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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,” said Professor Richard Larkins the Chairman of the Board of Universities Australia.

Universities Australia supports IHEAC in bringing serious issues to the Government’s attention including redressing the low enrollment 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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