



in the LOOP

The Dragons Abreast Australia e-newsletter - July 2011



Wow! Hard to believe we are now in July. Thanks to everyone who has supported Dragons Abreast both small and large ways over the last six months. Our next 6 months will be full on with planning for the Dragons Abreast Festival in Sydney on Sunday October 30th 2011.

Our Festival is a truly special time as not only is it our largest fundraiser, it also provides a wonderful opportunity to connect with the community and really get the message out there about Dragons Abreast. Paddling in the dragon boat is so much fun for all the corporate teams and it shows first hand exactly what it is that our members derive from being a part of this organization - fitness, fun and friendship.



Dragons Abreast Festival - Sydney

Be Part of the Action!

There will be excitement for participants & spectators alike as novice dragon boat paddlers discover why dragon boat racing is fast becoming Australia's favourite mass participation water sport – it's all about synchronicity and finesse more than power. You provide the 20 paddlers and we provide the drummer & steerer and authentic Hong Kong-style dragon boats. It's really easy to learn the basics of dragon boating and we give you training in advance. Don't miss out on your chance to do something wonderful for those living with breast cancer.

This is definitely the most fun you can have while supporting breast cancer survivors & raising breast cancer awareness.

Have a go at this popular exhilarating sport, feed that competitive urge and have loads of fun and laughs.



SET UP A FUNDRAISING PAGE BY CLICKING ON THE ICON ABOVE



Who Can Take Part?

Taking part in a dragon boat race is fantastic fun and a great team-building activity for business, community groups, students, friends and anyone up for a fun-filled challenge. No previous experience or level of fitness is required and all age groups, including mixed gender crews, can take part. Crew uniform & even fancy dress adds to the fun.

So round up a group of your friends, family or workmates & register your team now!

Need more information? Contact regatta@dragonsabreast.org.au

REGISTER NOW
AND START FUNDRAISING



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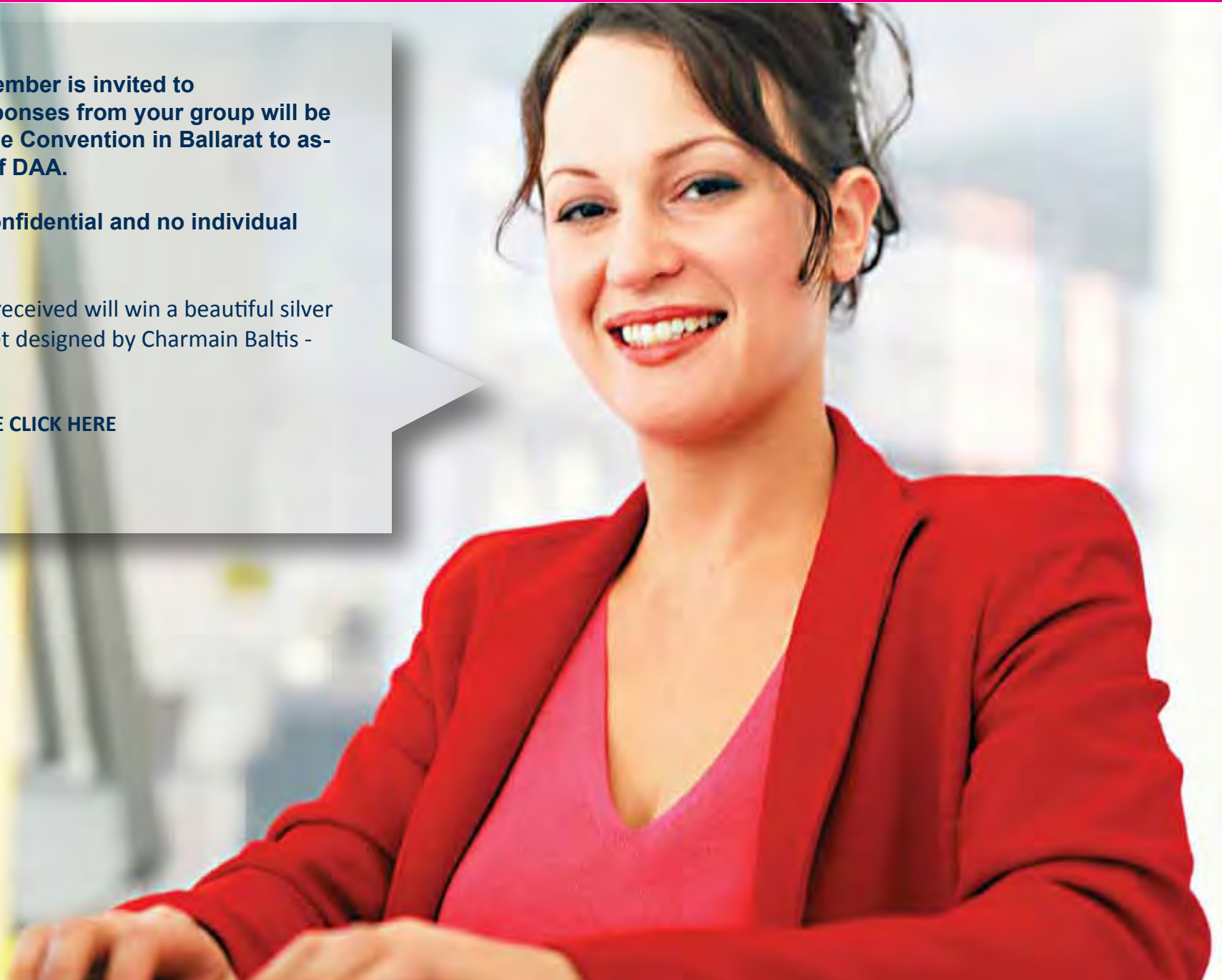
Member Feedback Survey

