

IBIS AERIAL TOURIST HIGHWAY

An ambitious plan to promote the Kimberley as a nature-based tourism destination - with associated benefits for local business and residents - has been adopted for the 1994 visitor season.

More than 30 tour operators from across the Kimberley have begun marketing the "Ibis Aerial Tourist Highway".

The concept was proposed by Dr Syd Shea at a meeting of tour operators organised by the Department of Conservation and Land Management at Mt Hart station in 1992 and has since been developed by CALM and the Tourism Commission.

An "aerial highway" was chosen to allow visitors and locals to enjoy a wide range of remote features, with minimal impact on the environment.

CALM already has a lot of the infrastructure tour operators need, with airstrips in key locations, and has allocated \$106 000 for further capital works.

The Kimberley is a magnificent area that offers so much to visitors and those who live there, but many people don't have the time or the confidence to drive the huge distances involved.

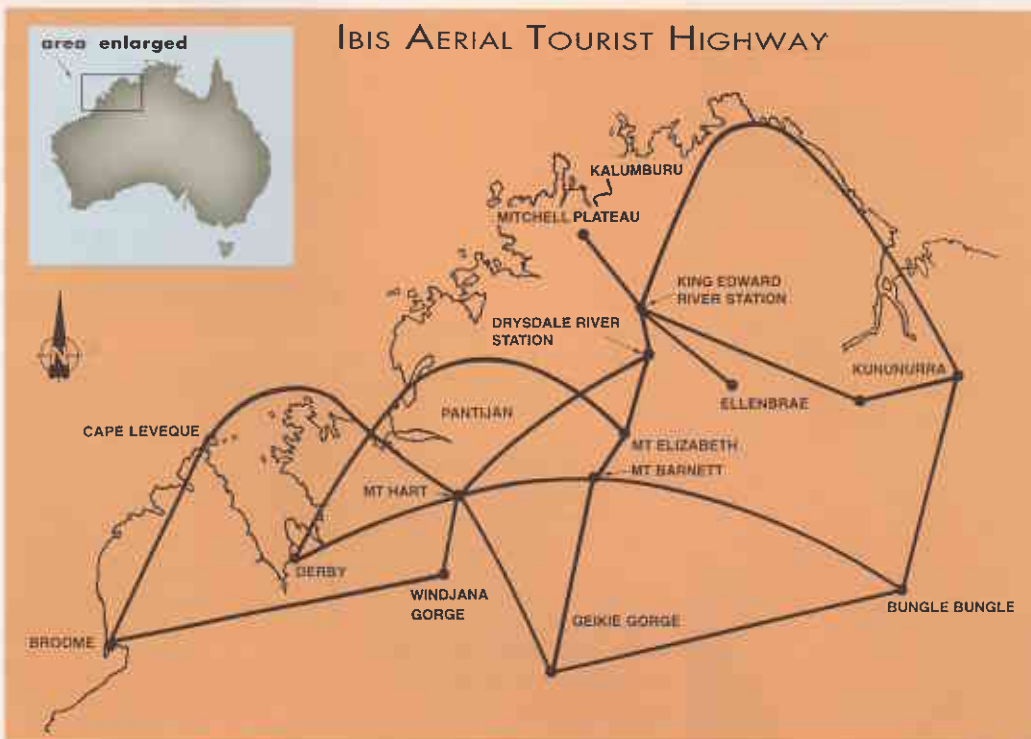
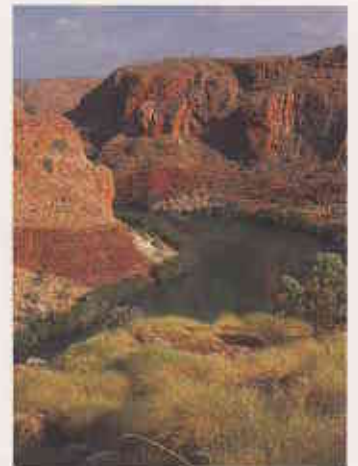
The answer is linking places such as Geikie Gorge, Mt Hart, the Bungle Bungle Range, El Questro, Cape Leveque and Drysdale River Station by air.

Tour operators are now planning package deals which would allow visitors to choose where to go, where to stay and which pre-paid ground tours to join. If the venture is shown to be successful, Ansett may include a range of add-on tours to complement existing flights to Broome, Derby and Kununurra.

The Ibis Aerial Tourist Highway has been a catalyst to bring different groups together, leading to many innovative partnerships between the private sector, Aboriginal groups, State government agencies and local government.



Properly managed, nature-based tourism can help bring prosperity to local economies, increase awareness of the beauty and variety of our environment and emphasise the need to conserve our unique plants, animals and places.



Top: The Bungle Bungle Range in Purnululu National Park is a major attraction that is currently difficult to reach. Photo - Carolyn Thomson

Above: The Ibis Aerial Highway will make rugged and remote parts of the Kimberley more easily accessible to visitors. Photo - Carolyn Thomson

Left: It is planned to link remote destinations such as Geikie Gorge, Mount Hart, Drysdale River Station and Cape Leveque by air.

LANDSCOPE

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The Pinnacles, in Nambung National Park, is one of the most photographed landscapes in the world. But there is another side to Nambung. See page 41.

The hidden caves and tunnels of Cape Range National Park harbour several animals found nowhere else. Turn to page 22 to find out about these bizarre cave dwellers.



The characteristics that made WA inhospitable to the first Europeans are now helping us create new industries that can also repair the environment. See page 47.



Perth has at least 70 species of skinks, geckoes and other reptiles. Find out how to attract these fascinating creatures to your garden on page 28.



Devastation caused by the recent NSW bushfires has fuelled debate on the practice of prescribed burning. How do managers fight fire with fire? See page 35.

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COVER

The bobtail (*Tiliqua rugosa*) is sometimes incorrectly called the 'bobtail goanna' but is actually a very large skink. They are common around Perth and often seen in gardens. During hot weather they can be seen basking on footpaths, verges or roadways. See our story 'Reptiles in the Garden' on Page 30. *The illustration is by Philippa Nikulinsky.*



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