

Rehab nears deal on land sale

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ROYAL Rehabilitation Centre representatives in Ryde are negotiating with Singapore-based property developer Frasers Property Australia, with the aim of selling 16ha of its 18ha hospital site.

Talks with Frasers began before Christmas with a deal said to be close to being reached.

If the sale is successfully completed, work would begin within three months on a 2.4ha public park and on Royal Rehab's new Weemala facility for its long-term rehabilitation residents.

Royal Rehab CEO Stephen

Lowndes said the sale of the land would allow the creation of a purpose-built centre of excellence for specialist rehabilitation and research.

"All of us at Royal Rehab are excited to be a step closer to the creation of this unique facility aimed at providing desperately needed services to support and improve the lives of people throughout NSW, who have suffered serious disability or impairment as the result of an accident or illness," Mr Lowndes said.

Frasers Property Australia CEO Stanley Quek said he was looking forward to completing nego-

tiations so that work could begin on "developing a high-quality, affordable, residential community with abundant public parklands, while at the same time enabling an important health facility to be created".

Dr Quek also confirmed that Frasers' intentions for the site were consistent with the existing approved concept plan.

Community rights campaigner and Coalition Against Private Overdevelopment (CAPO) spokesman Rolf Clapham has hit out at Royal Rehab management over the deal, which he said had been negotiated in secret.

"Once again, despite promises to keep the community informed, we have behind-closed-door meetings to flog off valuable land for \$83 million in order to fund a \$45 million rehabilitation facility smaller than the current centre without the community even being informed," Mr Clapham said.

He said CAPO would be holding a protest march in Parry St, Putney, from 10am on Sunday, March 28, starting at Parry Park, which he expected to attract more than 1000 people.

"The community has always supported the centre, but objects to stacking multiple high-density

towers containing about 800 units in our low-density suburb without any supporting infrastructure," Mr Clapham said.

"Management should be run out of town for attempting to sell off nearly 90 per cent of land to a foreign developer, when this land was largely gifted to the community by a local family."

Mr Lowndes denied the community had been kept in the dark over negotiations with Frasers, and said that it was normal to keep the details of commercial negotiations private until both parties had agreed to a deal.