders responded to requests for engagement on the Road Safety Strategy.

Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing

- Associated Kiln Driers Pty Ltd (AKD)
- Bulla
- Hancock Victorian Plantations (HVP)
- Midway Limited
- Minerva Foods (formerly Australian Lamb Company)

Education & Training

- Apollo Bay P12 College
- Carlisle River Primary School
- Colac Primary School
- Colac Secondary School
- Colac South West Primary School
- Lake Colac School
- Sacred Heart Primary School
- St Mary's Catholic Primary School
- Trinity College

Health Care & Social Assistance

- Colac Area Health
- Country Fire Authority (CFA)
- Great Ocean Road Health
- Victoria State Emergency Services (SES)
- Victoria Police

Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

- Department of Energy, Environment & Climate Action (DEECA)
- Department of Transport & Planning (DTP)
- Great Ocean Road Coast & Parks Authority (GORCAPA)
- Parks Victoria
- Roadsafe Otway

1.3 The Safe System

The internationally recognised Safe System approach to road safety considers the network as a system of interactions between the road itself, people, vehicles and speeds. The Safe System recognises that people will make mistakes and may have road crashes – but that crashes should not result in death or serious injury.

In consideration of the above roads, speeds and vehicles should be designed to reduce or avoid crashes and to reduce the impact when they do. The Safe System advocates for shared responsibility when it comes to safety on our roads – of those who design and manage the network, as well as those who use it.

Figure 1.1 below summarises the Safe System approach.

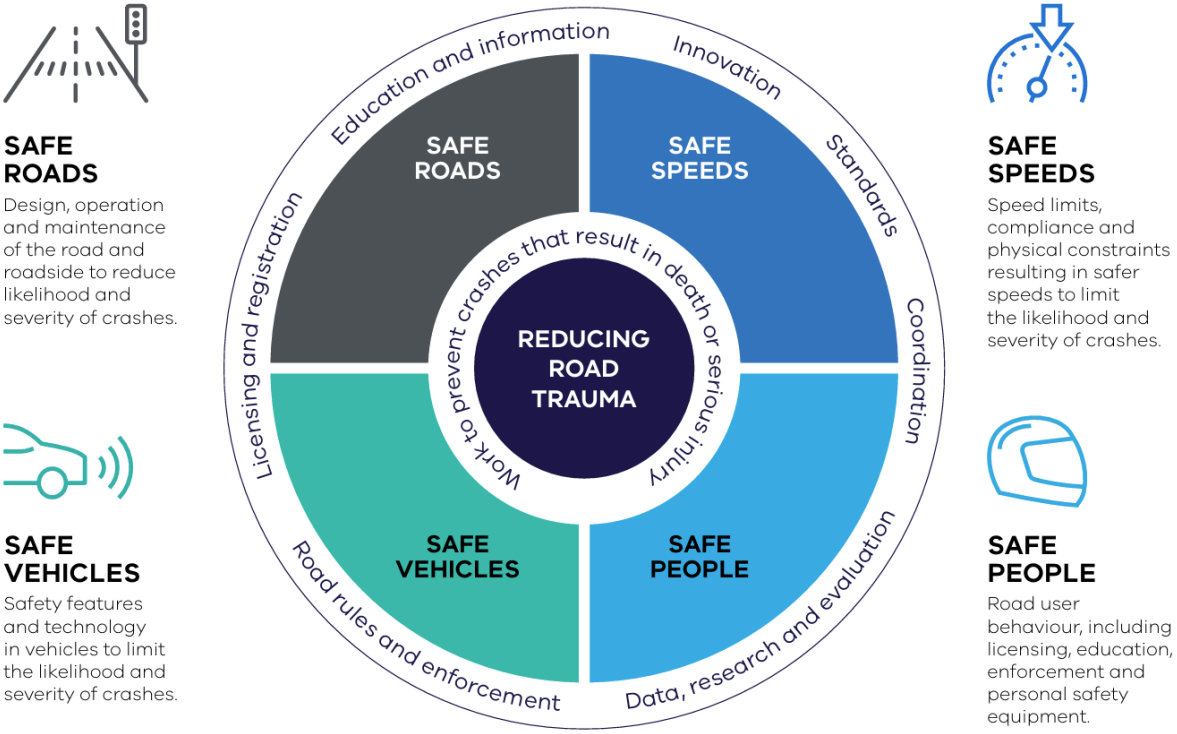

Figure 1.1: Safe System Principles (Source: Victorian Road Safety Strategy)

The Safe System approach highlights various key principles, including that:

- People inevitably make mistakes that can lead to road crashes
- The human body has a limited physical ability to tolerate crash forces before serious harm occurs
- A shared responsibility exists amongst those who design, build, manage, and use roads and vehicles, as well as those who provide post-crash care to prevent crashes resulting in serious injury or death
- All parts of the system must be strengthened to employ their effects so that if one part fails, road users are still protected

This Road Safety Strategy has been developed considering the safe systems approach with the Road Safety Strategy's themes and action plan (detailed in Section 5) developed under the safe system's key pillars of:

- Leadership
- Safe Roads
- Safe Speeds
- Safe People
- Safe Vehicles

2 COLAC OTWAY SHIRE

2.1 Location & Geographical Context

Colac Otway Shire (the Shire) is a municipal area of approximately 3,440km^2, located in the southwest of Victoria approximately 160km and a two-hour drive from the Melbourne CBD as shown in Figure 2.1.

The Shire borders three other regional Victorian municipalities including Corangamite Shire, Golden Plains Shire and Surf Coast Shire. It is located within commuting distance of the major regional cities of Geelong and Ballarat, and with Warrnambool to the west. The Shire features two main townships; Colac as the major administrative, retail and commercial centre and Apollo Bay.

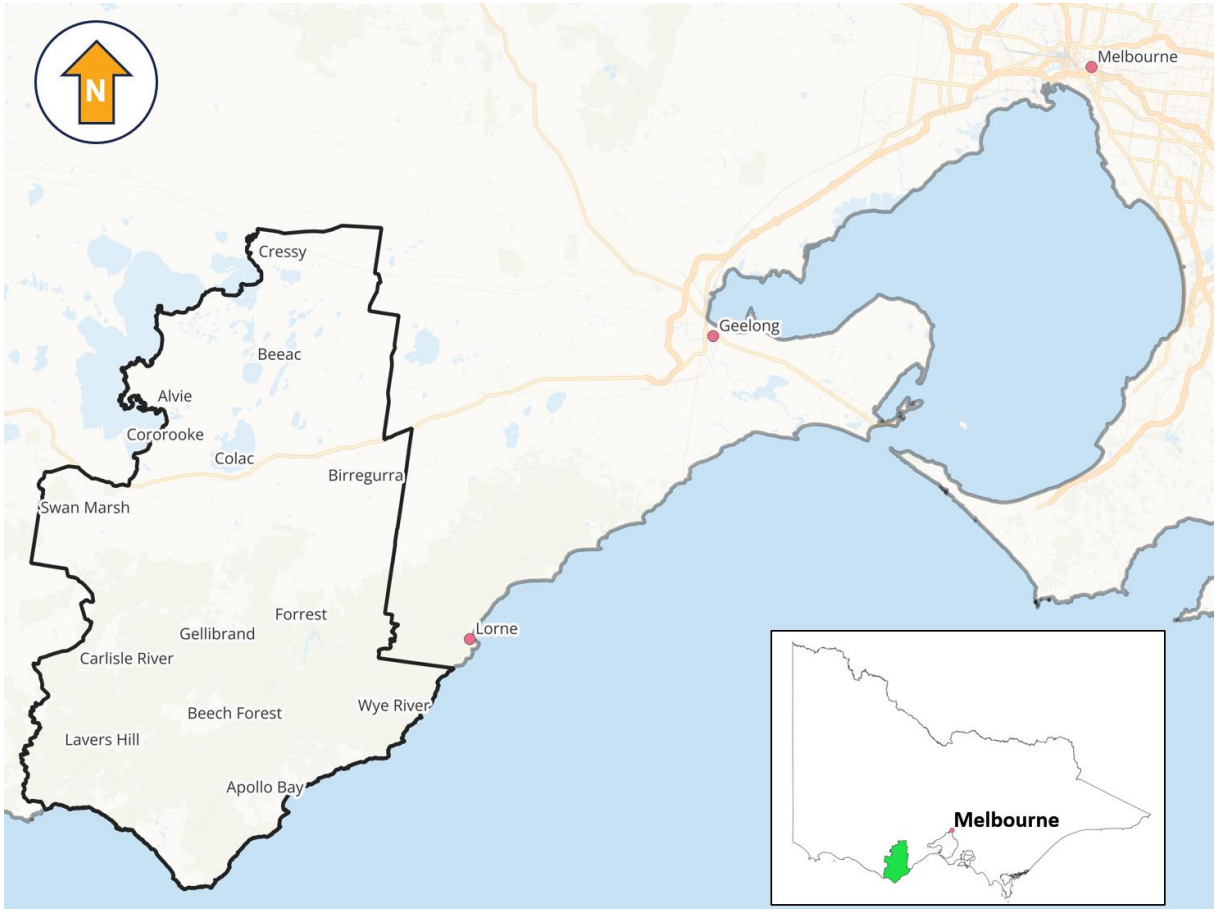

Figure 2.1: Municipal Area & Townships

Colac Otway Shire is diverse in its natural environment with spanning rugged coastlines, rainforests, productive farmland and volcanogenic lakes. Its inland and coastal townships support a wide mix of small and medium-sized businesses and is a regional manufacturing hub in southwest Victoria. The key economic sectors include:

- Manufacturing (food processing, dairy, meat, timber products)
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing (dairy, beef and sheep grazing, timber/forestry and cropping)
- Healthcare & social assistance (a major local employer)
- Tourism & Accommodation (centred around Apollo Bay and the Great Ocean Road corridor and adjacent areas)

This environmental and economic diversity places unique demands on the transport network compared to different Shires and Municipalities:

- Freight movements from agriculture and timber rely on safe, efficient rural and arterial roads
- Tourism destinations require accessible, resilient routes that can handle seasonal peaks
- Dispersed townships, resulting in longer vehicle trips in the Shire, depend on reliable connections for workers, visitors and goods

As a result, transport infrastructure in the Shire needs appropriately support economic productivity, visitor access and community mobility which sometimes have conflicting needs.

From a road safety perspective, the transport network needs to ensure a safe and reliable network to support these activities.

2.2 Tourism

The Tourism industry accounts for approximately $160 million plus and attracts in the order of 900,000 domestic and 100,000 international visitors every year[1].

Tourism is largely focused in the south and southeastern coastal areas of the Shire, including the Great Ocean Road and townships along it, Cape Otway and the Cape Otway National Park.

The Great Ocean Road itself is a key tourism attraction with approximately 7 million visitors a year[2]. This results in a significant number of tourism related vehicle trips in the Shire, particularly focused along the south and southeast coastal areas and in the warmer periods of the year.

A significant portion of these are international tourists driving on Great Ocean Road and adjacent areas along the coast.

2.3 Population and Age

The Shire's population of approximately 22,300 people reside in more than 15 small town and rural communities spread across the Colac Otway Shire, as follows:

- 13,000 people living in the Shire's major industrial, commercial and service centre of Colac (Colac and Elliminyt). This area's population is forecast to reach 20,000 by 2050.
- the second major urban centre Apollo Bay has a permanent population of 1,800 (Apollo Bay and Marengo) that swells to more than 15,000 during the busy summer tourist season.

In terms of population densities, the Shire has a relatively low 6.5 people / km^2 compared to 40 people / km^2 for the G21 Region and 30 people / km^2 for Victoria. This means that for some trip purposes, vehicle trips are expected to be relatively longer compared to these regions (on average).

The Shire's population demographics is summarised in Figure 2.2 and the following is noted:

- The average resident age is 45 years old.
- The Shire has a relatively aging population with:
  - Lower proportions of younger people compared to the G21 Region average[3]
  - Higher proportions of older people compared to the G21 Region average – with 31% of the Shire's residents (7,019 people) equal to or over the age of 60 years old and the population over 50 years old being higher than G21 Region average (6.7% higher than the G21 Region)

[1] Colac Otway Shire / Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism.

[2] Road Genius July 2025.

[3] The G21 Region (Geelong Regional Alliance) includes Colac Otway, Golden Plains, Greater Geelong and Surf Coast Shires and the Borough of Queenscliff.

