

# Dragons Abreast Australia National News Bulletin

DEC 2006

## Celebrating Life!



Welcome to the final issue of the DAA electronic newsletter for 2006!

I must begin by apologising to **Jan Skorich** – our wonderful webmaster and 2007 Organising Committee member. In the last newsletter we printed a photo of the committee but Jan was missing and I forgot to mention she was absent. So sorry Jan – I really don't know what I was thinking of!! Now just so you all know what Jan looks like – here is a photo.



*Jan Skorich*

I can't believe another year has flown past already – and what a year it has been! Thanks to all our fantastic member groups for their ongoing support, via attending dragon boat regatta's, volunteering at Nationals, undertaking courses, public speaking, fundraising, promotions, attending Pink Ribbon breakfasts, participating in Global Illuminations, Relay for Life, Mini-Fields of Women and just generally being wonderful people to be around!

I have some good news to share – at the recent AusDBF meeting **DAA was accepted as a full member**, rather than an Associate Member. This is fantastic news for DAA and something that we have been working towards for over three years. What it means is we are recognised as being as valuable as any of the State or Territory peak bodies but with a different role to play. Our focus is exclusively on the breast cancer side of things. This means we will be able to work closely to ensure that national standards apply to the BCS category of racing – in simple terms, a consistent set of rules for the BCS races which are run at any AusDBF sanctioned event. This will make things much simpler for DAA member groups in terms of understanding which rules apply etc.

We also now have 4 votes at the AusDBF level (as opposed to 1). Early in the new year DAA will be seeking expressions of interest for people who would like to be more closely involved with the liaisons between DAA and AusDBF – this would mean attending meetings as a delegate for DAA. If you are interested in such a role – keep a look out for the next newsletter which will have the EOI form attached.

Our 2007 Organising Committee has been hard at work and plans for Abreast in Australia are coming along nicely. **Don't forget the next cut off for registrations is 31<sup>st</sup> December at \$350 after which the fees increase.** Our fax machine is kept busy churning out the entries – we seem to have had a flurry from New Zealand this week!

The Dragon Walk of History and the commemorative book are underway. We are now recruiting for our Ambassador program (details on the next page) – which is a wonderful chance to make new friends from faraway places!

**DAA is actively looking for a wonderful soloist singer who is a breast cancer survivor.** The person needs to have plenty of confidence and be willing to sing in public for a large audience. This is for Abreast in Australia's opening ceremony. If you have anyone within your midst please do let me know – [nationalcoordinator@dragonsabreast.com.au](mailto:nationalcoordinator@dragonsabreast.com.au)

Many of you have been asking about Chinese New Year at Darling Harbour – the entry forms have not yet been released. Be assured that they will be forwarded to coordinators as soon as they are available! An invitation to the CNY annual banquet dinner hosted by Dragons Abreast Sydney has already been sent to coordinators. Places fill fast, so best book soon!

For those who have never been to a CNY in Darling Harbour – it is such a wonderful showcase for DAA and the breast cancer cause – a sea of pink ladies that cannot be missed! New friendships are made through the composite teams and old ones renewed. Yes, we will be putting together composite teams – again, those details will be on the entry forms when they are released. There will be a DA Challenge and all boats must be 100% survivor crews.

I hope you have all enjoyed reading all the latest adventures and news from around the country in our monthly bulletins, I know I certainly have! Congratulations to Rosemary Shimmin of Dragons Abreast Tasmania (based in Hobart), on behalf of all of DAA, for doing such a fantastic job with putting together this electronic newsletter each month. Contributions for the newsletter are always most welcome from everyone and do not need to come directly from your coordinators – editors maintain final say of what is printed. All contributions should be forwarded to [newsletter@dragonsabreast.com.au](mailto:newsletter@dragonsabreast.com.au)



I am sharing my little cartoon from Vicki Nottage with you – some have seen it before, as I used it last year too – but we have so many new groups these days, that what us 'oldies' take for granted is new to so many! Vicki was from Adelaide and sadly lost her battle with breast cancer some years ago – however she remains fondly in my thoughts at this time of year.

To those of you who have lost loved ones this past year – I extend my heart felt sympathies at what will be a difficult time of year. This year has been particularly difficult for so many DAA groups as we have lost too many wonderful women these last twelve months. Each one so special and unique but they are all now at peace with our Angels Abreast team who I feel watch over us all every time we race.

