

## Pilbara drive hopes to increase tourism

WARLU Way Tourist drive will compete directly with Victoria's Great Ocean Road for visitor dollars should the road become the drawcard Australia's North West is hoping.

Project manger Nerreda Hillier is pinning her hopes on Warlu Way becoming the link between sporadic tourist hot spots in the North West.

Tourism WA ploughed more than \$380,000 into the project and Mrs Hillier hoped it would pay off by attracting international and domestic visitors to the region.

The drive will take in hot spots including Karijini National Park, Dampier Archipelago and Burrup Peninsula.

A four-wheel-drive would not be needed to travel the main route but offshoots to more remote spots requiring off-road capable vehicles would also be included on Warlu Way maps.

"The icons are already well known but we want people to come to the Pilbara for two weeks and drive around," Mrs Hillier said.

"The Northern Europeans really enjoy their self-sufficient holidays and we do have an extreme shortage of accommodation in the Pilbara."

Australia's North West planned to promote self-drive holidays to capture that international market.

"We do have some superb eco-style accommodation in Karijini that is some of the best in Western Australia and Australia," she said.

Indigenous communities throughout the Pilbara would also play a major role in luring visitors to the North West.

Warlu Way would include a number of Aboriginal communities where could stop for a hands on indigenous experience.

"Tourism will not go away so it will have a positive affect on the region.

"It brings economic benefits to all business across all sectors and they see a real spike in profits in peak tourist season."

**Ben Cranston**