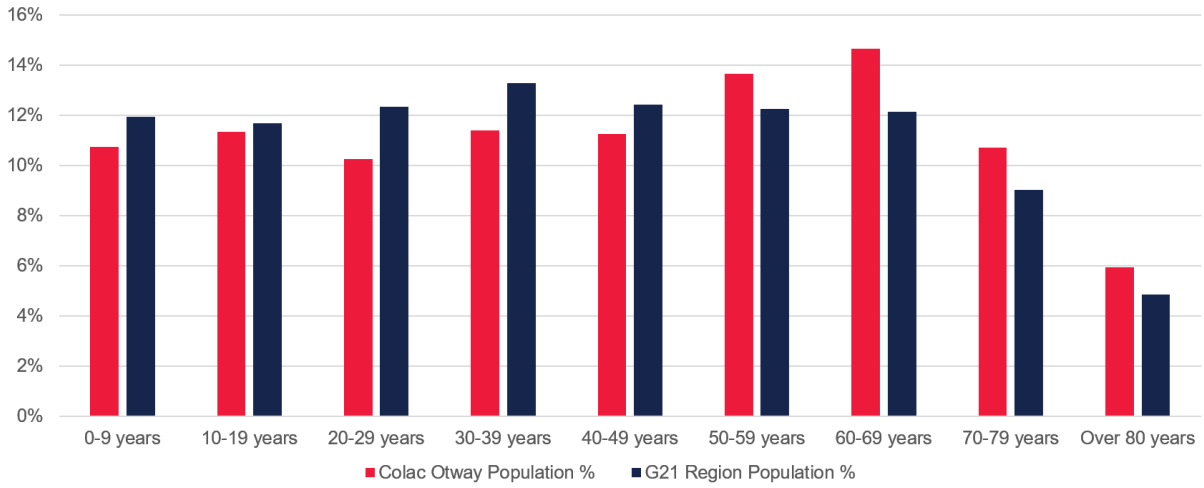

Figure 2.2: Population by Age (ABS 2021 Census Data)

Given the ageing population of the Shire, it is expected that this proportion of residents requiring care and assistance for core activities will continue, with the potential to grow as the existing population grows older and new residents move to the region.

2.4 Road Network

Colac Otway Shire manages more than 1,600km of public roads, including 566km of sealed and 1,059 km of unsealed roads, along with footpaths, drainage, bridges, rail trails and on-street and off-street parking areas. Posted speed zones on Shire managed roads vary from unposted 100km/h roads to 40-50km/h for local area traffic managed roads.

Department of Transport (DTP) manages approximately 890km of arterial roads within the Colac Otway Shire. Posted speed zones on DTP managed roads tend to be higher, in the order of 100km/h to 80km/h, with some areas of lower speeds in certain townships/locations (i.e. 60km/h).

The map of local and arterial roads is provided in Figure 2.4 on the following page and the breakdown of posted speed limits in the Shire in Figure 2.3 below.

Local Council managed roads comprise a relatively higher proportion of higher speed roads (100km/hr) compared to State managed roads (note many rural roads have default 100 km/h speed limits). State managed roads include a higher proportion of 60 km/h and 80km/h speed limit roads.

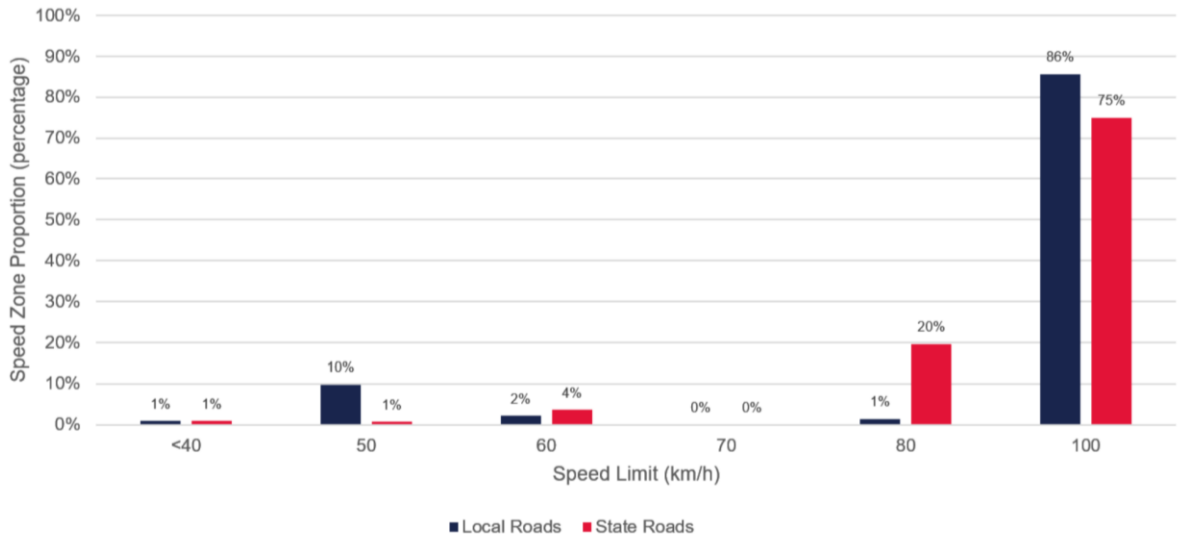

Figure 2.3: State and Local Speed Limit Profile

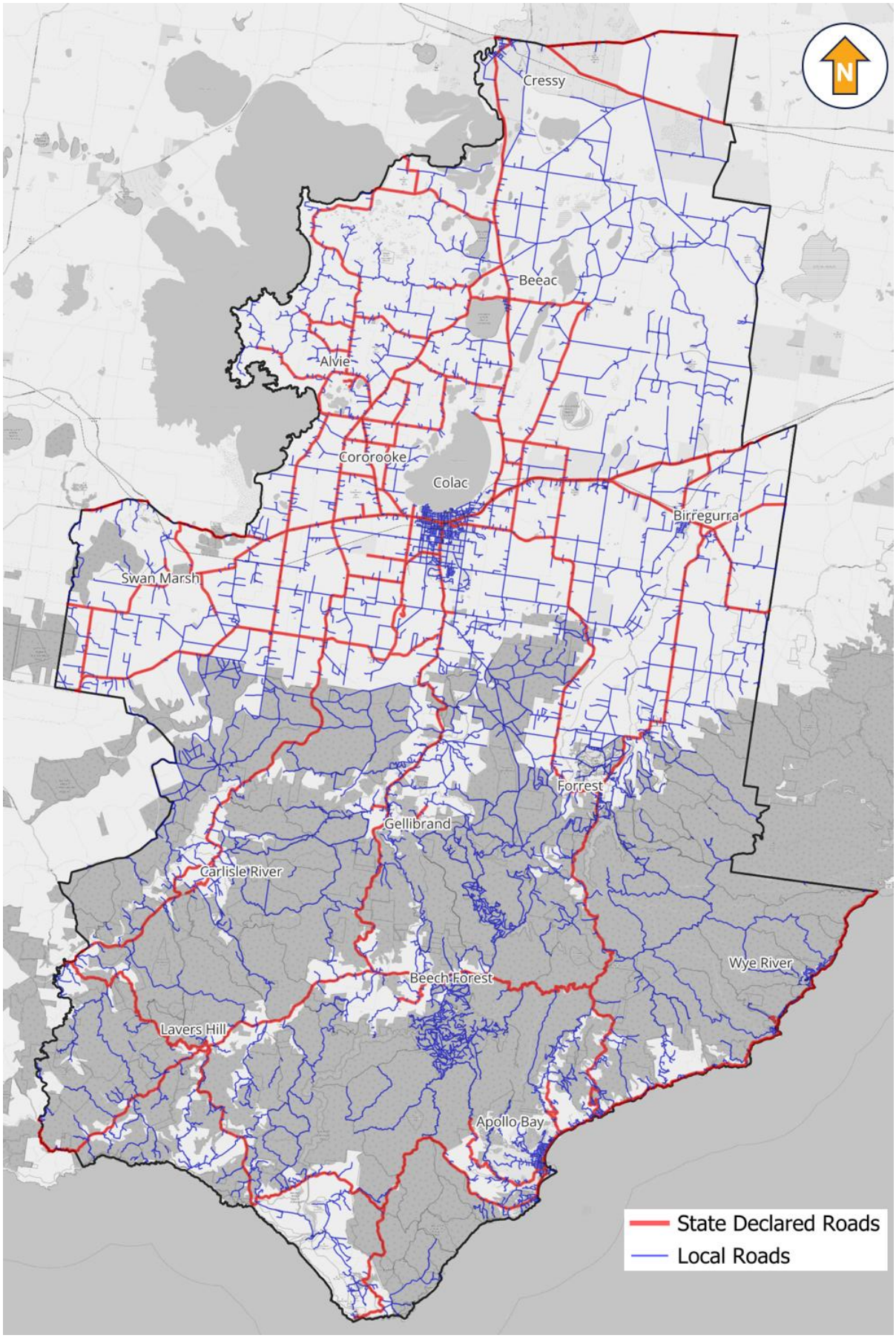

Figure 2.4: Arterial and Local Roads

2.5 Travel

Based on the Shire's size and potential for relatively long trip journeys, availability of public transport services (both routes and frequency), private vehicle travel is the dominant travel mode adopted by residents, workers and tourists.

This is reflected in the travel to work mode share data for the Shire of which 67% of residents travel by car (compared to 62% for the G21 Region and 54% for Victoria) (Figure 2.6), noting that on the day of the 2021 Census, 0.3% of people took public transport, 6.3% rode a bike or walked[4].

Overall average vehicle ownership in the Shire is generally higher compared to the G21 Region and Victoria, with car ownership levels per dwelling summarised below in Figure 2.5 – with overall car ownership levels higher on average.

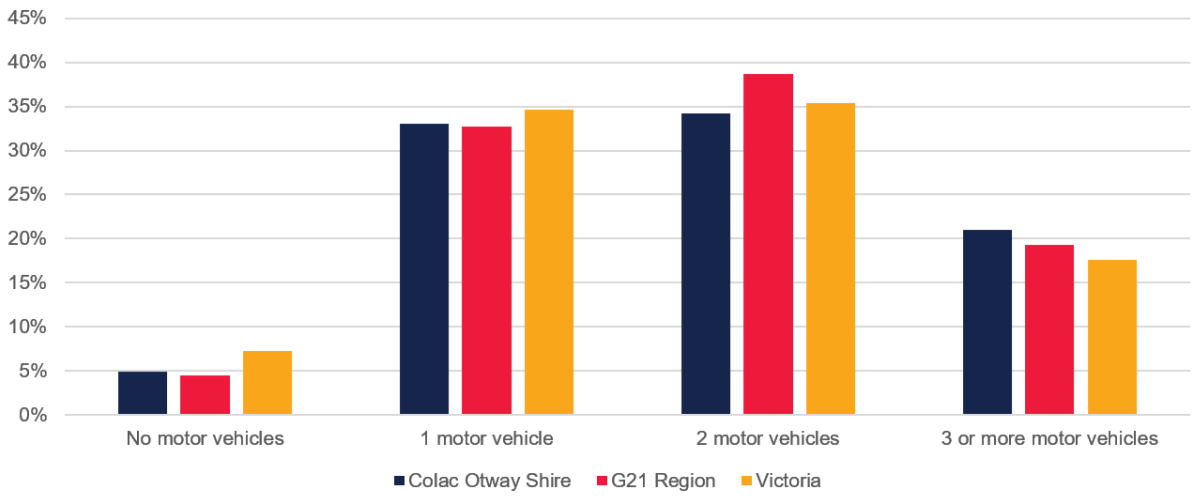

Figure 2.5: Car Ownership Data Comparison

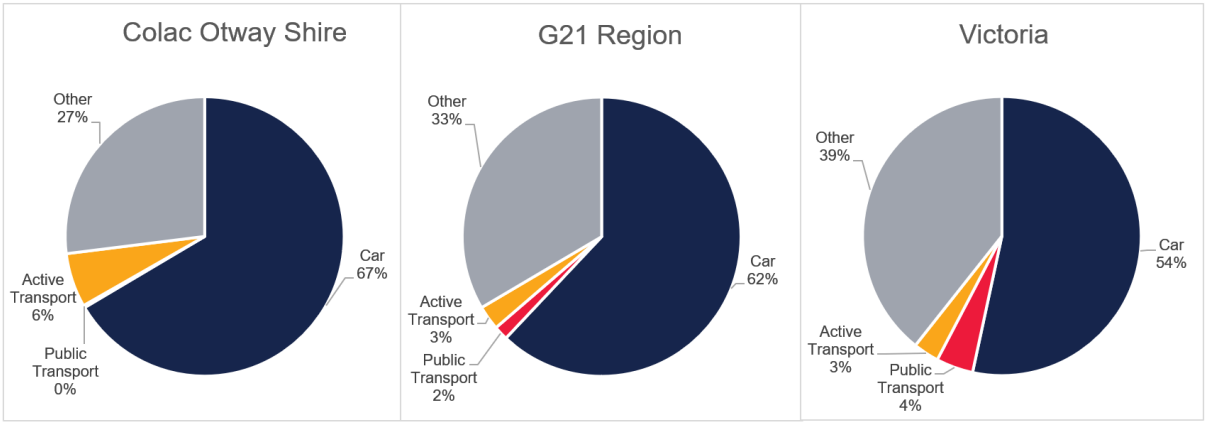

Figure 2.6: Travel to Work Mode Share

[4] 12.5% worked at home in Colac Otway Shire and 19.3% in the G21 Region.

