

Council boss poised to quit

**ANTHONY TEMPLETON
ANDREW HOUGH**

THE state's highest paid council boss is poised to announce he is suddenly quitting.

Adelaide City Council chief executive Peter Smith, who has a salary package worth almost \$400,000 a year, is expected to notify staff of his surprise resignation today.

The *Advertiser* understands the paperwork has already been submitted and accepted

but details of Mr Smith's expected payout remain unclear.

Mr Smith's resignation, the third involving senior staff in the past few weeks, comes days after a confidential five-hour council meeting, which occurred on last week's Adelaide Cup Day public holiday and discussed his position.

All 11 councillors and Lord Mayor Martin Haese attended



the meeting, which was held behind closed doors with lawyers present, but staff were excluded, prompting fevered speculation about Mr Smith's tenure.

Several council sources said the issue had come to a head after staff had raised concerns about Mr Smith's management style.

Mr Smith, a bureaucrat with more than 25 years experience

in all three levels of government, joined the council in 2008.

The council will now embark on a nationwide search but it is understood the role will be filled temporarily by senior general managers on a rotational basis.

His resignation comes on the eve of critical budget deliberations while general manager of City Culture and Community Services Sandy Verschoor and head of media

David Hill have left the organisation within the last fortnight. It also comes less than six months after the local government elections, which resulted in a new lord mayor, five first-term councillors and the youngest elected body on record, with an average age of 45.

There was mounting speculation during the campaign that Mr Smith would reconsider his future if former lord mayor Stephen Yarwood lost. The *Advertiser* understands

Mr Smith requested a five-year extension to his contract during a performance review last year but was rejected by councillors.

His six-and-a-half years in the role was marked by dramatic changes within Adelaide, including overseeing major projects and a push to improve the city's culture.

Mr Haese declined to comment last night. Mr Smith did not return calls. He refused to discuss his role with the council when contacted last week.

Don't let post-formals be a nightmare

FROM PAGE 1

Students are denied entry unless a parent has signed the form, which includes an option to refuse permission for their son or daughter to drink.

One mother of four said she had seen "a couple of dozen" similar forms over the past few years as her children progressively went through Year 12, while they were much rarer when her first daughter graduated in 2010.

Lawyers warn that even forms couched as waivers, denying legal responsibility for what happens at parties, would do nothing to abrogate a host's duty of care to guests and would likely have very little weight in any negligence case.

Duncan Basheer Hannon partner Patrick Boylen said they were "close enough to useless" but might offer a slim chance of avoiding some liability, though only proof of adequate supervision would provide a reliable defence to a negligence claim.

"I wouldn't have a party with hundreds of kids unless you have got security guards," he said.

Tindall Gask Bentley partner Mal Byrne said hosts were "on very dangerous ground having the party and supplying alcohol to underage kids, regardless of whether the parents consent".

Mr Byrne said hosts of house parties should call their insurers before issuing any forms, because they could be risking their public liability

SAFE WAY TO PARTY

Encounter Youth's tips for parents

- If your son or daughter is attending a party, call ahead and ask the host about the provision of alcohol and how the party will be supervised.
- Meet the hosts on the night. Strongly consider making this a condition for allowing your child to attend.
- Discuss with your child how they can get out of the party safely at any time and that you will be available to pick them up. Devise a code word they can use in a call or text that means "Come and get me now".

Police tips for party planning

- Parents and teens should set rules and expectations together.
- Inform neighbours.
- Keep guest lists manageable. Individualise and number each invitation to prevent copying.
- Discourage using internet, SMS or email distribution for invitations.
- Check guests off as they arrive, and consider using ID wrist bands.
- Avoid displaying balloons or signs along the street as this may attract uninvited guests.
- Aim to have only one entry and exit and supervise them to prevent uninvited guests entering.

cover by "bringing formality" to the teenage drinking on their property.

Encounter Youth, which delivers safe partying seminars to more than 15,000 students a year, warned against consent forms.

"Consent forms place massive pressures on young people attending the party to drink, and to drink to the level that is suggested on the consent form," education manager Kimberley Price said.

"To set a number of drinks that each guest can consume is risky and dangerous. A parent (host) cannot know exactly how this will affect each young person in their care."

Federation of Catholic School Parent Communities SA executive director Ann

Bliss said as long as party forms were not used as a substitute for proper supervision, they could be a good source of information about rules set for parties.

Ms Bliss said that at the best-run parties, students with permission to drink had different wristbands to those who did not. Hosts keep control of the alcohol and distribute it at intervals.

"(But) I have no doubt that there are many of these parties taking place where there is not that wisdom around supervision," she said.

SA Secondary Principals Association president Peter Mader said schools commonly sent letters to parents advising against any after-parties and emphasising that schools took

no responsibility for any non-sanctioned events after formals finished.

Seymour College student Belle, 17, attended her school's formal at the Convention Centre on Saturday night.

She said students and parents had to sign a consent form for the after-party at a house in the Adelaide Hills.

"I think it's good because it allows the people that are hosting it to legitimately know who's coming. There's no chance of anyone getting in who hasn't paid (\$50) and signed," Belle said.

The eastern states have laws requiring parental permission before alcohol can be served to their underage children at private parties.

Liberal MP John Gardner, who has previously pushed for similar laws in South Australia, said he had not given up on the idea here.

Mr Gardner said consent forms were needed to firmly establish expectations for parties but were "not a legal safety net against liability".

A police spokeswoman said: "We aren't aware of any parties causing particular concern this season to date, but have a wide range of 'party safe' information available on the SA Police website."

**PAGE 18: EDITORIAL
PAGE 19: VALDMAN'S VIEW**

ARE YOU A PARENT? JOIN THE CONVERSATION AT ADVERTISER.COM.AU OR ON OUR FACEBOOK AND TWITTER PAGE



ALL DOLLED UP: Tori and Belle ready for their formal at the Convention Centre last Saturday night. Picture: KERYN STEVENS

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