I would like to end by wishing you a very special and peaceful Christmas time – a time for sharing and caring, reflecting how lucky we are and enjoying every moment of our lives as we create and rekindle the special memories we cherish with our loved ones.

Peace on Earth & a world without breast cancer is my Christmas wish for all of us.  
*Michelle Hanton, National Coordinator*

#### MERCHANDISE NOTE

**New stocks of rashies and polo shirts should be available by end of January.**



## Abreast in Australia Ambassador Program

With about seventy teams joining us in Caloundra in 2007, we are inviting members of Dragons Abreast Australia to perform the role of **Team Ambassador**.

We need one Ambassador per team.

### *What is the role of the Ambassador?*

The Ambassador is someone who will make their allocated team feels welcome.

The Ambassador will be the conduit for information for their allocated team and be a face they can relate to when they arrive.

The Ambassador will be au fait with all aspects of Abreast in Australia 2007 so as to understand what is happening and be able to point the teams in the correct direction for specific questions.

The 2007 Organising Committee will remain responsible for all official communication.

The Ambassador needs to start communication with their allocated team from the start, giving the team one point of contact for any queries related to the events.

### *Why would you want to become and Ambassador?*

This will provide a terrific opportunity to make new friends with women from far a field. It also provides you the opportunity to represent and promote Dragons Abreast Australia.

All Ambassadors will be given parameters to work with, and each will be given the information to use and also understand what is NOT expected of them (e.g. being a tourist operator).

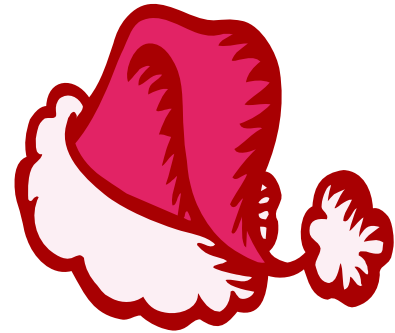
### *Contact*

All interested potential Ambassadors please contact Jo Parry at [jo.parry@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jo.parry@bigpond.net.au).

If you have specific questions email Jo or you can call her on 0408001907

**Contact Jo by January 15 2007**

# Seasons Greetings



## Dragons Abreast (ACT) Inc.

launched their Dragon Boat *GoAnna* with a traditional blessing by Buddhist monks. The ceremony was led by Venerable Master Tich Quang Ba and fellow monks from the Buddhist Centre in Lyneham. Following the blessing the boat was officially launched by Mr Andrew Barr, MLA, Minister for Sport, Education & Training.

left to right - President of Canberra Dragon Boat Association, Fred Lehmann, DAA Founding Member, Anna Wellings Booth; Bill Stefaniak MLA; Venerable Master Tich Quang Ba; ACT Minister for Sport, Education and Training, Andrew Barr MLA; Federal MP Annette Ellis; and Brendan Smyth MLA, all long time supporters of Dragons Abreast.

The gathering was a celebration for the crew who call themselves *Tickled Pink*. They paddle for fun, fitness, friendship and, most importantly, raise awareness of breast cancer in the Canberra community.

Check our website for more photographs:  
[www.dragonsabreast.com.au](http://www.dragonsabreast.com.au)



Anna Wellings Booth in the foreground, surrounded by the Dragons Abreast ACT team

We welcome Judy Richmond as incoming coordinator and coach/sweep Robyne Kellett as deputy coordinator.



Hello all paddlers! It's nearly Christmas and we are paddling and partying hard.

On Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November a full team of Rainbow Dragons headed north to Tweed Heads to take part in a regatta organized by The Kids in Need Foundation. The weather was glorious, the river was sparkling, and we all had a wonderful time even though we did not win. As our song says "we're here to have some fun" and we certainly did.

Then it was more fun a week later. Our members were invited to Curves Gym in Lismore to watch the graduating class of belly dancers show their moves. Twenty exotic dancers in colorful skirts and coin belts gyrated to the pulsing Arabic music showing us how much they had learnt over the past few months. At the end of the show Urte Devery, the gym's owner presented us with a cheque for \$650. Urte very generously donated the proceeds of the belly dancing classes to support our club.



*enjoying the sun at Tweed Heads*



*Laura accepts the cheque from Urte*

The recent launch of our new boat generated lots of good publicity. We now have so many active paddlers that our training sessions have increased to three times a week to make sure no-one is left out. As well as Sunday mornings we now paddle on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. On these late summer evenings when the sun is sinking low it is magical to skim the boat over the dark calm waters of Lake Ainsworth.