3 POLICY

3.1 Federal

The **Federal Government** provides national road safety leadership, setting the *National Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030* and coordinating national programs such as Black Spot funding, vehicle safety standards, and national data frameworks. It works with states, territories and Councils to deliver consistent national road safety actions.

The *National Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030* was agreed to by the Australian Government and all state and territory governments in May 2021. It sets the agenda for co-ordinated and planned government action to improve road safety over the next 10 years.

It also includes the following targets in the strategy (and includes consideration of population growth):

- **to reduce the annual number of fatalities by at least 50% by 2030** (55% reduction in rate per capita)
- **to reduce the annual number of serious injuries by at least 30% by 2030** (38% reduction in rate per capita)

The *National Road Safety Action Plan 2023–25* identifies nine (9) priorities where data shows the greatest reductions in road trauma can be achieved over the 10-year period. These priorities are:

- Infrastructure planning and investment
- Regional road safety
- Remote road safety
- Vehicle safety
- Heavy vehicle safety
- Workplace road safety
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (road safety outcomes)
- Vulnerable road users (e.g. pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists)
- Risky road use (e.g. speeding, drink/drug driving, distraction)

3.2 State

The **State Government (Department of Transport and Planning)** manages freeways, arterial roads and some non-arterial state roads, including upgrades, operations and major maintenance. It also leads statewide road safety policy through the *Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030*.

The *Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030* sets out ambitious targets to:

- **halve road deaths by 2030 and eliminate them by 2050**
- **reduce serious injuries by 2030**

The objectives are of the strategy are:

- **Be safe:** ensure all Victorians are safe and feel safe, on and around our roads.
- **10-year reduction:** halve road deaths and progressively reduce serious injuries by 2030.
- **A culture of safety:** embed a culture of road safety within the Victorian community.
- **Deliver initiatives:** deliver a suite of initiatives that are achievable and have an impact in the short-term but also prepare the state for the future.

Through a combination of policies, innovation and technology, infrastructure improvements, public information campaigns, education programs and enforcement, the strategy includes these focus areas:

- Supporting and enforcing safer driver behaviour (reducing casualties from drug and alcohol crashes and driver distracted behaviour crashes)
- Removing and reducing the number of old and unsafe vehicles from roads
- Improving outcomes for vulnerable and unprotected road users
- Improving safety on high-speed roads and at intersections and reducing the underlying risk
- Making remote and rural roads safer for all road users
- Increasing safety for those using the road for work or at work
- Recognising the importance of post-crash care

The strategy is to be delivered in three action plans. *Road Safety Action Plan 2* has been developed by the Victorian Road Safety Partners and is the second to be delivered under the *Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030*. The priorities of this Action Plan are:

- Improving safety across the network
- Protecting vulnerable and unprotected road users
- Addressing risky behaviours
- Improving vehicle safety
- Engaging for change
- Research and data to inform and improve road safety

Additional state government documents relevant to the development of this Road Safety Strategy are listed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.1: Relevant State Government Documents

DOCUMENT	DESCRIPTION
Plan Melbourne 2017–2050	*Plan Melbourne* is a long-term plan aspiring as a transformational blueprint for a *"generation of action"* with response to statewide, regional and local challenges and opportunities Victoria faces through to 2050.
Movement & Place	In 2019, the Department of Transport & Planning (DTP) adopted the *Movement & Place (M&P)* framework as a new approach to designing, planning and delivering Victoria's road and streets to meet the needs of people and businesses whilst emphasising the creation and improvement of important places and spaces for people.
Victoria's Infrastructure Strategy 2021–2051	Infrastructure Victoria has provided recommendations based on Victoria's ever evolving and changing circumstances, retaining a long-term approach until 2051 understanding that immediate and future needs must be met together.
Victoria's Climate Change Strategy	The strategy provides a roadmap to net-zero emission and climate resilience in Victoria by 2050, identifying initiatives that will support communities and businesses to make the requisite changes to reduce impacts of climate change and continuing to support economic growth.
Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018–2028	The *Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018–2028* sets out the State's 10-year plan to increase cycling for transport by delivering a safer, lower-stress, more connected cycling network and by making cycling a more inclusive option for all Victorians. Two Core Goals: • Invest in a safer, lower-stress, better-connected cycling network • Make cycling a more inclusive experience

3.3 Local

Local Government (Council) are responsible for building and maintaining local roads and the local active transport networks, as well as advocating to State and Federal Governments and holding local road safety education and outreach programs.

Colac Otway Shire has several road safety projects currently underway and in 2025 received TAC grant fund to deliver road safety projects:

- Pascoe Street/Moore Street – Raised roundabout and priority crossings.
- Connor Street (health precinct) – Two raised priority crossings.
- Armstrong Street, Pound Road and Hart Street (Trinity College and Scared Heart Primary School) – Two raised priority crossings and speed cushions.

Additionally, the Sealed Road Policy is currently under development which will identify and prioritise roads for sealing.

Local government documents relevant to the development of this Road Safety Strategy are listed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Relevant Local Government Documents

DOCUMENT	DESCRIPTION
Colac Otway Shire Council Plan 2025–2029	The Council Plan sets out the Shire's four-year strategic direction, built around the overarching vision: *"Colac Otway is a thriving regional hub where residents prosper, businesses find opportunity and visitors stay longer."* The plan is structured around the themes Place, People, and Prosperity, guiding how the Shire will develop its communities, economy, environment, and infrastructure.
Colac 2050 Growth Plan	The *Growth Plan* is a long-term strategic framework designed to guide how Colac will accommodate significant growth—potentially doubling its population to around 20,000 by 2050. • Emphasis on a Safe, Efficient Road Network • Supporting Sustainable and Active Transport • Transport Planning within Growth Areas (Deans Creek PSP) • Integration with Land Use & Infrastructure Planning • Road Safety Through Urban Design
Colac Otway Shire Road Management Plan (2025–2029)	The Road Management Plan provides a clear framework for how Council manages, inspects and maintains its entire local road network, ensuring compliance with the *Road Management Act 2004* while delivering a safe and reliable network within available resources.
Colac CBD Entrances Project 2012	The *Colac CBD Entrances Project* sets out a range of recommendations to shape access and movement, buildings and land use, streetscapes and open space within the context of the areas defined by the CBD and the entrances to Colac. • 40km/h CBD speed limit recommended (now implemented) • Pedestrian-first street hierarchy with safer crossings and slower traffic • Gateway and corridor upgrades to calm traffic and improve arrival experience • Streetscape changes designed to influence vehicle speed and behaviour • Integration of walking and cycling through enhanced active transport links • Precinct-specific movement strategies for key CBD streets and public spaces
Civic Health and Rail Precinct Plan (DRAFT 2025)	This plan covers the development of the Colac Civic Health and Rail Precinct over the next 20 years.

DOCUMENT	DESCRIPTION
	1. Create a Safe, Pedestrian-Focused Precinct 2. Integrated Transport & Land Use Around the Station 3. Holistic Parking Strategy 4. Safe and Legible Road Network Within the Civic–Health–Rail Triangle 5. Support for Urban Density That Reduces Car Reliance 6. Strengthening Gellibrand Street as a 'Green Spine' Pedestrian crossings and improved parking is proposed as part of this plan.
Active Transport Strategy 2013–2023	The *Colac Otway Shire Active Transport Strategy 2013–2023* outlines the 10-year plan to improve the safety and appeal of active travel, reduce car dependency and addressing the needs of the community with appropriate infrastructure within the Shire. The strategy recommended actions for infrastructure, behaviour, policy and regulatory, promotional and leadership. • Infrastructure actions are related to: – Walking & cycling network development – Trails & path projects – Footpath & pedestrian infrastructure – Wayfinding & signage – Supporting facilities • Behavioural actions aim to encourage and enable more people to walk and cycle by building skills, confidence and awareness. • Policy and regulatory actions integrate walking and cycling requirements into Council planning, design and regulatory processes. • Promotional actions aim to build community awareness, normalise walking and cycling, and celebrate active travel. • Leadership actions position Council as a leader and role-model for active transport. The Strategy set out improvements for pedestrian and cyclist paths, infrastructure and crossings for each township which would improve connectively and safety.
Birregurra Structure Plan 2025	The *Birregurra Structure Plan 2025* provides the strategic land-use and development framework for Birregurra over the next 10–15 years, guiding how the township will accommodate future growth and change. • **Managed growth** – guiding Birregurra's development over the next 10–15 years • **Land-use planning** – identifying where future residential, commercial and community development should occur • **Infrastructure planning** – ensuring future upgrades to roads, paths, and services support growth • **Transport and access** – improving local roads, active transport links and crossings • **Community needs** – ensuring development aligns with township character and resident priorities
Community Infrastructure Plan Apollo Bay, Skenes Creek and Marengo (2023)	The *Community Infrastructure Plan (CIP)* for Apollo Bay, Skenes Creek and Marengo sets a 20–30 year long-term vision for the three coastal towns, guiding future planning, infrastructure improvements, and investment priorities.

DOCUMENT	DESCRIPTION
Colac Otway Shire Tourism Parking and Traffic Strategy (2019)	This strategy focuses on eight individual towns within the Colac Otway Shire which have the Great Ocean Road passing through. It provides a comprehensive framework to manage **tourism-related parking and traffic pressures** across key coastal and hinterland towns in the Colac Otway Shire. It focuses on Apollo Bay, Marengo, Skenes Creek, Kennett River, Wye River, Separation Creek, Forrest, and Lavers Hill.
Footpath Strategy (Colac & Apollo Bay) 2025	The Footpath Strategy has been completed for Apollo Bay and Colac which brings together all past plans and assessments to identify: • Where footpaths already exist, • Where gaps remain, and • Which missing connections should be prioritised for future construction Footpath connection prioritisation has then been defined based on community need.
Deans Creek Structure Plan	The Deans Creek area is identified in the ***Colac 2050 Growth Plan*** as the **primary long-term growth front for Colac**, accommodating a major share of future residential development. The area sits on the western edge of Colac and has been the subject of several planning processes aimed at preparing it for future urban expansion.

4 ROAD SAFETY REVIEW

4.1 Crash Statistics Assessment

DTP maintains a database of all reported road casualty crashes in the state of Victoria with publicly available data from 2012 onwards with a seven-month lag. This provides a comprehensive and detailed view of road crashes in Victoria.

Crash data has been obtained and analysed for the Colac Otway Shire for the last available five-year period between 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2025.

4.1.1 Overview

A breakdown by crash injury severity is provided in Table 4.1, noting that 52% of all reported crashes resulted in a fatal or serious injury.

Table 4.1: Crash Injury Severity Summary

CRASH SEVERITY	NO. CRASHES	PROPORTION OF TOTAL RECORDED CRASHES
Fatal	15	4%
Serious Injury	197	48%
Other Injury	200	48%
TOTAL	**412**	**100%**

The crashes per year are shown in Figure 4.1, which also includes the previous 5-year period for comparison (this previous period has not been further analysed as part of this safety strategy).

Over this 10-year period the volume of 'all injury crashes' have decreased slightly however have remained relatively flat for 'fatal and serious injury' crashes. It is noted that the below data may be impacted due to COVID lockdowns and 'COVID-normal' settings (i.e. may be artificially lower in some periods).

