

Development splits Hills town

By **DAN HATCH**

DEVELOPERS and Gidgegannup residents are divided over the merits of extending a scheme water pipeline to the town.

Earlier this month, developer Port Bouvard Limited announced the water pipeline would be extended to Gidgegannup to ensure water supplies to the more than 2000 blocks in its proposed subdivision.

But Gidgegannup Progress Association chairwoman Sally Block says existing residents are not in favour of the plan.

"The community is extremely concerned that if scheme water comes to Gidgegannup it will not stop there but will continue on down the Toodyay Road to Midland, opening up the hills to suburban development," she said.

"Developers are already holding substantial land banks throughout that area and scheme water would enable high density subdivi-

sion to take place. A subdivision has been proposed at Bailup and it would not be difficult to envisage a future suburban sprawl from Midland to Toodyay."

At present, subdivisions in Gidgegannup are limited by laws restricting small block sizes from being serviced by rainwater tanks.

Real estate broker, John Garland, speaking on behalf of his client, Riseley Investments, said the pipeline was crucial to the development.

Riseley is owned by major Gidgegannup landowner Michael Coleman and is selling the three blocks for this development to Port Bouvard.

"Mr Coleman's whole idea was to make it happen because development was never going to occur with land being owned in a fragmented way," Mr Garland said.

"The first phase was Mr Coleman underwriting the provision of water to the town. Everywhere with scheme water is expanding

- Toodyay, Gingin - they have a strong water supply Gidgegannup doesn't have.

"The second phase was to acquire the land and talk as one voice. Mr Coleman's vision was to see Gidgegannup become the first town site in WA to have been master-planned."

On Tuesday, Port Bouvard directors declared their intention to use the funds already in their coffers to fund the \$40million, 270-block, Bunning Road rural-residential first stage of the development.

"The development plan, subject to statutory approvals, aims to bring the first lots (rural residential) to market in financial year 2008-09, which will provide a significant financial boost to the company," the announcement said.

"The remaining balance of land at Gidgegannup, being the town site, is expected to yield approximately 2000 lots and is due for settlement on a deferred basis in financial year 2011 and 2012."