Raise the Bar 2018

Indigenous students from all corners of Australia will arrive at the University today for the fourth annual Raise the Bar Academy (RTB). The Academy is a joint initiative between Athletics Australia and the University to provide Indigenous school students nation-wide a chance to discover the pathways to studying and participation through high performance sport.

In a competitive application process, 38 students were chosen to spend a week on the University's Parkville campus, working with University elite student-athletes and sporting professionals to develop new skills in athletics coaching, sports media training, and community sports event management. Mentors include 2017 University Sport team and student-athlete captain Stella Radford and Australian double Paralympian Torita Blake (nee Isaac). In addition to skill based activities, students have opportunities to connect with sports industry professionals and some of Australia's best athletes. The students are also given a chance to sample Melbourne culture, with visits to the Victorian Institute of Sport and a nighttime visit to the Queen Victoria Market on the itinerary.

'We are using athletics as the engagement tool to raise aspiration around higher education, particularly with study opportunities at the University', said program founder Carl Junot. Junot noted the program's success, in which three RTB students have successfully matriculated into undergraduate courses at the University.

The end of the week is capped with a celebratory dinner at the Ernie Cropley Pavilion. The students will have a chance to mingle with high achieving sportspeople and professionals, and learn about what it takes to balance sporting and academic life. A Q&A panel will be held, with panelists consisting of Mr Patrick Johnson, double Olympian and the Australian 100m sprint record holder, and Dr Tara Purcell, an Indigenous Doctor of Medicine/Master of Public Health graduate from the University.

What: Raise the Bar Academy is a joint initiative between Athletics Australia and the University of Melbourne to provide Indigenous school students from around Australia a chance to discover the pathways to studying and participation through high performance sport.

When: Monday 15 January – Thursday 18 January

Who: 38 indigenous students and mentors from UoM and Athletics Australia

Media opportunity: 0900-1100 16 and 18 January, Rawlinson Athletics track, Sports Precinct, The University of Melbourne

Media: Comments and photography of participants and program representatives available on request

- END -

Media contacts:

Peter Walker
T: +61 3 9035 6037
M: +61 433 048 646
E: peter.walker@unimelb.edu.au

Aaron McNaughton
T: +61 3 9035 6048
M: +61 481 005 680
E: aaron.mcnaughton@unimelb.edu.au