

# **Investigation of Tourists as Drivers and Motorcycle Riders in Tasmania and Road Safety Interventions**

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# 1. Introduction

Tourism brings around 1.3 billion Australian dollars into the Tasmanian economy every year. Perceptions of safety and security are an important component in the attractiveness of any tourist destination (World Health Organisation 2012).

In 2014, six million international visitors arrived in Australia, the majority of these visitors were coming for a holiday or visiting family and friends. Almost a quarter of all international visitors to Australia choose to use a private or company vehicle, hire car or campervan to get around, and all visitors will come into contact with our road network during their stay, whether as drivers, passengers, pedestrians, cyclists or users of public transport (Tourism Research Australia, 2012).

Road crashes are the most common cause of injury death for international visitors in Australia, and therefore of concern, however interstate tourists present a significant statistical concern. There are also a number of 'hidden' costs associated with road crashes involving international visitors, such as long-term care of those seriously injured or psychological trauma of crash victims, friends or family.

Compared with their country of origin, international visitors may be faced with a number of challenges on Tasmanian roads, including:

- driving on the opposite side of the road
- looking the opposite way before crossing the road
- unfamiliar road signs, sometimes written in an unfamiliar language
- unfamiliar road rules
- intersection designs and lane use management systems
- different rules on alcohol consumption, seatbelt usage and helmet laws
- unfamiliar travel conditions, including long distances between destinations, gravel roads, narrow winding roads, snow, ice and wildlife.

# 2. Profile of international and interstate tourists

The following information has been obtained from the Tasmanian Visitor Survey (TVS). The TVS is an exit survey designed to provide a profile of the characteristics, travel behaviour and expenditure of international and interstate visitors to Tasmania<sup>1</sup>.

## 2.1 Interstate Visitation to Tasmania

- In 2014 (year ending September), interstate tourist numbers increased to 914,700, 3 per cent higher than the previous year.
- Of all interstate tourists:
  - 385,200 were on holiday
  - 277,500 were visiting friends or relatives
  - 168,900 were on business
  - 29,000 were travelling to attend a conference or convention.

Refer to Figure 1 for a breakdown of interstate tourists by jurisdiction for 2014.

## 2.2 International Visitation to Tasmania

- In 2014 (year ending September) international tourist numbers increased to 167,800, 8 per cent higher than the previous year.
- The average length of stay for international holiday tourists is 12 nights.
- Of all international tourists, the following increases were recorded over the last 12 months:
  - 61 per cent increase from China
  - 14 per cent increase from New Zealand
  - 6 per cent increase from the United Kingdom
  - 5 per cent increase from Hong Kong
  - 3 per cent increase from the USA.
- Tasmania's share of all international visitors to Australia was 2.7 per cent.

Refer to Figure 2 for a breakdown of international tourists by country of origin for 2014.

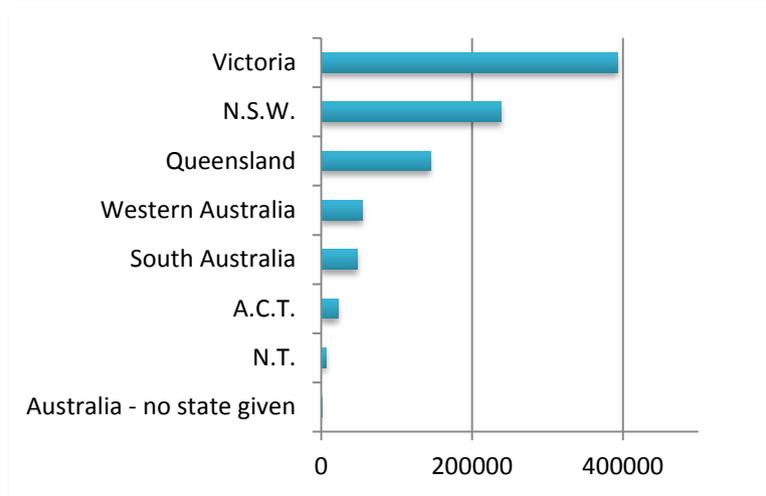


FIGURE 1: Origin of interstate tourists visiting Tasmania, year ending September 2014.

