



# Dragons Abreast Australia National News Bulletin

Mar 2006



## Celebrating Life!

Hello everyone,

DAA is expanding at a great rate of knots – so much interest in our organisation, increased hits on the website and more calls to the 1300 number. As an organisation we face constant challenges of sourcing funds and this month I am absolutely delighted to announce that thanks DAA has received a lovely windfall of \$30,000!!!! Isn't that FANTASTIC!!!!

I knew this while in Sydney – as I received the phone call in the middle of Darling Harbour on Sunday but was sworn to secrecy until Carol Arnold had a chance to announce this to her home team of *Missabittatitti* the follow weekend. It was a real effort keeping my lips zipped – but such fabulous news – I must have looked like the cat who swallowed the canary! Read all about the event in Carol's story below – notice, I am leaving her to tell you the details!!! It is so exciting!

As a national organisation we are at a cross roads. This is something that most organisations experience and as one that is almost 8 years old, it is not surprising that what used to work previously is not longer appropriate to the growing needs of DAA. We have spent much of the last 6 months reviewing our structure and policies whilst analysing how we can best move forward, staying true to our aims and ensuring that our image and are name are protected at all times, so that DAA continues to exist and be available for all those who will, inevitably, follow us down the breast cancer pathway – we know through our own personal experiences that the journey with breast cancer is easier when shared with the magic of the dragon spirit.

We have therefore made the decision that from 1 July 2006 Dragons Abreast races at major regattas will comprise 100 per cent survivor teams. The only exception to this rule will be sweeps, and that is only if a survivor sweep is not available. The change has come about purely through force of numbers - Chinese New Year 2006, Darling Harbour was the first time that we had 12 teams of survivors on the water together. Had we not made the decision to change our policy, several survivors would not have gained placed in the boats that participated as part of the 12 in the DA Challenges and the Flowers on the Water. However, we did not forget our supporters and were very proud of our three supporter composite crews that also took to the water.

As arrangements are already well underway for the Nationals 2006, in Nagambie, Victoria, the 80/20 rule will still be applied but it is expected that all future major regattas will use the 100 per cent rule, with, where necessary composite teams

being formed and supporter teams assembled in the same way. This does not preclude a group, that is an actually dragon boat club entering a team of any mix under a name other than Dragons Abreast – a good example of this is Dragons Abreast Sydney who often race as Mel's Belles.

Several of our groups already have viable supporter teams paddling, with partners, friends and relatives of survivors making up strong mixed crews which compete in social or sporting regattas – Brisbane River Dragons are one such example.

From 1 July 2006 we will also cease to charge individual members fees, as this is too time consuming administratively and not cost effective. Instead, the group membership fees will increase and be a flat rate as set at the beginning of each financial year. In effect the groups will be the members rather than the individuals – which means we are able to consult more effectively with our members as we will only have 31 to consult with rather than the 1200 we currently have on the books. This also means each group has an equal voice, no matter how large or small their membership.

Change is always difficult, but we have thought long and hard about all of this, and taken a great deal of advice. We feel very confident this is the right way forward for DAA.

*Michelle Hanton*



#### Introducing Rosemary Shimmin....

Jo Parry has decided to handover the national newsletter. Rosemary Shimmin has kindly offered to take over the role of getting the national bulletin to you all so you continue to keep abreast of all things Dragons Abreast.

A mainlander by birth, I came to Tasmania with my family in January 1980, aged 31, just 4 months after being diagnosed with breast cancer. And here I am nearly 27 years later, still in Tasmania, my two daughters now grown, successful in their chosen careers, married and with 2 little ones each.

Little did I know I would be fortunate enough to see them reach adulthood, be 'Romy' to my grand children and that I would also become a part of DA Tasmania. I was initially hesitant to be a "dragon lady". I felt more of a supporter than a survivor. It was all so long ago. I did not believe I could make a worthwhile contribution. As a single lady I found it difficult to "come out". How wrong I was. Many doors have opened and I have blossomed.

I look forward to my involvement in your newsletter. You are all such inspirational women."

## EVERY CLOUD DOES HAVE A SILVER LINING

I was extremely disappointed that my annual work conference clashed with Chinese New Year. How I longed to paddle with everyone on the Sunday at Darling Harbour but I have learnt that there is a reason for everything and this year the reason was DAA itself. As you read in the previous article, 156 delegates and sponsors opened their hearts and their wallets and at the end of the AFMA 2006 Conference, The Good Guys had raised \$30,000 for Dragons Abreast in honour of one of their own, Katrina Goldsworthy.

