(note: VC speaks following performance from Kuma Karro dance troupe and welcome to country from Jack Buckskin)

• Good morning, and welcome to the University of South Australia.

• For those of you who don’t know me, I’m Professor David Lloyd and I’m the University’s Vice Chancellor.

• At the outset, I want to acknowledge the stirring and evocative dance performance we’ve just seen from the Kuma Karro troupe, and the symbolic welcome to country by Jack Buckskin.

• I also want to add my personal respects to the traditional owners of this land, past and present – the Kaurna people, and to the elders who are here with us today.

• There’s no doubt this is a significant day for our University and for the Australian Indigenous Mentor Experience.

• Not only because we’re welcoming a number of special guests to our City West campus.
• But just as importantly, we are recognising and celebrating AIME, which is helping to deliver tangible, enduring benefits to Australia’s first people.

• The commitment to fostering opportunities for Indigenous Australians has been a foundation principle of our University since it was established 22 years ago, and is one that I have personally embraced since arriving from Ireland and taking up the role of Vice Chancellor earlier this year.

• Indeed, I carry deep, heartfelt memories of the incredibly moving welcome to country that I received during our recent round of graduation ceremonies – an honour that I understand was the first to be bestowed upon a Vice Chancellor in South Australia.

• I was greatly humbled and immensely proud to have been afforded that honour, and that poignant performance –as with the one we’ve just seen – will remain an indelible memory for life.

• And while today’s event marks a significant milestone in our University’s commitment to Indigenous culture and advancement, it is certainly not the first time we’ve been at the forefront of this most important social agenda.
• In 1997, the University of South Australia became the first university in the nation to develop a Statement of Commitment to Australian Reconciliation.

• We have also established the David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research, which offers a range of programs in Aboriginal and Australian studies.

  o For those of you who don’t know the inspiring story of David Unaipon – a Ngarrindjeri man from country near the mouth of the Murray River – I encourage you to find out more about the face that graces Australia’s $50 note.

• Not only is our commitment to the education and employment of Indigenous Australians enshrined in the University’s Act of Establishment, we have a dedicated Reconciliation Stone in place at each of our campuses.

• And just a few weeks ago, I was proud to sign a statement of commitment to producing a Reconciliation Action Plan that will develop strategies and actions designed to improve educational and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over coming years.

• The Plan will be launched at the beginning of next year.
• However, our commitment to Indigenous education and opportunity goes well beyond the aspirational.

• For example, in our Division of Health Sciences alone, we have reported a significant increase in the number of Indigenous students commencing programs and - over the past decade – we’ve graduated around 100 Indigenous health professionals.

• These are but a few examples of how the University of South Australia is working to make a difference for our Indigenous students, their families and the broader community.

• And it is why we are delighted to be hosting today’s event and to learn more about AIME.

• This important initiative, as you are about to hear, delivers practical, lasting results for Indigenous students by providing them with the opportunities, skills and belief to finish secondary school.

• But just as importantly, it also helps university students, schools, teachers and the wider community to connect directly with Indigenous Australians and to further break down the cultural, social and economic divide.
• This heralds a **genuine step forward** for reconciliation, and has the potential to make a **profound difference** to so many lives among its Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants.

• That’s why the University of South Australia was keen to join the program this year, and pleased to see how **quickly and enthusiastically** it has been embraced across our institution.

• Since we joined as a partner university with AIME, more than **80 UniSA students** have volunteered to be involved as mentors, and very soon we hope to grow that number to **100 or more** who will be working with Indigenous students at Adelaide’s eight participating schools.

• I extend a warm welcome to all the students who are with us today.

• We are also pleased that, under this agreement, AIME staff will be based at our UniSA campus at Mawson Lakes, and I want to take this opportunity to mention **Treena Clark** who is the AIME program manager at UniSA.

• In addition to being an esteemed alumnus, having graduated with an Honours degree in Public Relations from our University, Treena was named South Australia’s NAIDOC Scholar of the Year for 2012.
• She is an outstanding ambassador for UniSA, for AIME and for Australia.

• Ladies and gentlemen.

• It’s now my pleasure to introduce and hand over to today’s special guest presenters.

• Shortly we’ll hear from AIME’s chief executive officer Jack Manning Bancroft who founded the program at the remarkable age of 19 when he led a group of students from the University of Sydney to meet 25 Indigenous high school students at Redfern in Sydney’s inner-west.

• It’s a remarkable story, and I’m greatly looking forward to Jack’s presentation today.

• And following Jack, it’s indeed an honour to welcome today’s special international guest to the University of South Australia.

• As an entrepreneur, pioneer, activist, adventurer, humanitarian and mentor, Sir Richard Branson has been a global household name for more than four decades and it’s indeed wonderful to have him here in South Australia and with us at City West.
• I know everyone here – most notably the school and UniSA students involved with AIME – are keen to hear from our guests rather than me, so please welcome to the microphone the CEO of AIME, Jack Manning Bancroft.