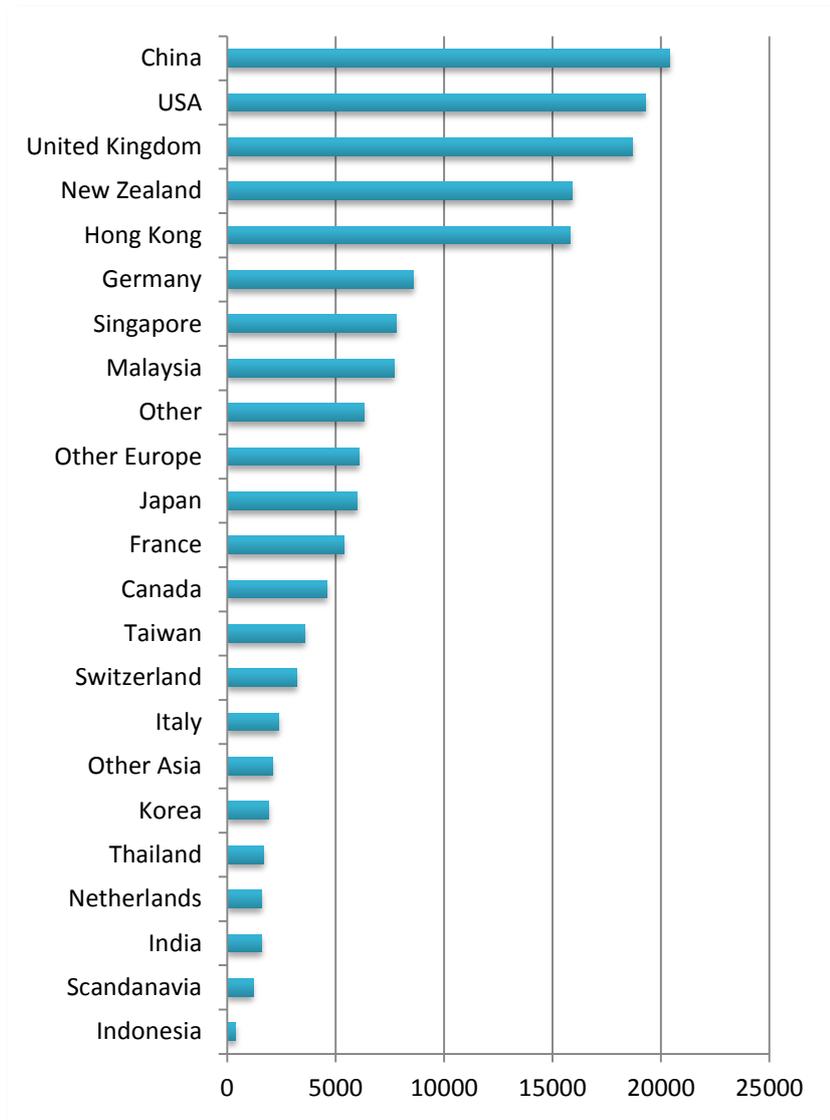


FIGURE 2: Origin of international tourists visiting Tasmania, year ending September 2014.

### **2.3 The most visited natural areas or other attractions by all tourists are:**

- heritage areas (around the State)
- Hobart Botanical Gardens
- Cataract Gorge
- Cradle Mountain
- Port Arthur Historic Site
- Sullivans Cove/Salamanca Place
- West Coast (including Gordon River)
- Stanley
- National Parks (including Freycinet).

# 3. Interstate and international visitors as drivers

## 3.1 Licensing arrangements

- Interstate drivers are permitted to drive on their current interstate licence, provided it is not suspended or cancelled.
- International visitors are permitted to drive on an International Driving Permit or on their overseas driver licence, provided it is in English or accompanied by an English translation.
- Temporary visa holders are permitted to use their international licences indefinitely, including students who may stay for several years.
- Permanent visa holders must change to a Tasmanian licence within three months of residency.
- This is part of a national arrangement and any change to licencing laws would be made at a national level.

## 3.2 Modes of travel

The most common types of transport used by international visitors (between stopovers, excluding air travel) throughout **Australia** in 2011 to 2012 were private or company cars (604,000 visitors), rental cars (394,000), and long distance coaches (221,000).

It should also be noted that approximately 104,000 visitors used a campervan or four-wheel drive vehicle (4WD) whilst travelling in Australia<sup>ii</sup>.

## 3.3 Driving convention

The origin of international drivers determines whether they come from a country with a left- or right-side driving convention. International drivers in Australia are often faced with driving on the opposite side of the road compared to their home countries. In New Zealand, it has been reported that nearly 20 per cent of fatalities involving foreign drivers can be attributed to drivers not keeping to the left hand side of the road<sup>iii</sup>.

Interstate tourists are familiar with Tasmania's left hand drive convention. As depicted in Figure 3, approximately half of all international tourists also follow the left hand drive convention.