Katrina had heard about Dragons Abreast Australia and requested that they be the beneficiaries of the conference dinner for the following reasons: *“provided it self generates the things I have perceived from the group i.e.: friendship, companionship, support, health, teamship and lots and lots of laughter which of course is the very best medicine”*

I doubt that truer words could describe Dragons Abreast. This is what ‘community’ is all about!

And so it began, there was to be a Catamaran ‘Race’ on the Friday afternoon with 10 Cats participating, money was being bet on whom the winner would be. The only ‘winner’ of this race was Dragons Abreast. Two delegates were given Helicopter rides out of Sea World as awards during the conference; these were then given back and auctioned off, and when won, re-auctioned. I believe over \$900 was raised just on this alone. There were fines given out over the three days of the conference, for varying reasons: mobile phones being left on during sessions, needing assistance to find one’s way back to one’s room at the end of the night and so forth, with most fines being \$5. Surprising how this adds up though.

Peter Steven, treasurer/secretary of AFMA was relentless in his quest to raise the money, with the tally on Friday morning reaching \$5,000. We were all ecstatic, I couldn’t believe my ears as on Thursday evening it was at \$2,300 and we still hadn’t finished betting on the Catamaran race. Friday evening the tally had reached over \$12,000 and when Katrina spoke that night there wasn’t a dry eye in the room. Sponsors increased their original donations and another delegate (Jeff Phillips) said he would have his head shaved if GIAA (General Insurance Advisors Association) put in \$2,000. Jacqui was told on the bus going back to the hotel on Friday evening that she was ‘going down’ and that they would reach that \$30,000.

I had to leave on Saturday morning, so was not there for the finale. The total money donated was stopped at \$29,999 so Jacqui wouldn’t have to go through with it (she had another conference to attend in Amsterdam in 8 weeks). The two Jeff’s had their hair shaved at lunchtime and after lunch Martin, the conference MC, announced that Jacqui had given the \$1 to him to make the total raised \$30,000. (Mind you, she took the dollar from Peter as she said that there was no way she was going to pay for it herself.) It was quite traumatic for her as Katrina joined her on stage to give moral support. We all know how hard it is when our hair falls out because of drugs, but to deliberately shave one’s head takes a rather extraordinary person.



My colleagues are extremely special people and the support given by each and every one of them, to both Katrina and myself, made this not only the best Conference ever, but also the most emotional.

I thank these people from the bottom of my heart! *Carol Arnold*

*Pictured – Left to Right Jacquie, Carol, Norbert Goulton, Rosy Loft, Lexie Warren*

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## News from Port Macquarie...

Six new members competed at the Central Coast regatta, Tacoma, Jan 2006. All had a fabulous of a time. Hiring a bus & driver meant everyone could relax on the trip home. Attached is a photo of the team relaxing between heats with our new sun shade donated by Oxley Cove Resort, Port Macquarie .

CNY this year was a major event. Again, everyone had a great time. Training continues in earnest for the NSW State Titles March 25<sup>th</sup>.



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Singapore!

Are you interested in going to Singapore? The application form is on the back of this newsletter. **Deadline for applications is 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006**

1st IPDBC Breast Cancer Dragon Boat  
World Championships  
Singapore - 29th September 2006 - 1st October 2006  
Registration is now OPEN to all breast cancer survivors teams in the world!! First ever opportunity to represent your country and your team.  
Full details of the event are available on [www.bcf.org.sg/IPDBC06](http://www.bcf.org.sg/IPDBC06)



Amazon Heart Odyssey

Applications for our latest amazing adventure, the Amazon Heart Odyssey Montana 2006 have just opened!

Also don't forget the New Zealand Trek that quite a few of our ladies are participating in.

For more information on the latest Amazon Heart ventures, go to [www.amazonheart.com](http://www.amazonheart.com)

Let's give them our support. Remember that Dragons Abreast Australia are the beneficiaries of funds raised by the Australian participants.

# Getting There is Half the Fun!!

It's an eight hour drive from Merimbula to Sydney and as we had to be in Sydney at 4pm on Friday for a local coordinators meeting with Michelle, the four of us had to leave very early.

