



Hotel chief attacks our nanny state

HOTELS Association chief Peter Hurley addressed Premier Jay Weatherill wearing a high-visibility vest yesterday in a provocative protest against a culture of over-regulation.

"It's the decade of the rise and rise of the fluoro high-vis jacket," he said, targeting State Government SafeWork SA.

"An audit visit from Work Safe SA (sic) is the only thing that makes you wish you were at the dentist having root canal work."

He said he had been told drive-in bottle shop staff had to wear high-visibility vests.

"Then the guy delivering bread started arriving in high vis. What took the cake recently was the bloke who tops up the condom vending machine arrives, gets out with his case of rubbery delights, resplendent in a high-vis vest. Maybe the topless waitress is next?"

Mr Hurley, state president of the Australian Hotels Association, was giving his Christ-



STUART INNES

mas lunch address to the Premier, State Government Ministers, other federal and state politicians, business chiefs and civic leaders.

He railed against Business SA for doing a deal with a key union over public holiday rates that would be a "massive" expense to hoteliers.

He said the overdue relaxation of shop trading hours, allowing the CBD to open on public holidays except Good Friday and Christmas Day, was a significant breakthrough.

"The bad news is that it comes at a massive cost to our members," Mr Hurley said.

He said moving from state awards to a federal award already increased costs to hotels.

The trading hours deal included two new "public holidays" for the seven hours to midnight on New Year's Eve

and on Christmas Eve. "Why our members have to wear the cost of two new public holidays so the interstate-owned DJs and Myer can trade their Rundle Mall properties on public holidays is a very hard thing," he said.

He said the chief union involved, the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association, had avoided the AHA and other associations in negotiating the trading hours deal taken to government and instead found Business SA.

Mr Hurley said Business SA chief Peter Vaughan had been quoted on Adelaide radio saying the deal was a win for the workers. "Since when did Business SA become Unions SA?" Mr Hurley said.

"Peter Vaughan is an apology (not attending) today. He bloody well should apologise."

Mr Weatherill told the AHA lunch that shopping hours had plagued the city "for ages" and the arrangement had settled the issue.

"Shop trading hours is part of a much bigger agenda," Mr Weatherill said.

“Peter Hurley's words and his apparent attitude to workplace safety are disappointing to us.

SafeWork SA seeks to work cooperatively with employers to demonstrate the benefits that safe workplaces can offer to the wellbeing of staff and others, as well as the business bottom line.

Precautions (such as high-visibility vests) came about



THE RESPONSE
BRYAN RUSSELL

because workers had been injured, sometimes fatally, by moving vehicles where the operator had been unable to see people nearby.

Anything which can help catch the attention of the op-

erator of a forklift or a truck alerting them to the presence of a nearby worker may well be the difference between life and death.

Employers who cut corners, take shortcuts, make assumptions or rely on luck, sooner or later get caught out and it's usually their workers who pay the heaviest price.

— Bryan Russell is SafeWork SA acting executive director.

STATEMENT: Australian Hotels Association state president Peter Hurley dons a work vest before his address yesterday.

Picture: DEAN MARTIN

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