

## Crisis cash

By FATIMA MRAD

CANTERBURY councillors have voted unanimously to donate \$5000 to support victims of the war in Gaza, however rejected Greens Councillor Linda Eisler's motion to condemn the Israeli attacks.

Deputy Mayor Karl Saleh put forward a motion at council's last meeting that Canterbury Council express deep concern over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza following the 22-day war, and provide \$5000 in assistance to a recognised charity, as well as grant council facilities to any groups seeking to raise funds for victims in Gaza.

Cr Michael Hawatt suggested amending the motion and stating the support for Gaza was a result of the bombings by the Israeli armed forces, however he was met with opposition from Councillors Bill Kritharas and Brian Robson, who said it's not council's role to involve itself in international diplomatic events.

"We're faced with a humanitarian crisis," Cr Robson said. "[There is] no purpose pushing the blame to parties."

About 15 members of the public who attended applauded Cr Hawatt, who said that if Cr Kritharas is "upset over the words 'Israeli armed forces'," they're the ones who dropped the bombs and "killed the children."

"Whether we take it out or not everyone knows the truth," Cr Hawatt said.

Cr Eisler said that council should act as a mouthpiece for the Canterbury community, who empathise with the pain and suffering of Palestinians.

"People in our community from refugee backgrounds, they suffer, even if they're not from Palestinian backgrounds, they suffer," she said.

"We must not let this be another example of passive observance," she added, referring to councillors rejecting her motion to write to the Federal Government to condemn the Israeli strikes on civilians.

"Why was the first motion put and accepted if you don't believe we should act?"

Cr Robson said it would be ludicrous for the council to get involved because Cr Eisler's motion was too political.

"It does nothing positive for people in Palestine," he said. "By donating money, that's a positive step."

Cr Saleh said his motion provides a "practical response to those in our local community and victims of the war in Gaza."