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MEDIA STATEMENT

Indigenous Cairns woman to become Cultural Ambassador

A program established by the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Australia is set to launch Indigenous Cairns woman, Nadine Hunt, into becoming a Cultural Ambassador.

The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) is an annual initiative that provides the opportunity for a select group of individuals to immerse themselves in U.S. culture through a three week U.S. trip, educating them with first-hand knowledge of U.S. policies, politics, society and culture.

The U.S. Embassy and Consulates look for future thought leaders that demonstrate leadership, forward thinking, and engagement on issues of global importance that impact both Australian and the United States.

Ms Hunt is a Graduate of the 2011 Indigenous Marathon Project (IMP), a not-for-profit charity established by marathon legend, Rob de Castella that uses running to drive social change, and celebrate Indigenous resilience and achievement.

Most have little or no previous running experience and train in six months for the world's largest marathon, the New York City Marathon.

Ms Hunt has since completed both Frankfurt and Tokyo Marathons and now lives in Canberra working as the IMP's National Education and Events Coordinator, and driving the IMP's Deadly Fun Runs - a series of fun runs held in Indigenous communities across Australia.

Jason Frohmayer, the U.S. Embassy's Cultural Affairs Officer, said he was extremely impressed with Nadine's achievements and leadership skills.

"Each year, the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Australia looks for young and emerging leaders in Australia who are actively engaged in fields such as innovation, public health and empowering women and girls, and sends them to the United States for short-term exchange programs.

"These programs are designed to strengthen their knowledge of the U.S., enhance the bilateral relationship, foster mutual understanding and establish long-lasting, positive relationships with individuals and institutions.

"Our hope is that after participating on this exchange program and meeting with like-minded individuals and organisations in the U.S., they will bring this knowledge and these relationships back to Australia and forge bridges of understanding between our two countries.

"In essence, they become our cultural ambassadors.

"I have worked closely with Nadine and the IMP for the last two years and quickly recognised Nadine's potential to become a leader for social issues in Australia," he said.

Ms Hunt said it was a privilege to be chosen as part of the program.



"I'm really looking forward to learning and meeting new people from all walks of life, especially the Indigenous people of America.

"I believe there is so much to learn, feel and identify about the close similarities (connection to land, strength in spirit, importance of family and culture) as an Indigenous Australian.

"Strangely enough I'm hoping to learn a lot more and gain first-hand knowledge of U.S. policies, politics, society and culture and how they support their Indigenous people and youth, and approach the many issues that we too face - social, health and mental issues. It's not an area I've really ventured into but feel this experience might give me some inspiration into how I can better make a difference in years to come.

"Most importantly I'm hoping to gain a sense of connection from the people I meet, the places I go to and just listen to stories. I'm really excited to just listen and ask questions, it's an opportunity to really find a whole new perspective and hopefully some inspiration on life and my future.

"To capture each place on foot, Rob always says the best way to really see a place is to run in it."

Ms Hunt departs Australia on Saturday 20 June and returns on 13 July.

For more information or to arrange an interview please contact Communication and Fundraising Manager: Kellie O'Sullivan (02) 6162 4750 or 0437 699 950. More information about IMP can be found at www.imp.org.au or visit our Facebook page, The Marathon Project.

