



Hats off

as young Roebuck trainees show the way

[Group training organisation, Kimberley Group Training, is helping the Indigenous Land Corporation to make Roebuck Plains Station in Broome a leader in Indigenous employment and training in the pastoral industry.]

GROUP Training Australia, through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations program STEP ERS, is supporting the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) in its efforts to provide traineeships and apprenticeships to Indigenous people throughout Australia.

The ILC assists Indigenous people to acquire land and to manage Indigenous-held land throughout Australia. It currently provides traineeships and apprenticeships in a unique format through a range of national land management activities and rural and regional ILC commercial operations.

In a major expansion of this program, the ILC Board recently committed \$9.1 million to provide additional residential facilities and vocational-based training for up to 530 Indigenous people over three years.

An example of the ILC Indigenous employment and training program at work is Roebuck Station located near Broome in the East Kimberley region.

The 283,000 hectare station, owned by the ILC, is a fully commercial operation running approximately 20,000 head of cattle aimed mainly for the Asian export market.

It has now also become an important on-the-job training hub for young Indigenous trainee pastoral workers from across the Kimberley and Pilbara.

The ILC recently completed a major upgrade to training and worker

accommodation facilities on the station including male and female living units, an upgraded kitchen and dining area, classrooms and recreation facilities including a swimming pool and basketball court.

Ten Indigenous recruits from the Broome area are currently undertaking a Certificate II in Agriculture (Beef Cattle Production). The trainees are employed full time through Kimberley Group Training and hosted by the ILC.

Indigenous Land Corporation Chairperson, Shirley McPherson, said the Roebuck Plains commercial operation was already a major Indigenous economic development success story.

“Australia is currently experiencing a major skills shortage across many industry sectors and this is the same for the pastoral industry which is crying out for skilled workers in rural and regional areas.

“The challenge in providing a pool of job-ready Indigenous workers has always been overcoming the skills gap and making the transition from long-term unemployment.

“The ILC’s response to this urgent need has been to work with communities, state and territory governments, their departments and registered training providers so existing ILC-owned pastoral businesses can maximise Indigenous training and employment opportunities”. 🔄

Practical learning reaps results

At Roebuck Plains, the emphasis is on practical experience and learning.

Trainees are placed into an initial six-week Australian Apprenticeship Access Program (AAAP) prior to starting their full-time traineeship and are provided with:

- Real industry experience, and exposure to structured accredited training
- An assessment of their suitability for the industry.
- Literacy, language and numeracy assessment and assistance.
- General life skills training and assistance with the transition from long term unemployment to being in a formal working structure, and for many being away from home for the first time.

During the wet season, when access to the outer reaches of Roebuck Plains is limited, additional life skills and technical training will be undertaken including:

- Language, literacy and numeracy
- Motor vehicle/bike licence
- Heavy plant operator’s certificates
- Health and management
- Financial management by TAFE and banking institutions
- Interactive first aid training.