

Residents being used, activist says

THE committee representing residents of Weemala special care unit of the Royal Rehabilitation Centre have expressed concern that new facilities might not materialise if the centre's negotiations with a developer break down.

Community activist, Rolf Clapham, claimed disabled residents at the Weemala building were being used in a "shocking power play".

His comments followed an email sent by the Weemala Residents' and Advocates' Committee to

Ryde councillors voicing concerns that any action that blocked the development of the Royal Rehab site might also block much-needed improved facilities for Weemala residents.

Mr Clapham said he was concerned the Weemala residents' committee had formed this view, given that when the development of the site was first approved by the State Government under special legislation that by-passed council approval, it had been the Putney community and Lane Cove

Liberal MP Anthony Roberts who had fought to keep the special unit at the centre.

"I believe that residents may be being manipulated in the face of a determination by the City of Ryde to make all dealings with the Royal Rehab transparent," Mr Clapham said.

Ryde Liberal Cr Bill Pickering said he had forwarded the email he received from the Weemala committee to Mr Clapham, along with a response that explained that the majority of councillors

aimed to protect the community and the residents of Weemala.

Cr Pickering said he would always support the residents of Weemala "just like we did when the centre's management tried to move residents off the site, along with Riding for the Disabled".

"We remain concerned that removing Weemala residents to an offsite location is still on the agenda, with a statement as recently as last week that Rehab management would be looking at

'community placements' for residents," he said.

He asked the Weemala residents' committee to "please understand that my role is to represent the community, and the over-development that is planned will wreck the Putney community".

Cr Pickering said he would not "abandon Putney residents just as I will not abandon Weemala residents".

"I am sure you would not want me to sacrifice one for the other," he said.