



Transport  
for NSW

Centre for Road Safety



# Drug driving trauma trends

Report

## Disclaimer

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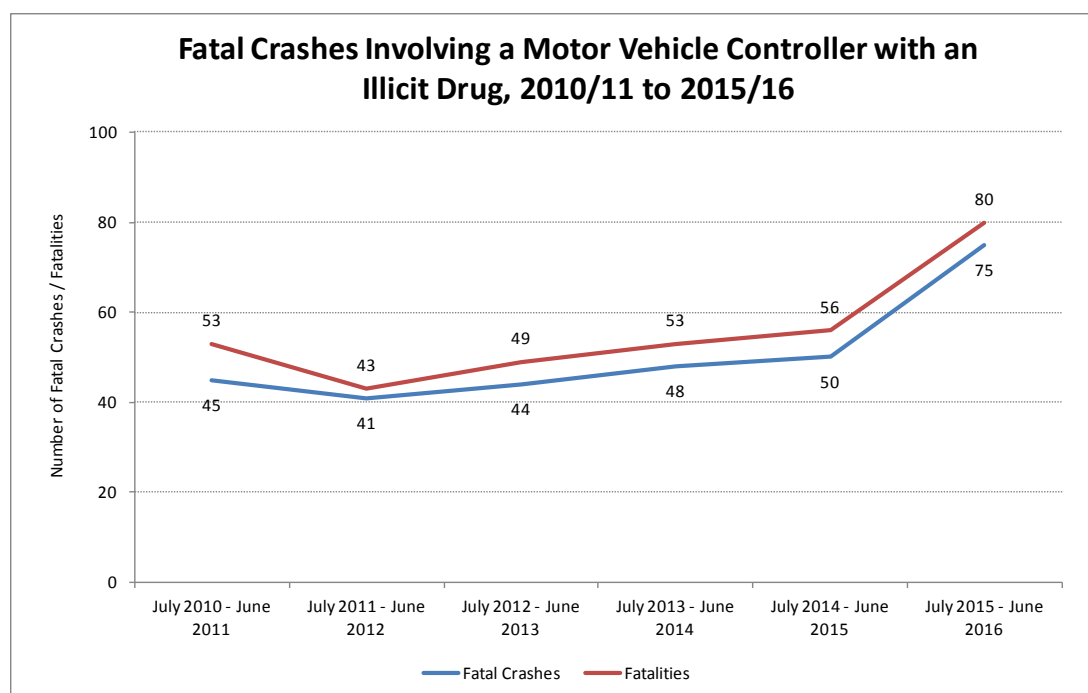
# 1 Fatal crash trends, 2010-11 to 2015-16

The following overview of drug driving involvement in NSW road trauma is limited to the most recent available data. Drug driving involvement refers to those crashes which involve at least one motor vehicle controller with an illicit drug present in their system. An illicit drug refers to cannabis, speed (amphetamines / ice) or ecstasy. Other illegal drugs (such as cocaine) or prescribed drugs are not included.

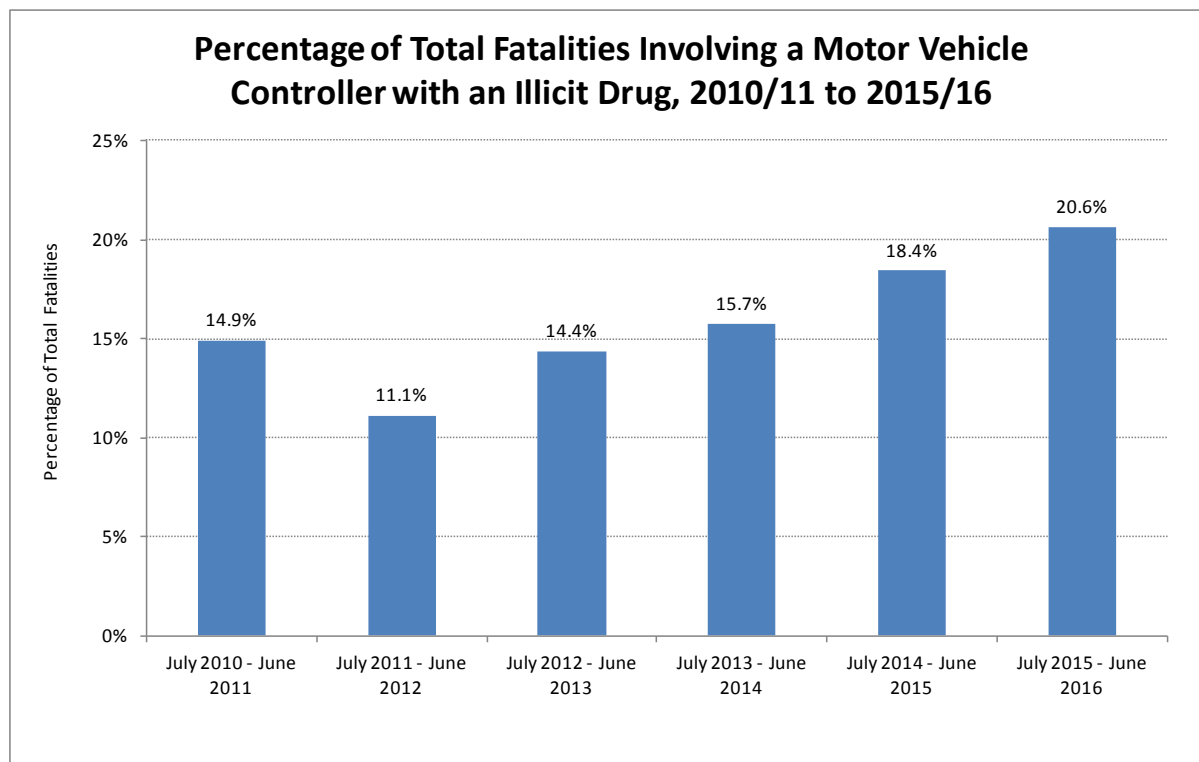
The overview is limited to the fatal crashes only for the financial years 2010/11 to 2015/16. Data for non fatal crashes are not available at this time. Fatal data are incomplete for 2016, particularly for the last quarter of the year. It should be noted that there was an enhancement to the drug testing sampling in late 2014 which enabled more accurate identification of the presence of cannabis and hence boosting the levels of drug driving for 2014/15 and 2015/16. Caution is therefore needed when comparing these results with previous financial years.

