

WA government is 'spinning' the results of community survey into Burswood Park racetrack and community hub, locals say

[By Cason Ho](#)



The state government has released the results of public consultation on building a community hub and racetrack at Burswood Park. (*ABC News: Glyn Jones*)

In short:

The WA government has released a report indicating the public supports a proposal to build a multi-purpose entertainment precinct and racetrack at Burswood Park.

The government's press release says 76 per cent of all contributions provided "positive ideas".

Save Burswood Park Alliance co-chair, Robyn Harvey, says that statement is disingenuous, and did not reflect the community's concerns about the proposal.

Link copied

A community group has accused the WA government of "spinning" the results of public feedback on a proposed community hub and racetrack in Burswood, contradicting the government's claims it has "significant" public support.

And WA Opposition Leader Basil Zempilas has weighed in on the debate, calling a report on the results of the feedback an "absolute sham".

The \$217 million development is set to include a 20,000-seat music bowl, function centre and motorsport circuit at Burswood Park and was a pre-election commitment.

A press release marking the end of the first part of the public consultation period claimed "76 per cent of all contributions provided positive ideas towards the project".

But Save Burswood Park Alliance co-chair Dr Robyn Harvey said that was a disingenuous framing of the data.

She said the feedback form offered no option for rejecting the development, instead asking for ideas.



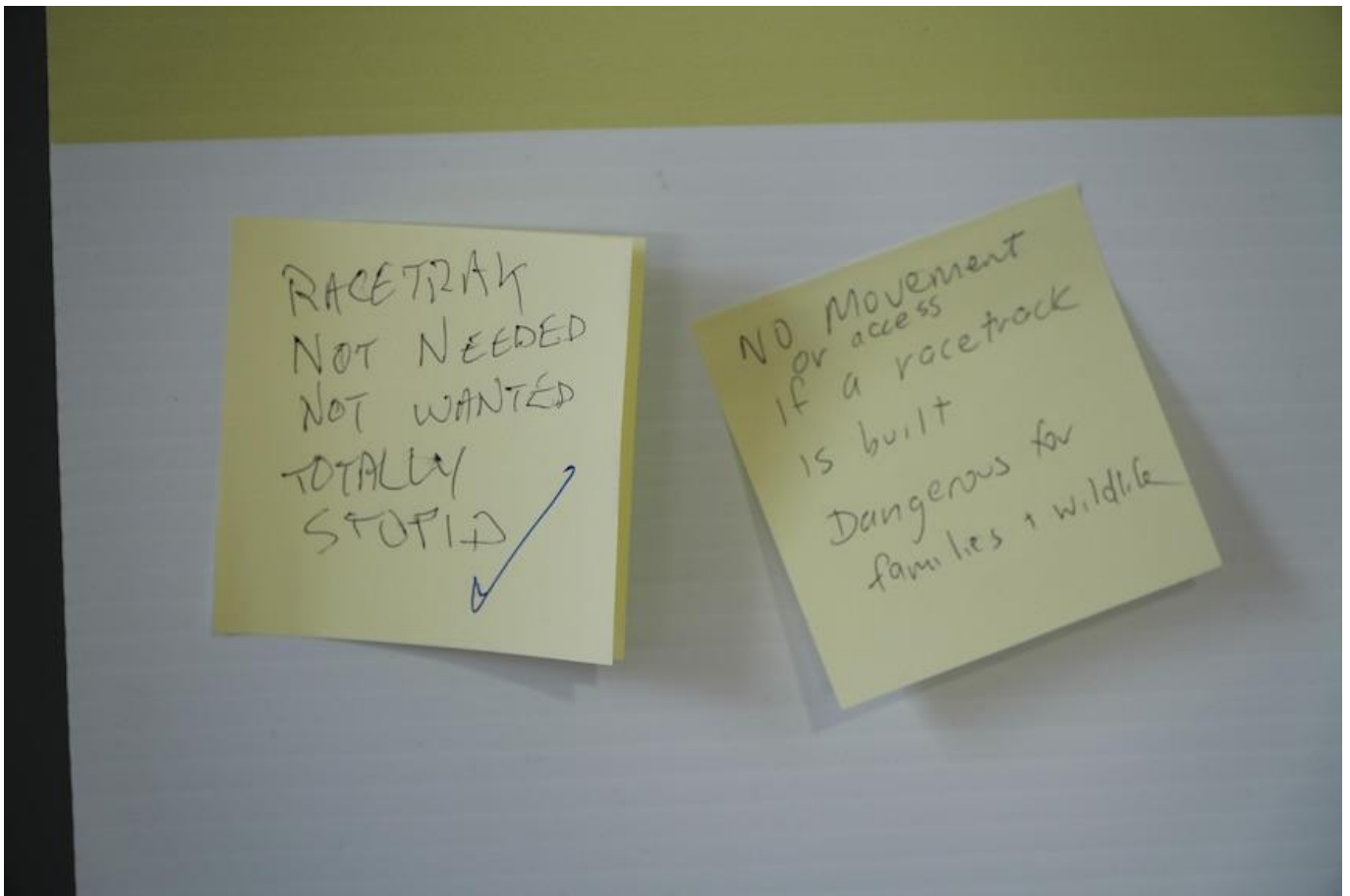
Robyn Harvey said the results were not an accurate reflection of community sentiment. (*ABC News: Courtney Withers*)

