



For immediate release

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Indigenous hospitality welcomes taskforce to the Kimberley

Home Valley Station's best and brightest proved inspirational for the Northern Australia Land and Water Taskforce which visited the indigenous owned cattle station and tourism operation this week.

The federal government appointed taskforce visited the 700,000 acre East Kimberley property as part of its ongoing research into the potential for land and water development in northern Australia in a manner that is ecologically, culturally and economically sustainable.

An important part of the Prime Minister's *National Plan for Water Security* the 15-member taskforce is chaired by Senator Bill Heffernan and also comprises federal member for Kalgoorlie, Barry Haase; Accor Asia Pacific chairman and Indigenous Land Corporation board member, David Baffsky; Acting Executive Director, CSIRO Strategic Change Programs, Dr Andrew Johnson; Queensland senators Ian Macdonald and Ron Boswell; Dr Wally Cox – National Water Commissioner and Chairman Agriculture Research WA; David Crombie – Chair, National Farmers Federation; John Daly – Chair, Northern Land Council; Warren Entsch MP – Member for Leichhardt; Lachlan Murdoch – Chief Executive, Illyria Pty Ltd; Noel Pearson – Director, Cape York Institute; Joe Ross – Chair, Indigenous Youth Leadership Program; David Tollner MP – Member for Solomon; and Terry Underwood of Riveren Station, Victoria River NT.

During its visit to Home Valley Station, which is owned by the Indigenous Land Corporation, the taskforce enjoyed the outstanding hospitality of the station's young indigenous trainees.

Home Valley Station is home to an on-site TAFE academy for indigenous students studying rural operations, tourism and hospitality, and horticulture.

Involved in every aspect of the day-to-day operation of the station, the trainees showcased the best of the property to the VIP contingent.

Indigenous involvement in the future development of land and water in the north is a crucial element of the taskforce's research.

The taskforce was encouraged by the harmonious model in place at Home Valley Station and agreed it was a stand-out success amongst indigenous education programs.

Home Valley Station was also host to Andrew Dickson, who is heading up the federally funded Northern Australia Land and Water Futures Assessment. The assessment, which is running parallel with the taskforce, is a five-year multi-disciplinary research program which aims to provide the best available scientific knowledge on key ecosystem, community and indigenous assets in northern Australia.

The taskforce is currently meeting with stakeholders across northern Australia, including Darwin and Cape York, as part of its research. It plans to have an interim report on the issue of sustainable land and water development in the north completed by the end of the year.

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