

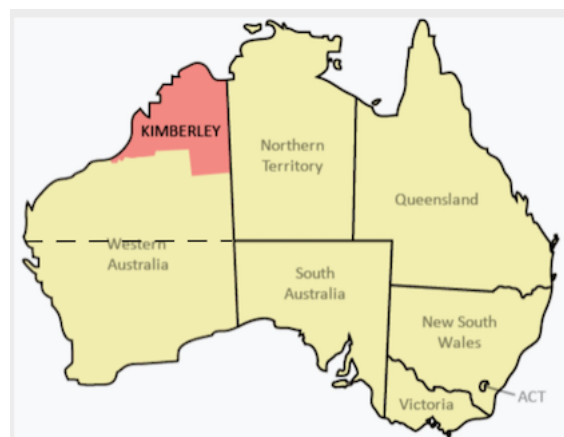
The new Kimberley Territory

Western Australia, which is the largest single state in the world, is impossible to effectively develop and manage at any distance from the rich and populated South West. Both businesses and the population inevitably gravitate to Perth, which is itself the most isolated capital in the world.

While geographic isolation is not the major problem it was once, the fact that Australia lacks any substantial settlement in the north-west is clearly an economic deficit - an opportunity that Australia is missing. This vast empty expanse on the map also suggests to the over-crowded people of Asia that here is an opportunity for settlement and development which breeds misunderstandings and resentments.

One important aspect of this proposal is that it would be seen to have the interests of non-Australians in mind, while not just following blindly down the track of "Big Australia". It would also be proof with important propaganda value that the restriction of population growth is not another version of the "White Australia policy."

However the Kimberley and North-west region lacks any substantial town which might spontaneously develop into a city. It is also a truism that in regions like the Kimberleys, any population nucleus will only develop into a viable and substantial city and administration centre and city if businesses can be confident that their chosen development region will eventually acquire a city which will later become a state capital.



New state/territory boundaries.

Essentially, we are proposing that Western Australia be divided into north and south regions along a boundary which is a continuation of the 26 degree South border division between South Australia and the Northern Territory. This demarcation line would meet the West Australian coast just below Carnarvon and create a new Australian (later self-governing) territory, probably named "Kimberley" or "North-Western Australia".

This new territory would have a number of small population centres: Carnarvon, Derby, Onslow, Port Headland on its southern coast, with Broome and the Kununurra/Ord River Irrigation area to the NE.

The Kimberley/North-West region would initially be treated as another sub-state following the established lines of the Northern Territory (but initially with an Assembly perhaps also having some indigenous representation).

Most West Australians would see value in this change, provided it is promoted as allowing more political focus to be on the South-west region. It would also give WA two more Senators for the period before full statehood.

The professed eventual aim would be to see (many years hence) the two north-most territories merge to form a state of "Northern Australia", having normal Federal parliamentary representation (12 senators) and its own state houses.

Current Industries

1. Tourism is important to this area, but it is erratic and not very beneficial to Australian business. Most recent developments have focussed on international cruise liners (with controlled environments) along the spectacular fiord-like north-west coast.
2. Fishing and the old pearl industry are famous along the coast, but both are facing their limits. Broome has a cultured pearl industry.
3. The cattle-pastoral industry still remains viable, but it is unlikely to be expanded.
4. The Ord River development scheme opened in 1963. The town of Kununurra and the Ord River Irrigation Area were initially developed for sugar cane and later for cotton. The Ord Dam now irrigates 750 sq kms of land with a “steppe climate” and a rainfall of 800mm. This area has potential as a food exporter to Asia given the infrastructure (all-weather airport).
5. Mining is not a major economic force, however the region has the Argyle diamond mine and some gold and other mineral extraction areas.

Climate

The region suffers from high humidity and heat in Oct-Dec period. Then in summer, monsoons between January and March often force the closure of many roads and national parks due to heavy rain. Days are overcast and hot; heavy downpours are a frequent occurrence.

This is also cyclone territory.

The Plateau Group’s interest in this scheme developed after it was recognised that the same low-rise/wide area engineering techniques we were developing to provide low-cost small homes in the CBDs of Australian suburbs could also provide a low-cost controlled environment development here.

Economic possibilities

Any new state or territory needs to have a couple of major viable industries. These are possibilities.

- A. **Energy-intensive** industries. Electric generation needed by intensive-consumption industries will need to be close to the industries being serviced in the future. North-western Australia, because of its environment and lack of intensive development will provide a worthwhile venue in the future for steel and aluminium smelting. We are facing the demise of coal and gas power generation which currently support our energy-intensive industries in the main population centres on the Eastern seaboard coast.

However, the monsoon cloud cover means that solar is unlikely to be a major source of future energy in the North-west. Large wind-farms could be mounted almost anywhere, so the use of wind generation is certainly highly viable (but without pumped hydro, it will be intermittent).

