

Government musters funds for indigenous study



RIDING HIGH: Stockman's Hall of Fame life member Jack Thompson was joined by trainee stockwomen Ellenore Lowdown, 18, left, and Destini Ross, 19, from Laura in Cape York, and stockmen Dane Sellars, back left, and Levi Farrell at the indigenous stockman heritage funding announcement at Federation Mall. Photo: RICHARD BRIGGS

By Phillip Thomson

It is a long way from Cape York to Canberra but wiry young stockwoman Ellenore Lowdown has a story to tell.

So do her predecessors, the other Aboriginal stockmen and stockwomen who worked sprawling Australian cattle stations before her, and that is why the Federal Government will spend \$150,000 researching their history.

Miss Lowdown, 18, from Crocodile Station on the northern tip of Australia, was in Canberra yesterday, 3500km south of her home, for a horseriding and stockwhip cracking show put on as part of Reconciliation Week. Reconciliation Australia is pushing for people to recommit to reconciliation. A website, www.unfinisheddoz.com.au, will let people register their support find out ways to get involved in reconciliation.

A decade ago this week more than 300,000 people walked across Sydney Harbour Bridge to lobby for an apology to the nation's indigenous people.

The Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre is scouring Australian universities trying to find a PhD student to research the history of indigenous stockmen and stockwomen. The student will receive a scholarship to travel across Australia to collect stories, perhaps from people like Miss Lowdown.

"The early starts, 5.30am brekkie, is the hardest part of the job," Miss Lowdown said outside Parliament House yesterday. "My favourite part - riding the horses, I've been doing that all my life."