

BATTLE OF BURSWOOD

Labor at loggerheads over \$217m racetrack as PM's right-hand man in Perth says 'listen to people who voted for you and kill the project'

Federal Member for Perth Patrick Gorman. Right: Protesters hold another rally against the Burswood racetrack.



EXCLUSIVE JOE SPAGNOLO

The Cook Government's controversial \$217 million racetrack and entertainment precinct at Burswood is now being opposed by one of its very own — Anthony Albanese's right-hand man in Perth, Patrick Gorman.

Mr Gorman, the local Federal MP, told *The Sunday Times* he does not support the project, imploring his State colleagues to not proceed with the racetrack.

His opposition to the project is a major blow to any hope Mr Cook might have had that the Prime Minister would kick in some Federal funding.

"I am hopeful they will listen to my electorate of Perth and address the extensive community concerns about the proposed Burswood racetrack," Mr Gorman said on Saturday.

"It is no surprise to anyone that as the Member for Perth my longstanding and firm view is that the Burswood racetrack should not proceed."

"As a local member I have heard extensive concerns from local constituents and community groups about the significant loss of amenity, environmental impacts and impacts on future housing developments."

The Burswood project is one of \$3.4 billion of election promises



made by Labor in the lead-up to the March poll. The Cook Government first floated the idea of a "world-class motorsport street circuit" next to Optus Stadium in 2024. The idea was promoted as taking V8s to the streets around Burswood "as the highlight of a new motorsports festival".

In June last year, Mr Cook's office said the idea for the circuit had stemmed from a meeting between Supercars and Mr Cook in early 2023 when the Premier was tourism minister, and was again resurrected during the 2025 State election campaign.

Mr Gorman told *The Sunday Times* there were concerns about the project from the beginning.

"These concerns started immediately after the election commitment was announced and have amplified since the release of the consultation report," he said.

But a spokeswoman for Mr Cook claimed on Saturday the Burswood project had significant support from nearby residents and groups.

"The consultation process resulted in hundreds of residents and 90 groups being engaged," the spokeswoman said. "In total, 76 per cent of all contributions provided positive ideas towards the project."

It's understood Mr Gorman — whose Perth electorate includes suburbs abutting Burswood, including Maylands, East Perth and Mt Lawley — has also commissioned polling on the issue. Mr Cook and Treasurer Rita Saffioti have had to defend the project claiming it was more than a racetrack, and includes a 20,000-seat amphitheatre for concerts and the like.

A Save Burswood Alliance has now been formed, and the State Opposition is demanding the racetrack be

scrapped and the money used on urgent spending in health. On Saturday, Mr Cook, through a spokeswoman, returned fire at Mr Gorman, suggesting he spend his time fighting for the interests of WA in Canberra.

"While we are always interested in the views of our Federal representatives, we think it would be most appropriate for Mr Gorman to spend his time in Canberra helping us to secure WA's fair share of infrastructure spending and aged-care beds," the spokeswoman said.

The Premier's spokeswoman also claimed Mr Gorman had some of his facts wrong in a recent letter to the Government about the project.

"For example, Mr Gorman asserted the precinct was being developed for numerous motorsport events — that's wrong," she said. "In fact, it will host one Supercars event a year, with the precinct being available for a range of other community events."

"Mr Gorman also incorrectly suggested there would be a loss of urban canopy and green space, when our plan will actually see an increase in the number of trees and natural amenity."

Shortly after the election Mr Cook strongly suggested he hoped the Prime Minister would help fund the racetrack/entertainment project as part of a list of priorities for WA.

But Mr Cook's spokeswoman said the State Government was "not seeking Federal Government funding for this project".