THE V8 Supercars are set to extend their stay in Darwin well into the next decade after NT Major Events general manager Paul Cattermole has been instructed by Chief Minister Adam Giles to begin long-term contract negotiations with Supercars chief executive James Warburton.

"We’ve been told to commence discussions as soon as possible with the view of extending the contract to ensure the V8 Supercars are secured long term at Hidden Valley," Cattermole said.

"And while I can’t give any numbers in terms of years, we’re already locked in until 2038 and want the Supercars here for a lot longer than that.

"Remember, Bathurst is secured until 2024. What Major Events and Darwin people don’t want to happen is to wake up one morning and read on the front page of the NT News that the V8s won’t be back next year.

"We were again very pleased with the support from the local community and it emphasises again that major events like the Supercars are important to the psyche of our city and one of the major reasons why we live here."

Cattermole said the “race ready” Hidden Valley circuit would undergo a month-long $3.9 million track resurface beginning in mid-July, the first time that has happened since the track first hosted the Supercars in 1998.

He also re-emphasised his organisation was “very focused” on maintaining the vibrancy of on-track entertainment the three days of V8 racing offered the fans.

"As a result we’re very conscious that the entertainment does not remain the same. Because, at the end of the day, we’ve got to entertain our big army of supporters.

“We now have a wonderful community asset at Hidden Valley, not just for motorsport events but as an entertainment venue, as was seen with the concerts we held without neighbours complaining about the noise.”

Cattermole said the local combined category – COMMODORE CUP, HiJ Holden and Improved Production – would remain on the program as they had for 17 years.

"From our point of view they are a priority," he said.

“We want to continue to ensure they get the exposure they deserve and more importantly – need – to be able to build on their numbers locally.”

"But the Formula 3s have got a lot of work to do after putting down to a very small number of entries this year. That means they have to go back and rebuild their numbers before coming back to Minor Events and justifying why they will be on the program again.”

"Lion King decides to draw curtain

By LAINE CLARK in Brisbane

In the end, it was a mark that defined Jonathan Brown’s AFL career.

But the Brisbane Lions’ champion conceded his courageous, back-to-the-pack approach seen in his 2002 Mark of the Year effort also fast-tracked his retirement.

Brown, 32, yesterday drew the curtain on his stellar 15-season AFL career based on strong medical advice after suffering his third heavy head knock in 12 months.

Brown won three straight flags but the forward as the club went into a post-2004 grand final freefall, last making the top eight in 2009.

"I was never blessed with great speed, so I had to try and use my physical force and attack on the ball to get the best out of myself."

"The shame for me was the body was quite sound the last month. I felt I got a bit of the mojo back.”

Brown admitted the 17th-placed Lions’ current plight also made it hard to announce his retirement. He followed in the footsteps of his father Brian – a former Fitzroy player – when he burst onto the AFL scene in 2000.

Back, hip and facial injuries hampered the forward as the club went into a post-2004 grand final freefall, last making the top eight in 2009.

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Brown admitted the 17th-placed Lions’ current plight also made it hard to announce his retirement. He followed in the footsteps of his father Brian – a former Fitzroy player – when he burst onto the AFL scene in 2000.

"Suffice to say we’re very focused on adding an additional category to our program and which one, we’re still to decide.”