

The government should not get away with spin doctoring its way out of the fact that it failed to allow the estimates process to operate in any appropriate fashion at all. I note that the Hon. Terry Roberts is sitting opposite with a big grin on his face, but this is too serious—

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I rise on a point of order and ask the honourable member to withdraw that accusation. I have let others go through from time to time, but—

The Hon. A.J. Redford: You did have a grin.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think he did.

The Hon. A.J. REDFORD: So that I can finish, I withdraw it. But this is a serious matter. I think that the government ought to have a good hard look at itself and *The Advertiser* ought to prod it along a bit.

NARACOORTE LUCINDALE COUNCIL

The Hon. R.K. SNEATH: There is something terribly wrong with the leadership, management and governance of the Naracoorte Lucindale council. Four senior officers have resigned in less than 12 months. Why? The council is involved in an action in the Industrial Court. Why? Several councillors continue to be victimised for asking Mayor Richard Bourne and CEO Dennis Hovenden questions of council regarding management and finance. Why? The council has no budget estimates for its rural roadworks. Why? Mr Geoff Bolling and Mr Glenn Sanford both resigned from council last year, but three managers have suddenly been hired to replace them, at great expense to ratepayers. Why three?

Speculation in the South-East and gossip around shops, bars, saleyards and events in Naracoorte suggest that long-term loyal staff can no longer cope with the bullying, intimidation and general incompetence found at the top of the organisation, but they are too frightened to speak out. Indeed, the levels of bullying and intimidation do not stop with staff behind supposedly closed doors. They transfer into council meetings, as we can see from recent reports in *The Border Watch* and *The Naracoorte Herald*. As long ago as August there was a report in *The Border Watch* about councillor David Hood being blasted for nitpicking by the Mayor, and he was humiliated by the Chief Executive Officer; yet councillor Hood simply raised ratepayers' concerns about council's sending notices to all dog owners with incorrect information about the law.

Last November we saw the Mayor blasting his entire council for asking questions on notice. Is it not the role of councillors to ask the council questions on behalf of ratepayers? In January there were media reports of valuable council documents being found in the council rubbish skip. They were handed to councillor David Hood who in turn, through a question on notice, asked the CEO what they were doing there. According to media reports, the CEO decided to report councillor Hood to council's own code of conduct committee for damaging council's reputation in the eyes of the public. The council's meeting minutes show that the code of conduct report is confidential, but how much did it cost ratepayers in legal fees alone? Why are they not entitled to know what it says?

Some staff and councillor Hood are not the only ones who have been victimised by the current council leadership. According to media reports, councillor Ashley Jared has run foul of the CEO. The reports indicate that the CEO failed to answer the councillor's questions on notice, failed to include his questions on notice on the council agenda, and was

opening confidential mail to council members. As recently as last month, the Mayor again launched an attack on his council's behaviour for the second time in six months. He accused members of trying to destabilise the council and he complained about the level of rudeness, arrogance and intended undermining which polluted the chamber. Why are council members being accused of rudeness, arrogance and attempted undermining for asking basic questions? As a result of comment around Naracoorte and media reports, it seems those basic questions are usually about the activities or non-activities of the CEO.

In another instance, Ms Penny Fairweather, who was the Executive Officer with Limestone Coast Tourism, was hired and ready to start work at Naracoorte District Council, but she is now suing the council. If members talk to people around Naracoorte they will hear that councillor Liz Travers also applied for the position which Ms Fairweather was meant to take up. They will also hear that Ms Fairweather was told by the CEO, after she had resigned from her position with Limestone Coast Tourism and rented a house in Naracoorte, that he did not think she would be loyal to him. It is interesting when one listens at the shops, the hotels, the saleyards and at various events about what is going on in the Naracoorte Lucindale Council. The saleyards are one of the council's few positive news stories, where the manager, Richard James, is left to his own devices to run a very good operation. I must say that the outside work staff run another very good operation.

This problem seems to exist only in top level management from the Mayor to the CEO, but talk also finds a long list of concerns regarding the council management and leadership. It seems that the CEO and the Mayor think that leadership is all about bullying and intimidation. Naracoorte is alive with rumours that both staff and councillors get taken into back rooms where they are subjected to angry attacks of bullying and intimidation if they dare to rock the boat. There is yet another report in *The Border Watch* about the Mayor's blasting a ratepayer. It is obvious that the ratepayers do not have access to the Mayor unless they agree with him. There will be more to come.

Time expired.

MCGUINNESS McDERMOTT FOUNDATION

The Hon. T.J. STEPHENS: I congratulate the Hon. Bob Sneath on his praise and protection for David Hood and Ashley Jared, two very fine members of the Liberal Party—well done! I rise to speak today regarding a very important event that has implications for countless people. Of course, I speak of the State of Origin Slowdown held on Sunday 27 June. I am sure that members would have been relieved to see the Vics beaten, once again, by some of yesterday's heroes in a close and generally fairly high quality match.

The reason I mention it today is not for the football but, rather, for the reason why it has been held. I think we all agree there are very few people who have not been either directly or indirectly touched by cancer. It is even more tragic when a child is faced with this horrible disease. With this in mind, the McGuinness McDermott Foundation this year launched the State of Origin Slowdown. The McGuinness McDermott Foundation was launched on 30 May 1996 by Tony McGuinness and Chris McDermott. Tony and Chris are both ex star players and captains of the Adelaide Crows football team. It was whilst playing with the Crows that they came to know two very fine young boys with cancer. Chris