

Another local council moves to formally oppose Burswood racetrack

Hamish Hastie

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The City of South Perth will decide whether to formalise its opposition to the \$217 million Burswood racetrack at a council meeting next week, with the councillor behind the motion warning it could bring more hoons to South Perth.

Both the Town of Victoria Park and City of Perth have already formally rejected the state government's plans to build the racetrack, and South Perth will debate a motion brought forward by Councillor André Brender-A-Brandis to follow suit at next week's council meeting.



An aerial view of the Burswood Racetrack precinct known as Perth Park. WA GOVERNMENT

The Perth Park precinct is wholly encompassed within the Town of Victoria Park and is about 2 kilometres away from the nearest border. However, Brender-A-Brandis said the project would impact South Perth residents by noise, odour, light pollution, traffic and loss of public amenity.

He took aim at the environmental impacts and questioned how accurate the government's business case and funding projections were while railing against the anti-social behaviour it may bring to the city.

"Antisocial behaviour has been raised as an issue in the Mill Point Ward, characterised as hooning," his motion read.

"Residents have complained about the disturbance emanating from noisy gas sniffers parked on the median strip directly below bedrooms, with car engines running and being revved, music blaring and skid marks as they leave.

"Motorplex spectators being car enthusiasts, may exacerbate the existing issues currently being experienced in South Perth."

The Save Burswood Park alliance presented at the city's agenda briefing session on Tuesday, urging the council to support the motion at next week's council meeting.

In their response to Brender-A-Brandis' motion, South Perth council staff agreed the racetrack may have an impact on the environment and amenity for residents and may increase traffic along Canning Highway on event days.

However, they warned the council supporting the motion could impact its relationship with the state government.

Town of Victoria Park Mayor Karen Vernon has had several public stoushes with Planning Minister John Carey and Transport Minister Rita Saffioti since the project was first floated ahead of the March 8 state election.

The state government is pressing ahead with the racetrack and earlier this month put out a tender for a hospitality provider to set up shop in the pavilion, which forms part of the pit-lane multi-use building.

The tender closed on Tuesday, but it has drawn criticism from the Greens and opposition over a requirement that interested parties sign a confidentiality agreement if they want to access the tender documents.

“The community should be concerned about the level of secrecy being applied to this project,” WA Greens planning spokesman Brad Pettitt said.

“Does Burswood Park really need another giant function space, given the Camfield – a huge function venue – already exists adjacent to the stadium?

“Reading between the lines of this tender, I’d expect the WA government are looking for a hospitality group to pay for the construction of the ‘Pavilion at Perth Park’ and then receive some kind of benefit – ongoing free rent or payment – as a way of keeping the upfront capital costs to the promised \$217.5 million.

“We need to remember that this tender is part of a public proposal being put forward in a way that does not have community support; it is simply outrageous that this tender process is not proceeding with the highest levels of transparency.”

Saffioti said confidentiality agreements were standard practice for commercial negotiations like this.

“Whether it’s stopping off for a post-game beer or grabbing a bite to eat before a show at the new amphitheatre, the new hospitality venue will complement the Perth Park Precinct and present an exciting opportunity for private sector operators,” she said.

“It was clear through the consultation process that a hospitality venue would complement the park, and we’re now very keen to hear the ideas and proposals from the industry experts.”

Saffioti's office has been contacted for further comment regarding the City of South Perth motion.