

Burswood's fabulous shrinking music bowl

JESSICA PAGE

The Premier has defended a decision to reduce the capacity of a new outdoor amphitheatre at Burswood from 20,000 to 12,000 seats, as more questions were raised about the cost of the \$217 million Perth Park project.

Labor won't budge on the controversial racetrack but Roger Cook says it has reduced the 20,000-seat capacity music bowl next door after receiving industry feedback.

The outdoor amphitheatre, announced in January, has been scaled back to 12,000 seats.

The Premier said budget concerns were just part of the reason for the change.

"Obviously, we want to continue to make sure that this is an affordable project. So that's always part of the thinking in relation to it," he said.

"The other feedback we got from the industry is that 12,000 is pretty much the sweet spot."

On Sunday, West Australian Music chief executive Owen Whittle said he wasn't worried about the revised size.

"WA sorely needs more live music venues, both big and small," he said.

The Opposition questioned the maths used in a summary of the project's business case, after consultants ACIL Allen predicted it would inject \$61m into the economy each year.

The economic firm's analysis included a caveat that ACIL Allen relied on government information and "has not sought to verify the accuracy" of it.

Mr Cook rejected claims this

reduced the credibility of the summary released to the public.

"It's absolutely transparent. Every time we come across these projects, if they're a little bit controversial, people will never be satisfied, until their argument wins the day," he said.

"But we've done the work. We've made sure that we've analysed this project, (and) carefully understood the economics.

"It will bring vitality, further vitality, to this great city and will provide a great opportunity to really activate a beautiful park."

Former Tourism WA chief executive Richard Muirhead said more scrutiny was warranted for what he called a "very expensive" exercise.

"There's no source data," Mr Muirhead told ABC Mornings.

"How do they know what the return is going to be? How many visitors are going to come? What additional visitors are they going to bring?"

"I'm assuming the Government handed the results of the 2023 event in Adelaide to ACIL Allen and they worked their numbers out on that.

"That gives you a return of \$1.35, or whatever, on every dollar invested which, frankly, from a government point of view, is not a good return.

"The other thing I should say is, the year that's quoted, of the \$61m return, that was a huge year for them, because in the middle of the event they had Robbie Williams performing... so many people said they went for the concert, not for the race."