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Vote deadly serious

By JOSH MASSOUD

THE struggle for South Sydney has taken a grave turn, with deceased members attempting to vote on Sunday's historic ballot.

Rabbitohs CEO Shane Richardson confirmed his staff fielded a telephone enquiry yesterday on behalf of a life member who died about three years ago.

And it is understood that up to a dozen more proxy votes bearing the names of dead members stand to be invalidated.

The out-of-this-world development prompted a torrent of vigorous finger pointing between the warring camps, with each accusing the other of "dirty tricks".

Millionaire businessman Peter Holmes a Court, who needs a 75 per cent share of the vote to secure his \$3million bid, said yesterday's caller wanted information on how to vote "No" to his and Russell Crowe's proposal.

"Souths have some really die-hard fans, but as I understand it you've got to be breathing to have a vote," he said.

Richardson said the caller was a woman claiming to be the widow of the deceased, believed to be a Rabbitohs star of the 1950s.

"The person rang up asking how they could organise a proxy vote on behalf of a certain member," he said. "We had a tip off that the member was deceased."

Although he confirmed the caller wanted to arrange a "No" vote, Richardson refused to accuse bid opponents Henry Morris and George Piggins of plotting the call.

"I don't want to comment on that -- the point is that this vote is straight down the line. We are doing absolutely everything to make sure this is done really thoroughly," he said.

When told of the call, Morris vigorously denied any involvement and urged the club to report the matter to the police.

He labelled attempts to link his camp with the Lazarus vote "an insult to everyone's intelligence".

"Desperate times call for desperate measures," he said last night.

"It's absolutely ridiculous and I completely deny it.

``Who's to say someone from their camp hasn't called up to do this?"

Holmes a Court said his camp couldn't have obtained the name and badge number because they didn't have access to member lists from beyond the grave.

``I thought their counter offer the other day was the low point, but this has eclipsed everything," he said.

Official auditor KPMG was last night understood to be sifting through proxies received in search for other ``dead" votes.