5. Assurance, Performance Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

SMS Webinar Series for heavy vehicle operations.

SMS Webinar Series

1. Introduction to SMS – what is it, and what does it mean
2. Leadership & Accountability
3. Risk Management – Hazards, Risks and Controls
4. Risk Management – Ongoing Risk Review Incident Management
5. **Assurance, Monitoring & Continuous Improvement**
6. People
7. Safety Systems
8. Tying it all together with ACAs, MAP and PSOE

SMS Webinar Series

Assurance Indicators

e.g. pre-trip checks completed, fatigue hours compliance, hazard reports raised

A zero-incident record alone is not evidence the SMS is working

Examples of Good Assurance Indicators

Linked to risk and controls

Timely indicators

Meaningful

Used in practice

Proportionate and practical

Trends Matter

Proportionality

Small Operator	Larger Operator
A clear and simple objective: Zero incidents	Evidence of safety specific dashboards tracking leading and lagging indicators
Incidents, non-conformances and breaches recorded in a register and tracked	Safety performance metrics included in executive business reviews
Maintenance and training compliance tracked	Workers aware of LTIR - LTIR is built into business scorecard
Monthly review of metrics	Contractor performance measures reviewed during joint performance reviews

Monitor and Review

LEVEL	WHAT IT INVOLVES	FREQUENCY AND WHO
1 Level 1 Routine operational assurance	Pre-trip checks, supervisor observations, checking controls are being applied Monitoring fatigue records and defect logs Reviewing hazard and near miss reports	**Daily / weekly** Frontline workers and supervisors. Ongoing as part of normal operations.
2 Level 2 Internal review	Structured review of SMS performance, performance indicator analysis Corrective action tracking Assessment of whether risk assessments and controls remain current and effective Management review of safety outcomes Quarterly compliance statements (required) Annual internal review (required)	**Monthly, quarterly or annually** Depending on risk profile. Conducted internally by management or a nominated reviewer. Quarterly compliance statements required as part of accreditation. Annual internal reviews required as part of accreditation.
3 Level 3 Independent external review	Formal audit or assessment conducted by a qualified, independent person outside the organisation Assesses the SMS against the Standard or other defined criteria Provides objective findings and recommendations	**As required – typically annually or at defined intervals** Required for NHVR accreditation. Good practice for any operation with significant risk exposure.

