



## A marathon effort for Indigenous runners Canberra Public Hearing 11:15am

The Indigenous Marathon Project will appear before the House of Representatives Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs on Thursday, 29 November to discuss the contribution of sport to Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring.

The Indigenous Marathon Project (IMP) was started by Robert de Castella, a former Olympic marathon runner. Each year, a group of young Indigenous men and women are selected to complete the New York City Marathon after 6 months of training. IMP uses the marathon to change lives, promote healthy lifestyles and develop community role models.

In October 2012, the runners travelled to New York but were unable to compete in the marathon due to Hurricane Sandy. They instead assisted with the clean-up efforts, an experience that brought the team together and taught valuable lessons. As a small charity, IMP does not have the funds to take the team to another international marathon, and will instead concentrate on raising the necessary funds to send the team to an Australian marathon in the near future.

The IMP organises Deadly Fun Runs in remote communities that aims to provide a fun non-intimidating environment for Indigenous men, women and children. The Fun Runs culminate in the Championships held each year in Uluru.

The Committee Chair, Mr Shayne Neumann MP said, “The Indigenous Marathon Project is an excellent example of a non-profit organisation promoting Indigenous sports participation and using sport to encourage Indigenous wellbeing. The Committee looks forward to hearing about their unique and pioneering work.”

The Committee will also hear from VicHealth, an independent statutory body that is responsible to the Victorian Minister for Health. In their submission, VicHealth state that sport “offers important positive images of Aboriginal success”.

The hearing will be broadcast live from Committee Room 1R2, Parliament House, Canberra from approximately 11:15am – 12:30pm via: <http://www.aph.gov.au/live>.

For more information, see the Committee’s website at [www.aph.gov.au/sport](http://www.aph.gov.au/sport) or contact the committee secretariat on **(02) 6277 4559**.

**For media comment**, please contact the Committee Chair Mr Shayne Neumann on (07) 3201 5300. **For background information**, contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 62774559 or [atsia.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:atsia.reps@aph.gov.au)