

HAYDEN LEGASSICK

SENIOR BASE PILOT,
AVIAIR KUNUNURRA

“Talk to any pilot and they will look back on their days flying around the Bungle Bungle Ranges and the like as the best days of their flying life.”



HAYDEN HAS WANTED TO FLY EVER SINCE HE PICKED UP HIS FIRST TOY PLANE AND WAS PREPARED TO DO THE HARD YARDS TO EARN HIS WINGS. NOW, THE PILOT GETS PAID TO TAKE PEOPLE TO SOME OF THE STATE'S MOST JAW-DROPPING LOCATIONS.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO YOUR JOB?

My dad's an aircraft engineer, so I naturally wanted to one up Dad and be a pilot. I studied maths and physics, but you don't have to be a mathematician - it's just having the commitment.

I took a year off after school and worked in a coffee shop for about 18 months to save up to move to the Gold Coast (from NSW) to do my pilot's licence. After I got my licence, I worked at the Gold Coast Airport for a year, just doing baggage handling and saving up. I was going to transfer to Broome but we ended up stopping off at Kununurra and I scored my first job there. I haven't looked back.

I manage the pilot group, the roster and other things for Aviair in Kununurra, as well as flying. I started flying the six-seater aircraft, then the 13-seater aircraft and into our faster nine-seat aircraft. Now I'm flying a little private jet around as well, so I pretty much started from the bottom and worked my way up.

WHAT'S THE BEST PART OF YOUR JOB?

I would say getting paid to visit places that some people don't get to see in their lifetime. I always enjoy doing our Mitchell Falls tour, which is worth thousands of dollars, but I get paid to fly there, get a free lunch, swim at the top of the falls and then get a helicopter ride at the end of the day. I don't think there are much better jobs out there.

And seeing people's faces when they jump off the plane at the end of the tour and say "that's the most amazing thing that I've done in my life." It's on their bucket list and seeing them get that goal is really rewarding.

WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE FOR ANYONE CONSIDERING A CAREER IN TOURISM OR HOSPITALITY?

Don't be afraid to take a big leap and move out of the cities and into remote areas - these places have so much to offer. Don't be afraid to pack up that little Corolla and move (as he did). I've really enjoyed working in Kununurra; it's going through big growth with Nexus Airlines launching and possible pathways into flying the 76-seater airplanes.

You have to put in the work to get a pilot's licence. It's a very rewarding career and there is government assistance available. I think what helped me a lot was driving up to the places and not just sending an email from Perth or Brisbane. Being there and ready to go, that's definitely what got me my job.

STEPPING STONES

1.

Wanted to be a pilot since a child



2.

Worked in a café to save up for pilot licence



3.

Started as a scenic pilot in Kununurra, flying smaller aircraft



4.

Promoted to Senior Base Pilot, flying faster aircraft



5.

Next step: flying bigger 76-seater planes