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## Indigenous pain celebrated in Australian desert achievement

Ten Indigenous Australians have embraced pain to earn their spot in the world famous New York City Marathon in November, as part of the 2015 Indigenous Marathon Project (IMP) team – a program of the Indigenous Marathon Foundation.

On Sunday 27 September, the 2015 IMP squad of five men and five women who only started training in May, took on their biggest challenge to date; a 30km qualifying run in Alice Springs which determined the final squad to take on the New York Marathon.

Alice Springs is a significant location for IMP, being home to 2010 IMP Graduate and Australia's first ever Indigenous Australian to finish the New York City Marathon as part of IMP, Charlie Maher.

This year further cemented IMP's connection to Alice Springs, with 100% of all 30km finishers being announced to leave their footprints on the New York Marathon course.

It is also compulsory for each squad member to complete their Certificate III in Fitness qualification to be considered part of the final New York squad.

The results from the 30km qualifying run were:

NAME	TIME
Daniel Lloyd, Murray Bridge - SA	2:27:38
Chris Guyula, Gapuwiyak - NT	2:30:11
Jessica Lovett-Murray, Heywood - VIC	2:54:25
Harriet David, Cairns - QLD	3:04:58
Jacinta Gurruwiwi, Elcho Island - NT	3:11:10
Dwayne Jones, Timber Creek - NT	3:30:30
Aaron West, Queanbeyan - NSW	3:31:01
Alicia Sabatino, Thursday Island - QLD	3:33:40
John Leha, Marrickville - NSW	3:35:01
Eileen Byers, Casino - NSW	4:07:10

IMP founder and director, Robert de Castella, said it was an emotionally charged final camp.

"This was one of the best camps we've had. These incredible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island men and women from across Australia have faced adversity, challenge and sacrifice that are times is incomprehensible.

"They have demonstrated resilience, determination and sheer hard work reaps life-changing benefits. All of these men and women have endured some extremely difficult situations in their lives and today they proved nothing will defeat them.

"I always say that running is easy – it's just one foot in front of the other. But running a marathon is hard; it's one of the hardest things you can do.



“Most members of the squad had no running experience just a few short months ago and now they are preparing to line up in the biggest marathon in the world, in one of the biggest cities in the world!

“I am extremely proud of their achievements and know they will embrace the marathon with the same unbreakable spirit and attitude with which they have faced their own personal struggles; with courage, pride, strength and an unwavering determination to succeed,” he said.

The squad was inspired and supported by IMP Graduates of each year (Charlie Maher, 2010; Nadine Hunt, 2011; Jamie Wunungmurra, 2012; Charmaine Patrick, 2013; and Adrian Dodson-Shaw, 2014) who were an integral part of the camp, sharing their personal stories of adversity and triumph, and running alongside squad members for the 30km run.

IMP Head Coach, Mick Rees, highlighted the growth and success of IMP and said each runner has justified their selection in the squad.

“This year we received a record number of applications from 150 Indigenous Australians from right across the country to be part of the squad.

“It’s an extremely difficult process to choose a squad of stand-out applicants from a pool of incredibly talented and deserving individuals.

“Every single one of our runners has well and truly earned their right to line up in the New York City Marathon.

“Running doesn’t lie. If you don’t do the training, you won’t be prepared for any run, particularly not 30kms.

“Consistent training is the key and this year’s squad has proven that if you put in the hard work, the results will speak for themselves.

“And they certainly have - a 100% success rate indicates that.

“The next five weeks are crucial for the squad to put in the final preparations and correct nutrition to make sure they are 100% conditioned for their marathon challenge.

“It’s going to be an emotional time on that finish line in New York, and I’m so proud of them all,” he said.

The IMP uses running as a vehicle to drive social change, create inspirational role models and celebrate Indigenous resilience and achievement.

All members of the squad will meet again in Sydney for pre-departure camp on October 27 before flying out to New York on Thursday 29 October.

*To arrange an interview, please contact Communication and Fundraising Manager, Kellie O’Sullivan on (02) 6162 4750 or 0437 699 950. For more information on the Indigenous Marathon Foundation please visit [www.imf.org.au](http://www.imf.org.au)*