Tidal Power: However much more interest lies in the use of **tidal power** which is only a minor renewable factor in other parts of Australia. Queensland has a small development project; Tasmania has a tidal and wave-power trial; and the coastline above Derby in WA is developing a 40 megaWatt tidal power system. The whole of this north-west coast is recognised with having the highest potential for harvesting tidal energy in the world.

Tidal energy can provide a very cheap form of non-intrusive sustainable/base-load energy when coupled with small pumped-hydro systems here.

- Tidal power is very highly efficient in terms of the amount of energy that can be reaped from the environment using the least necessary equipment — due to the sheer mass of the water v. air. This is also simple, easy to maintain primary equipment

- Tidal flows are predictable and regular (every 6.25 hours) and the north-west coast has the highest tides in the world. Predictability provides further economies in the amount of energy harvested from the least essential infrastructure.
- A number of different approaches are available for generating ocean power (tidal and wave)
 - Underwater turbines and water-pump equipment can be built into barrages across the wider inlets, or in the narrower fiords along the coast they can be fully submerged and therefore have no impact on the aesthetics of the region, especially tourism.
 - Rather than underwater electrical generation the water movement can be harvested to turn double-stroke water-pumps, lifting fresh ocean water up through hidden pipes to the high plateau surrounding this coast. This permits:
 - A very low-cost pumped hydro generation system providing steady output power.
 - A secondary use for the holding ponds in fish-farming and pearl culture.

B. Higher and Trade Education: Australia has developed a very viable market in Higher Education, with many of our State/Federal Universities and TAFE colleges making a substantial income from the so-called “export” of education. The export of higher education is now a \$30 billion industry in Australia, and given the development of a modern city (based on Plateau principles for temperature and humidity control, and resistance to cyclones, etc.) the potential here is enormous.

There is no reason why these same institutions couldn't develop various subsidiaries and colleges and research institutes (probably on a single campus) in this region to service the Asian market. This obviously would be also seen in part as foreign aid.

Ideally, one of the towns in this new territory would be developed into a “Science and Education City” with the CSIRO and various other medical and technical research institute alongside the educational institutes. This could also become the new centre for the innovative use of on-line systems for higher education.

One of the worst aspects of Australia's export of education, is that we often don't export them back to their nations to help fill desperate needs. We treat our education facilities as if they were ventures in foreign aid and train the brightest of the young citizens in Asia — but we then encourage them to migrate at the completion of their courses, because we claim Australia needs the skills we have helped them generate.

This is a hypocritical form of “brain drain” which is often used to circumvent the restrictions on immigration.

One advantage of siting these educational institutes in the north-west is that students, migrants, refugees, and business people can be admitted to this territory on conditional visas which would block them from claiming the right to take up Australian citizenship. The admission conditions would insist that they remain domicile in this region for the period of their visas and then return to their home nations. We should not be draining these countries of their brightest and best anyway.

Training Australians: Another viable angle here is to develop language and cultural training and research centres for Australian diplomats, the security services, bureaucrats, and business people - making use of the language and cultural knowledge of refugee and conditional migrant population and students.

Indigenous education: The development of a concentration of institutions for TAFE and University education, should also be an opportunity to develop special education and development facilities for the indigenous Australians.

C. Conventions, web-sites and call centres.

The location of the Kimberleys half-way between the main population centres of Australia and those of Asia, makes this an idea location for the development of major convention facilities eventually.

The necessary emphasis on electronic education, communications and training systems, also mean that this could be developed as a centre for web-site development and call centres, able

to use Asians on short-term visas. This would allow Australia to bring these under Australian control without necessarily adding to business costs, while providing work for genuine refugees.

D. Food and product export to Asia.

It is difficult to know the potential for food exports from this region to Asia, but since it is a short air flight from Kununurra [Ord River irrigation district] to most of the major Asian cities, the potential for overnight shipping of fresh food-stuff would have to be extensive once the infrastructure was developed.

Cotton and sugar cane are clearly not the way we should be going with the Ord River Irrigation scheme.

The tidal power energy scheme on the north-west coast can also generate a zero-cost secondary value out of a fish-farming industry which would utilise the high-level [pumped hydro] holding ponds. Pearl culture has similar requirements.

E. Temporary harbour for Asian refugees.

The development of one or more substantial population centres would initially require a number of low-skilled migrant workers and we have these people incarcerated in off-shore prison camps. These schemes would provide an opportunity for Australia to rectify the harsh treatment handed out to the early boat people.

Their labour would be needed, and they could be transferred from Manus Island and Nauru, and accommodated under a system of restricted visas (if draconian measures are still required). If the sole purpose is to provide a safe-haven from persecution or war threat then the North-west is the ideal location to provide shelter, for both the refugees themselves and for Australia.

Ideally such a region would also use migrant, refugees and overseas students as a way to establish special trade-links with Asia - only a short air hop away from our neighbours. Australia would also benefit from having a pool of language speakers able to provide translation services, know the cultures, and be knowledgeable about their old countries.

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