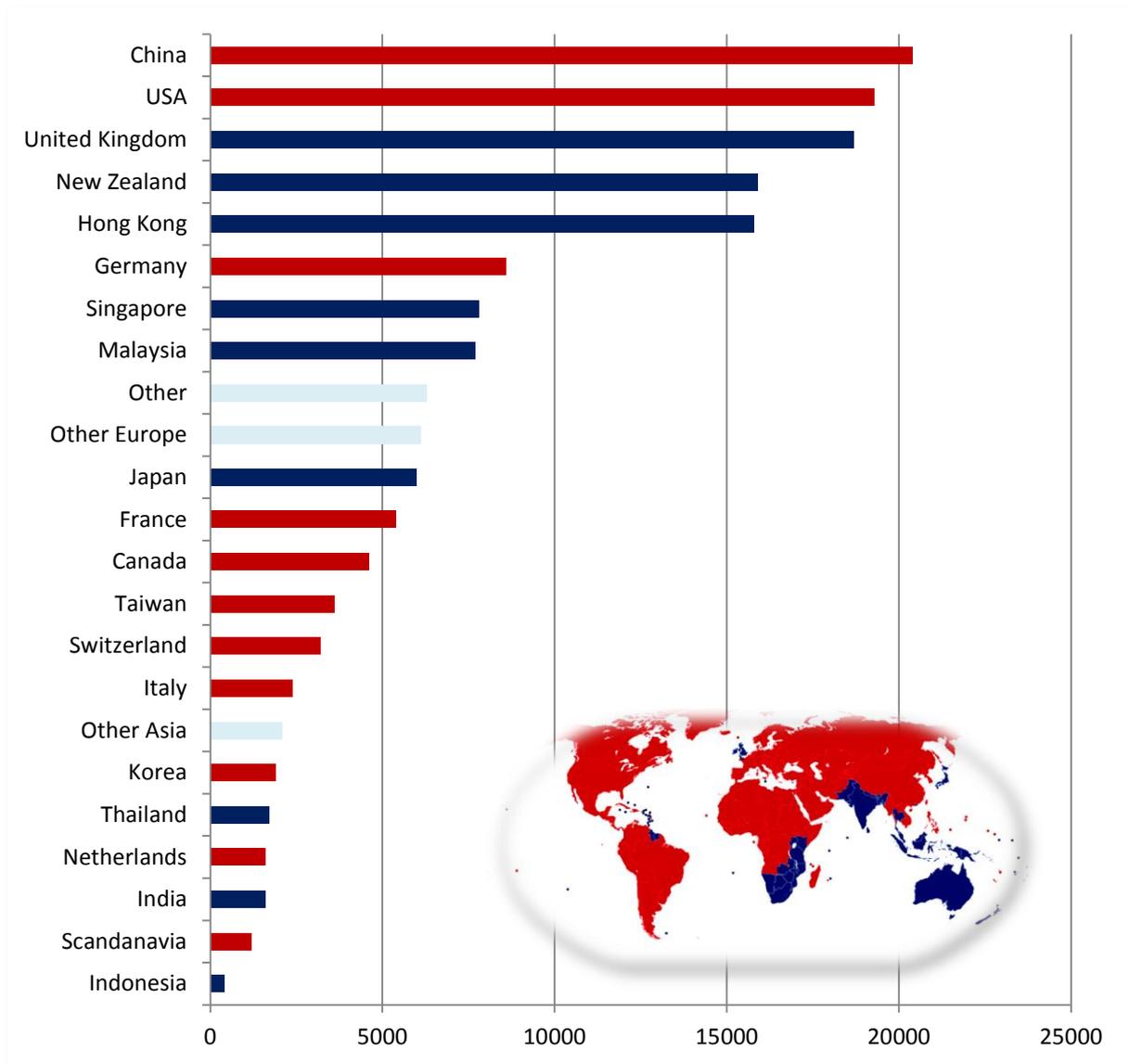


FIGURE 3:

- Origin of international tourists visiting Tasmania that practice the 'left hand drive' convention.
- Origin of international tourists visiting Tasmania that practice the 'right hand drive' convention.

Left or right hand driving conventions can be further complicated by local practices. For example in China, drivers follow a right hand convention. If there is no centre line, the rule says that vehicles should drive in the centre of the road. When two vehicles are coming towards each other in opposite directions, both vehicles should move to their right to let the other past.

# 4. Crash analysis of interstate and international tourists

Note: Crash data is limited in its ability to separate international visitors, such as tourists, from those who are long term visitors, such as students and workers, and permanent residents still using their overseas licences who are yet to change over to an Australian driver licence. International visitors are identified through Police crash reports by origin of their licence<sup>iv</sup>.

## 4.1 Interstate and international crashes

### 4.1.1 All crashes

Between 2010 and 2014, interstate and international tourists were involved in 2,010 crashes. These crashes consist of those resulting in property damage, first aid, minor injury serious injury or a fatality.

Of these 2,010 crashes, 77 per cent were interstate tourists and 23 per cent were international tourists. This means interstate tourists, as opposed to international tourists, present a concern for Tasmania (Figure 4).

