

Northern Gas Pipeline Project Update

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Australia's only female Indigenous pipeliners talk about work on the NGP

With eight children between them, you might think the decision to undertake 10 weeks' training and a chance to work on the Northern Gas Pipeline Project would be a difficult one – especially when it meant living away from home for up to three weeks at a time.

But for Australia's only female Indigenous pipeliners, Colleen Age and Geraldine Cook, this was an opportunity not to pass up. With help from their families, Colleen from Boulia and Geraldine from Dajarra set out. "It really was a journey for us," Colleen said.

The pair was two of 59 local people across the Mt Isa, Tennant Creek and Barkly regions who undertook Jemena's Project Ready Training Program, preparing them for work on the NGP.

Participants gained a white card,

forklift licence and other skills needed to work safely on the NGP.

"It wasn't easy. There were times we wanted to quit but we had photos of our kids on the wall and we kept doing it for them," Geraldine said.

Training began in March and after graduating in May, the pair was employed on the QLD section of pipeline.

"At times we thought we couldn't do it. But we supported each other and we've proved to ourselves and others that we are capable," Colleen said.

Now in the Mt Isa yard with a mountain of timber pipe skids to stack they are looking to the future.

"We'll get this job done and then we want to keep working. Our families are proud of us and our kids have got what they need," Colleen said.



Above: Colleen Age (left) and Geraldine Cook stack timber pipe skids in Mt Isa.

The pair said being Indigenous women was no barrier to employment in the construction industry.

"Not at all. Now we want to be mentors to other Indigenous girls and show them they can do whatever they want," Geraldine said.



Questions?

If you have any questions about the project we are happy to meet with you to discuss them.

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