



Dragons Abreast Australia National News Bulletin

NOV 2006

Celebrating Life!



Hello everyone,

Things are hotting up here in Darwin, not only weather wise but also organisation wise. Our office is under constant pressure as the emails, phone calls and letters flow in as we are now only 10 months away from Abreast in Australia 2007. There is so much enthusiasm from around the world – and the committee are working very hard. A 2007 update bulletin is being released today – if you are not already a subscriber, please check the website – and follow details at the end of this newsletter to subscribe yourself!

Our organising committee for 2007 had a great chance to catch up face to face at our weekend at EcoPoint Myall Shores resort. Due to popular demand we are making available the shirts worn by the 2007 Organising Committee – these are the ones featured in the photograph below. Details are available from your coordinators & merchandisers or on the attached order form.



2007 OrgCommittee - Anna Wellings Booth, Janelle Gamble, Jo Parry, Elspeth Humphries, Pete Cardell, Michelle Hanton

The resort is absolutely wonderful and we were treated to fabulous meals by their wonderful chef. In between the meals there was plenty of time for swimming, bushwalking and dragon boating – which helped ensure we burnt off some of the calories!

EcoPoint
Myall Shores Resort

www.ecopoint.com.au

The coaching workshop, the guided meditation and stretch sessions were very well attended with extremely positive feedback received from all participants. The only complaint was that they were held simultaneously! We are so fortunate that EcoPoint Myall Shores resort has the conference facilities that afforded us the luxury of two conference rooms and a great meeting room too! Brilliant facilities and we have some great ideas for other weekends to be held there – details will be released shortly!

The region around Myall Lakes is beautiful. Wonderful areas to kayak and canoe, beautiful surf beaches less than 10 minutes away. Great coffee shops in Hawks Nest and a golf course and at the end of a busy day, wonderful cabins to come home to. When I arrived it was very cold and damp but we were as warm as toast in our cabin with the heaters on, looking out the windows with beautiful clear view of the lake complete with white caps on the water! By the next morning it had turned rather warm, but we were still very comfortable as the doors opened up wide, we sat on our verandah and enjoyed – depending on the time of day - coffee, wine, champagne etc! Our southern friends swam in the beautiful calm lake and families of ducks and swans swam past. In the evening the rather well fed possums appeared on the verandah – it was truly a relaxing weekend despite the action packed schedule.



To our wonderful members of **DA Port Lincoln for their generous donate of \$1000** which was the result of a pink party, and the committee topped up the amount to give us a nice round figure!! These funds will go towards our general administrative costs as printing costs and calls to the 1300 number this year have skyrocketed as there is more and more demand for information.

Our EcoPoint Myall Shores weekend also saw us received from **DA ACT \$2,000** which was a result of their fantastic regatta – see details further on in this newsletter. Penny Dudding of **Advanced Breast Care presented us with a \$1,000** donation from sale of special edition pink ribbon range of prosthesis.

Thanks also to those of you who are supporting our miEssence fundraiser – some regular miEssence customers have also changed to ordering via the DAA fundraiser page. www.dragonsabreast.mifundraiser.com - which is just wonderful!

Special thanks too to **Zonta Breakfast Club ACT for** their hard work in securing over \$3,000 in donations from various friends, workmates and family members.

I am also very pleased to announce that DAA has signed a sponsorship arrangement with Zinc 96.1 and Hot 91.1 on the Sunshine Coast for exclusive commercial station broadcast rights within their area of broadcast. This will be a wonderful help to us in promoting Abreast in Australia 2007.

We are absolutely thrilled with the amount of people who have volunteered their services for 2007 and thanks to all of you who are sending us ideas, sponsorship leads, talking to local services clubs and generally striving to help us make Abreast in Australia 2007 an absolute resounding success! We are slowly moving closer and closer to our budget. Keep those wonderful ideas and suggestions flowing – we love to hear from you all!

In closing, I ask each of you to spare a thought and send a healing rainbow/prayer to Jon Taylor, President of the Australian Dragon Boat Federation who has himself just been diagnosed with cancer – he commenced his chemo last week – Jon has been a staunch support of Dragons Abreast from the very beginning and we all wish him well on his personal journey through the treatment cycle. **Michelle Hanton, National Coordinator**

DRAGONS ABREAST ACT 2006 CHALLENGE REGATTA



The Dragon Spirit must have been watching over us as a day of perfect sunshine ensured that Sunday 22 October 2006 was an unprecedented success

The atmosphere was enhanced through some good-hearted rivalry between the **33** assorted teams. Visually the teams embraced the 'Pink' theme with many variants of pink-themed boats. The 'best dressed' award went to the ComSuper team for flaunting their pink togas! This award has special significance as the team donated the toga material to Zonta. Zonta members make the breast cushions for distribution to hospitals for newly diagnosed women.

