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Weipa woman conquers iconic Boston marathon

By MATT NICHOLLS

FIVE years after running her first marathon in New York, Bianca Graham has now notched up her fourth, having just completed the famous Boston marathon.

The 33-year-old, who moved to Melbourne two years ago, has completed events in New York, Frankfurt, Tokyo and Boston as part of the Indigenous Marathon Project.

"It keeps my well-being in check. Who would have thought that running 42kms keeps me sane - I blame IMP for that," she laughed.

Bianca said she had never been much of an athlete growing up, but enjoyed going for a run.

"I developed a love of running during my boarding school years in Townsville, and when I heard about IMP, I embraced the opportunity to be an example for my community and show them the benefits of living an active and healthy lifestyle," she said.

Bianca, along with fellow 2011 IMP graduate Nadine Hunt became the first Indigenous Australian woman to finish the New York marathon.

"That event really set the



foundation for me and Nads. Since then, I seem to get roped in by her to enter more races.

"My family and Cape York communities motivate me to be a positive role model.

"Marathons are tough, really tough.

"When I'm in the incredibly difficult stages of the marathon,

when I hit the wall and need to dig deep to remember my purpose, it's easy; I look at the words written on my hands which say 'family and community'. They get me through."

Bianca said being a role model for other kids in Cape York was close to her heart.

"It's good to be able to show

them that just because you're from a small place in a remote part of Australia, doesn't mean you can't achieve big things," she said.

"Kids who grow up in Weipa and the Cape should have the same aspirations of kids who live in the city."

The former Rio Tinto employee is now working for Energy Australia in Melbourne and said the change of lifestyle was eye-opening.

"I do enjoy it down here, but it's such a long way from home," Bianca said.

"I'm glad that you're doing a story because I still want my friends and family back home to see that I'm still out there representing Weipa."

Bianca said anyone interested in joining the Indigenous Marathon Project should apply.

"It's a great program and if you get in you won't be disappointed," she said.

"It's one of the best things I've ever done."



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Contacts & Deadlines

EDITORIAL
 EDITOR - MATT NICHOLLS
 P (07) 4069 7715
 M 0477 450 558
 E editor@westerncapebulletin.com.au
 F 1300 787 248 (local call)

ADVERTISING
 BOOKINGS & AD DESIGN - SHARON GALLERY
 P 1300 4874 00 (local call)
 M 0419 828 639
 E office@westerncapebulletin.com.au
 F 1300 787 248 (local call)

ACCOUNTS
 P 1300 6397 00 (local call)

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Publisher's Details

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 NEWSPAPERS
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Publishers of The Western Cape Bulletin

CHAIRMAN: MARK BOUSEN
 editor@regionalandremote.com.au

PUBLISHER: COREY BOUSEN
 publisher@regionalandremote.com.au
 M 0428 191 002

GROUP EDITOR: MARK BOUSEN
 editor@regionalandremote.com.au

ACCOUNTS: MEG BOUSEN
 accounts@westerncapebulletin.com.au

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Mail to: PO Box 209, Weipa, Qld 4874
 or
Email: editor@westerncapebulletin.com.au