Last Sunday after our morning paddle we finished the year with a Christmas brunch. As usual there were enough sausages to feed the multitudes.

Thank you to all who have helped our club this year, especially our President Laura and her husband John (aka Monica). They have put in many hours of hard work to get us our new boat and storage shed. The wonderful contraptions devised by John to get our boat in and out of the shed show that the frustrated engineer fighting to get out.



*our new boat is safely tucked away in the new shed*

Happy Christmas everyone. Have a peaceful and safe holiday season and we look forward to paddling with you all next year.

## Who you gonna call ??? **COAST BUSTERS !!!!**

Once again, our team has been extremely active this season. Twelve members of Central Coast "Coast Busters" travelled to Singapore in September. There they competed as part of the Australian team "Inspiration" bringing home the Bronze Medal in the 80/20 500m Grand Final and placed First in the 80/20 Plate Final.

On a more local note, Coast Busters competed in three races at Roseville on November 5th along with some of the Illawarra girls. The day consisted of rain, rain and more rain which only seemed to get heavier each time it was our turn to race. As this also happened to us during the first day of competition in Singapore, we are starting to wonder if it means anything? Even though we all felt we had been for a swim in the river, we achieved third place in the Women's Masters.

On January 13th our club will host its second annual regatta on the Wyong River at Tacoma. This will be followed by the Chinese New Year at Darling Harbour in February. Our focus for 2007 is undeniably "Abreast in Australia" at Caloundra where we will be entering a full Dragons Abreast Central Coast team...Yeah!

Claire McConaghy, our co-ordinator for the past three years, has decided to retire from the committee. She passes on her baton to Liz Hill. Claire will still be an integral part of our paddling team and we wish both Claire and Liz well in their endeavours. A special thank you to Liz and Ian Hill for all the effort they have put into building our beautiful new Pink boat trailer.



One of our foundation members, Kathy Gibbons, was recently named winner of the inaugural "Simply Legendary" Local Legend. This was a program which sought to acknowledge the achievements of local residents who had passed away in the last 25 years. Kathy was nominated for her passionate commitment to fund raising for cancer research, and support for fellow cancer patients. Over a period of three years Kathy raised \$50,000 for the Cancer Council alone. To the Coast Buster girls, Kathy was an inspiration, mentor, advisor and an ever ready shoulder to cry on. She was a "True Legend" for her tireless work raising Breast Cancer awareness. We miss you Kathy!



Coast Buster... Judi Gurzinski was the recipient of some special recognition at this year's Relay for Life. Judi was voted the Central Coast Cancer Council's Cancer Survivor of the Year! Judi officiated over both the opening and closing ceremonies at Mingara where \$130,000 was raised for Cancer research.

The team has received quite a bit of positive publicity recently which has done wonders to raise our profile in the Central Coast region. It makes me feel proud to be a part of such a positive and pro-active group of Breast Cancer survivors .....

## Oh! What a feeling!!!!

No, this isn't a car ad, but a response to a wonderful get together for DAA paddlers. The Pan Pacific Games, which covers many different sports, were held during November on the Gold Coast in Queensland. Naturally, dragon boat racing was one of the sports, and although there wasn't a Breast Cancer Survivors' category, many of our paddlers competed. They came from Sydney, Brisbane, Redcliffe, the Gold Coast, and possibly other towns or cities. The games were wonderful, so was the fabulous breakfast on the Sunday morning.

The local Dragons Abreast team, *Dragons Abreast Gold Coast*, from Currumbin, organised breakfast at the Kurrawa Surf Lifesaving Club with its wonderful view over beach and surf. The weather was perfect, the Nippers were out practicing, surfers were in the water, all were having fun. Nearly 80 guests at the breakfast were also having fun. The white clothed tables set on the balcony were decorated with pink (what other colour is there?) balloons, ribbons, bows, table runners and pink candles. We did not need to light these, on such a beautiful morning, but they looked good. It all looked terrific.



After two days of paddling, and getting to know each other, there was, that morning in the surf club, real warmth, friendliness, and love. The breakfast was the usual Aussie breakfast..... fruit, cereal, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausages, hash browns, toast and condiments, tea and coffee. After eating we socialized. Some of the paddlers as well as the team from DAGC had been to Singapore to compete in the first International Pink Dragon Boat Championships on the 30<sup>th</sup> September and 1<sup>st</sup> October. This and DAA's competition in 2007 at Caloundra were hot topics of conversation.

