



Speech by

LINDA LAVARCH

STATE MEMBER FOR KURWONGBAH

Hansard 30 November 1999

PINE RIVERS SHIRE COUNCIL

Mrs LAVARCH (Kurwongbah—ALP) (10.13 a.m.): I know elections bring with them a silly season, and the local government election scheduled for 25 March 2000 is no exception. Even though the elections are four months away, the silly season has already struck in the Pine Rivers Shire Council.

The season was kicked off by a letter sent last week by Mr John Matthews, the Chief Executive Officer of the Pine Rivers Shire Council, to Division 6 candidate, Michelle McJannett. I seek leave to table that letter.

Leave granted.

Mrs LAVARCH: In this letter, Mr Matthews firstly points out to Mrs McJannett that he is aware that she has announced her intention to stand as a candidate, but as he has not formally announced the election he must, of necessity, regard her announcement as a statement of intention only. What does this mean? He does not explain himself, but it can be reasonably inferred that he is saying that, in his view, no-one can refer to themselves as a candidate until he calls the election.

But it gets better! Mr Matthews goes on to say that he is also aware that Mrs McJannett has commenced campaigning and has attempted to rectify resident grievances by attending at the council and speaking to staff. The CEO's response to this is: "I require you to cease this practice."

Do honourable members know why the CEO issued this directive? It is not because the grievances are not worthy of being followed up, not because they are not genuine, not because they cannot be rectified and not because they are not council concerns. Mr Matthews says—

"At the last election in 1997 there were 47 candidates and I expect a like amount for the year 2000 election. Council resources and staff are always functioning under considerable pressure. I simply cannot have staff deviating from their normal duties to satisfy the zeal of such a number of aspiring councillors. The system simply will not bear 47 separate attacks on its day to day functioning."

Well, excuse me! It is not a matter of these concerns or problems being manufactured. The CEO is indulging in arrant nonsense. What I want to know is who directed the CEO to write this letter.

Time expired.
