



Karratha would gain by being made a city

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KARRATHA should be Western Australia's next major city as its growth would bring positive economic benefits to the Pilbara region, a senator has said.

Senator Alan Eggleston has welcomed the Barnett Government's plan to transform Karratha into a bustling city with a population of more than 50,000.

The details of the work proposed are in the draft Karratha Revitalisation Plan, which outlines how such work would create jobs in the town, promote small business as well as help alleviate the housing crisis in Karratha.

Senator Eggleston said the Rudd Government was out of touch, after the Parliamentary Secretary for Northern Australia Gary Gray called

those who wanted improved community facilities in the Pilbara "whingers".

"At present we have a desperate shortage of houses in mining towns such as Karratha and Port Hedland and plans to ease the burden on the housing sector will be very well received by both long-term residents and workers residing in the Pilbara," Senator Eggleston said.

He said even the newer mining towns in the Pilbara were 50 years old and it was time for a shift in government perceptions from regarding the Pilbara towns as temporary mining communities to permanent towns with normal community facilities.

"It is only fair for the people of the Pilbara and other remote areas of WA to have a

portion of the money these areas are earning to be returned to the community.

"Only then will we see a change of mentality away from viewing the Pilbara towns as temporary fly-in fly-out camps and instead begin encouraging long-term residence."

Senator Eggleston said he wholeheartedly supported the broader Pilbara Cities Initiative and was excited to see the Liberal-National partnership working to deliver the Karratha Revitalisation Plan.

At the Riding the Boom conference in 2008, it was acknowledged that towns such as Karratha, Port Hedland and inland mining towns lacked community infrastructure.