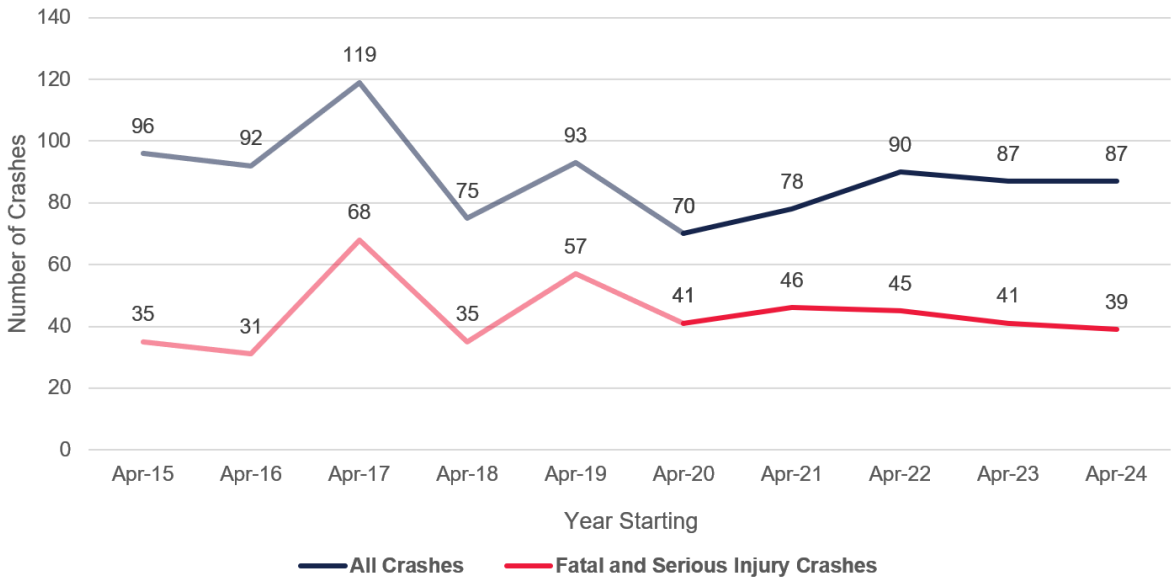

Figure 4.1: Crashes by Year

An overview of fatal and serious injury crash locations within the Colac Otway Shire is presented in Figure 4.2 below. Of these 67% occurred on DTP managed arterial roads.

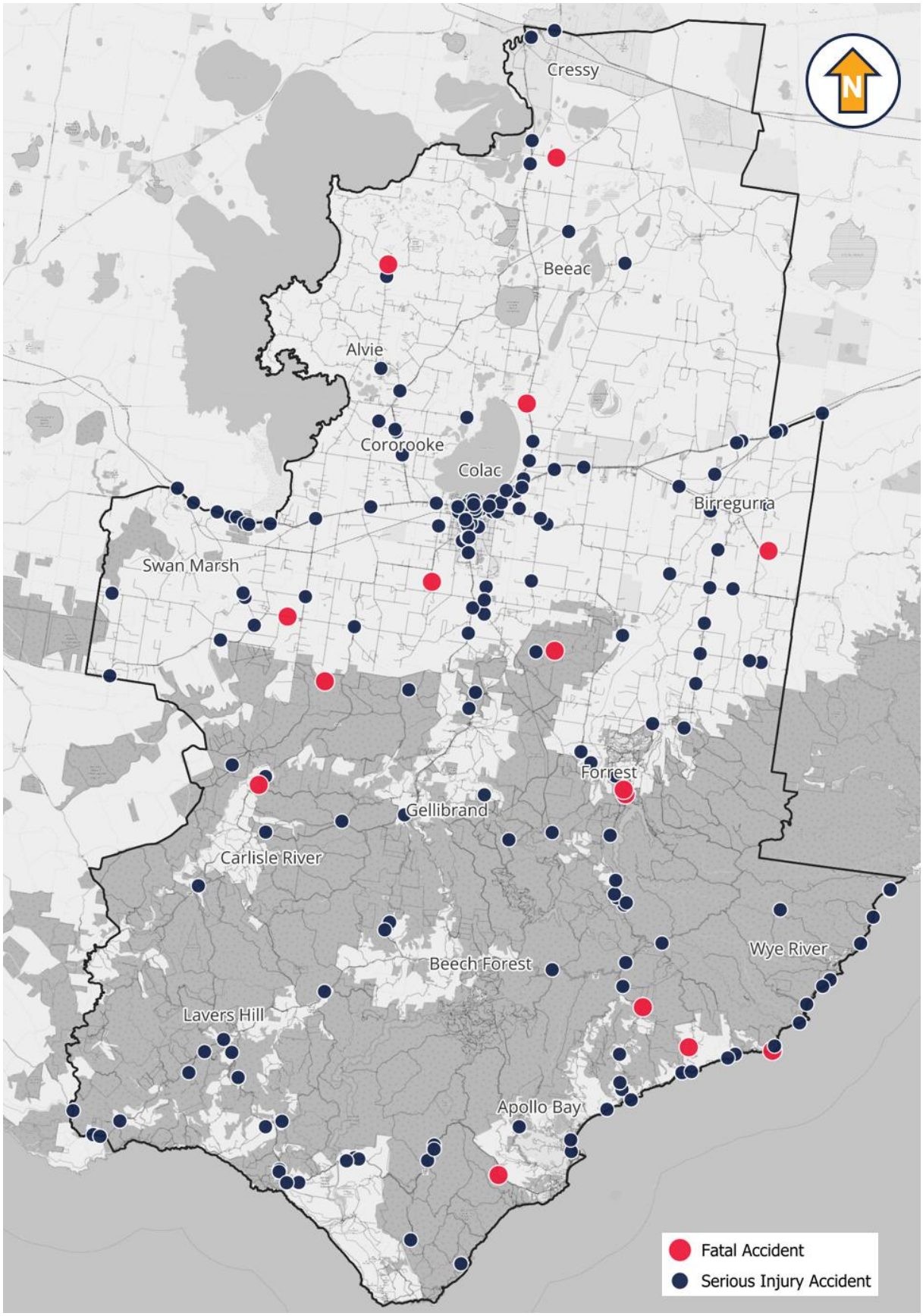

Figure 4.2: Serious and Fatal Injury Crash Locations

The fatal crash locations, types and road users are outlined in Table 4.2 below. It is noted that the majority of recorded fatality crashes are off path (straight or bend) hitting an object (80%).

Table 4.2: Fatal Crash Locations and Types

LOCATION	TYPE	AUTHORITY	ROAD USER
Barpinba Road	U-Turn	-	Passenger Vehicle
Great Ocean Road	Head On (Not Overtaking)	DTP	Cyclists
Sunnyside Road	Off End of Road/T-Intersection.	Local Road	Heavy Vehicle
Skenes Creek Road	Off Right Bend into Object/Parked Vehicle	DTP	Heavy Vehicle
Carlisle Road	Off Left Bend into Object/Parked Vehicle	DTP	Passenger Vehicle
Colac-Ballarat Road	Off Right Bend into Object/Parked Vehicle	DTP	Passenger Vehicle
Grant Street	Off Right Bend into Object/Parked Vehicle	DTP	Passenger Vehicle
East West Road	Struck Animal	Local Road	Motorcycle
Westwood Road	Off Right Bend into Object/Parked Vehicle	Local Road	Motorcycle
Great Ocean Road	Off Right Bend into Object/Parked Vehicle	DTP	Passenger Vehicle
Irrewillipe Road	Right Off Carriageway into Object/Parked Vehicle	DTP	Passenger Vehicle
Irrewillipe Road	Off Right Bend into Object/Parked Vehicle	Local Road	Passenger Vehicle
Rifle Butts Road	Left Off Carriageway into Object/Parked Vehicle	-	Passenger Vehicle
Corangamite Lake Road	Off Carriageway on Left Bend	-	Motorcycle
Rivendell Lane	Left Off Carriageway into Object/Parked Vehicle	Local Road	Passenger Vehicle

The Colac Otway Shire's crashes within the five-year period have been compared to the G21 Region and Victoria in Figure 4.3 (crashes per 100,000 population).

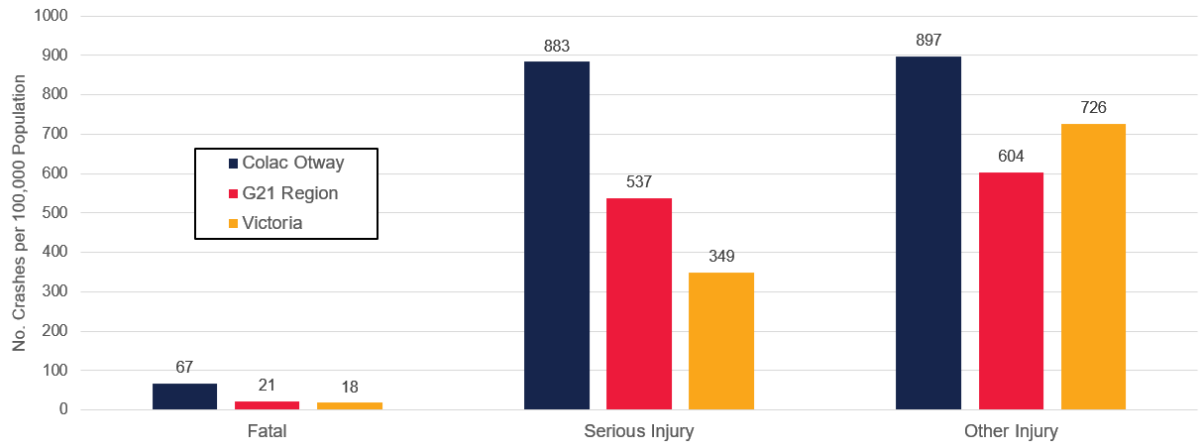

Figure 4.3: Crash Rate Comparison (per 100,000 Population)

Colac Otway Shire has a significantly higher rate of reported crashes (all crash severities) compared to the G21 Region and Victoria as a whole. This may partly be attributable to the relatively high numbers of tourists (domestic and international) that frequent the Shire, particularly on the Great Ocean Road and surrounding areas (i.e. the south and southeastern coast of the Shire) – when compared to Victoria, however this should be relatively similar to the G21 Region.

Notwithstanding, there is a substantially higher rate of fatal and serious injury crashes in comparison to the G21 Region and all of Victoria. It is expected that in part this may be due to the prevalence of high-speed arterials which dominate Colac Otway Shire's road network and again, differences in population densities (refer Section 2.3) and tourism on Great Ocean Road which is a key crash corridor hotspot (discussed further in Section 4.1.5).

It is however a strong indication of the need for road safety improvements to decrease the incidence of fatal and serious injury crashes within the Shire.

4.1.2 Age Group

A review of fatal and serious injuries to people (in crashes) indicates that the most impacted age group is between 30-59 years old. When considering the Shire's population age profile (Figure 2.2), younger and older people are less represented. This may be that older people are less likely to drive and therefore have a lower exposure.

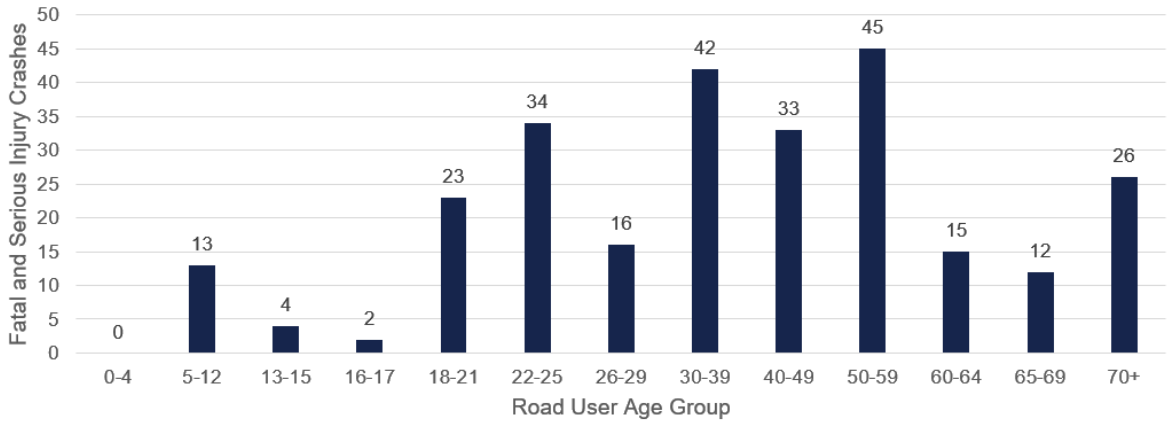

Figure 4.4: Crashes by Age Group

4.1.3 Road Users

Crashes per road user have been summarised in Figure 4.5. The data indicates that most fatal and serious injury crashes involve passenger vehicles, noting that those involving motorcyclists appear to be highly represented compared to typical motorcycle mode share (refer Section 2.5). This is expected to be due to Great Ocean Road being a popular motorcycle recreational route and a key crash corridor hotspot (discussed further in Section 4.1.5).

Fatal and serious crashes involving pedestrians, cyclists or heavy vehicles are relatively low in comparison to these road users.

