

MEDIA RELEASE – 24 FEBRUARY 2021

National Operating Standard Shows How Mandatory SMS Will Reduce Audit Duplication For Heavy Vehicles Operators

The [Australian Logistics Council](#) (ALC) continues its calls on Australian Governments to consider the development of a [National Operating Standard](#) for heavy vehicle operators as part of a review of the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL).

An important element of the standard would be a requirement for operators to maintain a safety management system (SMS), scalable to the size of the business, meeting standards made by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR).

ALC recently surveyed its members and recorded that the advantages of adopting an SMS include:

1. introduction of disciplines such as the creation of real time data reports to allow for the monitoring of speed, Chain of Responsibility compliance, fitness for work requirements and driver fatigue;
2. development of maintenance management programmes to minimise the chance of breakdowns and maximise productivity levels; and
3. encouragement of a just safety culture that actively engages workers, manages risks and ensures safety through evidence-based risk assessments and when necessary, changes to policies and procedures.

In NSW, accredited bus, coach, and taxi operators are required to maintain and operate an effective SMS¹.

ALC believes that amendments to the HVNL should be made that are similar in nature to those that apply to buses which require bus and coach operators to comply with guidelines made under the bus safety law.²

ALC Policy and Advocacy Director Rachel Smith says “Ask any member of the community: if it is appropriate for bus and taxi operators to maintain an SMS, then it is also appropriate for operators of heavy vehicles.”

The NHVR also supports the development of SMS’s through the provision of templates and other guidance.³

Having the NHVR develop a common set of SMS standards would also lead to productivity gains through a reduction in audit duplication – an audit of an operator’s safety systems conducted by a qualified auditor using the common SMS standards should be able to be relied on by all parties in the supply chain.

This also means that the development of an auditing framework which establishes appropriate auditor qualifications and practices should form an integral part of the HVNL reform.

The creation of a National Operator Standard offers the opportunity to enhance the safety and productivity outcomes of heavy vehicle operators – key objectives of the HVNL. The opportunity should be taken to make these amendments to the National Law while we have the opportunity and make the legislation fit for the 2020s and beyond.

ENDS

¹ For buses: section 9D of the *Passenger Transport Act 1990* (NSW). For taxis: Division 2 of Part 2 of the *Point to Point (Taxi and Hire Vehicles) Regulation 2017* (NSW)

² Found at: <https://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/documents/business-industry/buses/boas-safety-management-system-guidelines.pdf>

³ [Heavy vehicle safety tools launched | NHVR](#)