

Racetrack division drags on

OLIVER LANE

State Perth MP John Carey has backed his Government's proposed Burswood racetrack after his Federal counterpart called on the State to listen to locals and scrap it.

There has been fierce backlash to Roger Cook's proposal to build a \$217 million entertainment precinct in Burswood near Optus Stadium since it was announced prior to the March election.

Central to the design is a racetrack, which would hold a Supercars race one weekend a year.

Federal Perth MP Patrick Gorman became the first Labor figure to speak out against the idea on Sunday, saying the State Government should listen to his electorate and scrap it.

"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," said Mr Gorman, who is also Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister.

Mr Carey hit back on Sunday and said his view differed from his Federal colleague.

"I respect that there are a diversity of views on this project, Patrick's got the right to hold his views and I disagree with it," he said.

"It is not (correct) from my experience, and ultimately I understand that people can be apprehensive about particular projects.

"I'm never dismissing that apprehension and opposition."

Mr Carey confirmed there was no chance the State Government would move the location.

He denied it was an example of a deepening rift between the State and Federal Labor governments, arguing it was better there was contested views in politics.

State Opposition Leader Basil Zempilas said with dissent from its own side, Labor should scrap the plan.

"Clearly there is division in the camp, there is now two schools of thought," he said.

"There is Cook and Saffioti out on their own and there appears to be everybody else, some have the courage to speak up, most of them don't.

"I would urge all of those Labor backbenchers and I would urge all of those other Labor ministers, now is the time to speak up."

A spokeswoman for Mr Cook on Saturday said the project had significant support from nearby residents and groups.