



JANUARY 2019

Why is Westport investigating Cockburn Sound as a potential port location?

The most common question that Westport gets asked is why the Taskforce is considering Kwinana/Cockburn Sound as a possible location for a new container port facility. Many alternative locations have been suggested, from Moore River to Mandurah.

There is a long history of studies that have been done into possible locations for a second major container port for Perth (see *list to the right*), and each study has reinforced the point that Cockburn Sound is arguably the only suitable location for another major port within the Greater Perth area.

What is the Outer Harbour?

An inner harbour is part of a port or harbour that is positioned at a river mouth or further inland. An outer harbour is part of a port or harbour that is located in the ocean. The port at Fremantle is an inner harbour, while the ocean surrounding the river mouth – including Cockburn Sound – is the outer harbour. Both areas are managed by Fremantle Ports.

History of Perth port planning

- 1897: Inner Harbour at Fremantle opens
- 1940's-50's: Town Planning Commissioner, David Davidson, prepares a master plan for metropolitan Perth, with Kwinana designated as the heavy industry location
- 1952: Oil Refinery (Kwinana) Agreement Act 1952 is passed. This State Agreement with Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now BP Development Australia) promises land, utilities, transport links and a major port in Kwinana
- 1955: Plan for Perth and Fremantle reconfirms the planning for Kwinana industrial areas and port facilities in Cockburn Sound
- 1966: Development of the Outer Harbour begins. The Causeway to Garden Island is created.
- 1971: Corridor Plan again reinforces Kwinana industrial area and Cockburn Sound port facilities
- 1972: The Port Development Scheme Point Peron Area is produced which incorporated a marina in Mangles Bay.
- 1982-84: plan for Outer Harbour at Mangles Bay
- 1989: new Port Options Study assessed five locations along the coast between the CBH grain terminal and Fremantle Port
- 1991: Metroplan endorses Kwinana industrial areas and port facilities in Cockburn Sound
- 1994: Future Port Options – Naval Base/Kwinana study
- 1996: Cabinet endorses Naval Base/Kwinana as the preferred site for a second major container port
- 1997: Port Development Plan – looked at two options close to the CBH grain terminal
- 1999: Outer Harbour Development – proposed a design at Naval Base
- 2005-06: Port Options for Fremantle Outer Harbour proposed a number of options, including an island port connected to the coast north of the Alcoa jetty
- 2007: Port Options for Fremantle Outer Harbour – Cabinet endorses an island and land-backed port at Naval Base
- 2013-17: new port planning undertaken by the Barnett Government and Fremantle Ports assessed for privatisation
- 2017-19: Westport Taskforce develops the Westport: Port and Environs Strategy

The history of Kwinana

During World War II, the Town Planning Commissioner, David Davidson, commenced preparing a master plan for metropolitan Perth. During this period, the State Government designated the Kwinana coastal area as Perth's heavy industrial location.

This was underpinned by a State Agreement with Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now BP Development Australia), legislated in 1952. This agreement promised land, utilities, transport links and a major port in Kwinana, along with housing developments for BP workers in adjacent areas (now Parmelia, Medina and Kwinana). The BP oil refinery subsequently became the stimulus for a number of supporting industries being developed in Kwinana, and catalysed further heavy industrial growth in the area.

Within the context of Perth in the 1940s and early 1950s, Kwinana as an industrial area with port facilities in Cockburn Sound was a clear and logical planning decision. Kwinana was a location that offered land with direct access to the coast and Outer Harbour, had current and planned road and rail connections, and the workforce could reside in nearby suburbs. The protection offered by Garden Island made the waters of Cockburn Sound relatively safer for berthing ships compared to other stretches of WA's coastline. Kwinana has subsequently become an essential part of the State's economic growth, generating \$15.77 billion per annum by 2018 (Committee for Perth).



Other locations investigated

Many other potential port locations near Perth have been examined over the years – and each of them, except for Cockburn Sound, has been deemed unsuitable.

A 1989 report investigated having dedicated container-handling facilities at either Geraldton, Bunbury, Wilbinga or Breton Bay. It found that:

- land transport costs associated with cartage between a regional container port and Perth were prohibitive, given that the majority of containers had an origin or destination in the metropolitan area;
- there would be high costs for upgrading rail connections to these ports to handle high volumes of containers; and
- regional ports go against the international trend of consolidated container port facilities.

Five sites along the Perth metropolitan coastline were also considered:

- **North Fremantle (north of North Mole):** found to be unsuitable due to potentially causing substantial congestion on the transport network resulting in severe restrictions to the efficiency of operations;
- **Catherine Point (within Owen Anchorage):** deemed unsuitable due to existing proposals to redevelop industrial land for urban uses; water quality issues; social impacts (noise, light, risk) on nearby urban communities;
- **Jervoise Bay:** was unsuitable due to a lack of land for supporting industries; proximity to key recreational areas; impact on marine flora; proximity to the area earmarked for expansion of marine construction facilities;
- **Rockingham Wells Park:** deemed unsuitable due to proximity to urban land in Rockingham; major constraints presented by the unsympathetic bathymetry of the area; and
- **Mangles Bay:** unsuitable due to transport constraints, proximity to urban uses, negative environmental impacts, and the military use of Garden Island.

Cockburn Sound found to be the only suitable location

Naval Base/Kwinana was the only location deemed suitable for a major port. This was due to:

- ability to meet port, land use and transport planning needs while minimising environmental and social impacts;
- buffer between port/industry and urban uses;
- integration with existing industry; and
- meets ship operational criteria.

This location was subsequently endorsed by Cabinet in 1996 as the preferred site for the development of additional container port facilities to handle overflow trade beyond the capacity of the Inner Harbour at Fremantle.

The key findings of each of these studies were that:

- container handling facilities at regional ports are unlikely to be viable; and
- Kwinana/Cockburn Sound is the preferred site for an expanded port or container facility within the Perth metropolitan region.