We would like to thank all those who were able to come and join us for breakfast on that beautiful Sunday morning.

### **Hong Kong - Mother of Dragons by Henning Wiekhorst**

One of the more recent books about dragon boating.

The book's table of content includes:

- Introduction
- Hong Kong - traditional and sparkling
- Tradition becoming modern sport
- Dragon Boats
- Dragon Boat Community
- Racing Moments
- Objective, Rules, Regulations
- Paddling Techniques
- Race Strategies
- Training

Format 22x23cm, Paper Back, 118 pages, glossy paper, 300 photographs, bi-lingual: English/Chinese

Detailed information can be obtained from:

<http://www.creative-dragon-works.com/motherofdragons.htm>

## Lady Skippers Day

On 26<sup>th</sup> November DAA was fortunate to be the recipient of a fund raising day of sailing at the Wynnum Manly Sailing Club. This is an annual event for Lady Skippers. The 32 boats were decked out in lots of pink. Some of the Missabitatitti girls were able to go out on boats for a wonderful sail. Janelle Gamble was a skipper on one of the boats and Janelle Pritchard put their family boat into the competition.

Many of the girls helped out by selling pink merchandise to the boaties and tickets for our multidraw raffle. When all the boats returned to shore we had a sausage sizzle and the club was thrilled with the number of crews who turned out for the fun time after the race.

Dr Lewinn's skincare company were major sponsors for the event with over \$2000 of prizes. They also gave all DAA helpers a small gift, which was a wonderful surprise. We were able to hand over more than \$1100 to DAA and this will now become an annual event on our calendar with 4th November 2007 already in the sailing and Missabitatitti calendar.

Maybe you will all follow the Brisbane to Gladstone Race over Easter next year when "Raffles", a boat owned, skippered and crewed by women will be the a competitor. We wish them success as this will be a first time for such a crew.



### DA VIC – GROUP CALENDAR – 2007

26 January	Australia Day Event at Docklands
11 February	DA Geelong Fun Paddle event at Geelong Canoe Club
3/4 March	DA Ballarat Launch/Bless boat
11 March	Melbourne International Dragon Boat Festival at Docklands
31 March/ 1 April	Mile High Championships at Falls Creek - Bravehearts

Contact: Pru Menzies [pru19@iprimus.com.au](mailto:pru19@iprimus.com.au) for further information



## ***Pendragons Abreast Have Fun***

Thirteen Pendragons Abreast team members and supporters travelled to EcoPoint Myall Lakes for a promotion and learning weekend on 18<sup>th</sup> November. The first surprise was the lovely accommodation – two bedrooms and two bathrooms! We were all a bit tired after travelling so far and a few “bubbles” helped us sleep well.



Next morning we rose for a 7am paddle on the lake. It took time to unload the dragon boats from the trailer and then onto the water, but it was just gorgeous that time of the morning. Our sweep gave us some instructions on how to hold a paddle correctly, how a stroke should feel and look and was very helpful. We had a few races between the two boats. It was all fun.

We returned to our cabins for a hearty breakfast followed by a variety of organised activities – some paddled, some bushwalked, some learnt about training and the food you should eat on race day, some did yoga, etc. etc. After lunch it was back on the water to do some training for new sweeps.

In the evening Linda opened a very special bottle of champagne that P won in a competition. The buffet dinner was enjoyed by all especially the baked cheesecake – definitely race day food! Afterwards we congregated on one cabin veranda and the spirits flowed. Ron told many a tale of his younger days and kept us all laughing. He is from a family of seven. He was a practical joker even then, with a wonderful sense of humour.



Sunday provided us with another glorious morning paddle and a longer breakfast on return. Then we went to paddle for the sweeps being tested – not as good as our Clare and Jan, though. The public were invited to have a go at dragon boating and I am sure “the bug” bit a few.

What a great place for a regatta!

It was a wonderful weekend. We highly recommend you pay EcoPoint Myall Shore Resort a visit – tell them you are associated with DAA for the discount rates! You won't be sorry you visited!

Visit [www.ecopoint.com.au](http://www.ecopoint.com.au) We did what we do best – had FUN!

## DASydney .....

Wet, soggy and wild, but smiles all around..... the weather at the Roseville Regatta in early November did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of the DASydney paddlers. It was a baptism of fire for one of our new paddlers, Chris Dunn who commented..."Since it was my first regatta, I was happy just to survive paddling all 6 races, although it was comforting to see the St John's Ambulance people close by, just in case. They said we must have been slightly un-hinged to enjoy the day in such soggy conditions - in that case, I wouldn't be sane for quids!!"