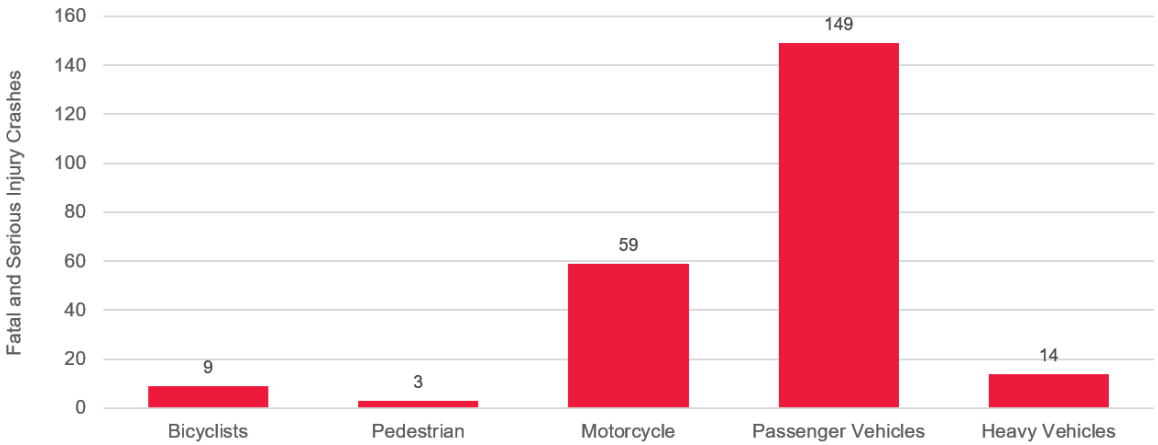

Figure 4.5: Crashes by Road User

The fatal and serious injury crash locations of pedestrian, cyclist and motorcycle road users have been mapped in Figure 4.6.

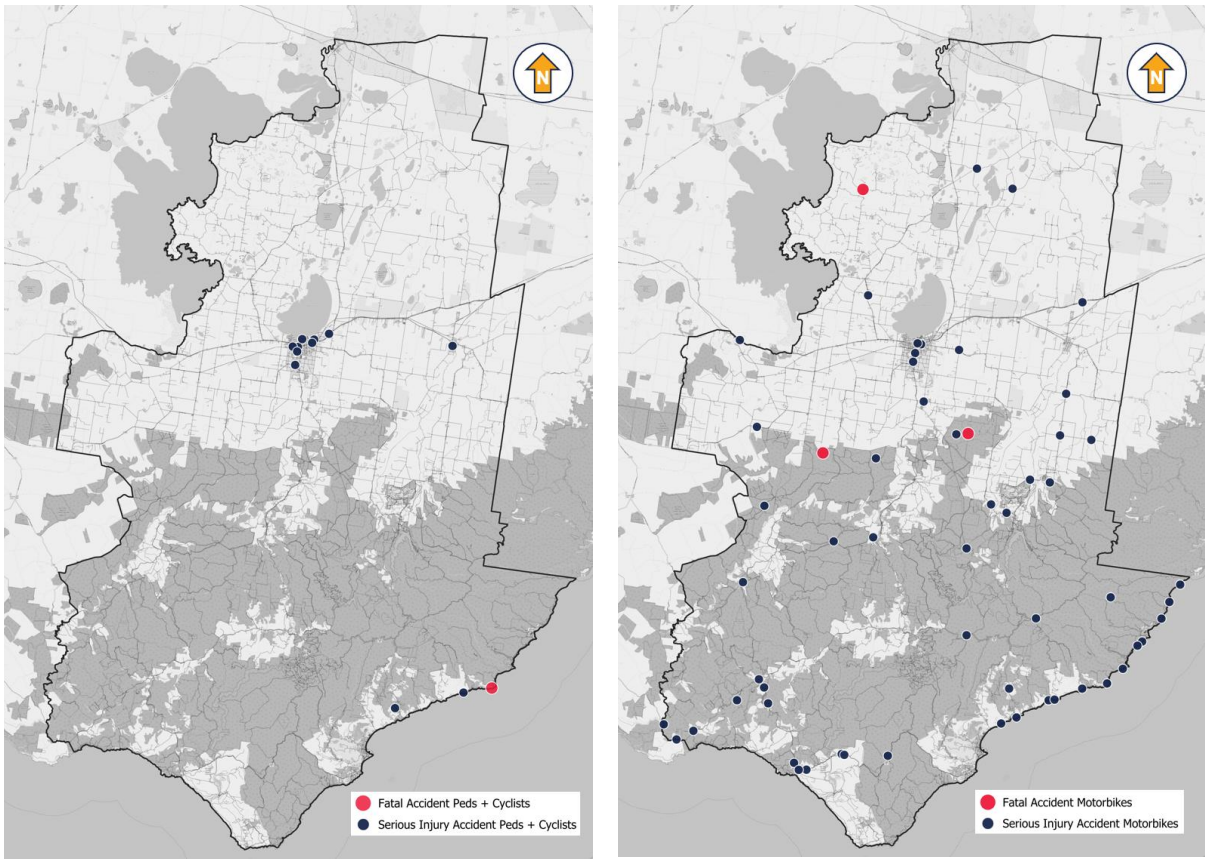

Figure 4.6: Pedestrian and Cyclist (left) and Motorcyclist Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes (right)

It is noted that:

- The majority of the pedestrian and cyclist crashes are in, and around, Colac.
- There is a single fatal cyclist crash on the Great Ocean Road (as discussed previously).
- There is a trend of motorcyclist crashes on the Great Ocean Road which is likely due to the road environment (higher speeds and tight corners) and as it is a popular motorcyclist recreational route. Great Ocean Road is therefore considered a key crash corridor for motorcyclists.

4.1.4 Speed Environment

Speed contributes to a high proportion of crashes and a comparison between speed and fatal and serious injury crashes is included in Figure 4.7.

Generally speaking, crash incidence and injury severity increases on higher speed roads. For instance, and with specific regard to pedestrians, the likelihood of being killed or seriously injured increases dramatically with speeds above 30km/h (outlined in The Safe System).

Notwithstanding, as a proportion, reported casualty crashes predominately occur on lower speed roads within the Shire, noting Colac itself is a casualty crash hotspot for the Shite (refer following section).

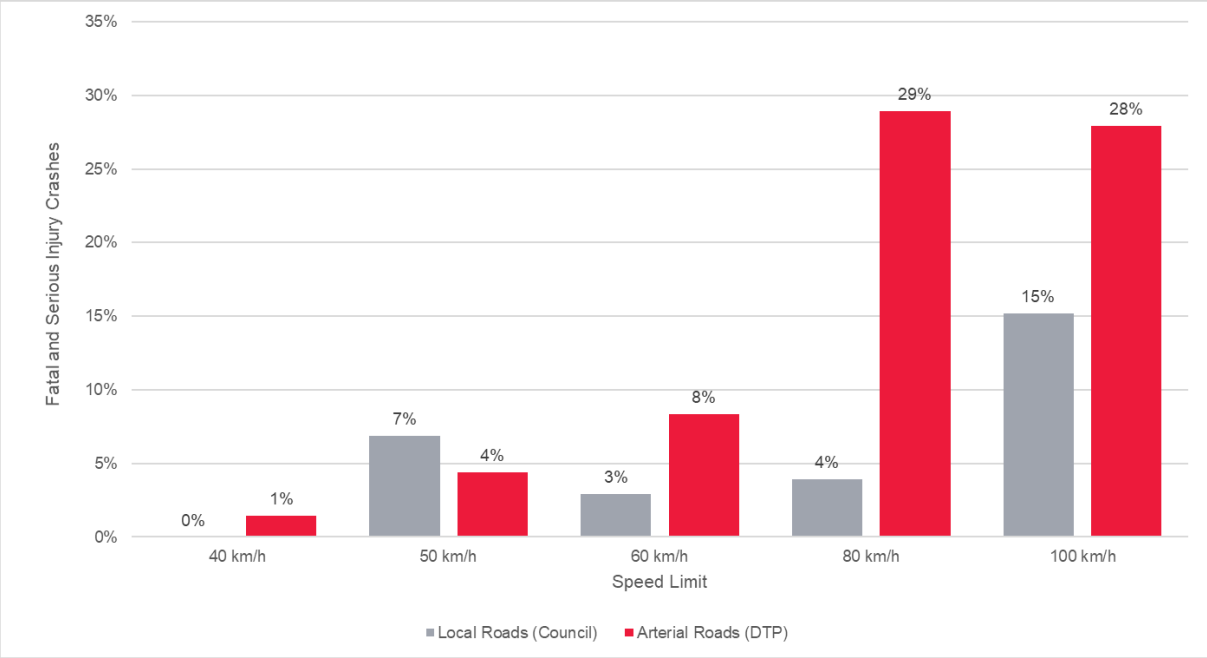

Figure 4.7: Crashes by Speed Limit

4.1.5 High Crash Locations

A fatal and serious injury crash heat map is included in Figure 4.8 which indicates a concentration of fatal and serious injury crashes in the following areas:

- Colac
- Along Princes Highway
- Along Great Ocean Road (particularly the eastern section to Apollo Bay)
- Along north-south arterial roads connecting Princes Highway (east) to Skenes Creek (Skenes Creek Road, Forrest-Apollo Bay Road, Birregurra-Forrest Road)

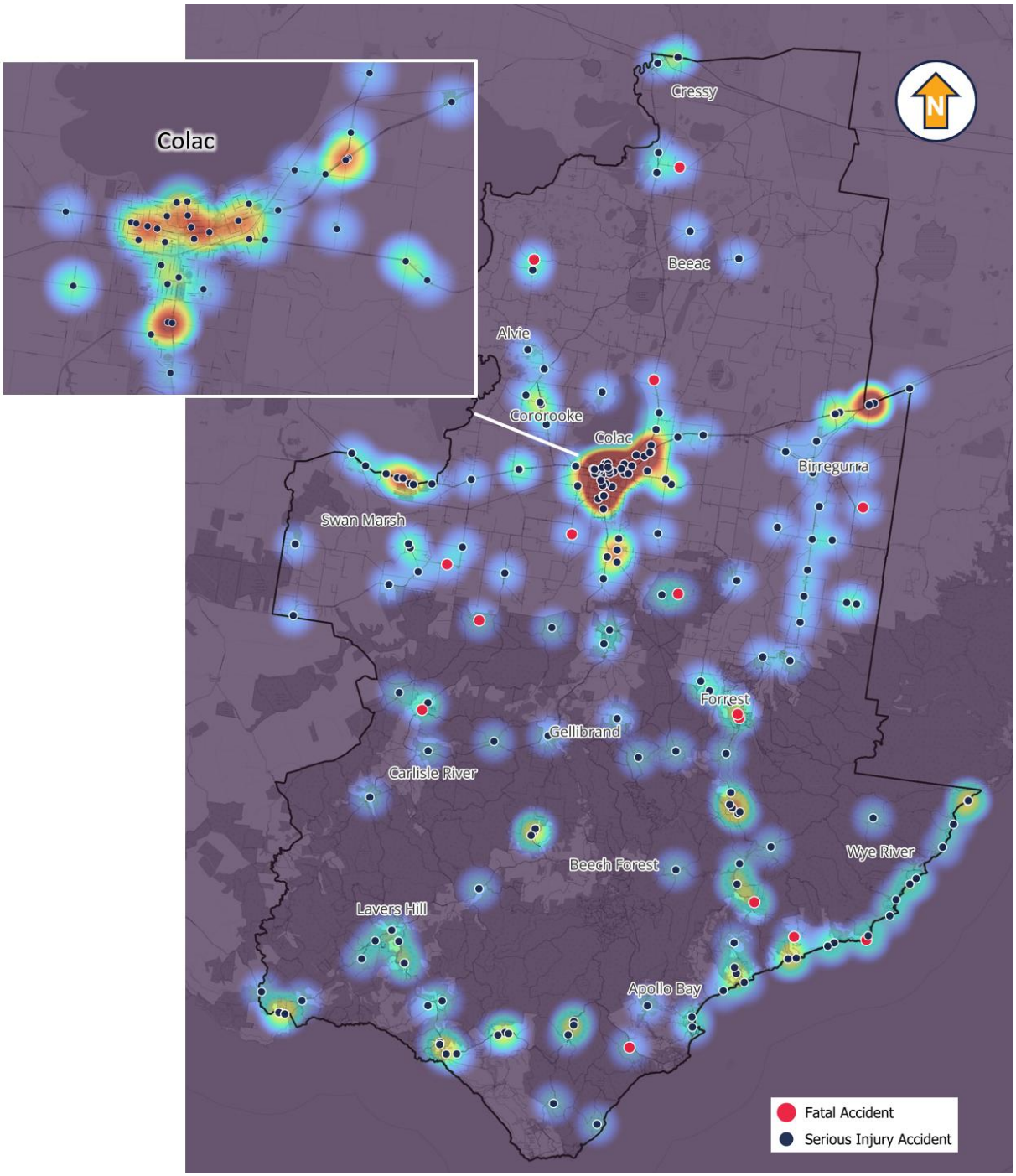

Figure 4.8: Fatal and Serious Injury Crash Heat Map

A review of crash locations (intersections and road link sections) with the highest volume of fatal and serious injury crashes was undertaken across the Shire.