Over the six financial years 2010/11 to 2015/16 there were a total of 303 fatal crashes which involved at least one motor vehicle controller with an illicit drug present in their system. These crashes resulted in 334 fatalities, representing at least 16 per cent of all fatalities. There has been an increasing trend in fatal crashes (and fatalities) involving an illicit drug in recent years with 80 fatalities and at least 20 per cent of all fatalities in 2015/16.

## 1.1 Fatal crashes involving a motor vehicle controller with an illicit drug, 2010-11 to 2015-16

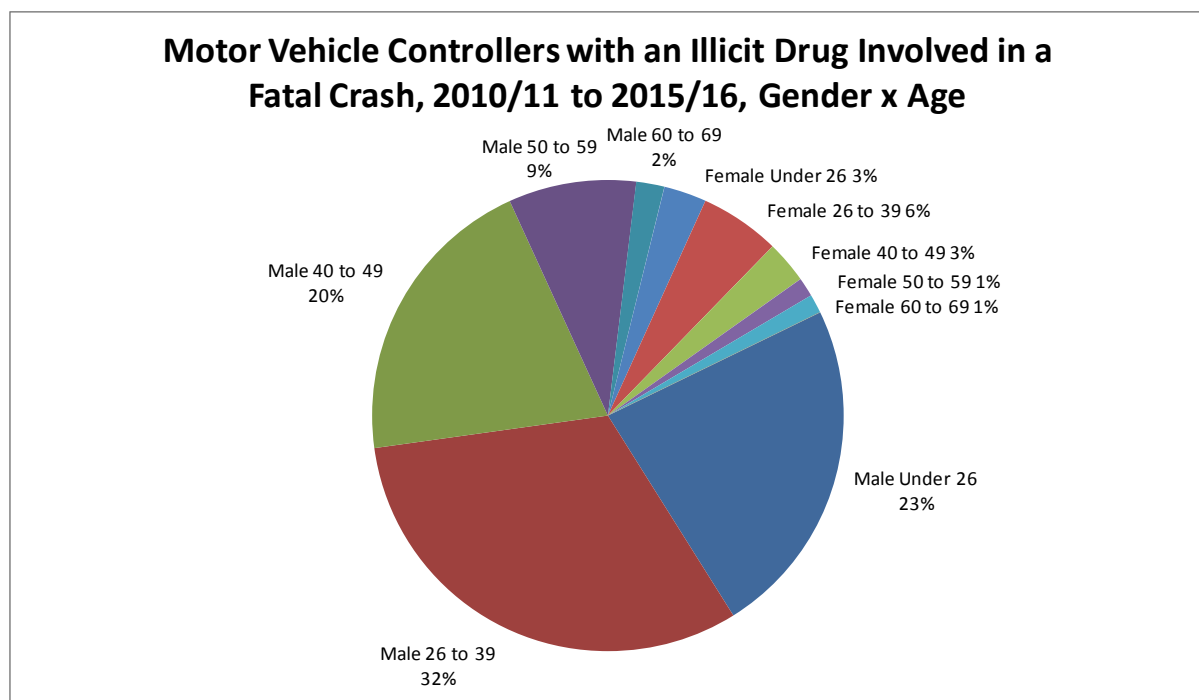


## 1.2 Percentage of total fatalities involving a motor vehicle controller with an illicit drug, 2010-11 to 2015-16



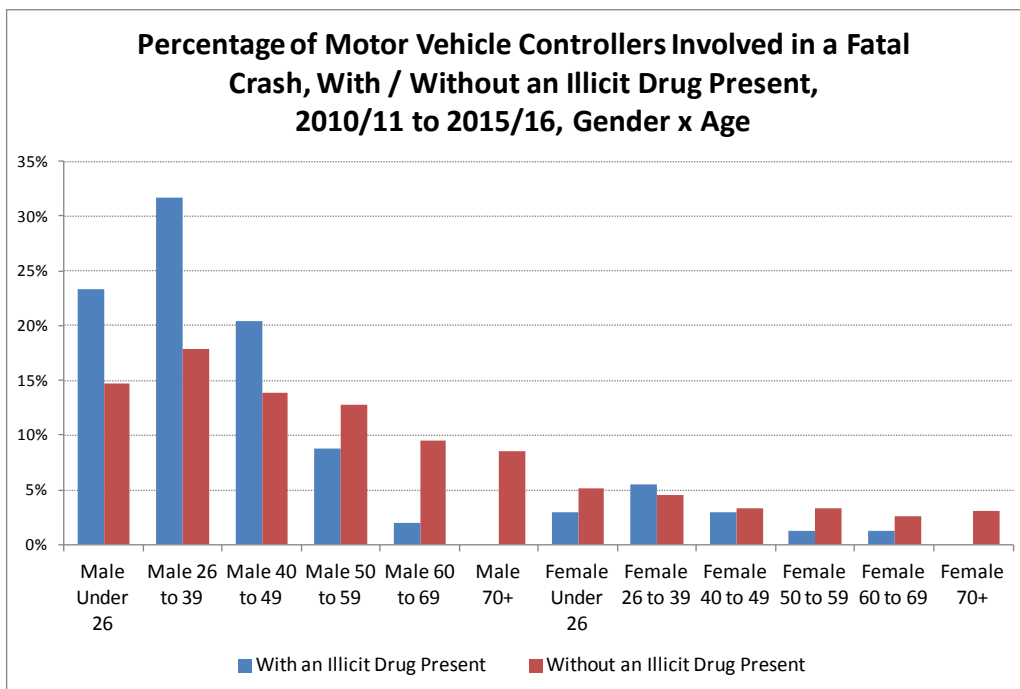