Every Dragons Abreast member is invited to complete our survey. Responses from your group will be collated and reported at the Convention in Ballarat to assist with future planning of DAA.

Your survey will remain confidential and no individual groups will be identified.

The 13th completed survey received will win a beautiful silver dragon earring & pendant set designed by Charmain Baltis - it's quick & easy!

[PLEASE CLICK HERE](#)



An Open Letter...

My name is Rachel Hall and I'm 16 years old. I was introduced into the Dragons Abreast family through my Mum who joined the group in Coffs Harbour. Mum was an inspiration to me because even though she was ill, she still had the strength to look after my brother and I and even though at times when she couldn't participate in paddling herself, she would be on the shore cheering us on or selling merchandise in the stall. Mum loved Dragons Abreast and dragon boating as a whole as it let her focus on other things apart from her illness, and was also a massive social experience. It made her so happy and she was always looking forward to it. Mum battled breast cancer for three years but lost her life to the disease in 2008 when I was 13.

I have continued to paddle as I do love the sport and have competed at the AusDBF National Dragon Boat Titles for the past two years which was an amazing experience. This would have been unachievable without the support from my team mates from Coffs Coast and the lovely ladies from Dragons Abreast both in Coffs and further afield.

I live with my dad and my brother, Trent, 18. At the moment I am studying Year 11 at Woolgoolga High School and working two jobs. I am also an Assist for Free Spirit Girl workshops which is run through Katie Pitsis who wants to make a change in the lives of teenage girls in our local community. As an assist, I help Katie support the girls and run her workshops.

For the past two years I have attended as many summits and leadership days as possible including a Break Through to Success Summit run by Chris Howard, an amazing motivational speaker. At the end of the Year 10 assembly I received a Zonta Award for advancing the status of women in my society, the Country Women's Association Award and Long Tan Leadership and Teamwork Award. In January of this year I attended a Youth Leadership and Finance Summit ran by the Magic Moments Foundation. At this summit I met some of the most amazing people and those in which I will be lifelong friends with. At the summit I learnt amazing ways to deal with things throughout life and how to believe in myself.

“it let her focus on other things apart from her illness, and was also a massive social experience”

I recently applied for Rotary Youth Exchange and was very fortunate to be accepted. The country I have been selected to go to is Denmark. Princess Mary, here I come. This is so exciting! I leave in January 2012 and return the following January, which also means, two winters and my first ever white Christmas! A whole twelve months in a country on the other side of the world, a lot colder than our sunburnt country. Whilst in Denmark I will be attending a school

(no uniforms: D), I will live with host families. Normally an exchange student lives with 3-4 families, so approximately 3-4 months at each. I will learn their language (Danish), eat their food, and learn their culture and ways of life.