"The online feedback did not allow you to simply say 'no' ... so [the public] were saying things like 'more trees', 'look after the wildlife', 'we want an urban forest'," Dr Harvey said.

"So yes, there were lots of positive comments, but they certainly didn't feed into the idea that we wanted a motor racing track.

"They're spinning it."

She said data collected by her group suggested an overwhelming majority of people were against the new development.



Some of the feedback provided during the community drop-in sessions. (*ABC News: Courtney Withers*)

"We took photographic evidence and screenshots of the online and drop-in feedback every day ... 85 per cent of respondents on the online feedback said 'no racetrack'," she said.

"At the drop-in centres it was even more, it was 98 per cent of post-it notes said 'no racetrack'."

According to the government's Perth Entertainment and Sporting Precinct report, there were 672 contributions via the online consultation platform.



The state government said the racetrack would only be used once a year. (*Supplied: WA Labor*)

"In summary, stakeholders offered significant support for the PESP with the majority recognising opportunity for their industry, association or group and identifying with the wider vision for the precinct," the report said.

"Opposition to the development centred around the use of the precinct for motorsport."

Response 'quite positive'

['Rita's racetrack' divides opinion](#)

Photo shows WA Premier Roger Cook smiles as he sits in a racing car.



The WA government's controversial \$217 million plan to build a street motorsport circuit at Perth's Burswood Park has incurred the wrath of many — and don't dare call it a motorplex.

Parliamentary secretary to the Premier, Daniel Pastorelli, who has been involved in community drop-in sessions about the proposal, said the "positive ideas" received complemented the government's proposal.

These included support for more hospitality venues, an urban forest and more trees.

"Things like more hospitality venues on the peninsula, things like an urban forest, people definitely want more trees in the park area," Mr Pastorelli told ABC Radio Perth.

"Overall, the response that we've received has been quite positive."

"Obviously, some of the local residents are concerned about the motorsport element of the project, there's no doubt about that, and we understand that completely."

Mr Pastorelli said initial public concerns about the project were due to "misconceptions" the motorsport track would be used frequently, but he said it would only host a "one-off annual event".

The proposal has faced pushback from residents and advocates of green space, and from the WA Liberal leader Basil Zempilas, who has previously labelled the project a "wasteful" use of taxpayer dollars.

Speaking on Saturday, Mr Zempilas said the government had not accurately reflected community sentiment in its report.



Basil Zempilas described the proposal as "wasteful". (ABC News: Phoebe Pin)

"All the government knows in relation to this project is spin," he said.

"People don't want a racetrack on Burswood Park."

"Spin, a sham, [the report] misrepresents what the survey told [the government] and it is nowhere near close to presenting an accurate view of what people think of this precinct and a racetrack."

Mr Zempilas said he did not believe the project would come to fruition.

"I hold great confidence that this project won't go ahead, because eventually the premier and the deputy premier will have to come to their senses.

"There's no demand for it. We have a racetrack that works up at Wanneroo. Why would you put one here and spend over \$200 million when that money could be spent on any other projects?"

Dr Harvey said she was opposed to the destruction of an inner-city green space.

"Even if they're not racing on it [the race track], it destroys the park," she said.

"The urban forest that they suggest is something they will look at, there is no room for it, where will it go?"

But Mr Pastorelli insisted the consultation had been "a constructive process" with many ideas advanced "that may be added to the project as we progress".

Local Government Minister Hannah Beazley, who is also the member for Victoria Park, says the consultation process was wide-ranging and offered many opportunities to respond.

"There is a diversity of opinion when it comes to the Burswood entertainment and sports precinct and I receive a lot of that ... opinion," she said.



Hannah Beazley says she was pleased with the "thoroughness" of the first round of consultation. (*ABC Perth: Courtney Withers*)

"I was really pleased with the thoroughness of the first round of consultation for the project and was really pleased to see the amount of positive contributions ... that will result in better outcomes for the precinct.

"There were multiple drop-in sessions, thousands of newsletters dropped, there was an advertising campaign, there was the ability to email to a dedicated website to comment ... it was a comprehensive consultation campaign."

A submission for the project is due to be made to the Environmental Protection Authority in coming weeks, and site investigations were underway.