## 1.3 Motor vehicle controllers with an illicit drug involved in a fatal crash, 2010-11 to 2015-16, gender x age

The overwhelming majority of motor vehicle controllers with an illicit drug involved in a fatal crash were males (86 per cent) and around three-quarters were males aged under 50 years.



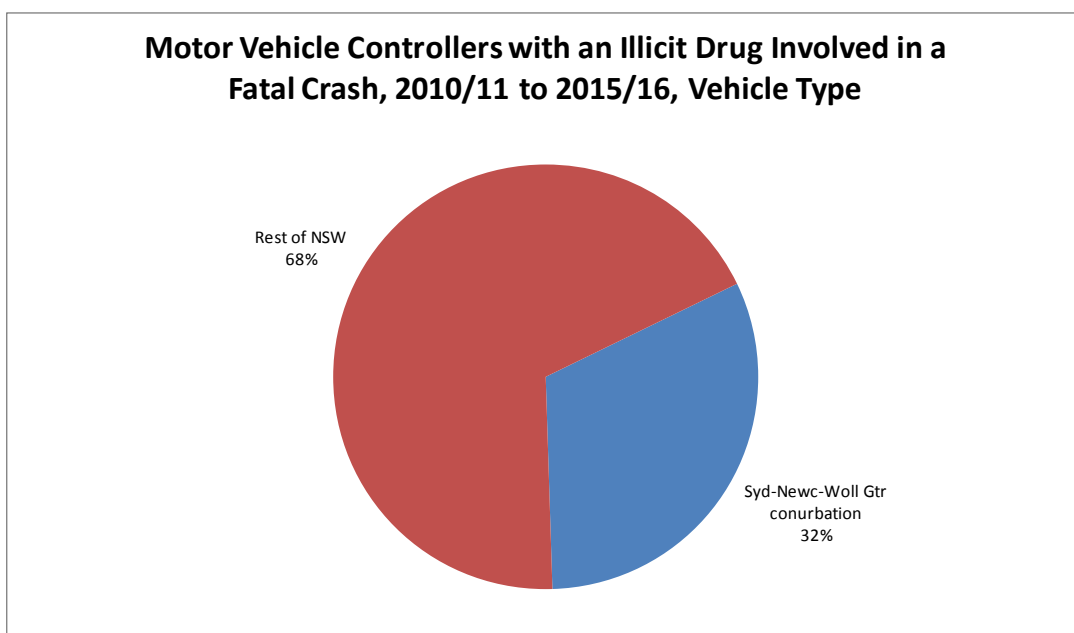
### 1.4 Percentage of motor vehicle controllers involved in a fatal crash, with/without an illicit drug present, 2010-11 to 2015-16, gender x age

The age / gender distribution of drug driving involvements in fatal crashes is quite different than that for those motor vehicle controllers without an illicit drug present and more like that for drink driver involvements.