We solved the political problems of the world before morning tea, ironed out all relationship difficulties, other than our own, before lunch, and had just started organizing local social events when a distinctive thumping from under the car warned us of the flat tyre!

Now, meetings with Michelle don't happen often, and an hours delay would have made us very late, so with one voice the cry of "We're Dragon Boaters, we can do anything!" went up. Marge Snijder began to unload the personal possessions of four women out of the back of the station wagon. Soon a pile of suitcases, assorted green bags with bits we'd forgotten to put into the cases, four eskies, a case of wine, life jackets, paddles, boxes of food, beauty bags, and clothes on hangers began to form on the grassy verge, and the spare tyre came into view.

Meanwhile Pat Helmore was rummaging in the glove box moving aside the accumulated junk of years to find the instruction manual, Anne Atkins was hunting for a pair of glasses to read the manual and Tina Bingham took charge of the camera. Instruction manuals are wonderful things especially when you can see the print, and it wasn't long before we had the jack in place. There was a nasty moment when the nuts wouldn't undo and there was some argument as to which of us had the best legs to lure a strong handsome man out from his car to help, but luckily (?unluckily?) the nuts shifted and the wheel was changed in under 20 mins. But the spare was a little flat on the bottom so we loaded up the car and limped into Campbelltown to find a tyre shop. Out came all the stuff from the back of the car again, much to the amusement of the tyre shop owner, and he had two new tyres on, we had the car loaded and were back on the highway in under an hour. What's more Tina and Pat made it to the meeting with Michelle and all the other coordinators with minutes to spare.



Chinese New Year in Sydney was spectacular, and the Pink Sapphires had the best time,

but it will always be remembered as "The Year the Tyre Went Flat" and there is no doubt that Dragon Boaters can do anything if they put there mind to it and work as a team.



Left:  
How much gear do 4 ladies need for one weekend?  
L to R Tina Bingham, Marge Snijder and Anne Atkins  
Above: How many dragon boaters does it take to  
change one tyre?

# Victoria Update...

A great day was had by all who participated in the Festival at New Quay – Australia Day. Dragons Abreast ladies from Geelong, Bendigo, and Albury Wodonga, made for a wonderful sight in bright pink on the water.

A closely fought battle ensued for the Breast Cancer Cup, with Geelong once again proving to be the better team on the day. Bendigo took out the Australia Day Cup, and Yarra (that's us), coming a close second. It was held on challenging conditions with 42 degree heat and 4 paddlers from DA Albury-Wodonga joined in with the DA Melbourne team to go home with a medal each!

Below is the sea of Dragons Abreast Pink ladies at Docklands, the new venue for VDBA Melbourne International Dragon Boat festival held this year on Australia Day.



Cheers Pru

**Dragons Abreast Geelong has a new Coordinator** – Lauren Vallance - I am a country girl, coming from the dry north west of Victoria. I am now a retail pharmacist in suburban Geelong, with 2 teenage sons (16 and 13). I was diagnosed with Breast Cancer in July 02, proceeded with chemotherapy and radiation therapy. I am now single, but my life is filled with family and the ever expanding family of dragon boaters and Dragons Abreast. I am now an

accredited sweep and hope to compete successfully at Nagambie, that is steering a straight course.

# Titivators Dragons Abreast



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The Titivators held a fundraiser at Novotel Pacific Bay Resort Coffs Harbour on Saturday 11 March to raise money for our much needed new boat.

Under a star lit  $\frac{3}{4}$  moon Wendy Matthews opened COthe evening by singing 'The Day You Went Away' the song which had been dedicated to husbands that had lost their wives, children that had lost their mothers, siblings that had lost their sisters and to all the Angels Abreast women that have gone before them and which bought tears to the 350 plus guests.

This was followed by a performance of the Titivators themselves adorned in their DA hats, pink tutus and singlets in their dragon boat paddling in the lagoon at the resort, followed by a follow spot light, to the amazement of the crowd. It was truly a sight to behold.

Our star attraction was Carlotta the infamous Les Girls drag queen who entertained to perfection, incorporated the Titivators into her act and of course brought the house down with her humour, love of the crowd and riotous girly/drag behaviour. One of the best acts I've seen in a long while. Truly sensational! Everyone should get her to their fundraisers – You won't be sorry!

We also had Michelle Hanton who kindly gave up her precious time to come down from Darwin to speak on behalf of all Dragons Abreast gals about what we do, why we do it and how much we love it.

