Deputy Premier John Rau
Minister for Industrial Relations

Thursday 2nd April 2015

SafeWork shake-up Transforming workplace safety

The State’s work health and safety regulator is set to be modernised, separating compliance and education aspects of SafeWork SA to better serve the needs of workers, employers and businesses.

Industrial Relations Minister John Rau said the current structure of SafeWork SA was reconsidered following the Return to Work reforms passing Parliament last year.

“SafeWork SA is both the educator on work health and safety, and the regulator responsible for issuing infringement notices and carrying out prosecutions for breaches,” he said.

“Under the current structure these two elements are not clearly defined and that can discourage businesses from contacting SafeWork SA and asking for assistance.

“It is not acceptable that people can not ask for help for fear of being prosecuted for breaches that may be found.

“At the same time the regulator can’t ignore unsafe work practices that endanger workers.”

Mr Rau said the primary focus for the Government was preventing work place injury, and the structure and culture of SafeWork SA needs to reflect this.

“Feedback from employers showed that many feared asking SafeWork SA for help because a visit from an inspector may lead to compliance action being taken against them,” he said.

“These proposed changes separate the compliance and education functions because the educator should be approachable, respected and able to assist both employers and workers to understand their obligations.

“Compliance activity by the Inspectorate needs to be proactive. It must enforce obligations and reduce the potential for injuries to occur.

“Following the Return to Work reforms last year, it became clear to me that structural separation of SafeWork SA was necessary to bring about the change we need to see in this area.”
Copies of the paper are available at www.agd.sa.gov.au/twhsp and feedback is open until the end of this month.