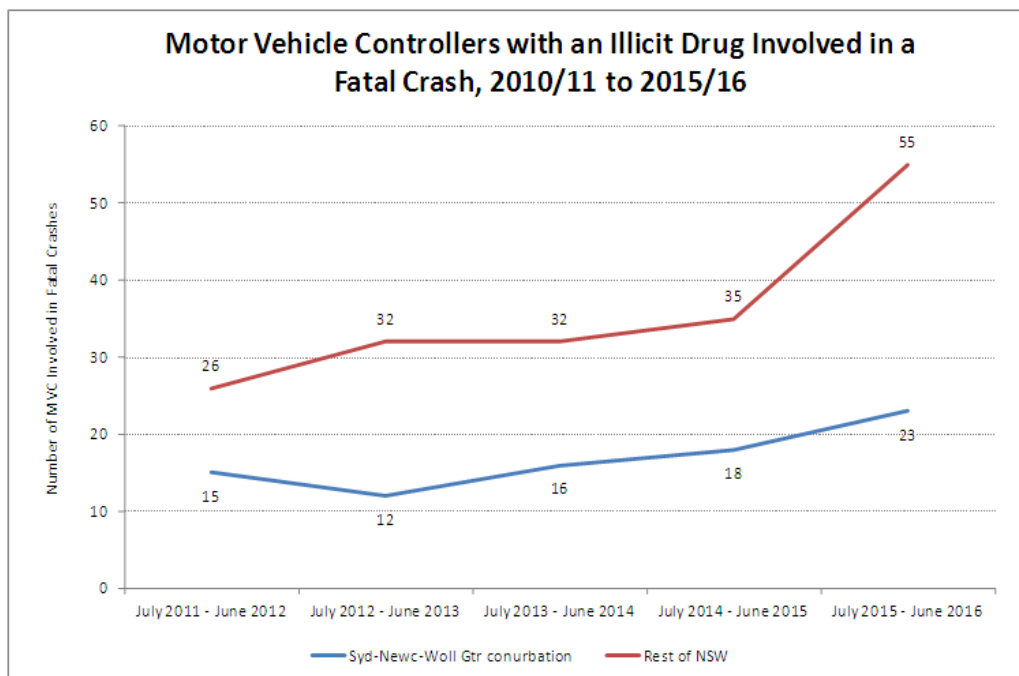
### 1.5 Motor vehicle controllers with an illicit drug involved in a fatal crash, 2010-11 to 2015-16, vehicle type

The majority of drug driving involvements in fatal crashes occur outside the Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong Greater Conurbation. This is not dissimilar to the geographic distribution of all fatal crash involvements.



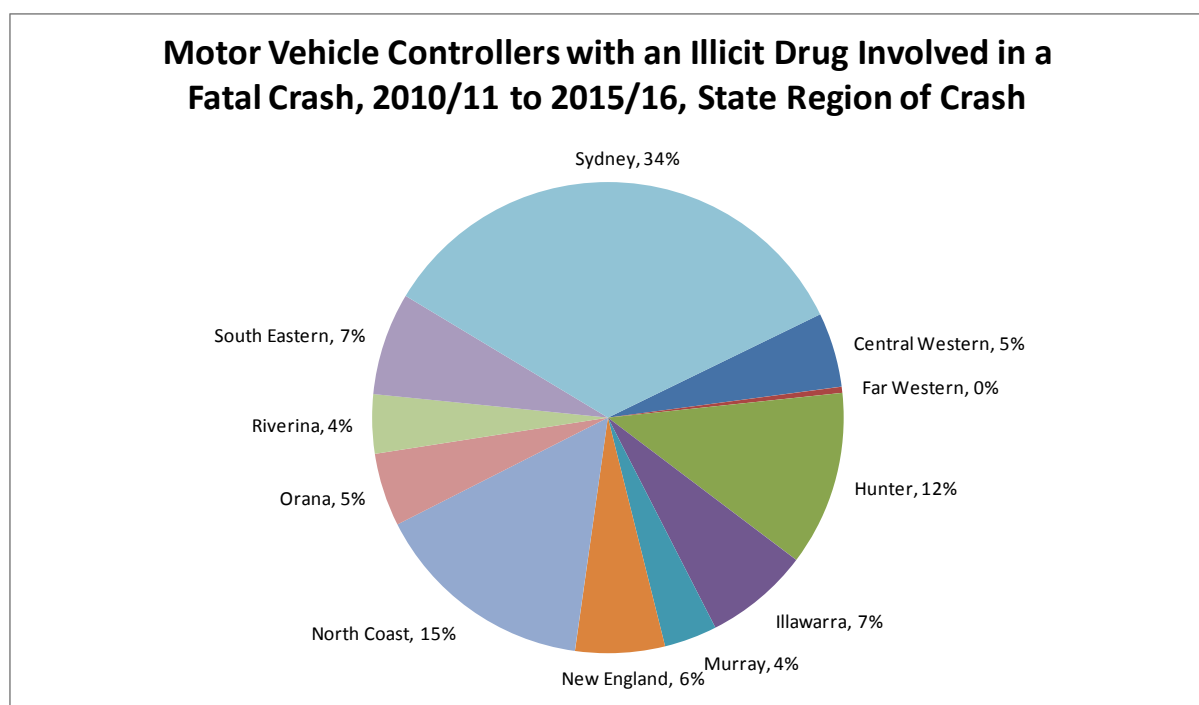
## 1.6 Motor vehicle controllers with an illicit drug involved in a fatal crash, 2010-11 to 2015-16

There have been similar increases in drug driving involvements in fatal crashes across the Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong Greater Conurbation and the rest of NSW since 2011/12.