It was a hugely successful event, a lot of hard work, but we got our boat. We raised approx \$18,000.00 on the night – still coming in. The biggest thanks ever goes out to our MC and producer of the show Graeme Singleton as this would never have got off the ground without him.

Thank you to all the Titivators who contributed so much and especially to Dympna, Maureen Meikle, Robbie, Cass, Avril, Kaye, Lyn Humphrys, Helen as it wouldn't have happened without us all pulling together.

*Maureen Shaw*

# Queen's Baton Relay - Sally-Anne & Susan..



Sally-Anne, who is the daughter of Eve Bryson, member of WA Amazons joined the Australian 2006 Commonwealth Games team in the 400 metres, carrying the Queen's Baton. Sally-Anne was chosen from thousands of employees from games sponsor Telstra to run with the baton.



Susan Tulley (DAA member, former BCNA State Rep and President NTBCV) was one of the lucky people to have the honour to carry the Baton. She carried this in Katherine, which is some 3 hours drive from Darwin. Penny La Sette (also DAA member), Michelle Hanton and her family got up at 4 am to drive down and cheer Susan on as well as fly the Pink Flag along! It was well worth the drive and as you can see from the photo's – Susan did a fantastic job!!

It was actually quite appropriate that Susan had to go to Katherine to do this, as it was in Katherine that she was diagnosed with breast cancer – many moons ago.

## The Regatta

Rows Of Pink Ladies Waiting In Line  
Been Through So Much, We'll Be Fine  
Stretching, Bending, Touching Our Toes  
Thinking "Why Am I Here? Heaven Knows"  
Clamber On Board, Keep The Boat Steady  
Sweep Enquires "Are You Ready?"  
At The Crack Of The Starters Gun  
The Dragon Boat Race Has Begun  
Paddling At A Furious Rate  
Hearts Pounding, Breathlessly  
Pursuing Our Fate  
Lone Bagpiper Standing On The Pier  
Melodious Sound Floats Across  
The Air So Clear  
Sweep Shouts Encouragement  
"Keep Going Your Almost There!"  
Stamina Wanning But We Don't Care  
From The Banks Of The River A Cheer  
The Finishing Line .....Were Here!  
Encouraging Words All Over The Place  
Exhilaration On Every Face  
Walking Through The Guard Of Honour  
Paddles Held High  
A Lump In The Throat  
I Could Cry.

*Poem by Judee Radford – one of our newer members from Pittwater Pinks.*



The newly formed "**Pittwater Pinks**" DAA crew is now up and running. Located in Bayview on Sydneys northern beaches as part of the Bei Loon Dragon Boat Club, the team train on the beautiful sandy shores of Pittwater. Started only in late November the team have already attended several races, including one in Penrith at the Olympic Regatta Centre and Chinese New Year at Darling Harbour where they gave a splendid performance for such a newly formed team!

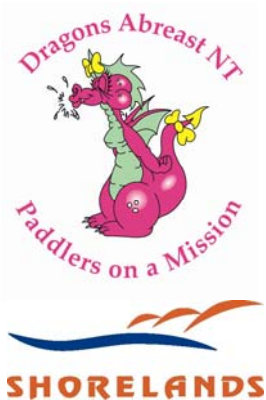
# Amazon Warriors...

After a very long 'spring' the temperatures in Perth are beginning to rise to expected summer highs. The unusually mild weather has seen us taking to the water in decidedly cool conditions with lots of choppy water to contend with when paddling. However, training sessions have pressed ahead regardless of cold, wind or rain, but we called it a day when a lightning storm threatened.

We have found it pleasant paddling further up the river, although there are still motor boats charging past and stirring up the water we find that many slow down to reduce the wake and wash they cause. It's particularly peaceful when we paddle into the non-motor boat zone through the wildlife sanctuary. It is alive with all manner of birdlife from pelicans roosting on an old post over the river to ducklings and cygnets scooting among the reeds and rushes. For several weeks we were paddling with a dolphin and her calf, but they have moved on now. Even though we are out there, pushing ourselves to drive the paddle just a bit deeper or harder, we still experience the calm and joy of being able to interact with nature as part of a caring team.