A special community award to honour the memory of Sylvia Flaxman, a founding member of Dragons Abreast, was presented to Clare Holland House (the Hospice).

Amongst the numerous stalls the Dragon Flyers BBQ stall was a well drilled and organised team that worked together and *in time*. Tarquin's sausage spruiking had everyone in stiches. The Dragon Flyers very generously donated their time and all **the profits** to Dragons Abreast. Coffee is always a popular choice and with the second coffee stall holder withdrawing the day before the regatta, a long line up for coffee was inevitable. The Thai food and Ice cream stall was well received.

The raffle and cake stalls were hugely successful. Raffle prizes were donated by Dragons Abreast members. First prize, a night's accommodation for 4 at Murramarang Resort in South Durras, was donated by **EcoPoint Resorts**, a major sponsor of AUSDBF and Dragons Abreast Australia. It was serendipity for the winner of that prize. His wife, in her early 30s, lost her battle with breast cancer two years ago. He has a 4 year-old son. Arthur praised the generosity of EcoPoint Resorts, and will take up the prize in the very near future.

Adding to the festive and colourful flair was the brilliant entertainment from the Djembie African drummers, Sing Australia Choir, Canberra City Pipers and the Daramalan College Jazz band. For children Kids at Play was a well attended and popular attraction.

Under and beside the Dragons Abreast tent a small band of people answered questions relating to health and dragon boating – not a bad combination. Community health groups provided pamphlets and handouts on health related issues. Dragons Abreast information was freely given and quite a few people came to find out more about dragon boating in Canberra.



Photo courtesy of Geoff Comfort - www.geoffcomfort.com "

Of course the regatta would not have been possible without the most generous assistance from the many volunteers that came forward to offer help in so many ways - CDBA members, CSCYC, Rotary and SES Volunteers. What would a regatta be without marshalls, race callers, time keepers, course umpires, the starters, boat wranglers? Quite often these positions are thankless or even vilified roles. Somebody has to do the job. ***Dragons Abreast is most grateful to all these troops for their time, enthusiasm and support of our regatta.***

Dragons Abreast is extremely happy to announce a considerable amount of money has been raised. \$9,000 will be distributed amongst breast cancer related organisations. We are very proud to be able to share our good fortune amongst other health and community related cancer groups. Recipients of donations include Clare Holland House (our local Hospice), Dragons Abreast (national), BCNA, NBCF, Amazon Heart and the Otis Foundation.

Another regatta over, what a relief! But it is SO worth it, we are really well known in the Canberra community because of it.



Hello all paddlers! Another busy month up here in the Rainbow region of Northern Rivers.

First up was the visit by the Amazon Heart bikers who called in on their way from Sydney to Brisbane. We welcomed them with breakfast on the beach in Byron Bay.



Amazon Heart bikers and Rainbow Dragons



On October 28th we travelled down to Grafton to paddle in the Jacaranda Festival regatta. We had a wonderful time, staying overnight at the hotel on the river and paddled the next day in three heats. We didn't win but we didn't disgrace ourselves and had lots of fun.

Celebrating at Jacaranda Festival

Some of our members are so pleased with our new logo that they have had it tattooed on various body parts. Ouch! Others are content to wear it on our new shirts.



"Show us yer tatts"



Showing off our new shirts and hats

Finally congratulations to our sweep John (aka Monica) for gaining his sweep accreditation.

Until next time - happy paddling everyone!

Pendragons Abreast and the Camden Support Group

said goodbye to one of their buddies, Pirkko Ranki, on Wednesday 18th October at 5.30pm. "P" was their sweep, a most loving caring person with the biggest happy smile and positive outlook. A "Flowers on the Water" ceremony was held the following Saturday at Penrith Regatta Centre.

"Fly with the angels, P".



On Saturday 28th October Pendragons Abreast joined Illawarra Pinks at Darling Harbour for the Shunde Dragon Festival. What an amazing and colourful festival. The Shunde were early dragon boat racers as long ago as the Quing dynasty. After their season of racing, the dragon boats were buried in the soil to preserve them. For the new season, the boats were unearthed, cleaned and the dragon's eyes were dotted.