A list of the top 10 locations has been summarised in Table 4.3 and illustrated in Figure 4.9[5] on the following page.

[5] These locations have firstly considered the number of fatal and serious injury crashes by location, and then other injury crashes were also considered to assist in ranking sites with similar numbers of serious injury crashes.

Additionally, on the basis of Figure 4.8, key crash corridors have also been identified as follows and included in Figure 4.9, noting these are all DTP arterial roads:

- Great Ocean Road (east)
- Great Ocean Road (west)
- Princes Highway (east) – Birregurra – Forest – Skenes Creek
- Colac-Lavers Hill Road
- Princes Highway (west)

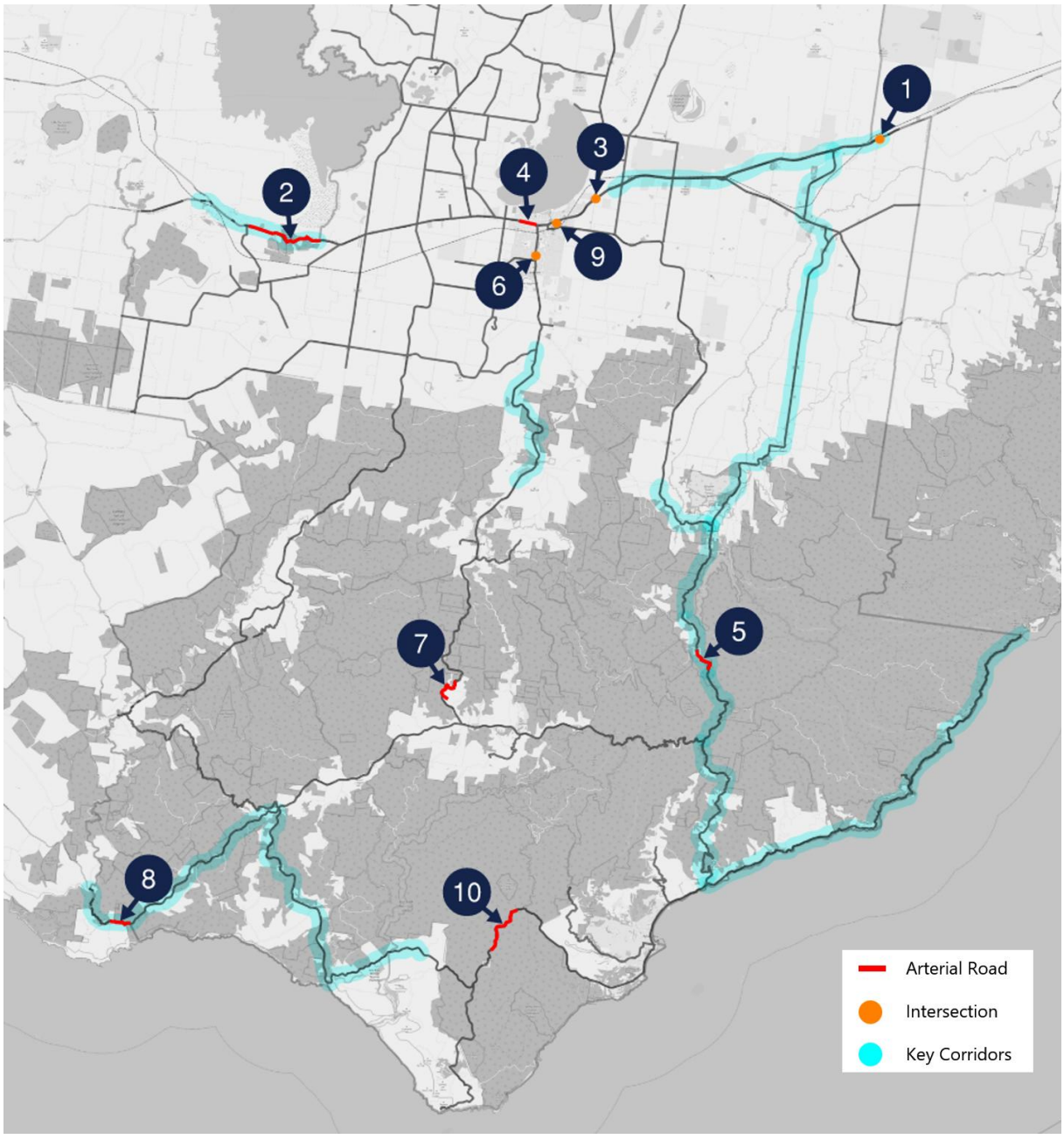

Figure 4.9: Top Ten Crash Locations and Key Corridors

Table 4.3: Top Ten High Crash Locations

NO.	LOCATION	TYPE	AUTHORITY
1	Princes Highway / Conns Lane, Winchelsea	Intersection	DTP / Council
2	Princes Highway – East of Swan Marsh Road, Pirron Yallock	Arterial Road	DTP
3	Princes Highway / Drapers Road, Colac East	Intersection	DTP / Council
4	Murray Street West, Colac	Segment of road and intersection crashes	DTP
5	Forrest-Apollo Bay Road, Barramunga	Arterial Road	DTP
6	Main Street / Aireys Street, Elliminyt	Intersection	DTP / Council
7	Colac-Lavers Hill Road, Carlisle River	Arterial Road	DTP
8	Great Ocean Rd Near Otways Forest Park, Yuulong	Arterial Road	DTP
9	Murray Street / Queen Street, Colac[6]	Intersection	DTP
10	Great Ocean Road Near Malts Rest, Cape Otway	Arterial Road	DTP

4.1.6 Crash Types

In addition to the top crash locations, fatal and serious injury crashes have been assessed using their identified VicRoads Definition of Classifying Accidents (DCA) Codes and summarised in Figure 4.10.

The predominant crash types include ‘off path (on straight or curve) crashes’ and ‘vehicles from opposing directions (intersections)’ or ‘vehicles from same direction crashes’ (DCA170/180 and DCA110/120 crash code serios, respectively). This analysis has also separated the local (Council managed) roads and arterial roads (DTP managed). This highlights that there are similar crash types occurring on both the Council and DTP road networks.

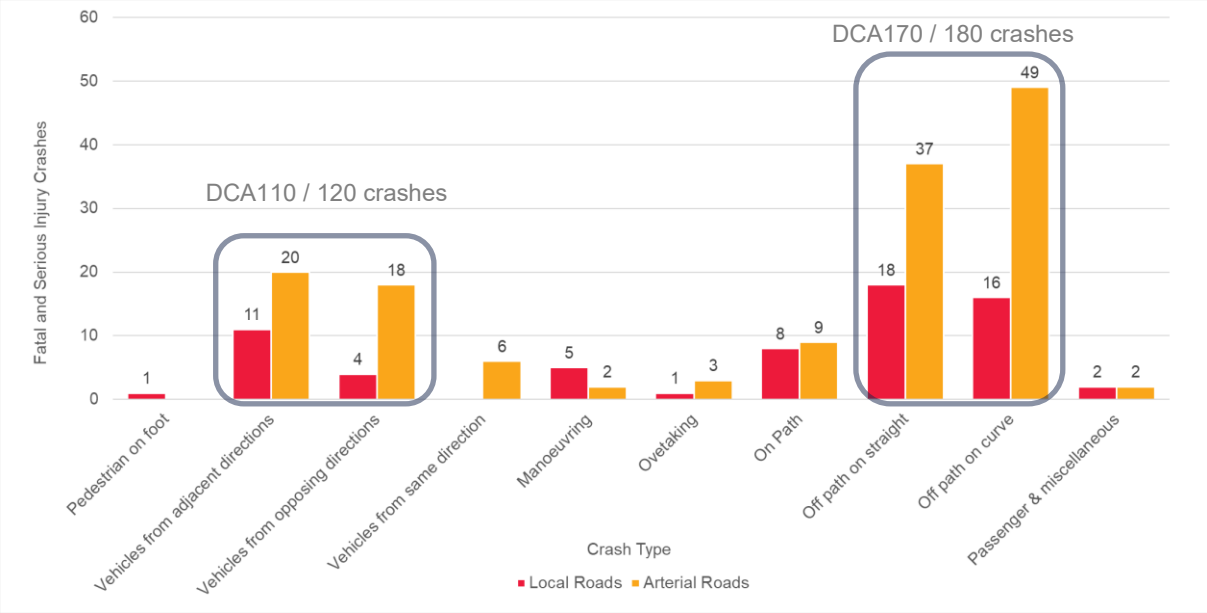

Figure 4.10: Fatal and Serious Injury Crash Types by Road Authority

The above indicates that the two predominant fatal and serious injury crashes occur at intersections and on sections of road where a vehicle has left the carriageway or road.

[6] It is separately noted that a fatal crash (right through) has occurred in 2017.

Further breakdown into sub-DCA codes provides the ten highest crash types as summarised in Figure 4.11.

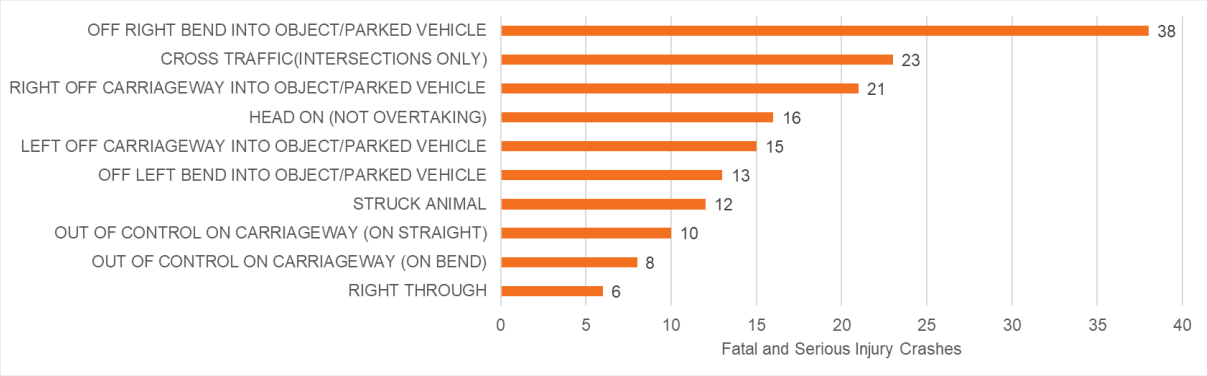

Figure 4.11: Crash Type Summary

This reveals that 'off-right bend' is the most common crash type for all crashes and cross-traffic (which occurs at intersections) is the second common. It is noted that 'struck animal' crashes are relatively high, noting that this issue was raised as part of community and stakeholder consultation, but not unexpected due to the rural and agricultural nature of parts of the Shire.

It is noted that head on crashes (DCA120) are the fourth highest crash type incidence. These have occurred mostly on the arterial road network (Great Ocean Road, Forrest-Apollo Bay Road and Princes Highway) which all have undivided carriageways and may indicate the need for further consideration as to geometry, barriers and speed review.

Cross-traffic crashes appear to mostly be related to four-way priority-controlled intersections across the Shire. These locations with the highest fatal and serious crash injuries have been identified in the preceding Section 4.1.5.

With specific regard to cross-traffic crashes on Council managed intersections (and in addition to the Top 10 intersections summarised Section 4.1.5 in Table 4.3) there are two intersections which have two serious injury crashes:

- Pound Road / Deans Creek Road / Black Larpent Road, Elliminyt (Council has applied for funding to improve the safety at this intersection)
- Forest Street / Shorts Road, Barongarook

Figure 4.12 has been prepared to summarise the locations of 'vehicles from opposing (intersections)' or 'vehicles from same direction crashes' (DCA110/120 crash codes) and Figure 4.13 has been prepared to summarise the locations of 'vehicles 'off path (on straight or curve) crashes' (DCA170/180), respectively.