Pan Pacs Pandemonium. It was such a thrill for a group of DASydney paddlers to participate in the Pan Pacific Masters Games held at the Gold Coast. Despite the drama at the airport on the Thursday - some of our ladies were delayed 8 hours at the airport before they could board a Jet Star flight to Coolangatta - the weekend turned out to be fabulous.



Queensland turned on its beautiful weather for the racing. On the Friday night we all helped Tracey Bowne (one of our paddlers) celebrate her birthday and ....uummm, there was alcohol, even though we were paddling the next day. Although we didn't win any races, we think the organisers must've been infected by our zany enthusiasm because they awarded us 'Best and Fairest' at the Games. We all agreed the Pan Pacs were fantastic fun both on (despite some mishaps) and off the water.

Amelia Bentley from the Gold Coast Weekend Bulletin (who us? Media tarts?) interviewed 3 of our paddlers, Fairlie Stanish (Team Captain), Carol Fentoullis (Head Coach) and Pam Bell (PR) who grabbed the opportunity to outline the DAA cause. The article with the girls' picture appeared in the November 11-12 Gold Coast Weekend Bulletin.

Yes it's that time of the year again. Our Social Events Coordinator, Kathryn Pineiro, did a fantastic job organising the DASydney Christmas Party and Carol Fentoullis and family provided a terrific venue for it. It was impossible not to taste just a little of all the yummy food that was laid out on the table....so many good cooks, such variety and exotic flavours. The astonishment on the faces of the children when Santa arrived was just indescribable and the double act of Santa (Neil Millgate) and his helper (Sergio Piniero) kept us entertained with their antics while still maintaining the magic for the littlies. All in all, a fabulous evening enjoyed by all.



## Dragons Abreast TASMANIA

Flexibility was the key when competing at the Seafarers Festival in Hobart in November. Dragons Abreast Tasmania paddlers were not sure until the day how they would line up against surf life-saving boats and outrigger canoes.

However, with eight paddlers and a sweep from the northern Dragons group in Devonport, DAT were very pleased to be able to have both their boats, *Boobialla* and *Dragon Fly*, on the water.



Thanks to partners John Rundle and Paul Kerrison, both dragon boats arrived at Kangaroo Bay with plenty of time to spare. Paddlers were able to help the crew's experienced "retail sector" at the merchandise stall set up on the boardwalk in the middle of the festivities.

The race schedule went to plan with the arrival of surf life-saving boats and the outriggers. The mix of craft provided a colourful spectacle for the large crowd.

The 300-metre race course enabled crews to build up momentum to a sprint. However, the lack of lane markers challenged some sweeps! *Dragon Fly* just edged out the composite Devonport-Hobart *Boobialla*. Both dragon boats easily accounted for the outriggers (six crew). Unfortunately none was a match for the long-oared Clifton Beach surfboats.

What a great day. The retail team did a fantastic job selling raffle tickets and pink merchandise. And guess who won the raffle – none other than DAT green fingers Faye Johnson. She was delighted with her prize - a basket crammed full with gardening gear.



### THE BOX (Original source unknown)



The story goes that some time ago a mother punished her 5 year old daughter for wasting a roll of expensive gold wrapping paper. Money was tight and she became even more upset when the child used the gold paper to decorate a box to put under the Christmas tree. Nevertheless, the little girl brought the gift box to her mother the next morning and said, "This is for you, Mum"

The mother was embarrassed by her earlier over reaction, but her anger flared again when she opened the box and found it was empty. She spoke to her daughter in a harsh manner. "Don't you know, young lady, when you give someone a present there's supposed to be something inside the package?" She had tears in her eyes and said, "Oh, Mum, it's not empty! I blew kisses into it until it was full." The mother was crushed. She fell on her knees and put her arms around her little girl, and she begged her forgiveness for her thoughtless anger.

An accident took the life of the child only a short time later, and it's told that the mother kept that gold box by her bed for all the years of her life. Whenever she was discouraged or faced difficult problems, she would open the box and take out an imaginary kiss and remember the love of the child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us, as human beings, have been given a Golden box filled with unconditional love and kisses from our children, family and friends.

There is no more precious possession anyone could hold.

Enjoy your family time together!



**EVERYONE from all at DAA!**