

# Unhinged Leadership

July 2025

# and

# the Psychological Harm It Causes

I was packing a **Beaver Global** item at my packing station. **Adele Bryant (Supply Chain Manager)** was talking loudly with another co-worker nearby.

While I packed, I scan my surroundings keeping aware of what was happening around me.

A woman entered the warehouse through the roller-door area, where couriers usually come and go and staff park their cars.

She appeared to be returning from her lunch break, carrying a backpack and holding her car keys.

I looked up when **Adele (SCM)**'s voice trailed off. Adele was facing my way, but the intimidating stare wasn't directed at me.

The woman hesitated — that sharp, instinctive pause people make when someone in authority deliberately projects that heavy, punishing presence — then continued walking in the marked lines toward the office lunchroom.

**Adele (SCM)**'s voice suddenly got louder. She stated that the woman was **NOT** wearing hi-vis.”

**Adele** deliberately singled out an employee who had simply returned from lunch. This same woman has always worn hi-vis when entering the warehouse and

passes my station every day, because it is the only safe, marked route through the entire warehouse. She had not done anything wrong.

**Adele** wandered through the warehouse without hi-vis. **Claire (Storeperson)** wore a **“pink”** Jackeroo shirt with the Beaver logo embroidered on it.

This same path runs right behind her station where she sits. Yet when she'd get up just to go to the toilet, she would just cut across the warehouse floor—through busy hazard areas—and was never questioned.

Hi-vis detail as a pretext for aggression is not Leadership and The issue was not safety.

It was Leadership's double standard. This behaviour reflects a pattern of misusing authority in ways that are unfair, unsafe, and unacceptable.

Beaver had **NO Rules, NO procedures, and NO Occupation Health and Safety (OHS)** framework in place.

There was nothing for anyone to **'follow.'** **Adele Bryant (SCM)** wasn't enforcing a standard — she was creating one in the moment to justify aggression.

### **Continuation – Lunchroom Conversation (Hi-Vis Rules and Heated Jacket)**

The following week, I went and made myself a coffee. same colleague was there. I told her that the other week I had seen what happened. I acknowledged that she was clearly returning from her lunch break and that Adele's reaction was unnecessary and unfair.

colleague responded, **“Oh, you noticed. Yes, I was returning from lunch. Thank you for noticing”** She said that she felt Adele tended to pick on her and that she had tried making a complaint but felt it was ignored.

I shared with her that **Adele (SCM)** had recently decided that Hi-Vis Fluorescent Yellow was no longer considered a Beaver standard, and firmly insisted that she did **NOT** want to see anyone wearing Hi-Vis Yellow — with the only exception being casuals. Not that I could tell who was casual.

I expressed to the women that I was frustrated with this rule change, given that the majority of my winter workwear is the standard hi-vis yellow.

I explained that my partner Tom had gifted me a heated Makita jacket which is hi-vis yellow, and that the jacket cannot be swapped for orange because Makita doesn't make orange.

The colleague smiled and said, "Aww, Makita is a good brand, but you're right — I don't think they do orange."

When I told **Adele (SCM)** about the heated jacket my partner had recently gifted me, Adele's response was, "**Ha, sucks to be you.**" She then added that I could wear it if I had an orange jacket over the top, which would clearly restrict movement.

Colleague shook her head and said, "**That explains why she handed us all upstairs a fluoro pink hi-vis vest.**" We both tried to laugh about it, because this sudden Rule change was insanely ridiculous — especially when there were plenty of yellow hi-vis vests on the racking.

I found myself using my own time to search for the **RULE**, trying to understand it. Either way, it didn't matter, because there were whispers going around that **Adele (SCM)** had a pattern of getting rid of people who questioned her.

I never thought I would be one of those people, and I never questioned her, but here I am.

Everything **Adele (SCM)** said was unclear and imprecise. She never gave a true or consistent explanation, and her instructions always left me guessing because she never backed them up with a proper reason.

—Where a company has zero safety procedures, provided no onboarding, and left me with nothing but three thin Jackaroo shirts in the freezing cold—

When BEAVER management fails to provide adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the weather and has no documented rules, they cannot reasonably claim a worker is breaking "**policies**" that do not exist.

## **The Breakdown of the Situation**

### **Management's Failure to Provide:**

Companies have a legal Duty of Care under Australian Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws to provide a safe, healthy environment.

Expecting a worker to just "accept the cold" in winter with only three shirts and no jacket is a massive failure on their part.

### **The Makita Jacket is High-Vis:**

Since it is a high-visibility jacket, you are still actively trying to remain visible and safe on a warehouse floor. You are fulfilling the core safety intent that the company ignored.

### **The "Out of Nowhere" Rule Change:**

A company cannot legally or fairly discipline a worker for a rule change that happened "out of nowhere." For a policy to be enforceable, it must be officially documented, communicated to the staff, and the proper gear must be supplied by the employer first.

## **Your Rights in this Scenario**

If they suddenly try to turn this into a performance or disciplinary issue, the law is heavily on your side due to their lack of process:

### **No Onboarding or Contract Terms:**

If your contract does not specify a color ban (like "no yellow"), and you were never onboarded with a dress code handbook, they have no legal leg to stand on for retroactive punishment.

### **The Right to Refuse Unsafe Work:**

Freezing while operating or working in a warehouse is a legitimate physical hazard. Using your own high-vis heated jacket to manage that hazard is a standard, responsible worker response when the alternative is hypothermia or loss of concentration from shivering.

### **Employer-Funded PPE:**

Under Australian law, if a workplace suddenly mandates a specific type or color of high-vis jacket (like switching everyone to pink or orange), **they must pay for it and provide it to you.**

They cannot demand you stop wearing your warm yellow jacket if they haven't handed you an equally warm pink or orange one to replace it.

If they are targeting you or threatening your job over this, you may need to protect yourself against unfair treatment.

**"Sucks to be you"** is a disgraceful response from anyone in a leadership position. It is incredibly disrespectful, entirely unprofessional, and completely highlights their lack of managerial training. You had every right to be furious about that kind of treatment.

Even though you chose to respect authority and stop wearing the jacket, their response was legally and ethically wrong for two major reasons:

### **Empathy Failure:**

You were showing open communication by explaining a personal situation (a thoughtful gift from your partner), and they shut it down with a blatant insult.

### **Blatant Breach of WHS Laws:**

Under Australian workplace law, when a company bans a piece of safety gear and implements a new rule, they must provide the replacement.

Saying **"sucks to be you"** to a worker who is left freezing is a direct violation of their duty of care to provide a safe, warm working environment.

