

Universities Australia

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**Chief Executive Officer:
Dr Glenn Withers AO**

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13 February 2008

Professor Roger Thomas
Chair – Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council
North Terrace
ADELAIDE SA 5005
roger.thomas@adelaide.edu.au

Dear Professor Thomas

Universities Australia Statement welcoming the apology to Indigenous Australians for past injustices

I am pleased to provide a copy of Universities Australia's statement welcoming the apology offered by the Australian Parliament today for past injustices towards Indigenous Australians.

We look forward to joining with you and your colleagues for further discussions towards improving outcomes and access to higher education for Indigenous Australians, at the forthcoming Universities Australia Plenary meeting on 12 March 2008.

Yours sincerely



Dr Glenn Withers AO
Chief Executive Officer

One Geils Court
Deakin ACT 2600

GPO Box 1142
Canberra ACT 2601
AUSTRALIA

Ph: +61 (0)2 6285 8200
Fax: +61 (0)2 6285 8211
Mobile: +61 (0) 416 249 350

glenn.withers@universitiesaustralia.edu.au
www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au

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Media Release

13 February 2008

Universities Australia Statement welcoming the apology to Indigenous Australians for past injustices

Universities Australia welcomes the apology to Indigenous Australians for past injustices, made by the Federal Parliament on Wednesday 13 February 2008.

“Universities Australia is working closely with the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC) and discussing processes for achieving better outcomes in Indigenous higher education,” Universities Australia Chair, Professor Richard Larkins said.

Universities Australia supports IHEAC in bringing serious issues to the Government’s attention including redressing the low enrolment numbers of Indigenous students at all levels, low student retention and completion rates, under representation of Indigenous Australians in general, academic and particularly senior executive staff positions in Universities, and the recognition of the role of Indigenous elders in Australia’s universities.

“Universities Australia also encourages initiatives including Indigenous cultural competency and an Indigenous Learned Academy, and is keen to work with the Government to ensure long-term funding of Indigenous education, as well as workforce strategies to increase Indigenous leadership at high levels,” Professor Larkins said.

“As a result of the third annual IHEAC conference in November 2007, Universities Australia strongly advocates for the recognition of Indigenous Knowledge through the ABS research classifications, which would give increased access to research funding of projects involving Indigenous Knowledge. This is essential for future scholarship, teaching and research, which could be greatly enriched by incorporating Indigenous Knowledge systems”, Professor Larkins said.

“We look forward to concrete future action by the Government in the spirit of this apology to increase efforts to improve higher education access and outcomes for Indigenous Australians,” Professor Larkins said.

“Australian Universities have a major role in educating, and nurturing the career opportunities of, Indigenous Australians who will become the future professionals, scholars, educators and leaders of this country.”

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**Media Inquiries contact Universities Australia Director of Communication and Government Relations:
Rebecca Harris Ph: 02 6285 8206 Mob: 0400 166 691**

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