



After cattle station work, sky's the limit

FLIP PRIOR

Cassie Trevilyan-Hayes is a knockabout girl, happiest when chasing cows around on horseback at cattle stations, catching bulls and sleeping under the stars.

But the 20-year-old also hopes to work in the hospitality industry and one day become an international air hostess.

At Home Valley Station, 120km from Kununurra, the young woman is encouraged to dream big. The trainee receptionist is among the latest intake in the station's indigenous training program, a joint initiative of the Indigenous Land Council, TAFE and Kimberley Group Training.

Each dry season, up to 14 live-in trainees are offered accredited training in tourism, horticulture and agriculture. In turn, they are employed across the station, while getting experience in everything from animal husbandry to cooking, tour guiding and land management.

When they graduate with a Certificate III, they are offered a job — like Cyril Yeeda, 29, who arrived at Home Valley a shy man with no plans for his future. Four years later, he is a full-time stockman with tourism qualifications, caring for horses as he works towards becoming a station manager. He hopes others will follow his lead.

"I'm thinking clearly now for the future," he said. "I didn't like talking to people, now they can't shut me up."

Home Valley pastoral manager John "JR" Rodney said he was impressed with Mr Yeeda's "terrific qualities", his natural affinity with horses and how far he had come.

Ms Trevilyan-Hayes said she loved working in the cattle industry but was focused on building a career. "This is a great opportunity," she said. "You get to meet fantastic people and there's the bonus at the end — you've got that certificate."



Loving the life: Home Valley head stockman Cyril Yeeda and trainee Cassie Trevilyan-Hayes.

Picture: Mogens Johansen