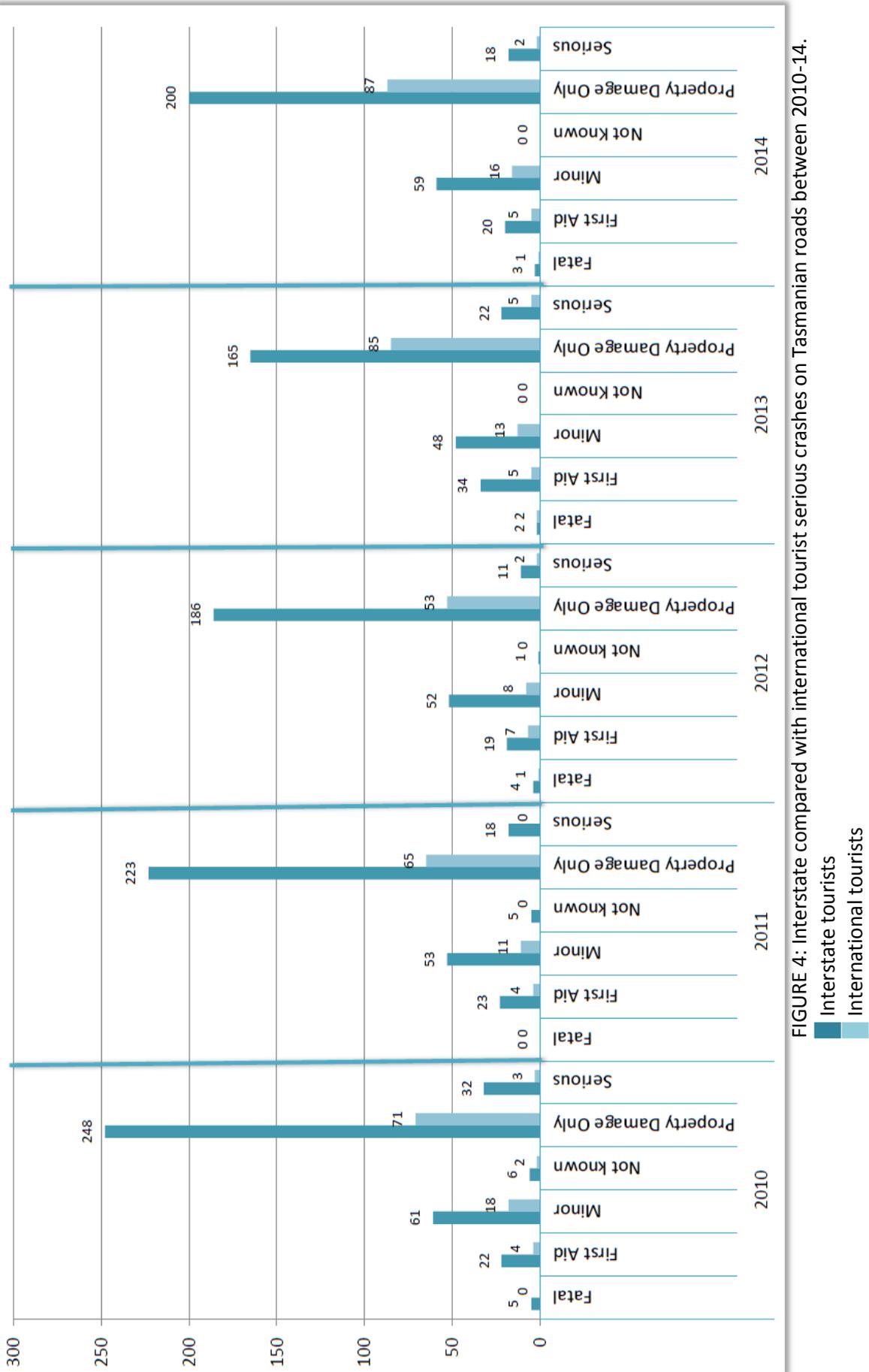


FIGURE 4: Interstate compared with international tourist serious crashes on Tasmanian roads between 2010-14.

- Interstate tourists
- International tourists

### 4.1.2 Serious Casualty Crashes

Between 2010 and 2014, there were 1,249 serious casualty crashes in Tasmania. These crashes consist of those resulting in serious injury or a fatality.

Of these 1,249 crashes, 115 involved tourists from interstate and 16 involved international tourists, as shown in Table 1. This means that interstate and international tourists accounted for 131 or 10 per cent of all serious casualty crashes in Tasmania (Figure 5).

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
All interstate	37	18	15	24	21	115
All overseas	3	0	3	7	3	16

TABLE 1: number of fatal crashes and serious injury crashes for interstate and international tourists.

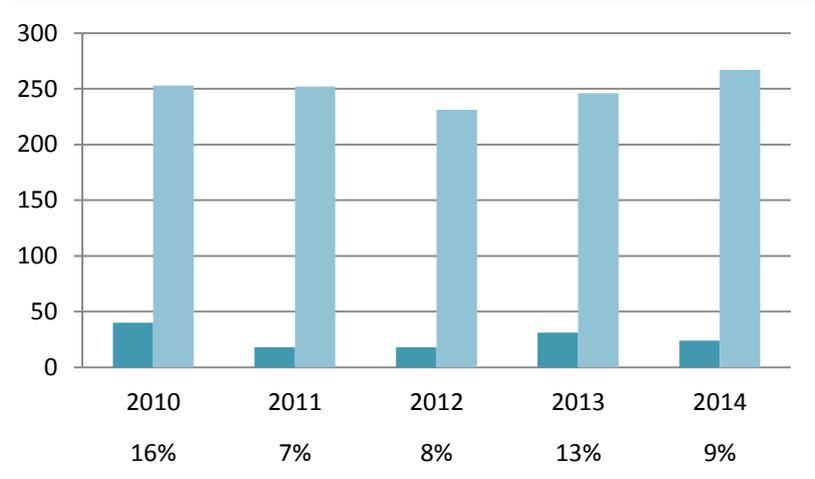


FIGURE 5: Interstate and international tourist serious casualty crashes as a percentage of all serious casualty crashes 2010-14.

■ Interstate and international tourists ■ All crashes

## 4.2 Types of vehicles driven by tourists

As previously mentioned, the most common types of transport used by tourists in Australia are private or company cars, self-drive hire vehicles, and long distance coaches. Tasmanian data reflects this trend, self-drive hire vehicles are most prevalent, followed by a friend or relative's vehicle and use of own vehicle (Figure 6).

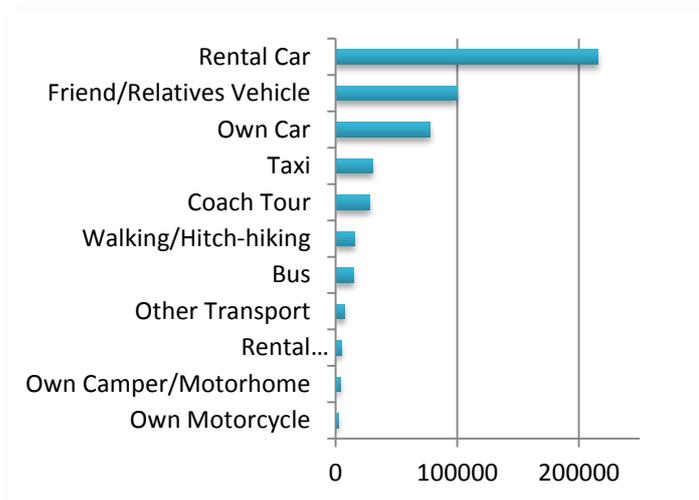


FIGURE 6: Type of transport used by interstate and international tourists visiting Tasmania<sup>v</sup>.

It could reasonably be expected that the type of vehicle most frequently used by tourists would equate to the type of vehicle most frequently involved in crashes. However Figure 7 shows motorcycle riders (all of which were interstate residents, with one rider using a German licence) account for 46 per cent of tourists (60 of 131) involved in serious casualty crashes. This presents a serious concern to the Tasmanian community.

