



# 'Down with merger'

By HAMISH HASTIE

Community opposition to the State Government's local government reform proposal is growing after hundreds of people turned out to the battle for Burswood rally on Sunday morning.

Dressed in red, the crowd rallied at Memorial park, Victoria Park to protest boundary changes which would mean an amalgamated City of South Perth and Town of Victoria Park would lose the Crown casino complex and new Perth stadium.

Speakers included Town of Victoria Park mayor Trevor Vaughan, City of South Perth mayor Sue Doherty, Member for Victoria Park Ben Wyatt, Christina's restaurant owner Christina Harding and Save the Town of Victoria Park group founder Stephanie Kimberley.

The speakers raised their concerns about the costs to ratepayers the reforms would have and the parking

and traffic problems the Perth parking levy could cause in surrounding suburbs.

Mr Wyatt also raised concerns about the Government attempting to remove the Dardour amendment from the Local Government Act 1995 which would remove the right of ratepayers to vote on amalgamations.

Mr Vaughan said the current boundary changes could cost it \$90 million over 10 years.

He said the removal of the Crown complex would cost \$2.8 million a year and the merger between South Perth and Victoria Park would cost \$12 million.

Mr Vaughan said council land within the Crown complex, which could have a value of between \$40 and \$50 million was at risk.

He hoped Liberal party members took notice of the public outcry.

"All of the Liberal members of parliament

who see this is causing huge disruption in all their communities, not just us," he said.

"Belmont is upset, Armadale, Canning, there's a whole heap of Liberal party members who need to take notice of this because if they don't, come the next election people are going to remember it."

Mr Wyatt said big crowds like the one on Sunday did not come out for small issues.

"People are obviously concerned and agitated that Colin Barnett feels as though he can ride roughshod over their views and that is why we will be opposing this in the parliament in his attempt to remove the right for ratepayers to vote on their boundaries," he said.

"If we lose that part of the peninsular two things happen, our rates have to go up and our services have to be cut.

Victoria Park chief executive Arthur Kyron said the rally

was just the start.

"You can't ignore this many people on a Sunday plus the number of people that have filled out surveys to date, the number of people that have visited the webpage," he said.

"The only other crowd anywhere near this would've been Anzac day which is a major national day.

"Well this is Victoria Park's national day.

"This is a day where we're standing up and

saying pay attention to the people of Victoria Park."

Local Government Minister Tony Simpson said he was looking forward to October 4 when all submissions to the Local Government Advisory Board were due and it could start doing its work, including taking into account community feedback.

He did not answer questions about the rally.



Town of Victoria Park mayor Trevor Vaughan said the proposed reforms could cost the town \$90 million over 10 years.



*Victoria Park and South Perth councillors and local members oppose the current boundary reforms  
Photographs — Hamish Hastie.*



*Hundreds of people turned out opposing the boundary changes.*