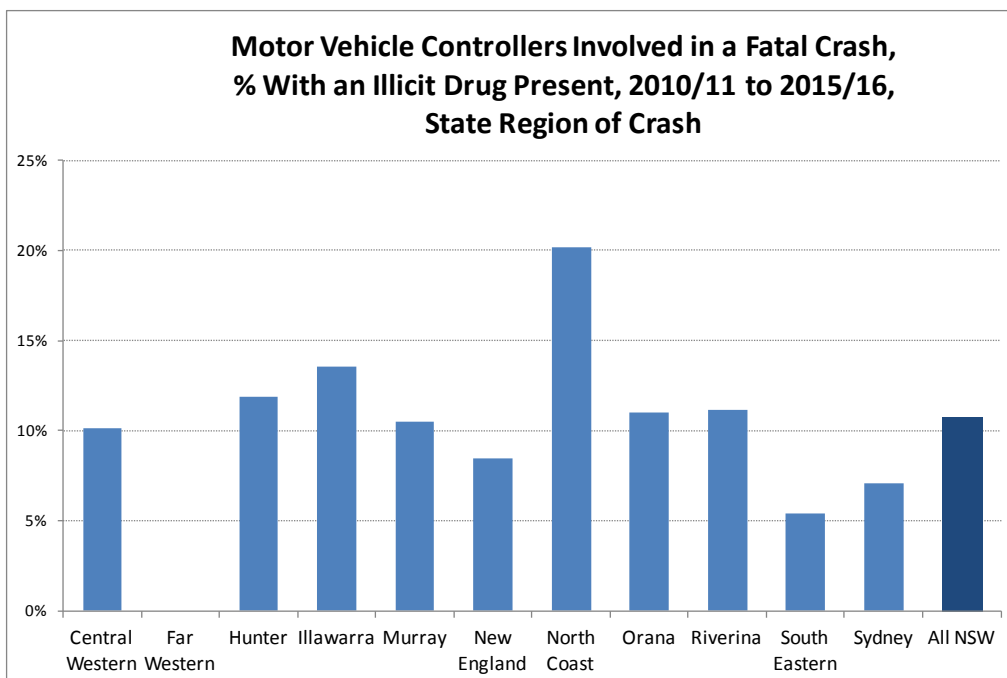


## 1.7 Motor vehicle controllers with an illicit drug involved in a fatal crash, 2010-11 to 2015-16, state region of crash

The Sydney Region (34 per cent) contributes the largest number of motor vehicle controllers involved in a fatal crash with an illicit drug followed by the North Coast (15 per cent) and Hunter (12 per cent) Regions.

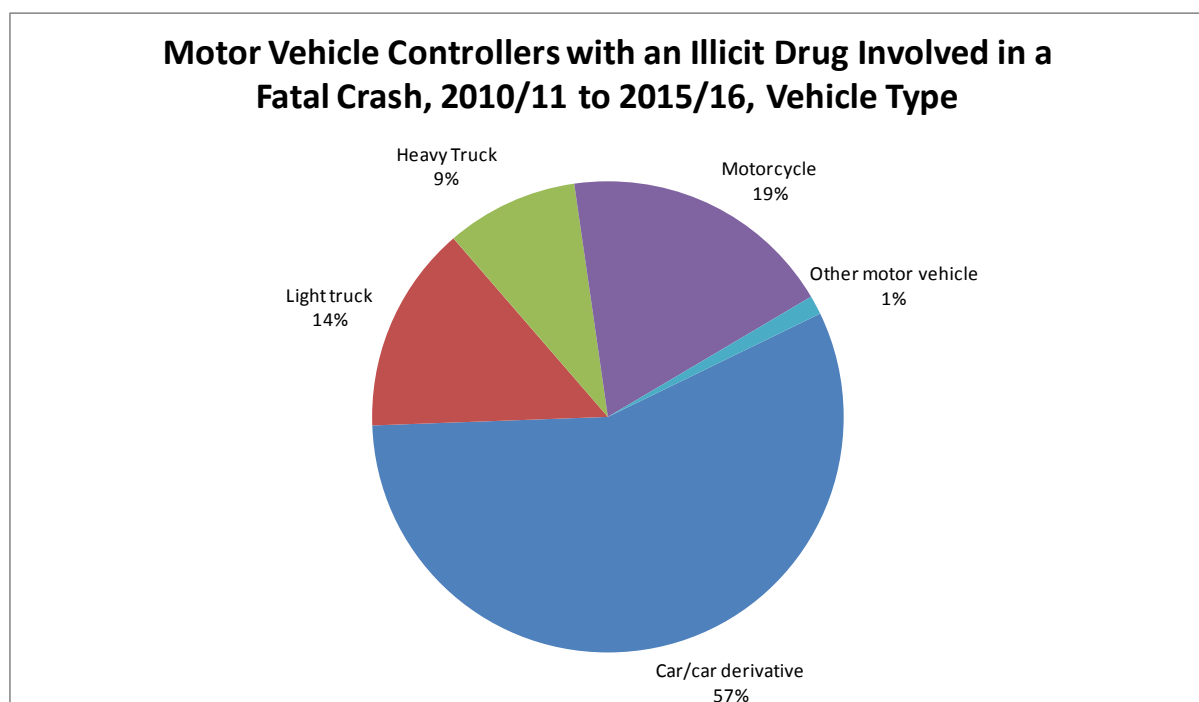


**1.8 Motor vehicle controllers involved in a fatal crash, % with an illicit drug present, 2010-11 to 2015-16, state region of crash**



However, in terms of the percentage of all fatal crash involvements by State Region which involved an illicit drug, the leading State Regions are the North Coast (20 per cent) and Illawarra (14 per cent) Regions. Across the whole of NSW around 11 per cent of fatal crash involvements involved a motor vehicle controller with an illicit drug present.

