

Isolated from the more civilized parts of Australia by a large desert called the Nullarbor Plain and by economic factors known as the High Price Of Tickets for a Plane, Western Australian fandom has evolved into a pretty unique form. Not only that, but it is probably the most enthusiastic group of fans in the Southern Hemisphere, with the possible exception of New Zealand fandom.

Since Swancon I, W.A. has had a convention per year, last year's Swancon V being the Australian National Convention. Large quantities of fanzines have also been flowing from Western Australia, though, in some cases, the zines are so typical of the W.A. idiom that they are incomprehensible to the outsider. Once again, the state capital, Perth, provides the centre of W.A. fandom, though American fan Mark Sharpe was, for a while, stationed at Exmouth.

W.A. FAN GROUPS

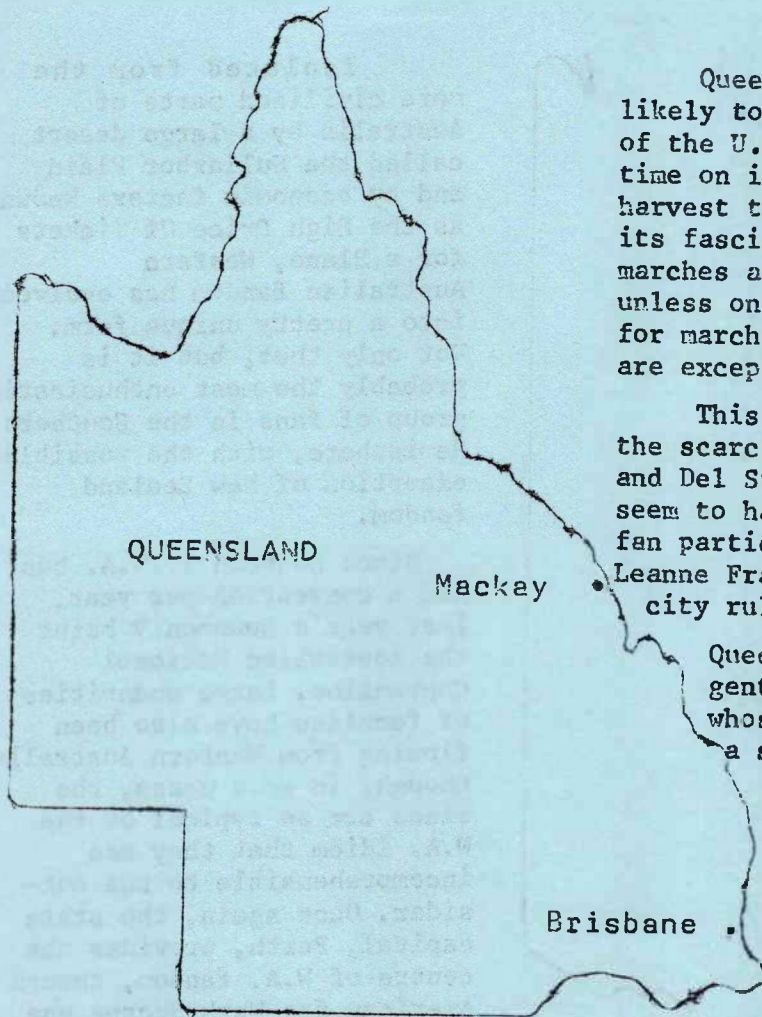
THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN SCIENEC FICTION ASSOCIATION Wasfa seems to be Perth's equivalent of Sydney's Foundation. It has a fanzine, at present titled THE BLACK DUCK'S TALE, and, I gather, organises all sorts of fun events.

SOUTH WARREN A house that has the same sort of connotations for Perth fen as Moira Crescent had for Sydney fen, and that The Magic Puddin Club had for Melbourne fen. One of those houses in which one can find just about anyone if one waits long enough.

In addition there is a University group, UNISFA, and a media group Federation Outpost Colonies. While not in himself constituting a group, Grant Stone has a fanzine library funded largely by the Murdoch University.

W.A. FAN LANDMARKS

SOUTH WARREN See above.



Queensland is as close as you're likely to come to an Australian equivalent of the U.S. Deep South. It relied for a time on imported coloured labour to harvest the sugar cane, and is noted for its fascist police laws. Indeed, street marches are not permitted in Queensland, unless one can get a permit, and permits for marches against the State Government are exceptionally rare.

This may have something to do with the scarcity of fan in Queensland. Dennis and Del Stocks were quite well known, but seem to have gaffiated. The only Queensland fan particularly active at present is Leanne Frahm, and she breaks the capital city rule by living near Mackay.

Queensland has as its Premier a gentleman named Joh Bjelke-Petersen whose political activities are a standing joke elsewhere in Australia, but sacred in Queensland. Queensland is also the home of the cane toad, an ugly amphibian which exudes a malodorous yellow poison from its skin. Many have seen in this an element of divine irony.

PUTTING AUSTRALIA INTO PERSPECTIVE

The main problem facing Australian fans is that the country is so bloody big. From Sydney to Perth is over two thousand miles. Even the flight from Adelaide to Melbourne, a mere four hundred miles, costs one hundred and seventy dollars return. Thus any interstate fandom either takes a hell of a long time, or costs a lot. (One Perth group travelling by car to Syncon '79 had two cars breakdown during the course of the journey). The only alternative to car and plane is the bus or rail services. What the bus makes up for in time it loses in comfort, and what the train loses in comfort it also loses in time. (It is reputed that a Queensland train passenger got off the train when it made one of its frequent stops in the middle of barren bush. When asked what he was doing he replied that he was going to pick some flowers. The train conductor informed him that there were no flowers out there to be picked, but the traveller explained that he had a packet of seeds with him.)

The other thing which increases fan isolation is the high cost of postage in this country, but I don't really want to talk about that at ~~present~~. present. When I talk about postage costs I tend to cry a lot.
