

Ibis - a unique concept

THE Ibis Aerial Highway, launched this month by Western Australian Premier Richard Court, will provide a massive boost to tourism in the Kimberley.

Under this unique marketing concept, private tourist operators are providing plane or helicopter flights to tourist attractions in wild, remote parts of the Kimberley.

Visitors can create their own itineraries by choosing which remote attractions they wish to visit and which ground tours or sea charters they would like to link up with.

The aerial highway is a joint initiative of the Government and private tour operators.

The Kimberley region is one of the world's last great frontier destinations that can be experienced in

safety and comfort.

The Department of Conservation and Land Management, in consultation with the Kimberley Tourism Association, the WA Tourism Commission and local operators, has produced a full-colour marketing brochure for distribution to tourism outlets in major Australian and international markets.



The brochure aims to create a sense of excitement about the Kimberley's magnificent national parks, wildlife and other natural attractions and should help draw more visitors to the region.

The Ibis Aerial Highway will allow people to visit isolated destinations quickly and easily, and with minimal environmental

impact.

Airstrips have been built at the main visitor points, such as Bell Creek Gorge, Windjana Gorge and El Questro, to enable sightseers to join tours by bus, boat or four-wheel-drive.

They can also choose to stay overnight at station homesteads or wilderness areas such as Cape Leveque, where comfortable accommodation is available.

The Kimberley has a number of world class attractions.

They include the Rowley Shoals, with its luxuriant untouched coral atolls offshore from Broome, the spectacular Bungle Bungle in Purnululu National Park, moss-covered waterfalls in the Prince Regent Nature Re-

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serve and a remarkable Aboriginal culture.

The region's wildlife is also diverse and unusual. Waders fly to the Kimberley from as far afield as Siberia, saltwater and freshwater crocodiles are seen in tidal areas and gorges, and wallabies and kangaroos are visible and abundant.

As a result, the choices available on the Ibis Aerial Highway are just as diverse. Tours on offer include going helifishing for barramundi, crocodile spotting near Kununurra or flying over the amazing horizontal waterfalls north of Derby.

"Fortunately, you can now enjoy the Kimberley and its wild, remote places without a four-wheel-drive and an enormous amount of time," Mr Court said.

"As a result, the Ibis Aerial Highway will help bring people closer to nature in the Kimberley.

"It is a good example of what can be achieved by encouraging nature-based tourism in this State."

Mr Court said nature-

based tourism could also greatly benefit and help protect the environment.

"Dollars generated by quality nature-based experiences can fund major conservation initiatives and can be used to manage our national parks and other conservation areas," he said.

"And because our natural areas and their wildlife are actually helping to generate valuable tourism income, the entire community has a vested interest in ensuring they are conserved in their pristine state."

Environment Minister Kevin Minson said the Ibis Aerial Highway also had the advantage of having a very low impact on the environment.

"For instance, there is no need to build roads through remote wilderness areas or use a four-wheel-drive because you can fly to them direct."

"Now that the Ibis Aerial Highway has been established successfully in the Kimberley, I would like to see similar aerial highways in other parts of the State."

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