International tourists involved in serious casualty crashes were more likely to have driven a sedan or station wagon.

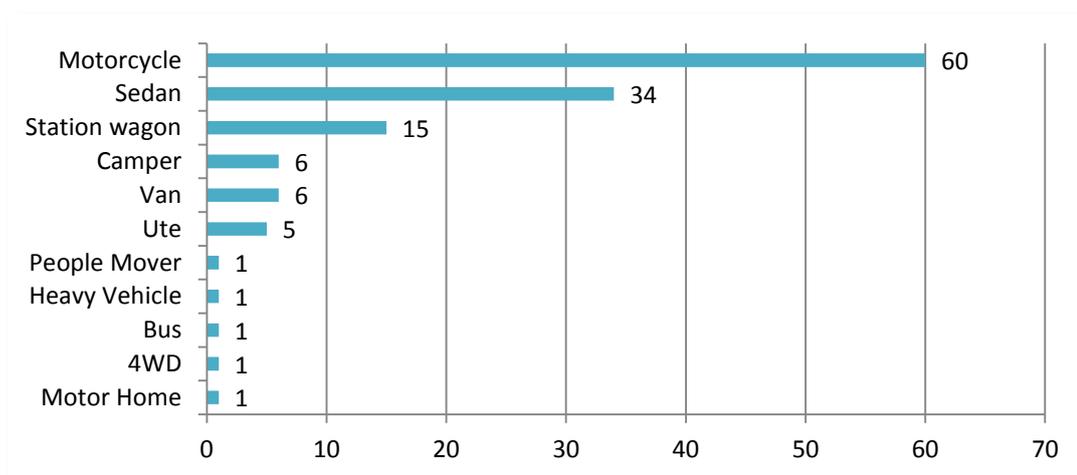


FIGURE 7: Number and type of vehicle used by Interstate and international tourist involved in a serious casualty crash - 2010-14.

### 4.3 Self-drive hire vehicles

Between 2010 and 2014, there were 131 serious casualty crashes involving interstate and international tourists. Of these, 4 per cent were involved in fatalities and 16 per cent were involved in serious injury crashes using a self-drive hire vehicle, the exact numbers are displayed in Table 2.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Fatality crashes (tourists)	2	0	1	2	0
Serious injury crashes (tourists)	7	3	2	6	3
Serious casualty crashes (tourists)	9	3	3	8	3

TABLE 2: the number of interstate and international tourists using self-drive hire vehicles involved in fatal or serious injury crashes.

Note: Crash data is limited in its ability to separate privately owned or self-drive hire vehicles registered interstate. Therefore the numbers of self-drive hire vehicles involved in crashes may be slightly higher than reported.

### 4.5 Factors contributing to a crash

Analysis of the contributing factors to serious casualty crashes is provided individually for international tourists, interstate tourists and for interstate motorcycle riders.

#### 4.5.1 International tourists

- Inexperience
- Distraction
- Inattention

#### 4.5.2 Interstate tourists

- Excessive speed for the conditions/ circumstances
- Distraction – external to vehicle
- Inexperience
- Animal on road
- Failure to observe road signs

### 4.5.3 Interstate motorcycle riders

Figure 9 shows the unique profile of serious casualty crashes involving motorcycle riders on Tasmanian roads. 'Road defect' features high on the list of contributory factors, this maybe indicative of their travel patterns and ultimately crash locations, as seen in Figure 10.

