Number	Member	Question	Hansard reference
RSQN015	Chester	**CHAIR**: …[T]he committee recently received evidence from industry relating to the visibility of trucks and trailers and whether aids should be added to the trucks and trailers, such as reflective tape. I think it's in play in some states of America but there's no requirement in Australia that that reflective tape be used. I think the company that presented to the committee was 3M Australia. Has NHVR looked at that issue and whether visibility of trucks and trailers is an issue for us, particularly in a regional setting? **Mr Petroccitto**: We are aware of the work that 3M has done in this space and, we understand, in relation to the Australian design standards and the way our current provisions are. It is an area that we are looking into. It's probably an area that I think we should pay a little bit more attention in relation to improving the visibility of our heavy vehicles, particularly in some of those regional areas but also, more importantly, during some of those periods of either fog or low light. It's a matter that I'm happy to take on board and come back to you with more information. But at this stage, as you have indicated, there is no requirement like other countries across the globe to mandate use of this type of reflective material.	p. 3

RSQN015 – NHVR Response

The reflective tape referred to by the Hon Darren Chester MP is intended to improve the visibility of heavy vehicles, especially in low light situations or in situations where a vehicle's lights are not on, such as when the vehicle is parked.
In general terms, there are two types of visibility markings that are currently in use:

<u>1. Markings intended to indicate the presence of a heavy vehicle</u>

Commonly known as 'rear marking plates', these markings have been mandatory in Australia for motor vehicles with a gross vehicle mass over 12 tonnes and trailers with a gross trailer mass over 10 tonnes since 1992. Similar marking plate requirements also apply in Europe and the UN ECE regulations.

Typical rear marking plates are shown at **Figure 1**.

To improve the safety benefits offered by these marking plates, amendments were made to the relevant standards in 2017 that now require all new marking plates to be manufactured from higher grade material, known as Class 400 or Class 1A material.

2. Markings intended to indicate both the presence and the shape / size of the vehicle

The reflective tape is commonly known as 'conspicuity markings' and are the next evolution of vehicle markings, using high performance multi-directional reflective material and being fitted so they highlight the entire profile of a heavy vehicle. These types of markings are not yet mandatory in Australia, but have been mandatory in the US since December 1993 (trailers) and July 1997 (trucks), and in Europe since July 1997.

Typical UN style conspicuity markings are shown at **Figure 2**.

While conspicuity markings are not mandatory in Australia, the NHVR recognises their potential safety benefits. The NHVR has made amendments to the *Heavy Vehicle (Vehicle Standards) National Regulation* to provide operators with the option of either rear marking plates or conspicuity markings. This addressed the previous situation where operators who chose to invest in conspicuity markings also had to fit rear marking plates to comply with regulatory requirements.

As part of the current changes to truck and trailer width regulations (i.e. 2.5 to 2.55 metres), consideration is being given to requiring wider vehicles to be fitted with conspicuity markings.

In relation to mandating conspicuity markings, this matter falls within the responsibilities of the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications.

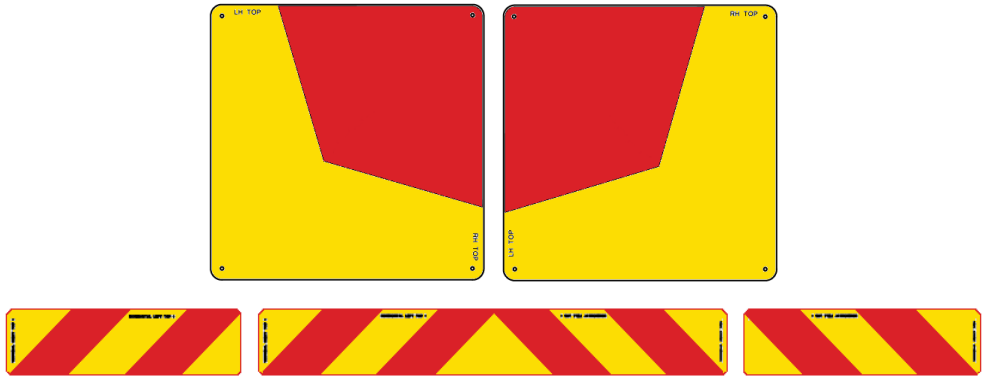


Figure 1: Typical Australian Rear Marking Plates and Strips

Source: ATA Technical Advisory Procedure – Heavy vehicle visibility

Figure 2: Typical UN standard conspicuity markings

RSQN016	Thistlethwaite	**Mr THISTLETHWAITE:** …In your submission on page 4 you discuss the nine-step SMS road map. Can you tell us what those nine steps are and what's involved in that? When you say SMS, do you mean phone message SMS? **Mr Petroccitto:** Thank you for your question, Matt. No, it actually relates to safety management systems. …Several years ago we released the first phase of our safety management program. The nine-steps approach—apologies, committee, I don't know all the nine steps, but I can get that information to you—takes an operator through the various stages of evolution and development in their safety management system. It goes from concept, if they haven't got one in play—so tools, guidance and information available on our website—to the next phase, which then starts to look at how you enhance and develop those safety management principles and practices; to the final stage of the processes, which looks at how you come back and review.	pp. 3–4

RSQN016 – NHVR Response

In the context of 'the nine-step SMS roadmap', SMS refers to a Safety Management System. A SMS is a systematic approach to managing safety, including the necessary organisational structures, accountabilities, policies and procedures, which are integrated throughout the business wherever possible.

