

# Town & Country

## Queensland



Stuart Austin in his days as a tour guide in the Rocky Mountains.



Stuart Austin drags calves to the fire at Roach and Sons branding, East Central Alberta, Canada.

## Finding Aussies work OS

By EMILIE CHAPLAIN

**A**GRICULTURE and travel have dominated Stuart Austin's life for the past 12 years and now he specialises in helping young country people get a taste for farming life in the Northern Hemisphere.

A bush boy from New South Wales, Stuart arrived in Alberta, Canada in the spring of 2007. A working holiday visa turned into a three-year contract in the Rocky Mountains working as a tour guide on trail rides, on drilling rigs and as a farmhand. Stuart realised the opportunities in Canadian agriculture and working prospects.

With an already impressive background in agriculture back on Australian soil, ideas started to brew. It was through a meeting with Canadian lad, Craig Ference that helped turn these ideas into reality. Craig comes from a farm near

Kirriemuir, Alberta where he and his father operate Double F Farms and Cascade Cattle Corp.

Similar to Stuart, Craig set off to explore other horizons, landing himself on the sunburnt plains of Australia 10 years ago. It was through living and working in Australia for a year that he discovered the strong Australian work ethic evident among our young farm kids.

At the start of 2009, when Craig's family farming business was struggling to find good help, he decided to look at prospects of recruiting labour out of Australia.

The Ference family began hiring seasonal workers from down under to work in their cow/calf operation.

"We have been so pleased with the work ethic and abilities of these employees, and they bring completely new and diverse ideas and skills with them," Craig said.

"To me, Australians have a good-hearted, easy-going nature about them. They are well-rounded farm kids with strong rural roots," he adds.

Craig and Stuart joined forces after meeting through a mutual friend at the Farm Tech conference in Edmonton, 2009.

"Craig had an employer and I had a resume," Stuart said. "This first job placement quickly turned into five and then 10 work placements across Canada."

Now Positive Perfection and Cascade Recruitment are going great guns with more than 40 candidates placed in both countries.

In essence, both businesses provide a farm labour solution assisting cattle and sheep stations, feedlots, dairy and grain farms to find the right employee for the job.

While Austin selects and screens employees and employers in Australia, Ference is doing the

same in Canada.

"It's about good young farm kids wanting to have a go," Austin said. "It shows their commitment to the land if they have that get up and go."

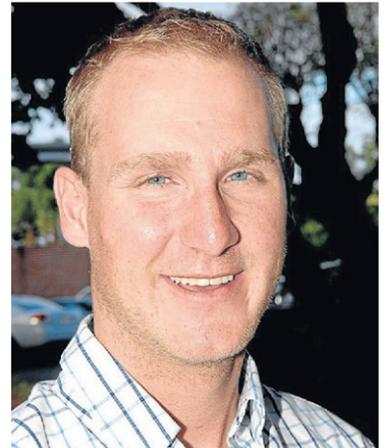
One of the major benefits of the business is that time frames to suit seasonal cycles can be matched.

"Many employers and employees were seeking three to nine-month durations," Austin said.

When Stuart spent his year in Canada, a working holiday visa was limited to one year and it was a once in a lifetime opportunity. Today, working holiday visas for both countries allow young people aged 18 to 30 to stay for two years, and the visas are renewable.

Canadian farmer Greg Loewen recently finished a three-month stay on a grain farm in NSW.

"It was exactly what I was looking for. A really good experience all the way through," Greg said. "The family



Craig Ference, founder of Cascade Recruitment.

were so welcoming and we became good friends. They want me to come back next year."

"Stuart and Craig were really helpful. It was absolutely worth it," Greg said.

♦ For more information contact Stuart Austin at 0428 521 612 or visit [www.positive-perfection.com](http://www.positive-perfection.com)

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