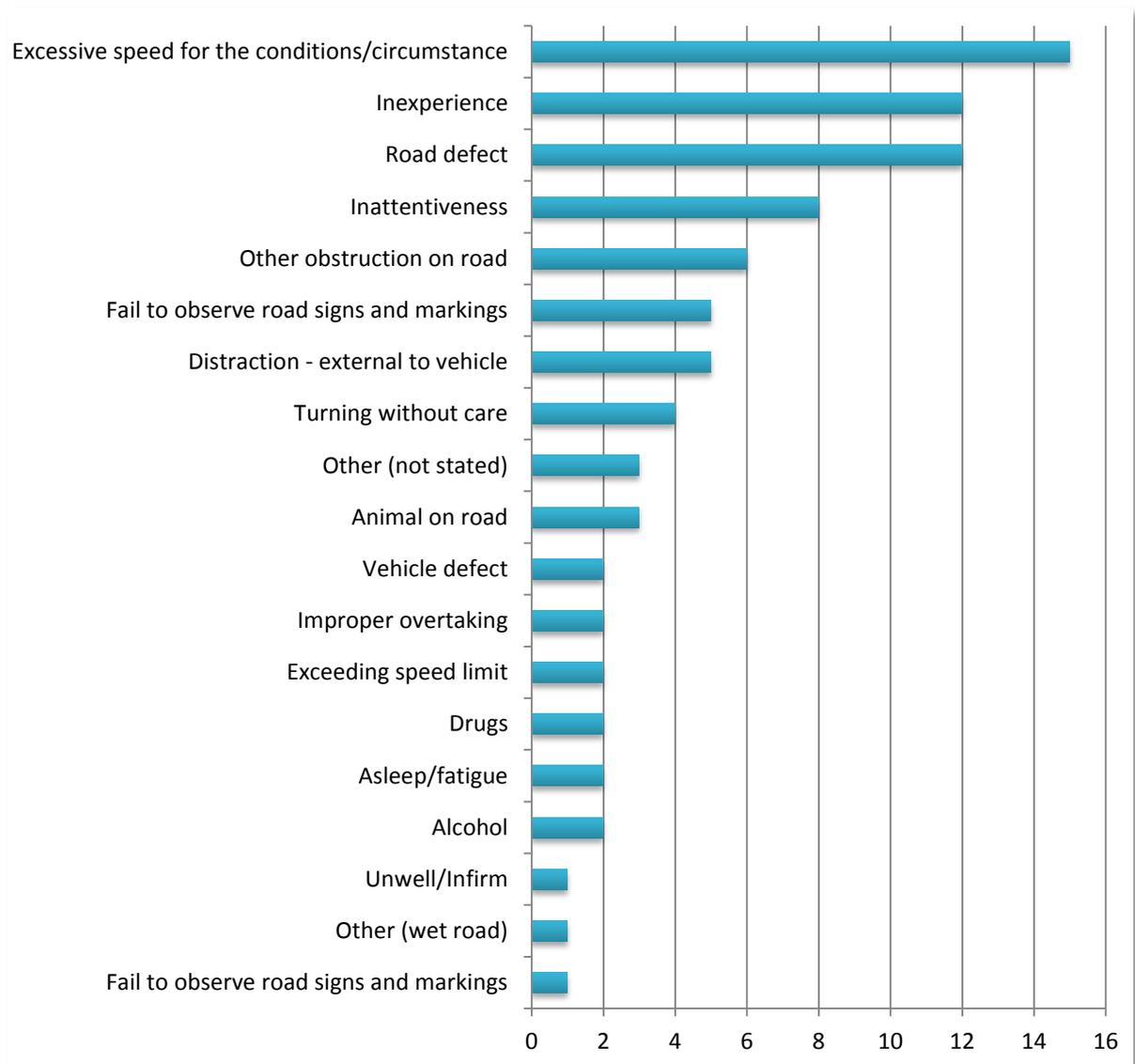


FIGURE 9: Factors contributing to serious casualty motorcycle crashes 2010-14

The attending Police officer, at the time of crash or soon after, determines crash factors from observing the scene, and if possible, interviewing the driver.

\*inexperience could be interpreted as:

1. Novice driver, driving skills are not well developed
2. Not familiar with vehicle type or road type.

\*Road defect could be interpreted as:

1. Flawed road surface i.e. pothole to be rectified

2. Gravel on road or verge.

#### **4.6 Risky behaviour**

In general, interstate and international drivers (with the exception of motorcycle riders) do not exhibit the same high risk behaviours that local drivers display. Crash factors such as alcohol and speeding are lower for international drivers; however they should not be dismissed as insignificant.

The fact that interstate and international drivers do not exhibit the same pattern of high risk behaviours associated with crashes involving local drivers is suggestive that the causes of crashes may be due to their unfamiliarity with Australian road conditions.

#### **4.7 Tourist crash causes compared to local crash causes**

Tourist crash statistics bear no comparison with the proportion of serious injury crashes attributed to alcohol, speeding or drugs as a cause of road trauma by local residents (see Attachment 1).

Between 2010 and 2014:

- Alcohol was listed as a crash factor in 3 per cent of serious casualty crashes involving tourists, as opposed to 18 per cent of serious casualty crashes involving all motorists
- Exceeding the speed limit was listed as a crash factor in 4 per cent of serious casualty crashes involving tourists, as opposed to 10 per cent of serious casualty crashes involving all motorists
- The use of drugs was listed as a crash factor in 5 per cent of serious casualty crashes involving tourists, as opposed to 10 per cent of serious casualty crashes involving all motorists.

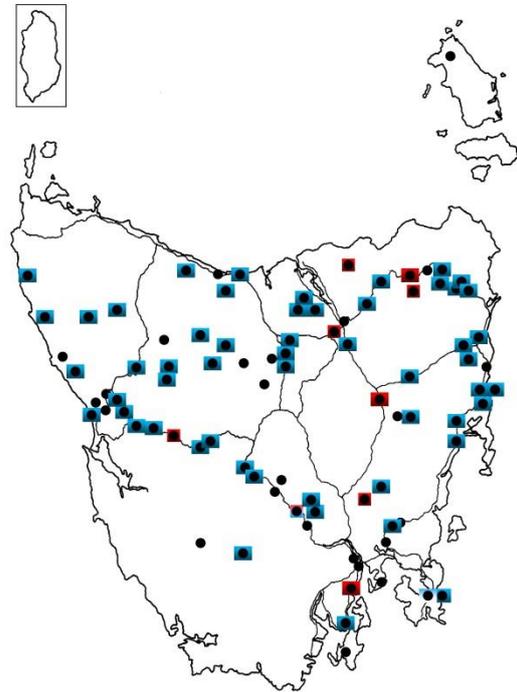
## 4.7 Location of serious casualty crashes

### Interstate Tourists – Observations

Interstate tourist crashes are located on major highways that connect Tasmania's larger cities and their surrounds. The locations pose the following hypothesis:

- Interstate tourists travel further and more remotely than international tourists.
- Interstate motorcycle riders utilize roads to access the west and north east.