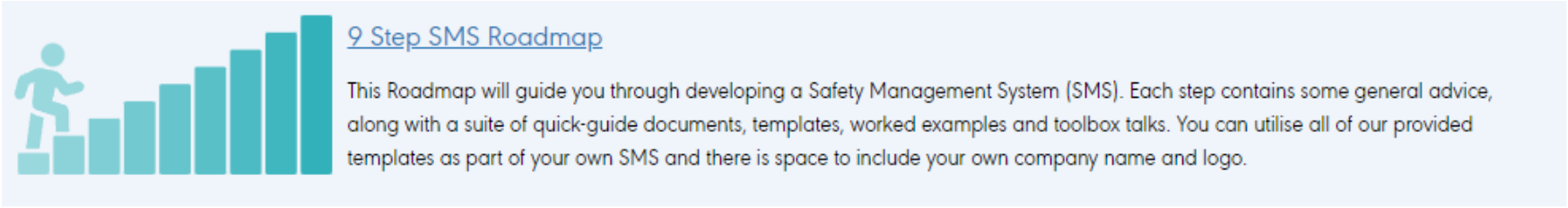
Having a SMS in place can be one of the most effective ways business can meet their safety obligations under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL).

Adopting and effectively operating a SMS has proven to help reduce safety-related incidents in other transport sectors, such as maritime, rail and aviation.

As part of the NHVR's ongoing commitment to improving the safety of heavy vehicle operations, the *9 Step SMS Roadmap* is a resource designed and developed with industry to guide the adoption, development and implementation of a SMS as part of day-to-day business. The roadmap provides guidance and tools which can be adopted regardless of the size and complexity of a business or where the business is in its SMS journey.

The nine steps provide a roadmap to developing an effective SMS, from inception (Starting Out), to filling the gaps in an existing SMS (Improving On), through to improving the performance of an already implemented system (Continuous Improvement).

Figure 3 shows the *9 Step SMS Roadmap* at Step 1.



