

Angry parents back teachers in ESF row

By Angela Szeto

PARENTS of students in the English Schools Foundation yesterday expressed their outrage at chairman Denis Bray for backing the foundation's chief executive Maurice Millard in his long-running battle with teachers.

One angry parent at last night's meeting lashed out at the management, saying it should have never happened.

The meeting was set up so that parents could hear views from both sides.

But Mr Bray and ESF officers did not attend.

A parent said: "I am extremely disappointed that Mr Bray is not here. It seems to me that he is

not fulfilling his role in the Foundation in many ways, and I ask that he explain himself.

"If he cannot explain himself, then we should ask for his resignation."

It was the first time parents voiced their support for teachers who have expressed a lack of confidence in Mr Millard's leadership.

After the meeting Mr Bray refused to comment on criticisms made in his absence. But he repeated that he had already issued a statement to the meeting's organisers.

"There will be a board of inquiry which will go into all of these things," he said.

Parents were shocked to learn Mr Bray had re-

newed Mr Millard's contract in January without consulting the executive committee. He did so in full knowledge of the growing hostility towards Mr Millard among teachers.

Two parents asked whether the dispute was just a petty personal conflict with Mr Millard. Many of the 350 parents said they left the meeting with their faith shaken in the ESF management.

"I think it's appalling that two individuals can exist in a democratic society where 73 per cent of the individuals have voted against them," said one Island School parent.

"That doesn't even happen in a communist country."