In very gusty weather our team participated in this colourful ceremony. We feared that the old wooden dragon boat might be a bit top heavy with all its flags and decorations.

The Shunde Festival committee held a race for Dragons Abreast competitors. At the start we dedicated this race to P! Do you believe in "Karma"?!

We won that race and were showered with gold medals and a gold plate.

In this unusual way "P" told us to continue our passion, joy of life, humour, friendship, support and all that makes us special."

We had a great time and thank the Shunde committee for a wonderful and colourful day.



NEWS FROM THE ILLAWARRA

The **Field of Women** was held in Wollongong on Sunday 22nd October and what a great day we all had. The rain did stop and the sun shone brightly. The successful day meant different things to different people, but the underlying atmosphere was always one of love and goodwill. Our IBCSG members were joined by people whose BC story had begun many years previously as well as first timers. People who didn't know one another found themselves sharing stories and hugs. Some travelled great distances to be with us and it was great to see some of our Dragon Boat friends with us especially the Camden girls. Some of our Dragon Boat team were volunteers. Along with husbands, daughters and friends they manned the tables at McCabe Park helping with sponsorship messages to be put onto the silhouettes. Whilst doing this they spoke with many women- quite an emotional experience.



Then began our **Celebration of Life** walk to Win Stadium. One of our DA members was chosen, along with other group representatives, to carry the huge BCNA banner whilst the rest of us marched proudly behind our DA banner. What an awesome sight it was to see the many pink-for survival, white and blue silhouettes set out on the field. The concert was wonderful. Guest speaker, Raelene Boyle, was fabulous, even giving hugs, hearing stories and being photoed many times. Walking among the Silhouettes, planting new ones, looking for messages from loved ones and reading the others- It was certainly a **Day of Celebration** to remember.

AMAZONS PERTH

The Season has Started!

Our first regatta of the 2006/2007 season was held at our own venue: Maylands Bowling Club, hosted by the resident Dragon Boat Team - Perth Pirates. It was the first time that a regatta has taken place there.



We had a stunning spring day for the event. It was too good really because lots of other craft shared that stretch of water with us, so, timing of races had to be a little flexible to accommodate some of the larger vessels and their wakes!

Five teams took part; Pirates and Amazons fought it out in the club events. The corporate teams TNT, Roy Weston and DARWA were given some excellent on-the-spot (first time in a dragon boat) tuition by Pirates' coach Stuart Clarke, who also organised the whole event. Once more the Amazons were the only all female team of paddlers. We borrowed Mark Deephouse from the Pirates as our sweep.

The pink ladies did a fantastic job in the 1000m and 500m events but really shone in the 300m 10's heats with Amazons (1min 48 secs) narrowly beating Pirates 1 (1 min 49 secs) for our first win of the season...we celebrated with a salute and a great cheer. Then it was straight back to business against Pirates 2. We lost to them by 10 secs, but with an improved time of 1min 45 secs...we were delighted!

The day proved to be a great success, a just reward for all those winter training sessions and a fabulous first regatta for several of our new ladies who are already showing great commitment to the team turning up to training twice a week.

The second regatta attended was a couple of weeks later. The Mandurah Dragon Boat Club organised the Boddington Regatta on the Boddington River approx 2 hours South East of Perth. 16 paddlers turned up at Boddington - enough for a boat but unfortunately no sweep or drummer. These were provided by the other clubs for which we were most grateful.



We came a mighty third in every race (hang on, there were 3 boats in each race!!). However, we were only really a boat length behind. At the end of the day, we were just happy not to have slipped over in the mud which in some places went up past your shins. You could lose a shoe if your toes weren't hanging on as you lifted your foot out.

Afterwards we drove to Fairbridge Village for our annual team bonding session. Our coach, Jill provided an excellent dinner and breakfast. There was much laughter late into the night aided by some light refreshments!

DRAGONS ABREAST MACKAY

FAREWELL LORNA

On 7th September 2006 we lost one of our founding members, Lorna Ryan. Lorna was only 42 when she lost her battle with breast cancer. She was passionate about Dragons Abreast Mackay though she was only able to paddle in the new boat a couple of times before she became too ill to do so. As Mackay is a fairly small town, Lorna spent many months in Townsville and Brisbane for treatment, always with her very supportive husband Mick by her side. Even though she was far away she was always in our thoughts.