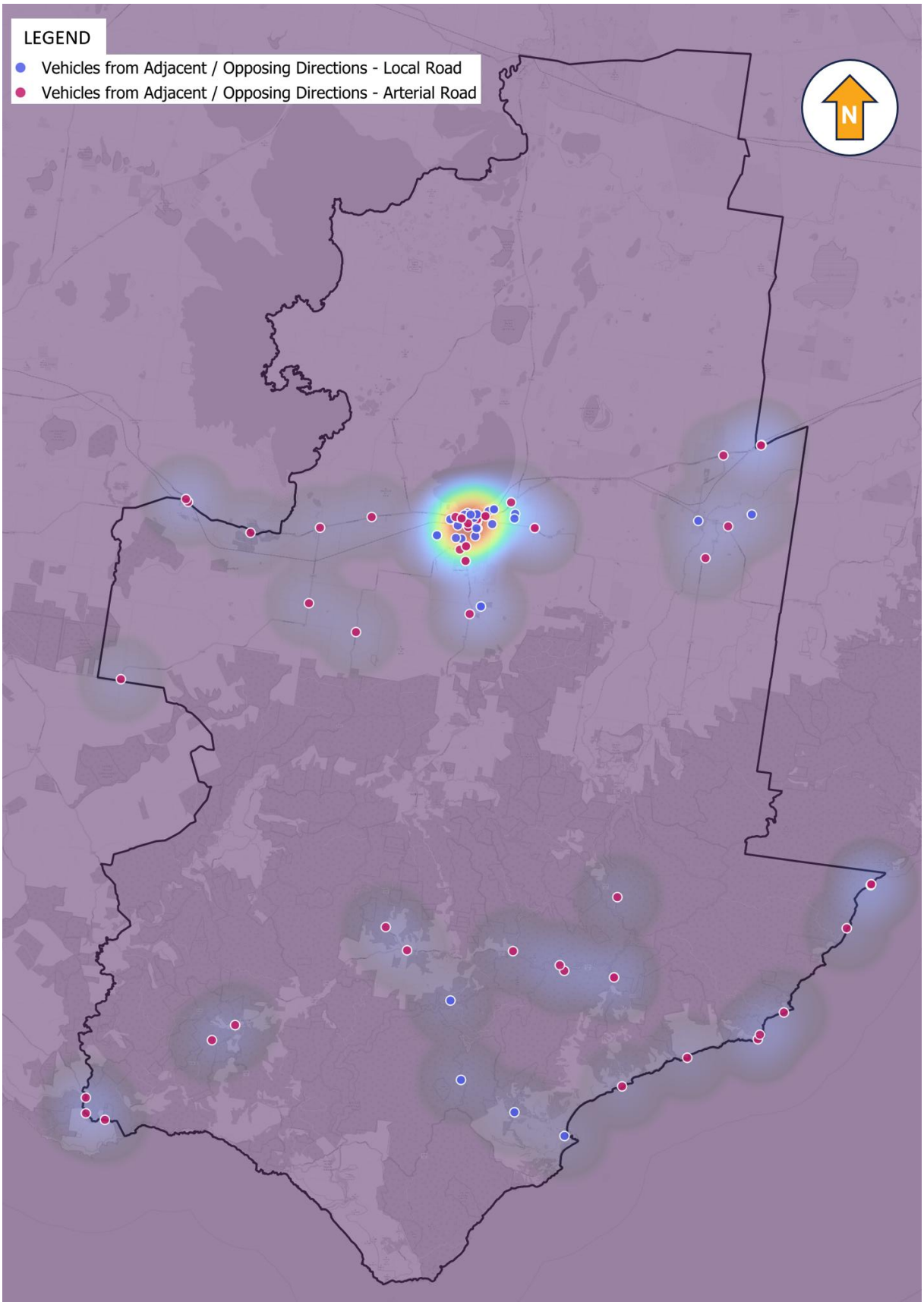

Figure 4.12: Vehicles from Adjacent / Opposing Directions – Local vs Arterial Roads

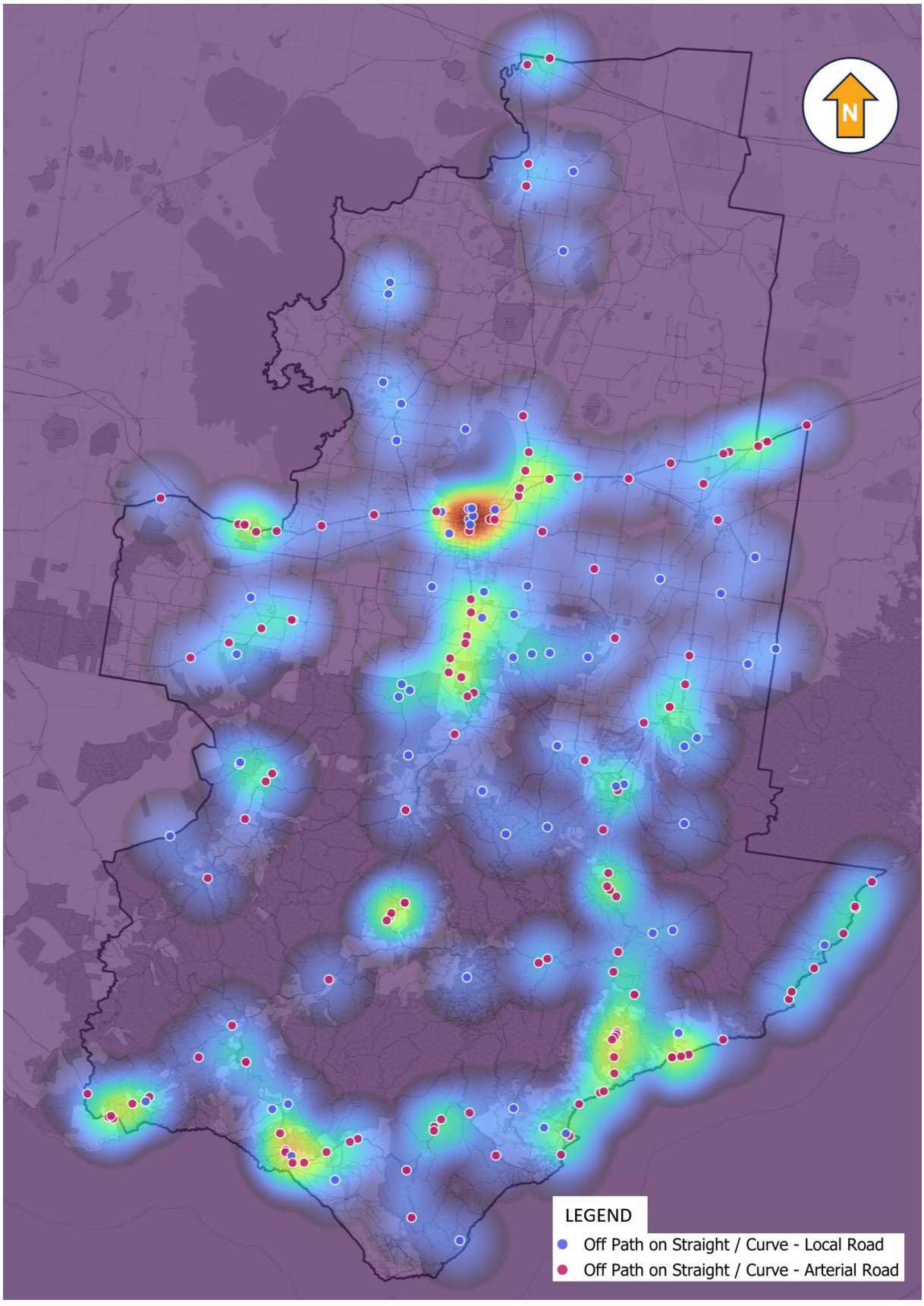

Figure 4.13: Off Path Accidents on Straights and Curves – Local vs Arterial Roads

As noted in Section 4.1.5, a number of key crash corridors have been identified. The highlighted off path/off carriageway crashes (on bend or straight) generally align with these key crash corridors.

4.2 Community and Stakeholder Engagement

4.2.1 Approach

As briefly noted in Section 1.2.1, the community of Colac Otway Shire was engaged to assist in developing the strategy with the aim to capture the views and concerns of the community, allowing development of actions in line with this.

Drop-in community consultation sessions were held in Birregurra, Colac and Apollo Bay on the 10 and 11 October 2025 to provide the community an opportunity to discuss the Road Safety Strategy and raise any related concerns in-person.

An **online survey** was posted onto Colac Otway Shire's community engagement platform 'Have Your Say' between 8 September 2025 and 3 November 2025. This allowed key stakeholders, residents and or visitors to provide their feedback on a range of safety related questions. Respondents were given the opportunity to respond to a survey as well as interact with a map where particular places could be pinned with a comment for specific comments.

The online engagement platform received a total of 60 people participating in the survey with 29 people placing pinpoints on the map (a total of 91 issue responses). The primary age group which responded was between 55-64 with 30% of respondents.

Key **stakeholder groups were engaged** to provide input to the strategy. This included government bodies, local primary and high schools, Victoria Police, several primary industry businesses, health care services and the Otway Road Safety group.

Full summaries of the community and stakeholder engagement process have been provided to Council separately. Key issues and items have been addressed in this Road Safety Strategy, with key items summarised below.

4.2.2 Online Survey Community Response

Results suggest that respondents consider:

- Driving a car to be a **safe** activity in townships (67%) however **unsafe/very unsafe** on rural roads (65%)
- Cycling on the road to be an **unsafe/very unsafe** activity within both township (80%) and on rural roads (98%)
- Riding a motorbike to be an **unsafe/very unsafe** activity within both township (68%) and on rural roads (83%)
- Crossing the road to be an **unsafe/very unsafe** activity in townships (54%) and on rural roads (65%)

Overall respondents considered rural activities more unsafe then in townships. This is likely to correspond to higher speeds and less facilities.

In regard to speed limits:

- Local roads are at a **comfortable** speed however 29% say they are too high
- Arterial roads are at a **comfortable** speed however 15% say they are too high

The top three (3) reasons which respondents feel unsafe on roads was similar for both town centre and rural roads were:

1. Road user behaviours
2. Maintenance
3. Lack of safe road infrastructure

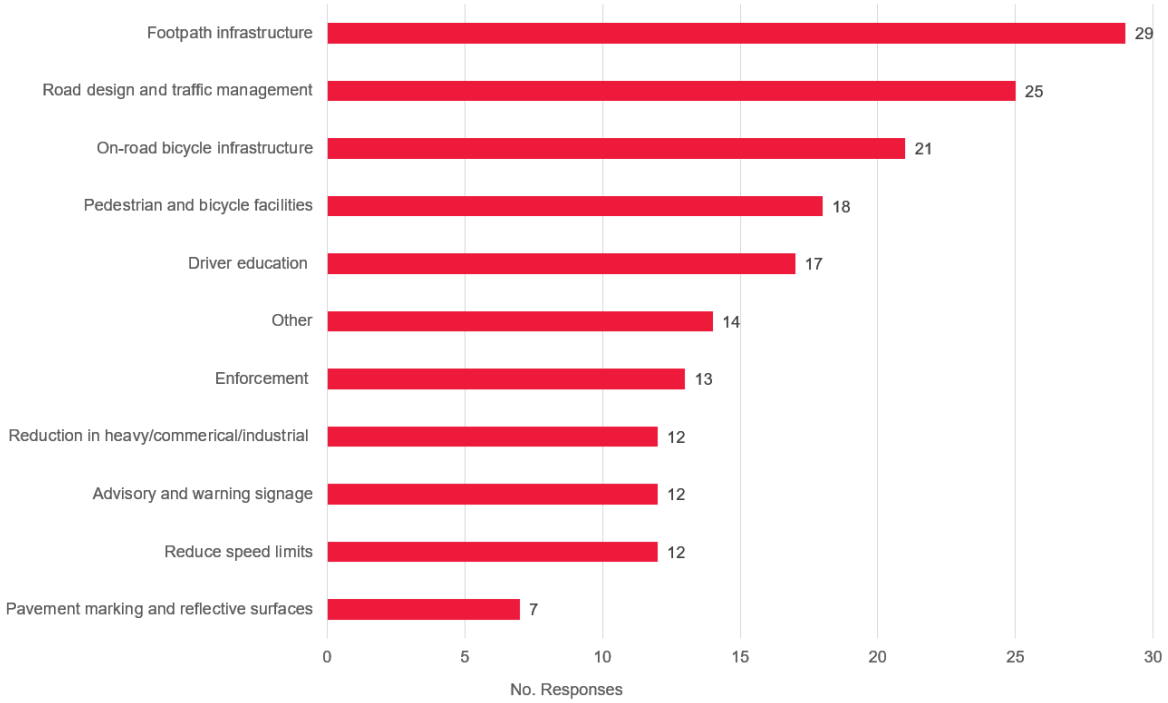

Figure 4.14: Highest Priorities to Improve Safety

The top five reasons which respondents suggest are highest priority to improve safety are:

1. Footpath infrastructure
2. Road design and traffic management
3. On-road bicycle infrastructure
4. Pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure
5. Driver education

4.2.3 Community & Stakeholder Response

Overall, there was a substantial response from the community and key stakeholders relating to feedback for the development of this road safety strategy. These have been reviewed and considered in the development of the Action Plan.

