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Media release:

Riversleigh Open Day showcases trainee skills

Six Indigenous pastoral trainees showcased their horsemanship skills in front of more than 100 people from Gulf communities, neighbouring properties and MMG Century at the Riversleigh Open Day on Wednesday 29 July.

The six trainees, from Doomadgee, Mornington Island and Gregory, are completing their Certificate II in Agriculture – Beef Production at Riversleigh, part of a 539,000 acre pastoral property operated by the Lawn Hill Riversleigh Pastoral Holding Company (LHRPHC).

Each year, the Company selects at risk youth interested in pursuing a career in the pastoral industry to participate in a two-year course. Since the training program began in 2002, more than 30 young Indigenous people, ranging in age from 14 to 25, have been employed as pastoral trainees at Riversleigh.

The Open Day was especially poignant this year, with the family of the late Don George, a founding Director of LHRPHC, officially opening the Don George Training Complex. The Training Complex, which was donated by MMG Century, will provide opportunities for trainees to learn computing and business skills, in addition to their pastoral qualifications.

2009 Beef Australia Rabobank Young Ambassador Elisha Seekamp attended the Open Day and said that she was impressed by the commitment of the pastoral company to assist local Indigenous youth to gain employment.

"This program provides the trainees with invaluable experience and skills. The trainees are also given equipment as they progress through the program to enable them to seek employment in agricultural industries after graduating.

"It was nice to see the Company, which is jointly owned by the Waayni people and MMG Century, trying to make a real difference to the communities around them. It would be good if more companies followed this approach."

MMG Century General Manager, and member of the LHRPHC Board, John Lamb said that the Open Day was a chance for the community to come together to recognise the hard work of the trainees.

"The pastoral company aims to provide personal growth opportunities, as well as career options, for young Indigenous people. These six young men, and the men and women before them, have shown that with commitment, enthusiasm and hard work that this, and many other things, are possible."

Riversleigh is located about 60 kilometres from the MMG Century mine site at Lawn Hill and was one of five pastoral properties purchased in 1997 during the development phase of the mine site. In accordance with the Gulf Communities Agreement, under which MMG Century operates, these five pastoral properties are to be transferred to the appropriate Native Title Groups. Today, LHRPHC is 51 percent owned by the Waayni people and 49 percent owned by MMG Century.

High resolution photographs available on request.



The trainees begin the horsemanship challenge.



2009 Beef Australia Rabobank Young Ambassador Elisha Seekamp with pastoral trainee Charlie Dick, who won the horsemanship challenge on the day.

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