Her spirit lives on. Her husband Mick now paddles regularly with the team and has learnt to sweep the boat. Lorna was adamant that in lieu of flowers donations be made to Dragons



Abreast Mackay at her funeral. The result of this has been overwhelming. It has enabled us to purchase a new dragon boat not the second hand one originally planned. This new boat will be Lorna's favourite colour purple and named in her honour.

A very moving and beautiful Flowers on the Water Ceremony attended by many of her family and friends was held to commemorate Lorna's "Dragon Farewell" and "Induction into Angels Abreast". Namdag, our lovely Buddhist nun blessed the flower petals and prayed for Lorna, her family and friends

While this was an intensely emotional day it highlighted the DAA philosophy. Even though Dragons Abreast Mackay has been a close knit group from the very beginning Lorna's passing has strengthened those bonds even more.

WARRIORS ABREAST- ADELAIDE

Breast Cancer Awareness Week in Adelaide-Oh what a week!!

On the Monday, as representatives of Warrior Abreast, Margaret and Joy were invited by the Breast Cancer Nurses to St Andrews Hospital Breast Cancer lunch. All the women present had recently finished treatment so we were asked to mingle and talk about Dragon boating and life after BC to anyone interested. The lunch was held in the grounds of the hospital. The marquee was beautifully decorated, the food was great. Margaret won the lucky chair prize of dinner for two and Joy won 6 bottles of wine in the raffle!

On the Wednesday, Eva, Margaret and Joy went to Ross Roses at Willunga to attend a morning tea organised by the Southern Vales Zonta Club, again as representatives of Warriors Abreast. The roses were in full bloom, so we were truly able to walk round and smell the roses! It was a fundraiser for their beautiful cushions, which I'm sure you all know about.

Then on the Sunday, Margaret and Joy attended the mini field of women at Burnside. As usual it was a moving occasion.

Treasure Chests Dragons Abreast

Clarence Valley, NSW

The Grafton Jacaranda Festival gave the **Treasure Chests** an opportunity to compete with other dragon boat crews from Northern NSW areas. We were programmed to compete in the first race of the day against all the local Dragon's Abreast crews including the Rainbow Dragons, Titivators, and Flamin' Dragons. We worked very hard and our training sessions paid off – we didn't come last!



The Treasure Chests Dragon's Abreast crew from Maclean in the Clarence Valley, NSW
Grafton Jacaranda Festival - Sunday 29th October 2006

The day was very hot and after paddling in two more heats, we all went home feeling exhilarated and exhausted but very proud of our efforts.

Some of the girls had husbands in attendance and they were able to catch a few of our glorious moments on camera to show to the world



Coming in after the race - look at the smiles!



Sweep David working to guide our dragon boat in after the race.

We had a fantastic day in Grafton and look forward to being there again next year!



Amazon Heart Expedition - Arizona 2007

Amazon Heart is delighted to announce applications are now open for our first adventure for 2007 - Amazon Heart Expedition Arizona!

In April 2007 a group of intrepid breast cancer survivors will trek through Canyon De Chelly in the Navajo Nation in Arizona. Each day we will hike through what is widely considered as one of the most striking canyons in the Colorado Plateau, its colourful rock layers telling the canyon's story through the millenia, camping each night under the stars. Each day will be a powerful celebration of the lives of the women taking part. In addition to the physical challenge, each team member will also raise funds and awareness of breast cancer issues in their local community.

On this trek we will explore not only an incredibly beautiful landscape, but also the rich human culture and history of this area. Our group will journey through time and history with our understanding and appreciation of both the environment and the Navajo culture enhanced by our native guide Winnie, who loves to share her knowledge, traditions and legends with respectful travellers. During our trek we'll investigate Anasazi ruins, visit Spider Rock, and learn how the Canyon and the Navajo have shaped each other through the centuries.

To apply now go to www.amazonheartexpedition.org to read more about this amazing adventure. Applications close January 8, 2007.

Amazon Heart Expeditions take groups of intrepid breast cancer survivors on epic treks through some of the most beautiful and challenging wildernesses in the world, from the Southern Alps of New Zealand, to the desert canyons of Arizona.



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DAA now accepts AMERICAN EXPRESS CARDS

Registrations for 2007 @ \$350 each cut off on 31 December 2006 – price then increases to \$400 per person.

Latest 2007 Bulletin is now available – please check our website – www.dragonsabreast.com.au or to subscribe

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