**1.9 Motor vehicle controllers with an illicit drug involved in a fatal crash, 2010-11 to 2015-16, vehicles type**

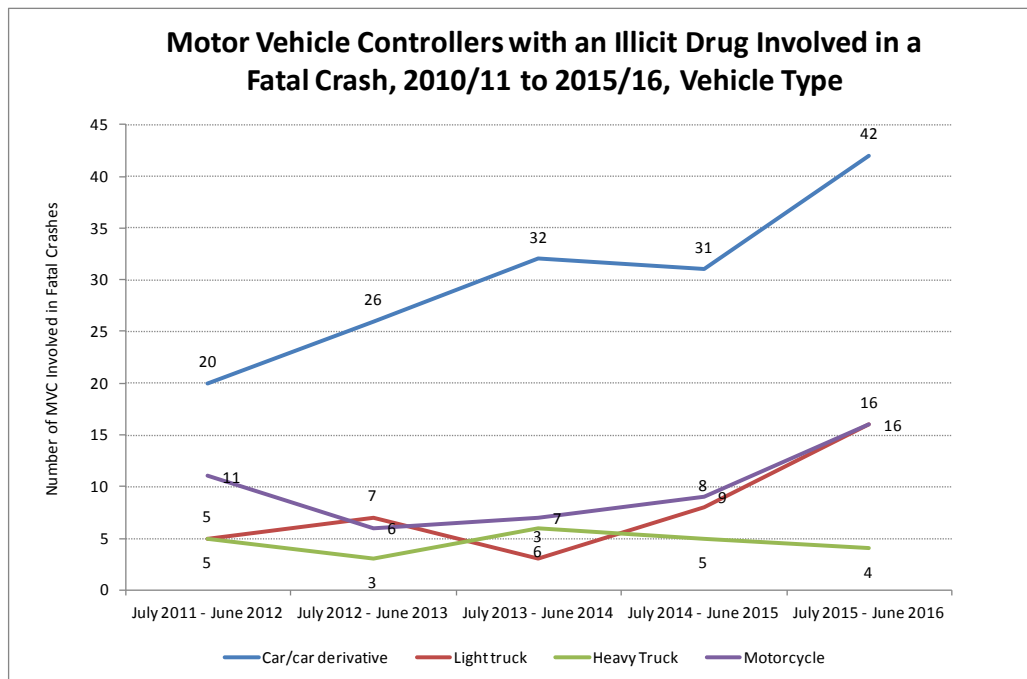




The majority of motor vehicle controllers with an illicit drug who were involved in a fatal crash were car/ car derivative drivers (57 per cent) followed by motorcycle riders (19 per cent) and light truck drivers (14 per cent).

There has been an increasing trend for drug driving involvements for car / car derivative and light truck drivers.

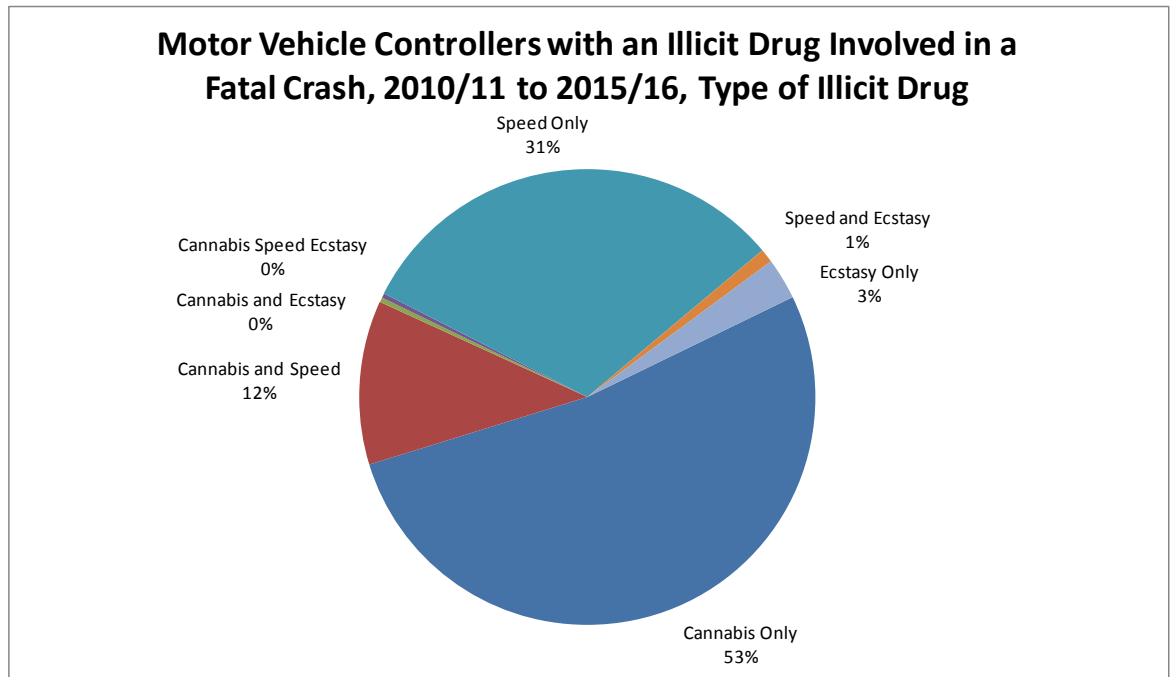
### 1.10 Motor vehicle controllers with an illicit drug involved in a fatal crash, 2010-11 to 2015-16 vehicle type



### 1.11 Motor vehicle controllers with an illicit drug involved in a fatal crash, 2010-11 to 2015-16, type of illicit drug

