



NORTHERN TERRITORY CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Media Release

Date: 2 April 2011

Indigenous Mentor Tells Kids to "Take a Long Stride Forward"

When Minister Malarndirri McCathy asked Les McLaughlin if he had any advice to give young indigenous people looking to get a start in the Northern Territory pastoral industry, he said "hold your head up high and take a long stride forward."

It was that belief and determination that saw 27 year-old Les receive the Young Indigenous Leader's Award at the 27th Annual NT Cattleman's Conference, presented by Minister McCarthy.

Les is employed as a stockman at the Bohning Cattle Yards, 15 kilometres south of Alice Springs and has a family history steeped in the Northern Territory cattle industry.

"My father, Larry McLaughlin, was a ringer, and worked at Mount House for Ken Warriner for a while, then worked for the DPI for years," Les said.

"He was born on Waterloo Station, on the WA border, but we spent most of our lives in and around Katherine." Les finished his schooling at St John's College in Darwin before enrolling at the Katherine Rural College. He worked for Consolidated Pastoral Company' Manbulloo Station for five years and developed a love of the stock camp life, horses and the occasional bull ride.

Stunned and delighted to receive the award, Les said it was entirely unexpected.

"I've never got anything like this; it makes me feel really good – I've never expected anything for what I've done, I just love chasing bush work. I'd really like to thank the NT Cattleman's Association and the NT Government for the award, and all the people who have given me a go, let me run the camp and believed in me, especially Consolidated Pastoral Company."

Les, who mentors young Indigenous people in his industry, believes that more Indigenous youth would take up work in the bush if they understood how rewarding, and fun, it can be.

"You can only try your best to give people a start; so many kids these days are stuck on computer games and don't get taken out into the bush by their families like they used to. If you could pick up a big mob of them and take them out to a station to experience it, they could see how much fun it is. They just need to be able to access some basic safety training and be shown how to do things, like motorbike mustering and horse riding.

Les would eventually like to buy his own piece of land on which he could train young people wanting to enter the industry.

"I don't think that Indigenous people should be trained separately from other people because when they go to work on stations they will be mixing with people from all over Australia, and the world, and they have to be used to that," Les said.

'Advancing and protecting the interests of the cattle producers in the Northern Territory'



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“Indigenous boys and girls are very shy, and they need to learn how to speak up for themselves. That’s why it’s better that they train with the variety of people.”

NB: Les is available for interviews on his mobile 0459 408 419

Background information

The Northern Territory Cattleman’s Association (NTCA)

The Northern Territory Cattlemen’s Association is the peak primary industry group in the Northern Territory representing over 90% of the Territory’s cattle herd. With over 220 pastoral leases, our industry manages a landmass in excess of 620,000 square kilometres and a herd of over 2 million head. Annual turnoff is around 600,000 head to live-export and domestic markets.

The pastoral industry is the Northern Territory’s third largest GDP earner, accounting for more than 50% of primary production in the NT and generating over \$400 million in direct income. In 2010, over 300,000 cattle were exported live through the Port of Darwin. Live cattle exports are of critical importance to the northern pastoral industry and the northern Territory economy as a whole.

The industry directly provides in excess of 1800 jobs, mainly in rural areas of the Northern Territory. By area, employment and economic contribution the pastoral industry is the dominant industry in land management in the NT, with a predominant focus on long-term sustainable production. Over 85% of all NTCA members are active participants in Conservation, Environmental and Landcare groups throughout the Northern Territory and the Association encourages members to join their local groups.

NTCA members include all of the country’s largest beef producers including the Australian Agricultural Company (AACo), Consolidated Pastoral Company (CPC), S Kidman & Co, Heytesbury Beef, North Australian Pastoral Company (NAPCO), Georgina Pastoral Company, The Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) and Paraway. These companies operations extend beyond the Northern Territory to cover vast tracts of northern, eastern and western Australia.

‘Advancing and protecting the interests of the cattle producers in the Northern Territory’