Key elements raised by the community and stakeholders include:

- Poor road conditions (such as lack of shoulders, narrow roads, unsealed roads and lack of maintenance)
- Poor and risky driver behaviours, including tourists not understanding the road rules
- Intersections and roads perceived to have issues, such as sight lines, signage and layout deficiencies
- Desire for lower speed on several local/town roads, and consistent application of lower speed zone areas around townships and schools (including Costin Street and Pengilley Avenue, Apollo Bay, Forest Street, Colac and Roadknight Street, Birregurra)
- Improvement needed to the pedestrian and cyclist network including missing footpath and bicycle links and crossings at key locations (including within Birregurra, Colac and Apollo Bay)

4.3 Key Issues Summary

The road safety review has provided an overview of the current road safety issues and concerns within Colac Otway Shire. The Shire has a significantly higher rate of reported crashes (all crash severities) compared to the G21 Region and Victoria, noting the majority of fatal and serious crashes are occurring on the arterial network.

The review indicates that the key issues and factors to safety within the Shire are:

- The majority of roads within the Shire being high speed roads (both arterial and local) (80 - 100 km/h). Higher speeds can increase the likelihood of a crash occurring and increases the likely crash severity when crashes do occur.
- Many intersections are priority-controlled intersections, often on high speed roads comprising cross or T-intersections. The crash data and community response indicates there are road safety deficiencies at a number of key locations, and this is expected to be a common theme within the Shire.
- Poor road conditions, relating to maintenance and perceived unsafe infrastructure.
- Road user behaviours, the top reason the community feel unsafe on roads.
- A lack of active transport connections and safe travel options throughout the Shire (footpaths, crossings, cyclist facilities) and it is currently considered an unsafe travel method.

There are a number of potential treatment and mitigations available to improve safety for road users and common crash types. Note these are highly specific and are adopted in response to site-dependant conditions and issues.

Notwithstanding, common mitigation treatments are outlined below, noting these are not exhaustive.

Table 4.4: Common Mitigation Treatments

ROAD USER	POTENTIAL MITIGATION
Vehicles (including motorcyclists)	Off-road / off-carriageway crashes • Roadside environment treatments (hazard removal, relocation or protection (i.e. barriers)) • Delineation treatments (signage, audio tactile line marking) • Road / shoulder widening to provide additional buffer Intersection crashes • Geometry realignment (staggered intersections, turn lanes, improved geometry) • Conversion to roundabouts or signalised intersections • Improved signage, line marking and sight distance Struck animal type crashes • Virtual fencing (wildlife alert system) • Wildlife/warning signage • Driver education Head on crashes • Divided/widened carriageway, central barriers

ROAD USER	POTENTIAL MITIGATION
Pedestrians	• Footpaths and/or Shared User Paths (SUPs) • Implementing crossings and/or crossing improvements (such as wombat crossings, pedestrian refuges, signalised crossings) 
Cyclists	• Off-road cyclist paths or SUPs • On-road cyclist lanes and line marking improvements • Signalised crossings

5 THEMES & ACTION PLAN

5.1 Themes

The Colac Otway Shire Road Safety Strategy is to align with the Road Safety Strategies of the state and national government, with the vision to decrease serious and fatal injury crashes on the road network.

In line with Safe Systems five action themes have been identified for the Action Plan.

Leadership	To foster collaboration across agencies and the community, ensure accountability and monitoring for delivering the Road Safety Strategy as well as continuing to identify safety issues and proactively work towards improvement.
Safe Roads (Transport Network)	To review the design, construction, maintenance and management of the road environment to minimise the likelihood and severity of crashes. This includes existing issues and arising issues on the roads, intersections and active transport networks.
Safe Speeds	To set, manage and review speed limits that reflect the function, design and safety of the road, ensuring that the forces in a crash are survivable for all road users.
Safe Vehicles	Ensuring that the vehicles using the road network are designed, maintained and operated to reduce the risk and severity of crashes.
Safe People	Supporting and encouraging road users to make safe choices, behave responsibly, and understand the risks associated with road use.

5.2 Action Plan

The implementation of the Road Safety Strategy Action Plan is proposed for a 10-year period. Actions are proposed as immediate or short term, ongoing and longer-term actions.

Based on the review of existing documentation, community and stakeholder consultation, Council feedback and crash assessment undertaken, actions have been identified to work towards reducing the number of fatal and serious injury incidents in aligning with the Safe System approach and principles.

Actions with associated timeframes are detailed in the next few pages in Table 5.1.

These are the key actions noting that in addition to the action plan it is recommended that Council review key and specific items raised as part of the community and stakeholder engagement process.

Table 5.1: Action Plan

ITEM	AIM	ACTION	TIMELINE
LEADERSHIP			
1.1	Accountability and monitoring of this Road Safety Strategy	Appoint the Manager of Assets and Engineering to implement the Road Safety Strategy.	Immediate
		Provide Safe Systems training to those involved in implementing the Strategy and those developing and implement transport infrastructure projects.	Short-term
		Ongoing monitoring and evaluating the actions of this Road Safety Strategy on an annual basis.	Once a year
		Refresh the Road Safety Strategy after the initial 10-year strategy period.	Year 10 / long term
1.2	Ensure any road safety funding opportunities are identified and utilised	Develop a list of funding opportunities for road safety projects, and develop targeted applications, including: Federal: • Active Transport Fund • Local Roads & Community Infrastructure Program • Roads to Recovery Program • Black Spots Program • Heavy Vehicle Safety & Productivity Program • Safer Local Roads & Infrastructure Program State: • Community Road Safety Grants Program • Flexible Local Transport Solutions Program • Transport Accident Commission (TAC) Grant Programs Collaborate and communicate with key industrial and tourism stakeholders that enhance and contribute to the local economy to assist in obtaining grant funding opportunities and equitably contribute to mutually beneficial projects. Ensure this is updated as opportunities arise and apply for funding as these arise.	Ongoing

ITEM	AIM	ACTION	TIMELINE
1.3	Working alongside and advocating with key partners	Develop and attend key partner working groups to ensure ongoing communication. This includes: • Periodic meetings (monthly) with key authorities including DTP to collaborate, relay, advocate and collaborate on safety issues (ongoing and new issues) • Periodic meetings (monthly) with key stakeholders such as emergency services, including Victoria Police, SES, TAC, GORCAPA, RoadSafe Otway, etc. Continue collaboration with community groups (Kennet River Association, Kennet Community Action Group and WYE SEPPA) where road safety risks are identified.	Ongoing
1.4	Active and ongoing communication with key stakeholders	Establish a list of road safety stakeholders and annually proactively engage them in road safety programs, projects and initiatives – such as a safety forum for key stakeholders to attend, including schools, health care and other stakeholder groups.	Ongoing
1.5	Road safety issues are identified as they arise	Continue collecting and recording community feedback in relation to road safety issues. Prioritise key risks and respond to the community issues raised.	Ongoing
		Review crash statistics annually to determine emerging safety issues on the network.	
		Investigate and monitor key issues and locations identified. This may include road safety audits, site inspections, surveys, speed data collection, etc.	
SAFER ROADS (TRANSPORT NETWORK)			
2.1	Footpath Network Improvements	Continue to secure allocated funding each year to implement the Strategic Footpath Connections program for the *Colac & Apollo Bay Footpath Strategy* with at least one priority from Colac and Apollo Bay per year. This is also to include key Birregurra connections. Review community and stakeholder identified path, crossing and pram ramp issues. For example: • pram ramp design and grade issues were identified in Colac and Apollo Bay • A significant sight distance issue was identified at the zebra crossing with flashing lights in Apollo Bay (opposite 133 Great Ocean Road) Refresh the footpath strategy and expand to include pedestrian crossings (i.e. pram ramps and DDA compliance and appropriate grades).	Ongoing

ITEM	AIM	ACTION	TIMELINE
2.2	Action the *Colac Otway Shire Active Transport Strategy (2013-2023)*	Review the *Active Transport Strategy* infrastructure actions for each town, in line with current infrastructure provisions, latest strategies (such as the Colac & Apollo Bay Footpath Strategy), and this Road Safety Strategy (crash data, community and stakeholder engagement results). This is expected to include implementation of key pedestrian crossings and active transport connections. Refresh the Colac Otway Shire Active Transport Strategy, to include updated action plan, priorities and timelines for completion.	Short-term (review) Ongoing (implementation)
2.3	Action strategies and structure plans that propose improved active transport connections and outcomes	Continue to action the improved active transport connections and outcomes which have been developed as part of the: • *Colac CBD Entrances Project 2012* • *Civic Health and Rail Precinct Plan (DRAFT 2025)* • *Birregurra Structure Plan 2025* • *Community Infrastructure Plan Apollo Bay, Skenes Creek and Marengo (2023)* These are to consider the findings and feedback as part of this strategy and ongoing.	Ongoing
2.4	Maintenance	Ensure ongoing road maintenance as per the Road Management Plan and in consideration of issues raised during consultation. If necessary, seek additional funding to ensure timely implementation. This includes: • Vegetation management (including sight distance and signage obstructions) • Kerb and channel construction/replacement • Road damage and poor-quality pavements • Maintenance of footpaths cycle paths (Shared User Paths, etc.)	Ongoing
		Continue to advocate with DTP for improved maintenance and arterial road conditions, including shoulders, maintenance and items raised by the community as part of this engagement.	Ongoing
2.5	Road Sealing	Implement the Road Upgrade Policy which assesses and prioritises roads required to be sealed.	Ongoing

ITEM	AIM	ACTION	TIMELINE
2.6	Improve key intersection and road link safety	Undertake a detailed review of identified crash locations, road sections and key crash corridors in this Road Safety Strategy. Identify potential location specific mitigation options, focusing on the key crash types. In the first instance, this should focus on the high crash locations, common crash types and key crash corridors (refer Section 4.1.5 and 4.1.6). *It is noted that many of the locations identified are on DTP managed state arterial roads.*	Short term / ongoing
		Review key intersections and locations identified in the community and stakeholder engagement process – noting this process raised road safety concerns at a total of 40 roads and intersections (some of which have been identified in the crash statistics assessment in this strategy).	Short term / ongoing
		Continue to develop mitigation options and a live priority action list (both Shire and DTP managed road locations).	Short term / ongoing
		Secure funding for road safety mitigation treatment and implement upgrades.	Ongoing
SAFER SPEEDS			
3.1	Speed Limit Reviews	Undertake a speed limit review, including investigation of: • Speed reduction treatments (schools, townships, activity centres, local streets/areas identified in community consultation), noting that this partly aligns with the Active Transport Strategy actions PR-5 and PR-6 • Consistency in speed reduction treatments on roads, and key environments (i.e. Cape Otway Road, schools, townships) • Consider variable speed limit zones where appropriate (schools in urban areas / activity centres)	Short-term, Ongoing
3.2	Speed Limit Enforcement	Advocate and communicate with Victoria Police for enforcement of speed limits, this includes where speeding issues are being identified through community consultation (e.g. not adhering to the new Murray Street speed limit).	Ongoing

ITEM	AIM	ACTION	TIMELINE
3.3	Speed Management	Where speed limits are not being observed, consider the development of speed mitigation treatments and local area management plans.	Ongoing
3.4	Speed Monitoring	Continue collection of traffic volume and speed data on Council roads, monitoring speed mitigation treatment effectiveness and identifying speed hotspots.	Ongoing
SAFER VEHICLES			
4.1	Safe Vehicle Fleet	Review and update the Council fleet vehicles to ensure these are ANCAP 5 star rated and have the latest in safety technology.	Ongoing
		Council fleet vehicles to be well maintained and training provided to staff on safe driving.	
4.2	Safe Use of E-Mobility Devices	Be aware of and align with any statewide e-mobility device management and safety initiatives which can be implemented by Council.	Ongoing
SAFER PEOPLE			
5.1	Increase Safety Awareness and Safety Programs	Develop and organise safety awareness and safety programs where opportunity rises. Continue to facilitate Walk to School every year and school crossing training for kinders.	Ongoing
5.2	Community Messaging on Road Safety	Continue to development and communicate messaging to the community on how to be a safe driver.	Ongoing
		Review and identify opportunities with partners to support driver education – in particular tourists (issues observing signage & road rules (lack of education, experience, unfamiliar road / driving environment) sometimes drive on the wrong side of the road).	Ongoing
		Advocate to DTP develop and communicate messaging targeting tourists' safety (domestic and international, including motorcyclists). For example, variable message signage (VMS) to coincide with holiday periods on the Great Ocean Road and adjacent areas.	Ongoing

ITEM	AIM	ACTION	TIMELINE
5.3	Enforcement of Road Rules	Collaborate with Victoria Police to monitor and enforce road rules and high crash locations, including Queen Street / Murray Street in Colac as an example.	Ongoing

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