Exchange is a very important thing to me as through this I expect to gain so many new, amazing friends, learn my language fluently, and others if possible and most importantly just gain so much knowledge about other cultures. I know that I shall succeed in my goal but with this comes such a big bill. To pay this very large bill, I am working two jobs and saving a lot as the initial cost is \$7000. I have set up a fundraising page and if you are inclined to assist me your help would be greatly appreciated. If not, thanks for taking time to read this anyway.

Thank you, Rachel Hall xxx.



Keeping us Afloat

“PINK” Pamper Day in Grafton

The staff of RED HOT HAIR and IMAGES NATURALLY in Grafton recently decorated their salons and gave their time and their skill for 2 hours of “PINK” pampering all in the name of Dragons Abreast Australia.

The oohs and the aahs could be heard in both salons as many ladies enjoyed shampoos, blow dries, 15 minute massages, manicures, pedicures and skin analysis. Competitive excitement rose as the close of the Silent Auction approached. With only minutes to go, bidding on preferred items became very competitive with even some sneaky tactics being introduced. At 4:00pm the auction closed and the \$100 Club winners were drawn.

What a fun couple of hours! Many happy, pampered women walked away feeling great and taking with them some excellent prizes, all of which were donated by Grafton businesses and individuals.

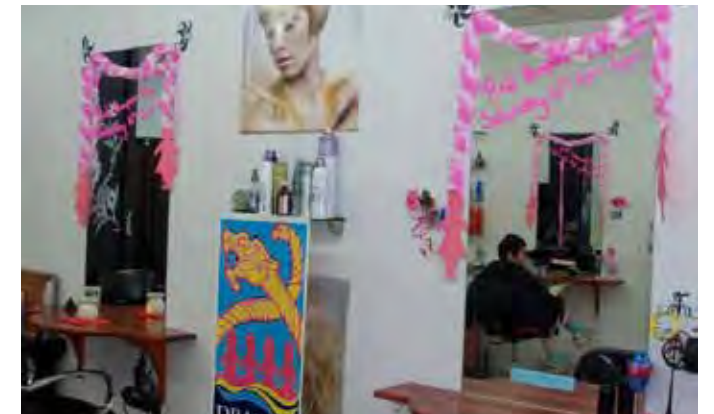
The day was all about Breast Cancer Awareness, having fun and raising funds for DAA – all of which we did. In just 2 hours we raised over \$1300.

I put out a challenge to others to beat us!!!

Gill Goddard Dragons Abreast Clarence Valley



Red Hot Hair Salon team members: Laura, Fran, Gill DACV, Kylie, Meg with Priscilla the Dragon



Dragons Abreast Awards 2011

We are pleased to announce that nominations are now open for the Dragons Abreast Spirit Awards which will be presented annually from 2011 in recognition of our outstanding members.

Many, many members are working hard at their local level to ensure that the needs of those with breast cancer are understood and met, as well as to further the sport of dragon boating for both survivors and in general. All of these members are inspiring.

The Dragons Abreast Spirit Award will recognise those members who have made outstanding contributions to DAA. Award recipients will have contributed in a significant way to ensuring that DAA's aims are achieved, and will be committed to ensuring that the movement reaches out to all parts of the community.

Affiliates and individual members are invited to nominate a member or members who they feel have made such significant contributions. Dragons Abreast Spirit Award 2011

A special presentation will be made to the successful nominees and will take place at the Celebration Dinner, which will be held as part of the DAA National Regatta in Caloundra on Saturday 10th September 2011.

Nominations close on 30 July 2011. Full details can be found by [clicking here](#).

DISCOVER VIETNAM AND LAOS

THE AMAZING BEAUTY THAT LIES WITHIN



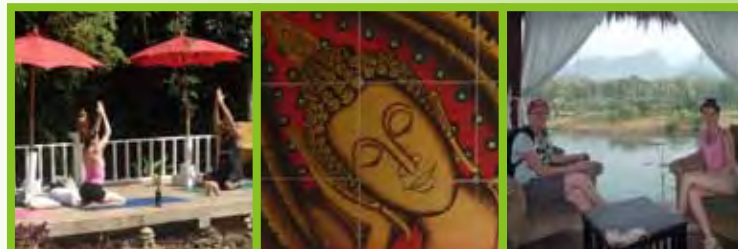
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Dates For Your Diary - click on image for more info...