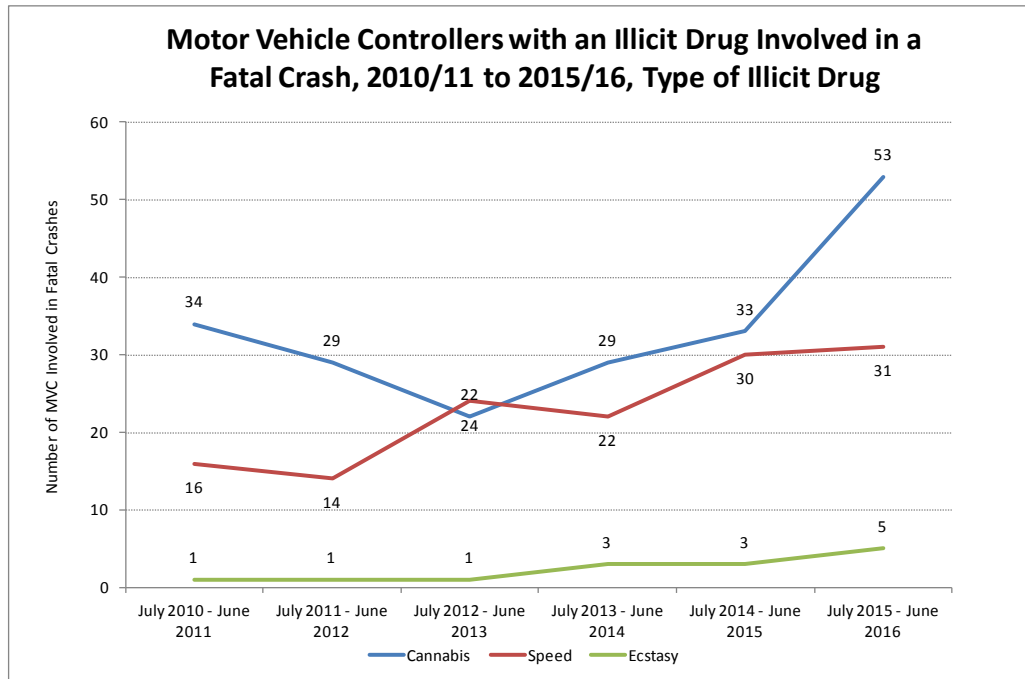
Around two-thirds (65 per cent) of drug driving involvements involve cannabis whilst almost half (44 per cent) involving speed (amphetamines / ice). Less than five per cent of all drug driving involvements involve ecstasy.

Note that these categories are not mutually exclusive as a fatal crash involvement may involve more than one illicit drug. Multiple illicit drug presence accounted for 13 per cent of all illicit drug driving involvements.



### 1.12 Motor vehicle controllers with an illicit drug involved in a fatal crash, 2010-11 to 2015-16, type of illicit drug

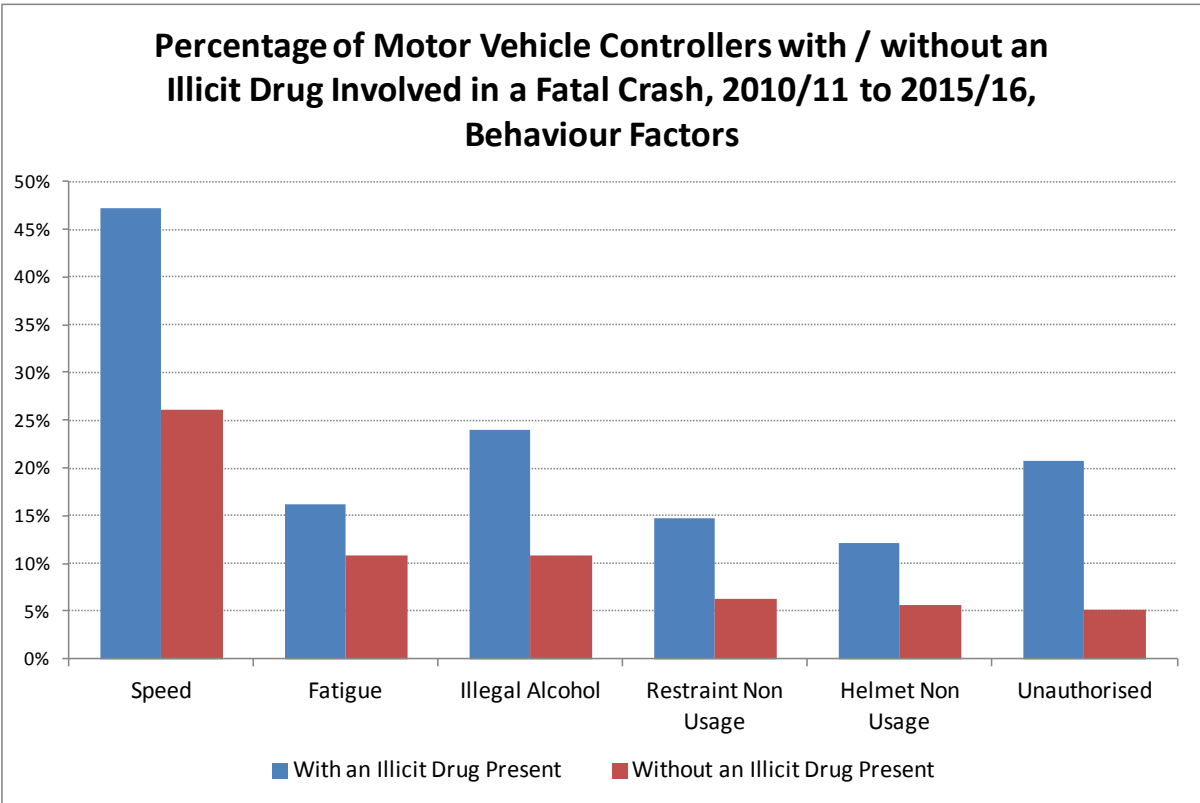
There has been a steady increase in the drug driving involvements which involve speed (amphetamines) over the five year period of review. Cannabis involvements have increased since 2012/13, though the improvements in cannabis detection commencing late 2014 have contributed to some extent to the recent results.



