

Give Rehab nod: advocates

MELISSA DAVEY

THE Weemala residents and advocates committee has again expressed dismay about the delayed construction of the new Royal Sydney Rehabilitation Centre.

President Michael Matthews said the committee was acting independently of Ryde Council and centre management in expressing its concern.

The family members of profoundly disabled residents who live in the Weemala building have called on Ryde councillors to sign

the deed of novation which would allow the construction of a new Weemala centre and a new state-of-the-art hospital on the Putney site to go ahead.

"We are wondering if some councillors are trying to impede progress just to get one back on Royal Rehab management," Mr Matthews said.

His comments come after community activist Rolf Clapham said Weemala residents were being used by centre management in a "shocking power play".

"I believe residents are being

manipulated in the face of a determination by the council to make all dealings with Royal Rehab transparent," Mr Clapham said.

Cr Bill Pickering and Coalition Against Private Overdevelopment (CAPO) members said they, along with Lane Cove State Liberal MP Anthony Roberts, had fought to keep the Weemala unit at the centre and prevent its residents from being kicked out.

But Mr Matthews denied that was the case.

He accused Mr Roberts of taking

credit for something the Weemala residents and advocates committee had fought hard for.

"We busted our guts for 12 months on that issue," he said.

He said Cr Pickering was misleading the public in saying he remained concerned the hospital would be looking at community placements for Weemala residents.

"It has been clearly stated that residents will have the option of being put into community placement or relocated on the Royal Rehab site," Mr Matthews said.

"They will not be forced."