

Australia's leading motor sport body is lobbying for a premium car racing circuit to be built in Ballarat to replace the soon to be defunct Sandown Racetrack.

Confederation of Australian Motor Sport chief executive Eugene Arocca has revealed Ballarat's highly anticipated \$50 million motor sport complex was CAMS's preferred location for a new V8 track.

He estimated a single V8 weekend event could pump between \$15 and \$20 million into Ballarat's economy.

"We'd consider moving CAMS's headquarters (currently in Melbourne) up to Ballarat that's how committed we are," Mr. Arocca said.

"We're working against the clock to get a track established in the next two years."

It followed news the Sandown Park's racecourse and horse track in Springvale may be up for residential sale soon leaving the Australian Motorsport industry without a permanent metropolitan track.

"We've asked the council to look at the project more holistically and draw up a master-plan that incorporated a national level best practice track," Mr. Arocca said.

"This would ensure the project not only met the grassroots needs of the community but attracted races from around the country and events from within Victoria."

To date, 35 different sites in the Ballarat region have been examined for the complex.

However, Councilor Vicki Coltman cast doubt on whether such a large-scale complex could be built within two years. She said the council's priority remained building a grass-roots motorsports hub for existing local clubs.

She said the Ballarat West Employment Zone's expansion was starting to impact on Ballarat Light Car Club and Ballarat Drag Racing Club space and it was imperative works on a new hub were fast tracked.

But Cr Coltman didn't rule out the possibility of V8 track in the future.

"These projects generally take a minimum of five years because there is a whole stack of planning and zoning required," Cr Coltman said.

"Given we haven't got any funding yet, I would be surprised to see a track the level of Sandown built in two years. If we were to secure government or outside funding... a project of this nature would need to be staged over a number of years."

Long time campaigner for the complex, councilor John Philips said about 300 hectares of land was needed to deliver a multi-discipline motor sport facility with opportunities in driver education and training, industry testing and events.

"The idea is that it will be able to cater for anything on wheels," he said.

“For years the council have worked alongside local groups car clubs, bike clubs and organization’s like CAMS to do a range of things which ultimately may be able to cater for V8 super cars and possibly Formula One racing.”

Mr. Arocca said suburban crawl meant the future of motorsport tracks existed in regional areas like Ballarat.

He said ideally the hub would be 15 to 20 kilometers out of Ballarat’s CBD on a large parcel of crown land which provided a gateway to the venue from Melbourne and Geelong.

“A quality track run privately on crown land operated by a board made up of representatives from the council, the government and organizations like CAMS could make a lot of money which would be put back into community and back into the track,” he said.

Meanwhile, Supercars is negotiating with Sandown’s owner, the Melbourne Racing Club, for a minimum three-year renewal of the Sandown 500 event, which would end in 2019.