

Council support for triangle falters before crucial vote

By Denise Mooney

PORT Phillip Council's support for the contentious St Kilda triangle development is showing signs of crumbling ahead of a crucial vote on the plan this Thursday.

At least two councillors have voiced concerns over the size of the development following a huge community backlash. Others have expressed reservations.

Only one councillor – Janet Bolitho – has indicated to *EHW* that she will support the plan. Dick Gross refused to comment for fear of being sued by the developer, but he has previously supported the plan.

The fallout over the decision could seriously impact this year's council elections. The Community Alliance of Port Phillip (CAPP) has threatened to withdraw its support from the five CAPP-backed councillors.

CAPP treasurer Brenda Forbath said CAPP members would have to decide whether to support councillors Janet Cribbes, Judith Klepner, Karen Sait, Janet Bolitho and Dick Gross at the next election.

The councillors stood for election on the basis of CAPP's policy – which includes provisions protecting the St Kilda foreshore, she said.

"We're going to have to weigh up what the councillors have done and how they've acted," Forbath said. "The councillors have the power to reject this application and I think they should."

Meanwhile, councillors Cribbes, Klepner and Sait said last week they were unsure if they would seek another term.

Cr Sait, who was elected to St Kilda ward in 2004, said she hadn't made a decision yet but found it difficult to juggle full-time work and council duties.

"It's always been difficult for me. I have to work full-time because I have a mortgage," she said.

Cr Cribbes said the pressures of the triangle proposal had forced her to reconsider whether she would stand for council again and Cr Klepner said she had not decided.

Councillors Janet Bolitho and Dick Gross have both confirmed they will run once again. Cr Gross in the newly formed Junction ward. His current ward, Blessington, was jettisoned last year by the Victorian Electoral Commission.

Cr Peter Logan, an Emerald Hill councillor since 2002, will also stand for election in November.

For more on the St Kilda triangle, see page 10.