Last month Amazons and other WA dragonboat paddlers joined with representatives from Rowing WA and Canoeing WA to try out the water at Champion Lakes. This is WA's newest sporting recreational park for water sports. It has been developed in conjunction with the new highway on the southern outskirts of Perth. When it is finally complete, it will certainly be international standard, but that will be some time in the future. Planning and Infrastructure Minister Alannah McTierman and Sporting and Recreation Minister John Bowler took the opportunity to don pink rash shirts to try their skill at paddling with the Amazons. Alannah was heard to say, "This is a lot harder than it looks, it really takes a lot of effort, but it's a lot of fun."





Last year Colleen Haydon received a phone call from Arthur Hamilton of Shorelands asking her if his company could be involved with Dragons Abreast NT-Paddlers on a Mission. He wanted to assist in promoting the education and awareness of Breast Cancer as widely as possible through the NT. After several meetings, a three year sponsorship agreement was formed. Shorelands agreed to repair & repaint one of our boats – SUNSHINE, to supply 30 rashies, a new drum and to fund or assist in the funding for the promotion and running of events and or activities by Dragons Abreast NT-Paddlers on a Mission. They have also supplied a trailer (painted PINK), had our BBQ trailer repaired and gave tremendous support to our Crab & Quail Evening held last September.

SUNSHINE was taken out of the water during October. She was stripped naked and a complete overhaul was done (wouldn't it be wonderful if it was that easy for we mere mortals) and on January 24 2006 we celebrated her rebirth. The "Rebirth of Sunshine" was held at the Darwin Sailing Club, another great supporter of Dragons Abreast NT-Paddlers on a Mission. The evening was attended by 140 guests including the Minister for Sport & Recreation, Dehlia Lawrie, several other politicians, our outgoing Patron Sue Carter and our incoming Patron, Carolyn Richards the Northern Territory Ombudswoman plus friends and supporters of Dragons Abreast NT-Paddlers on a Mission.



After a welcoming speech from yours truly, speeches from Minister Delia Lawrie and Arthur Hamilton, Sunshine was blessed by the Buddhist Monks. Arthur was given the opportunity to be part of the ceremony by performing the task of dotting the Dragons eyes to open them. This traditional ceremony was followed by the Lion Dancers, which is always a spectacular show. Sunshine was the first boat to be donated to the Northern Territory by Madeline Luck. She was first blessed on January 24 2001 and, as she was going to do this time, had her first race in the Australia Day Regatta. – Good Karma here I am sure.



left DBNT Australia Day Regatta – in our new rashies).

We were all very excited about her new outfit and looked forward to seeing her on the water. This came to fruition during the DBNT Australia Day Regatta on Sunday 29 January. Shorelands entered into the regatta as one of our Novice Teams and their first race of the day, decked out in our new rashies, was in Sunshine. Even though she did not come over the line first she certainly looked spectacular on the water. We now, very proudly paddle Sunshine on the water with her fresh coat of paint through the generous sponsorship from Arthur Hamilton of Shorelands. (pic to

**APPLICATION FORM – DAA COMPOSITE TEAMS**  
**1<sup>st</sup> IPDBC Breast Cancer Dragon Boat World Championships - Singapore**  
**29<sup>th</sup> Sept – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006.**

If you are interested in being a part of a composite DAA or Internationally Abreast team please complete this form. This event has an 80/20 as well as a full survivor class – supporters are very welcome. **Deadline for applications is 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006** as we need to pay registrations to Singapore by end April.

**DAA CONDITIONS**

1. Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.
2. A non refundable deposit of \$200 per paddler must accompany this form. The deposit covers the entry fee to the event, DAA administrative cost, and team get together in Singapore.
3. All DAA team members **MUST stay in the same hotel** for the period 27<sup>th</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> October inclusive. We will decide on hotel once we have received all applications. We will be looking at least 3.5 star or above.

Name:			
Address:			
Telephone:		Email:	
Date of Birth		BC Survivor (please circle)	Supporter (please circle)
DAA group are you a member of?			
Accredited Sweep?	Yes	No	(please circle)
Preferred Paddle Side?	Right	Left	Either (please circle)
Experienced Drummer?	Yes	No	(please circle)

**CREDIT CARD PAYMENT AUTHORITY**

Please debit my     Bankcard    Visa     Master Card

Cardholder Name: \_\_\_\_\_    Expiry Date:    /    Please  
print as it appears on your card

Cardholder Signature: \_\_\_\_\_    Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_    Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_    Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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