### 1.13 Percentage of motor vehicle controllers with/without an illicit drug involved in a fatal crash, 2010-11 to 2015-16, behavioural factors

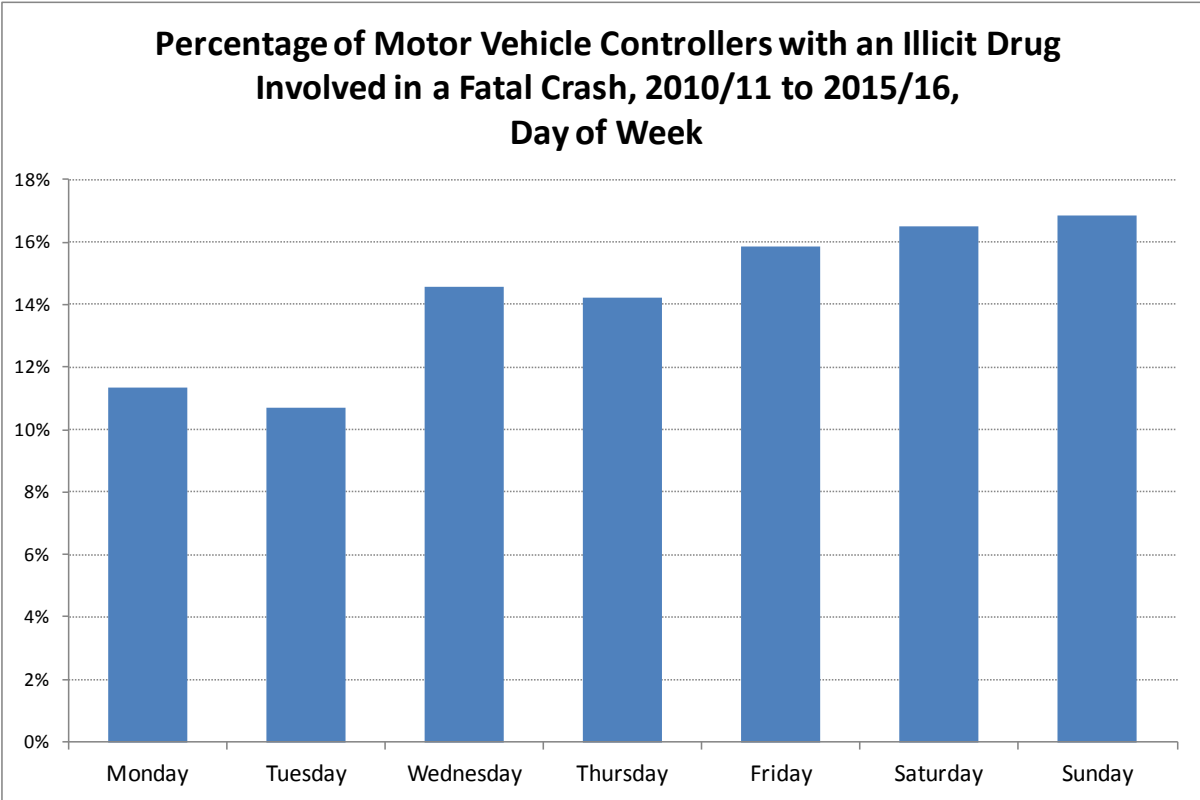
Comparison of the risk taking behaviours for fatal crash involved motor vehicle controllers with an illicit drug with those without an illicit drug highlight that the former are more likely to engage in other risky behaviours. For example, almost half of all drug driving involvements (47 per cent) involved excessive or inappropriate speed whilst only 26 per cent of all other fatal crash involvements involved excessive or inappropriate speed. Illegal alcohol, safety device usage and unauthorised driving are also strongly over-represented amongst drug driving fatal crash involvements.

Note that these results do not take into account the differing demographic profile of motor vehicle controllers involved in fatal crashes with an illicit drug present. Standardising the results by age and gender only slightly reduces the strength of the over-representation of these risk taking behaviours for drug driving fatal crash involved drivers and riders.



**1.14 Percentage of motor vehicle controllers with an illicit drug involved in a fatal crash, 2010-11 to 2015-16, day of week**

The incidence of drug driving increases through the week, peaking at 17 per cent of all fatal crash involvements on Saturday and Sunday.



### 1.15 Percentage of motor vehicle controllers with an illicit drug involved in a fatal crash, 2010-11 to 2015-16, hour of day

The incidence of drug driving is highest in the afternoon through to late evening, with a particularly strong peak in the afternoon between 2pm and 3.59pm.