FIGURE 10: Fatal and serious injury crash locations of **interstate** drivers and riders at fault 2010-2014

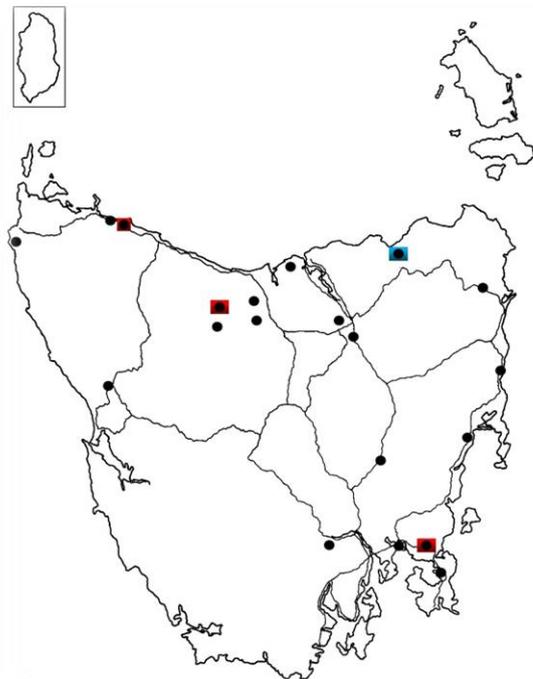


### International Tourists – Observations

International tourist crashes are located close to Tasmania's larger cities. The locations pose the following hypothesis:

- International tourists limit the distance they travel (stay close to larger cities),  
or
- International tourists plan to travel further, but crash close to where they begin their journey.

FIGURE 11: Fatal and serious injury crash locations of **international** drivers and riders at fault 2010-2014 – Note: the seriously injured motorcycle rider was driving on a German licence, but was a resident of NSW.



- Serious Injury Crash – motor vehicle (excluding motorcycle)
- Fatal Crash – motor vehicle including motorcycle
- Serious Injury Crash - motorcycle – (excluding motor vehicle)

# 5. Previous approaches to address tourist crashes

## 5.1 Literature Review

Note: A literature review yielded little information regarding tourists and road crashes and crash statistics are limited in number and in time frame. Some of the studies reviewed were published before 2000 and should only be used as a guide to previous trends in Australia and Tasmania.

In 1999, the *Symposium on International Visitors and Road Safety in Australia* was co-hosted by the Queensland University of Technology's Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety (CARRS-Q) and the Queensland Parliament's Travelsafe Committee. The findings were published by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau.

The Symposium helped shape the Australian Government's *National Road Safety Action Plan for International Visitors 2004–2005*. The Action Plan was adopted by the Australian Transport Council to complement the *National Road Safety Strategy 2001–2010* and associated Action Plans.

This Action Plan and the strategic objectives for improving road safety for international visitors were developed using data from a range of research on the issues affecting international visitor road safety. The National Road Safety for International Visitors Working Group, representing Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, and the National Road Safety Strategy Panel, oversaw the development of the Action Plan and established the following strategic objectives:

1. Encourage international visitors to use our roads safely.
2. Provide a road environment that caters for the needs of international visitors.
3. Foster partnerships between government and industry that help protect international visitors on our roads.

Since the conclusion of the *National Road Safety Action Plan for International Visitors 2004–2005*, individual jurisdictions have implemented low cost initiatives in targeted campaigns.

## 5.2 New Zealand approaches to tourist crashes

New Zealand have introduced a range of measures to address growing concerns in relation to international tourists – <http://www.saferjourneys.govt.nz/action-plans/signature-programme/>



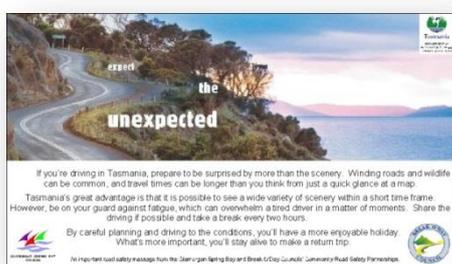
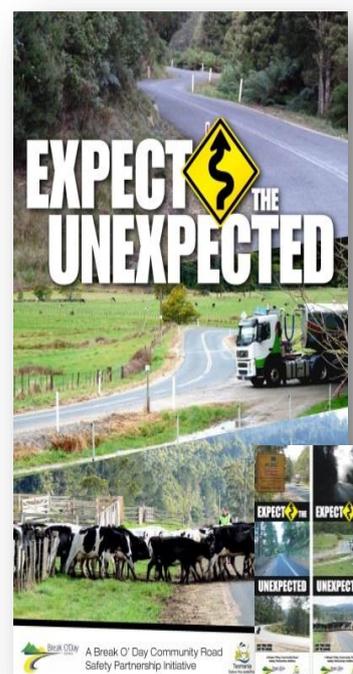
New Zealand use highly visible bus backs to remind tourists of simple road safety rules.

### 5.3 Tasmanian CRSP Initiatives regarding tourists

The Tasmanian Community Road Safety Partnerships (CRSP) Program was implemented by the former Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (DIER) to develop partnerships with local government authorities and associated community networks to achieve a greater focus on road safety outcomes at a local community level.

Through the CRSP program, the following tourist safety initiatives were initiated:

- signage on the exit of the airport road with messages about being aware of wildlife on the roads and gravel roads on Flinders Island,
- mirror hangers in two rental car companies warning of wildlife on the roads on Flinders Island,
- a flyer for motorcycle riders, advising visiting riders of travel distances and travelling times, road conditions and rider safety tips for the east coast of Tasmania, and
- flyers, posters and news inserts with slogans advising tourists to “Expect the Unexpected” i.e. drive cautiously on unfamiliar roads and in poor weather conditions.



## **5.4 Current Tasmanian initiatives regarding tourists**

The Department of State Growth has recently secured a prominent billboard at the gateway to the Launceston airport, which will be used to target tourists and promote safe driving in Tasmania. Over 1.1 million travellers use the Launceston airport each year.

