

22 October 2015

MEDIA STATEMENT

Indigenous runners ready to devour Big Apple in world's largest marathon

Six months ago, they had no running experience. Now, 10 young Indigenous Australians are facing the biggest challenge of their lives – running in the world's most iconic running event, the TCS New York City Marathon.

On Tuesday 27 October, the 2015 Indigenous Marathon Project squad will arrive in Sydney from some of Australia's most remote communities for the squad's final camp before flying to New York on 29 October.

The squad is available on Wednesday 28 October for media engagements.

When: Wednesday 28 October

Where: Novotel Brighton Le Sands or Brighton Le Sands Beach (Botany Bay)

Time: 9:00am – 12pm

This is the final opportunity to meet the inspirational 2015 squad that has transformed into self-confident, proud and resilient Indigenous role models who have also contributed to encouraging and inspiring their communities to adopt active and healthy lifestyles, and celebrating Indigenous resilience and achievement.

Victoria's first-ever IMP female representative, Jessica Lovett-Murray from Heywood, said IMP has provided her with tools that she can apply to everyday life.

"The opportunity to run in the New York Marathon has provided me with the confidence to inspire my loved ones and my community; to make my family proud that no matter what life throws at us, we have to get back up and keep moving forward.

"IMP has taught me that any dream or goal is achievable if you work hard, stay focussed and surround yourself with those who believe in you," she said.

The final squad includes:

NAME	COMMUNITY
MEN	
Daniel Lloyd	Murray Bridge, SA
Chris Guyula,	Gapuwiyak, NT
Dwayne Jones	Timber Creek, NT
Aaron West	Queanbeyan, NSW
John Leha	Marrickville, NSW



WOMEN	
Jessica Lovett-Murray	Heywood, VIC
Harriet David	Cairns, QLD
Jacinta Gurruwiwi	Elcho Island, NT
Alicia Sabatino	Thursday Island, QLD
Eileen Byers	Casino, NSW

Many of the runners have overcome considerable adversity and personal challenges including mental health, family, and weight issues, to emerge as fit and healthy role models and representatives for their families, communities and Australia.

In addition to their incredible running achievements, the entire squad has successfully gained qualifications in a Certificate III in Fitness, Level 1 Recreational Running, and Sports First Aid and CPR, providing long-term employment pathways and opportunities in health related industries.

The qualification also provides members of the squad with the skills and knowledge to establish running and fitness groups in their communities.

Head Coach, Mick Rees, acknowledged the dedication and commitment required to have achieved these incredible feats.

"The squad arrived in Canberra in May ready for their first camp. Most were quite shy, reserved and unsure of themselves.

"The adversity, challenge and sacrifice each and every one of them has made is overwhelming. They have endured situations in their short lives that most people never endure in a lifetime.

"Running gives them a goal, a purpose and a strong sense of self-belief after each training run. We constantly tell them to celebrate every run because sometimes it takes a lot of organisation and sacrifice just to complete a training run.

"Through running, members of the squad have learnt a lot about themselves. They have grown in character and confidence. They have used the discipline they have learnt to overcome personal struggle and I am so proud of what they have all achieved in a significantly short amount of time," he said.

The IMP, a program of the Indigenous Marathon Foundation (IMF) is a not-for-profit foundation established in 2010 by world marathon champion, Robert de Castella. Each year IMP selects 12 young Indigenous men and women (aged 18 to 30yrs), to train for the New York City Marathon and through their achievements celebrate indigenous resilience and success.

The IMP relies on the generous support of the Australian Government Department of Health, Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport, Qantas, Accor, Good Oil Films and the generosity of the Australian public.

**If possible, please confirm your attendance by Tuesday 27 October with
Communication and Fundraising Manager, Kellie O'Sullivan:**

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More information about IMP can be found at www.imf.org.au or visit our Facebook page, The Indigenous Marathon Foundation.



The Indigenous Marathon Foundation Ltd is a registered health promotion charity

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