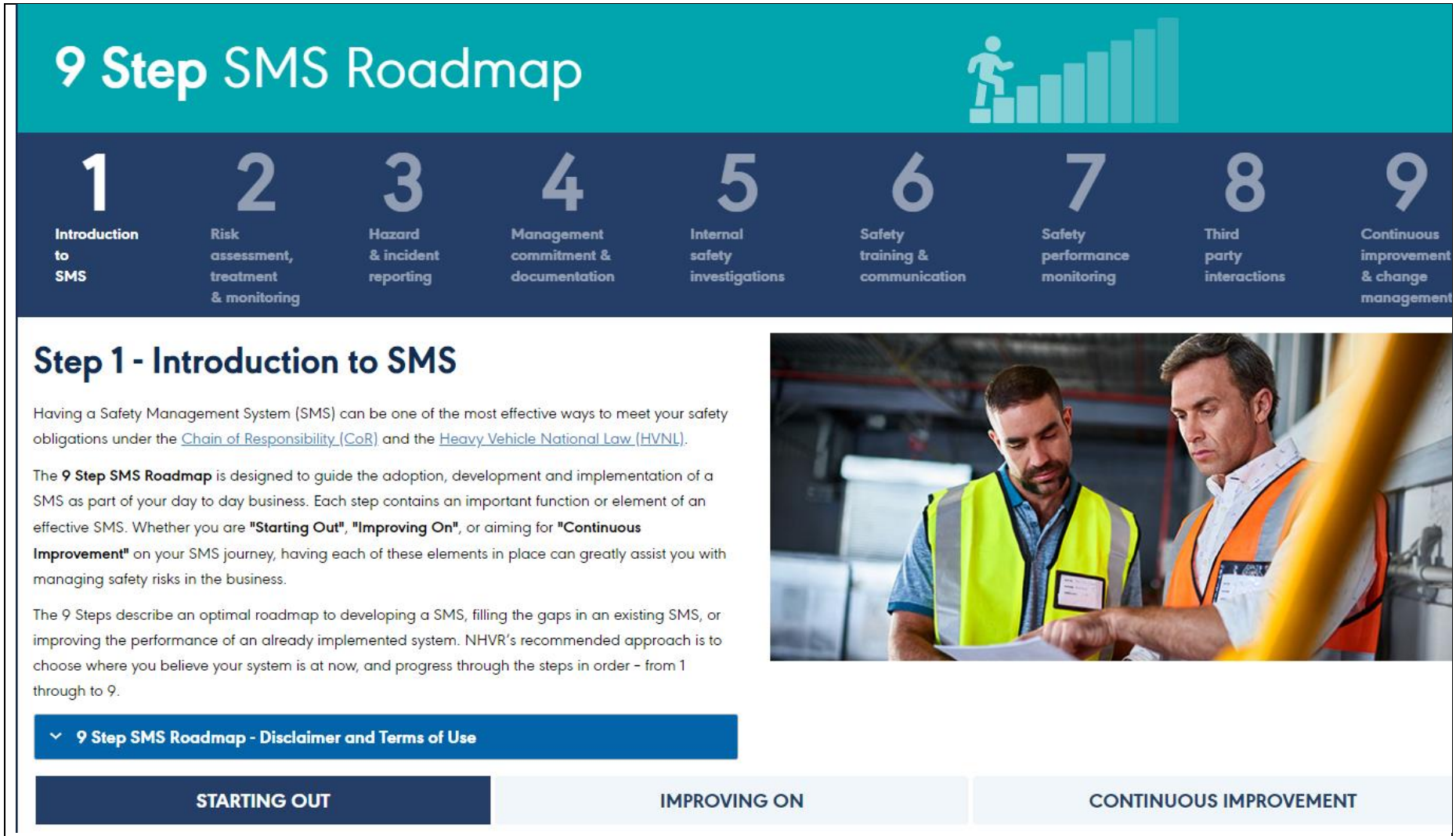


Figure 3: The 9 Step SMS Roadmap is accessible on the NHVR website at https://www.nhvr.gov.au/safety-accreditation-compliance/safety-management-systems/sms-9-step

The Roadmap takes transport operators on the journey to develop and implement the key elements of an effective SMS:

1. *Introduction to SMS*

2. *Risk assessment, treatment and monitoring* takes operators through the process of establishing systems and processes to identify safety risks, to consider how they could impact their business, identify what risk controls are in place, if further treatments are required, and monitoring controls that are in place to ensure that they are all working as intended.

3. *Hazard and incident reporting* outlines how an operator can establish a hazard and incident reporting process to encourage reporting and recording of safety hazards and incidents. Hazard and incident reporting can prevent safety incidents reoccurring.

4. *Management commitment and documentation* highlights the importance of documenting all key functions of an SMS, including key risk controls to reinforce critical safety processes, to educate and train staff, formally record incidents and other safety information, assist the executive in meeting their HVNL due diligence requirements, and help demonstrate that operators are effectively managing their heavy vehicle safety risks, so far as is reasonably practicable.

5. *Internal safety investigations* help establish how and why a safety incident occurred. Identifying the causes and contributing factors and exploring opportunities for safety improvements helps reduce the likelihood of similar events recurring.

6. *Safety training and communication* encourages targeted and scheduled safety training and communication as important practices to assist in developing and supporting a positive safety culture and sustaining safety in a business.

7. *Safety performance monitoring* outlines how safety performance monitoring can help to measure the quality of safety practices in a business to meet established safety objectives.

8. *Third party interactions* encourages transport operators to document third party interactions as an integrated component of their SMS to help their business identify, understand and manage the shared safety responsibilities for their heavy vehicle operations.

9. *Continuous improvement and change management* encourage transport operators to consider where they can improve on their safety management and performance on a proactive and ongoing basis. It encourages operators to be proactive in managing safety risks.

Figure 4 describes the full set of SMS components and elements.

Figure 4: Components and elements of a Safety Management System (SMS)

RSQN017	Chester	**CHAIR:** …I have one more question, perhaps take on notice: is any work being done around driver shortages in our remote Indigenous communities? One thing the Defence Force has been very good at doing is some pre-recruitment training for our Indigenous communities, where they perhaps didn't have the opportunity at school to reach the qualifications, getting them ready to take on a role in the Defence Force. Is the heavy vehicle sector something that we could look in those more remote communities around employment opportunities for Indigenous people? But I don't expect you to have an answer off the top of your head on that one. **Mr Petroccitto:** I will take that one on notice.	p. 8

RSQN017 – NHVR Response

The NHVR strongly supports improvements to the heavy vehicle licensing system to lift safety standards across industry and ensure truck driving is seen as a viable employment option for more Australians.

This approach requires moving away from a time served approach to focusing on practical safety skills and competency driven training. This would require drivers when seeking their licence to meet a minimum set of core driving skills, including fatigue management.

The competency-based approach would help improve driver professionalism and address current and predicted driver shortages, ensuring truck driving is seen as a viable employment option and providing a clear career path starting from school leaver.

While licensing is the responsibility of the state authorities, the NHVR has suggested that the review of the current HVNL provides an opportunity to look at other critical heavy vehicle processes and systems (such as licensing) to ensure they align with delivering a modern and streamlined approach and are fit for purpose.

A review of the Licensing Framework has been initiated by Austroads which is focused in strengthening the national heavy vehicle driver training and assessment standards.

The NHVR understands that the draft National Road Safety Strategy (NRSS) Action Plan 2021-25 may include an action to improve access/reduce barriers to driver licensing in remote communities, by funding and delivering specialised driver licensing programs, and delivering specialised pre-learner driver courses. An example of an existing program is 'On the Right Track' in South Australia. This action is directed at improving road safety outcomes, rather than addressing driver shortages. Well designed and implemented programs, in conjunction with industry, could achieve both objectives. Further, while the focus is likely to be on car driver licensing, it may be possible to incorporate a pathway to heavy vehicle driver licensing.