What genuine continuous improvement looks like

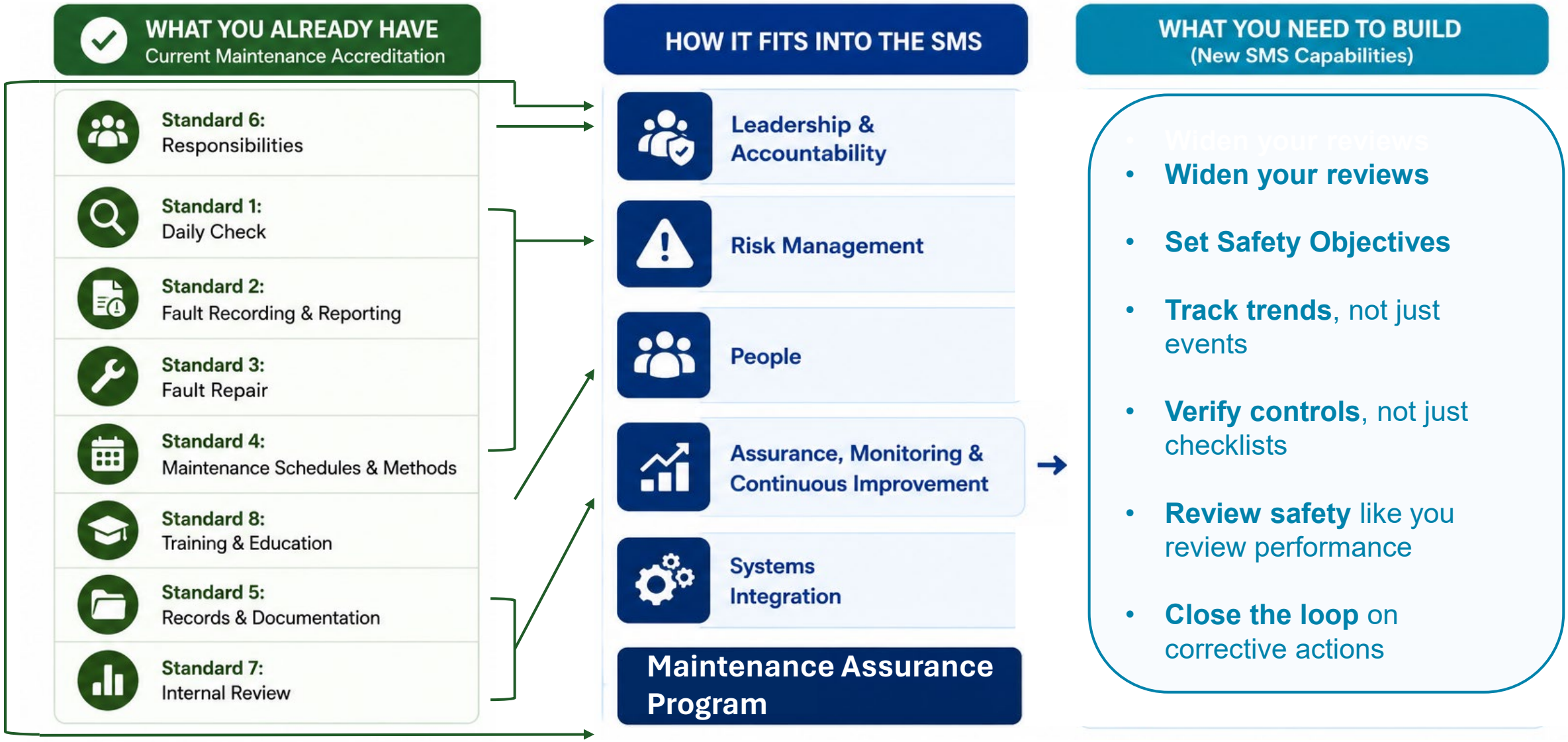
- Decisions to act are risk-based: serious issues receive proportionate attention
- Corrective actions address underlying causes, not just immediate symptoms
- Actions are implemented as intended — not just planned or recorded as “in progress”
- Effectiveness is verified: the operator confirms the action has actually resolved the issue
- Learning is applied broadly: lessons from one finding are considered for relevance across the wider operation
- Improvement feeds back into the SMS — updating risk registers, procedures, training, and monitoring

Closing a corrective action on paper is not the same as fixing the problem. Improvement is verified when the risk is reduced — not when the form is signed off.

Evidence

Examples of Evidence	
Small Operator	**Large Operator**
A small set of meaningful leading indicators tracked regularly (e.g. pre-trip completion rate, near miss reports)	Performance dashboard with leading and lagging indicators, reviewed at management level
Quarterly SMS review records showing the register was reviewed, corrective actions checked, and any issues identified	Internal audit reports with findings, corrective actions, and follow-up records
Corrective action log showing open items, closure dates, and notes on effectiveness verification	Management review records showing safety performance discussed alongside operational performance
Record of annual independent review by a consultant or trusted industry peer	Independent external audit report with findings addressed and evidence of closure

What does this mean for you?
Keep doing what you are doing, and start building out



Questions?

Safety Management Systems (SMS) | NHVR

Next Series & Questions

DATE	TOPIC	TIME
Wed 17 June	Introduction to Safety Management Systems (SMS) – what they are and why they matter	8am AEST
Wed 24 June	Leadership and Commitment	8am AEST
Wed 1 July	Risk Management – Hazards, Risks and Controls	8am AEST
Wed 8 July	Risk Management – Incident Management and Ongoing Risk Review	8am AEST
Wed 15 July	Assurance, Performance Monitoring and Continuous Improvement	**8am AEST**
Wed 22 July	**People**	8am AEST
Wed 29 July	Safety Systems	8am AEST
Wed 5 August	Bringing it all together – Accreditation Compliance Accreditation (ACA),Maintenance Assurance Program (MAP), Present, Suitable, Operating and Effective (PSOE) Audit method	8am AEST

Scan to register