

Labor says the \$217m Burswood racetrack will drive an ‘economic boost’. So, will it?



By [Holly Thompson](#)

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A community group lobbying for an end to plans for a \$217 million racetrack and amphitheatre on the Burswood peninsula has hit back at claims the development would be a boon to the local economy, pointing to similar developments in other states they say proved the opposite.

Australian Hotels Association WA chief executive Bradley Woods was among the latest to jump on board with the plans, following [the thumbs-up from Crown Perth chair John Van Der Wielen](#).



An artist impression of the Perth street circuit and amphitheatre on the Burswood peninsula. In an opinion piece in *The West Australian*, Woods claimed the proposed track would bring with it “significant benefits” to the economy, and critics had “resorted to caricatures and stereotypes to undermine the initiative”.

But Save Burswood Park Alliance co-chair Robin Harvey said while “the roar of V8 Supercars may thrill motorsport fans”, the aftermath was “far from exhilarating”.

“The legacy of these events is not one of prosperity but of disruption, disillusionment, and economic disappointment,” she said.

“As the Cook government moves to invest hundreds of millions of dollars to host a V8 Supercars event in Burswood Park, we must learn from the hard lessons of other cities.”

Harvey said the events shifted economic activity, rather than created it, giving the example of a 2017 Supercars event in Newcastle, NSW, which was hailed as a success with a \$36 million boost to the local economy.

However, a separate independent review found the real figure was less than half that amount.

She also said there had been a proposal to bring Supercars back to Canberra in 2023, after the original Canberra 400 racetrack was abandoned after two years in the early 2000s.

That proposal was called into question in parliament, with ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr telling a budget estimates hearing it “didn’t stack up”, and that the ACT would have needed to spend “tens of millions of dollars” to make it work.

In the Northern Territory, there was a reported drop in crowd numbers between the 2024 and 2025 Supercars rounds, but it was a dip the Northern Territory government’s events arm said was not a concern.

Harvey also argued that jobs created were “typically short-term”.

“Event staff, security, and hospitality roles that vanish once the engines fall silent,” she said.

But Sport and Recreation Minister Rita Saffioti argued there was “ample evidence of similar events driving a huge economic boost in other states”.

“The highly successful Adelaide 500 event is a model that Perth can take to a whole new level at Burswood,” she said.

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"In 2023, it delivered an economic injection of more than \$60 million to the South Australian economy."

Saffiotti said hosting major events in WA was a key pillar of the plan to diversify the state's economy, creating jobs across a range of industries, including tourism and hospitality.

"We've already seen the incredible success of hosting major events in Western Australia, drawing in thousands of out of state visitors who spend money in our restaurants, cafes, bars and pubs – supporting local businesses and local jobs," she said.

"This project will create a true multipurpose entertainment precinct, delivering benefits for both the local community and everyday park users, as well as boosting the state's capacity to host a range of arts, cultural and sporting events.

"The business case will be finalised in due course, with the project incorporating input from the community consultation process and the design work now under way.

"This work is critical to undertaking the economic analysis of the overall project."

The group of companies that built the Boorloo Bridge has been selected to design and build the racetrack and the 15,000 to 20,000-person amphitheatre, which is expected to open by 2027.