

14 May 2020



## HIGHWAY TO ZERO

A road safety blog

### CONTACT

---

WEBSITE:  
[www.rtszero.com.au](http://www.rtszero.com.au)

EMAIL:  
[Rtszero19@gmail.com](mailto:Rtszero19@gmail.com)

## 2020 ROAD DEATHS DOWN ON 2019 BUT THE REDUCTIONS ARE NOT EQUAL

**Males still outnumber females in terms of overall road deaths but 80% of the reduction in lives lost this year are male.**

Everyone is happy about a drop in the number of lives lost on our roads in the last few months and rightfully so.

Mother's Day and International Nurses Day, two days that celebrate women at their finest, have just been and gone. Yet there's one aspect of the recent road fatality data that is cause for concern.

There has been little change in the number of females who have lost their lives on Australian roads.

According to data from the Federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (BITRE), 365 people died in crashes nationally in the first four months of 2020. That compares to 425 for the same period last year so 60 fewer lives have been lost on the roads 2020.

But so far this year, 48 fewer males have died in crashes but only 12 less females were killed meaning males account for 80% of the reduction in lives lost.

Indeed in New South Wales more females have died in crashes in 2020, with 29 female lives lost in the first four months of the year compared to 27 last year meaning the reduction in lives lost in that state is made up entirely of males.

There has been little difference between this year and last year in terms of how females died. For example, 41 female drivers have died this year compared to 43 last year. There have been two additional female pedestrian deaths this year and one additional female passenger death.

Meanwhile, male driver deaths this year have fallen by 19 and motorcycle rider deaths by 21.

If it is the case that road usage by males has been affected by COVID-19 restrictions and job losses, then this

would support the view that *exposure* is a critical risk factor for fatal and serious injury outcomes.

Nationally, there have been five additional pedal cyclist deaths this year but six fewer pedestrian deaths.

The disparity between the genders is most likely a COVID-19 story but as to why female road deaths in Australia have remained relatively constant requires further study beyond the scope of this blog.

### **Life begins at 40**

It is also noted that reductions in deaths are not uniform across all age groups.

New South Wales Centre for Road Safety data for the period 1/1 to 13/5 indicates that "40" is the most significant age.

Road deaths of people aged 40+ are down by 32 in NSW this year but for age groups under 40, road deaths are up by seven.

Data sourced from:

[https://www.bitre.gov.au/statistics/safety/fatal\\_road\\_crash\\_database](https://www.bitre.gov.au/statistics/safety/fatal_road_crash_database)

<https://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/downloads/dynamic/nsw-road-toll-daily.pdf>

### **The Authors – RTS Zero**

*RTS Zero is the partnership of Michael Timms and Sonia Roberts who have a combined 55 years of experience in road safety. Their profiles are searchable on LinkedIn.*

*This work is their personal analysis of current events.*