



LAING O'ROURKE TRAINEE PROFILE

Corey Chufung

Rail Construction Worker

Real-life accounts of how the National Workforce Development Fund is benefiting Australian transport and logistics enterprises.

Not that long ago, rail construction worker Corey Chulung was “unemployed, sitting at home, drinking, and smoking - a lot. It was becoming pretty much an every day routine.”

Then an opportunity of a lifetime walked into his Port Hedland backyard. Laing O’Rourke indigenous relations manager Andrea White “was looking for my brother”.

“When she walked through the back gate she noticed there were three of us. She went back to the car, came back with three applications and said, ‘Do you want a job?’”

So began Chulung’s journey, and that of his two younger brothers, Keith and Karl, on the ‘Making Tracks’ program with one of the world’s largest construction companies.

MAKING TRACKS IS LAING O’ROURKE’S 10-WEEK COURSE OF WORK AND LIFE SKILLS FOR RAIL PROJECT TRAINEES, INCLUDING A CERTIFICATE II IN TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS (RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE).

Making Tracks is Laing O’Rourke’s 10-week course of work and life skills for rail project trainees, including a Certificate II in Transport and Logistics (Rail Infrastructure), a qualification developed by the Transport and Logistics Industry Skills Council and afforded under the National Workforce Development Fund.

Chulung’s West Australian crew is learning how to operate ballast tampers and regulators, stabilisers and loaders to prepare foundations for new track to increase the rail capacity between Port Hedland and mines to the north east, 30 kilometres away.

“My family is over the moon about it, they’re so proud, you know,” Chulung says. “More money to contribute to the great family circle.” Family support is key to Making Tracks’ success, as well as that of an indigenous liaison officer in Port Hedland, Herbie Rose, who “motivates us and helps us out every morning. He comes in with us for support.”

Rose says the training has “changed lives. They’re working hard, they’re earning big money; they’ve bought cars, and clothes; and put a feed on the table for the family.

“It actually has changed their lives. For this to become a reality for them is absolutely fantastic.”

Currently working “four weeks on, one week off”, Chulung says he can see himself “in a year or two, operating a machine”.

His well-earned downtime is spent with his partner and son, “fishing for salmon and turtle, hunting ‘roos and swimming”. Compared with a year ago, life is “beautiful”.

“I enjoy railing a lot,” Chulung says. “It’s something I always wanted. Basically, I’ve got my foot in the door of where I wanted to be all along.”

For more information about how TLISC can assist your enterprise in accessing the National Workforce Development Fund, please contact our Workforce Development team:

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