The Department has secured editorial space in a Chinese Tourism magazine. The editorial informs tourists of the most important road rules and provides advice on hire car selection, fatigue management and describes what 'driving to the conditions' means on Tasmania's roads. It is expected that 10,000 copies will be distributed in Tasmania through hotels, food and wine tour operators, airports and regional centres. Copies will also be provided to Chinese travel agents in Melbourne and Sydney and a digital version will also be available.

# **6. Conclusion**

It would not be accurate to describe interstate and international drivers as a road safety problem, as interstate and international tourists account for 10 per cent, or 131 of the 1,249 serious casualty crashes in Tasmania between 2010 and 2014 (Figure 5).

However, taking into account the economic benefits associated with tourism and the potential impact on future tourism of Australia's reputation as a safe place to travel, the road safety of interstate and international tourists is an issue worthy of consideration by the Road Safety Advisory Council.

# **7. Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Road Safety Advisory Council develop an evidence-based road safety strategy in consultation with stakeholders aimed at international tourists and at interstate tourists, using messages that are derived from analysis of key crash causes for both types of visitors.

# Attachment 1

Crash Factors for crashes involving an interstate or overseas - motorcycle rider or driver					
Severity: Fatal					
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Alcohol	0	0	1	0	1
Animal on road	0	0	0	1	0
Distraction - external to vehicle	2	0	0	1	0
Distraction - in vehicle	1	0	0	1	0
Drugs	0	0	0	1	1
Exceeding speed limit	1	0	1	0	0
Excessive speed for the conditions / circumstances	2	0	1	0	0
Fail to give way	1	0	1	0	0
Fail to observe road signs and markings	1	0	1	0	1
Improper overtaking	1	0	0	0	0
Inattentiveness	0	0	0	1	1
Inexperience	2	0	2	1	1
Other	0	0	1	1	3
Pedestrian on road	0	0	1	0	0
Road defect	1	0	0	0	0
Turning without care	1	0	0	0	0
Severity: Serious					
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Alcohol	1	0	0	0	1
Animal on road	4	2	0	0	1
Asleep / fatigue	0	0	1	0	1
Distraction - external to vehicle	5	5	0	2	3
Distraction - in vehicle	0	1	0	0	2
Drugs	1	1	1	1	0
Exceeding speed limit	1	1	0	1	0
Excessive speed for the conditions / circumstances	8	3	4	9	5
Fail to give way	3	1	0	3	0
Fail to observe road signs and markings	2	1	3	3	0
Improper overtaking	1	2	0	3	0
Inattentiveness	8	1	2	1	5
Inexperience	12	6	6	10	3
Other	0	0	0	0	2
Other obstruction on road	6	2	0	1	0
Pedestrian on road	0	0	0	2	0
Reversing without care	0	0	0	1	0
Road defect	4	1	1	4	3
Turning without care	0	2	0	2	0
Unwell / Infirm	0	1	1	2	0
Vehicle defect	1	0	1	1	1

**Crash Factors for All crashes- motorcycle rider or driver`**

<b>Severity: Fatal</b>					
	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Alcohol	8	5	5	5	7
Animal on road	1	0	1	1	0
Asleep / fatigue	5	1	1	2	1
Distraction - external to vehicle	5	0	2	1	0
Distraction - in vehicle	4	0	1	1	0
Drugs	11	4	4	4	7
Exceeding speed limit	8	6	4	5	4
Excessive speed for the conditions / circumstances	8	8	7	7	8
Fail to give way	3	1	1	1	1
Fail to obey traffic signals	1	0	1	0	0
Fail to observe road signs and markings	3	0	3	3	2
Improper overtaking	1	2	2	1	1
Inattentiveness	2	1	0	4	5
Inexperience	7	8	5	3	3
Other	0	0	3	7	14
Pedestrian on road	5	3	6	3	1
Reversing without care	0	0	1	0	0
Road defect	1	1	1	0	0
Turning without care	3	0	0	2	4
Unwell / Infirm	7	5	5	4	3
Using a mobile phone	1	0	0	0	0
Vehicle defect	1	2	4	2	1
<b>Severity: Serious</b>					
	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Alcohol	49	48	42	27	35
Animal on road	7	5	5	5	4
Asleep / fatigue	6	11	8	7	8
Distraction - external to vehicle	26	32	22	19	6
Distraction - in vehicle	9	8	9	4	4
Drugs	14	17	16	22	21
Exceeding speed limit	23	21	19	15	18
Excessive speed for the conditions / circumstances	50	56	56	62	42
Fail to give way	22	30	33	32	24
Fail to obey traffic signals	5	5	2	8	5
Fail to observe road signs and markings	12	11	19	10	6
Improper overtaking	10	11	5	8	2
Inattentiveness	68	10	12	25	32
Inexperience	76	61	62	56	32
Other	0	0	0	5	37
Other obstruction on road	15	11	5	2	2
Pedestrian on road	21	28	29	24	16
Reversing without care	5	7	6	3	3
Road defect	18	8	8	16	26
Turning without care	13	20	17	10	10
Unwell / Infirm	27	29	34	13	10

<b>Using a mobile phone</b>	1	1	1	0	4
<b>Vehicle defect</b>	10	13	12	8	7

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.tourismtasmania.com.au/research/tvs>

<sup>ii</sup> Tourism Research Australia, 2012

<sup>iii</sup> Watson, Wilks, Hansen, & Johnston, 1999

<sup>iv</sup> New South Wales and the Northern Territory define international visitors in terms of residency, rather than licence status

<sup>v</sup> Tourism Tasmania 1998