JULY

**Dragons Abreast Australia
2011 National Convention
21st - 24th July Ballarat**
[click here for more information](#)



OCTOBER

**22nd - Dragons Abreast ACT
Corporate Regatta
CANBERRA**



OCTOBER

**30th - Dragons Abreast
Festival SYDNEY**
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or for more information.



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BADGE DRAW WINNER

JULY 2011

Fay Johnson - Hobart

A lovely surprise is on its way to you!

Traditions Respected

CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Our thanks to Phil Chan, past Cultural Director of AusDBF for this information

Dragons Abreast always strives to include the traditional aspects of our sport and below is a snapshot of some of the key components.

The Dragon Boat Festival over the past decade is still evolving as a sport, which has captured the imagination of the world by storm. The sport is fastest growing water sport in the world and the International Dragon Boat Federation (IDBF) is trying its best to set international standards to ensure the ongoing development of the sport.

However, the Dragon Boat Festival, upon which the sport is based, has its traditions and beliefs that have come from a history of over 2000 years. These traditions and beliefs are extremely important to the people of Chinese heritage and a strong demonstration of respect by dragon boat paddlers for the tradition will be appreciated by those whose traditions we are part of.

The Duanwu Jie – Dragon Boat Festival celebrates the life and especially they death of Qu Yuan (c. 340 -278 BC), the first great Chinese poet who lived during the period of the Warring States (481 – 221 BC) – a time when China was divided into several kingdoms which were constantly at war with each other, each seeking supremacy over the other.

Qu Yuan was a high-ranking Mandarin (official), a Minister of Law and Ordinance of the kingdom of Chu, in southern China. The kingdom of Chu was under siege by the warriors of Qin, a kingdom in the north which was determined to control it.



The king of Qin offered a peace treaty to the king of Chu, a treaty that was never intended to be honoured. Qu Yuan, suspicious of the Qin motives, advised the king of Chu not to accept the treaty. Unfortunately for him and behind his back, treacherous officials, fearing his growing

importance to the king, slandered him and led the king of Chu to believe that Qu Yuan was being traitorous to the Chu's kingdom. The king signed the treaty. Qu Yuan was dismissed by the king and sent on exile to a remote region of the Hunan Province.

On the fifth day of the fifth lunar month of the Chinese calendar in the year 278 BC, while in exile. Qu Yuan heard of the fall of the kingdom of Chu, that the capital had fallen into the hands of the Qins. In despair, and in the ultimate expression of love of his country, Qu Yuan, weighted down with a rock, threw himself into the Miluo River (in present day Hunan Province) and drowned.

According to legend, when news of his drowning became known, boats were launched by the local fishermen in a race to be first to recover Qu Yuan's body. Thus dragon boat racing was born. The furious splashing of paddles and banging of drums used these days to get the crews in time has its origin in the fishermen's bid to scare off fish and other river creatures from defiling his body.

In one version of the legend, the fishermen began throwing rice into the river as an offering to Qu Yuan, so that his spirit could be nourished in the next world. But one night, Qu Yuan appeared in a dream to one of the fishermen, telling him that the fish were eating the rice offerings, that to prevent it, the rice ought to

Traditions Respected continued...

be wrapped in silk – later replaced by bamboo leaves – to protect the offerings.

A second version, was that rice was thrown into the river to entice the river creatures away from Qu Yuan's body, to prevent the creatures from defiling their hero.

Whichever the version and the association with the dragon, Qu Yuan's ultimate sacrifice gave birth to dragon boat races.

Before the commencement of racing, the permission of the guardian spirits must first be sought in order to avoid bad luck befalling and to bestow good fortune to those taking part in the racing. This is a highly ritualized ceremony which is left usually to a Taoist priest as strict protocol needs to be observed in order not to cause offence to any one of many spirits. It may also be performed by a Taoist elder should a priest not be available. Although Dragon Boat is a Taoist Festival, blessings can often be performed by Buddhist Monks.

CHINESE LION DANCE

The Chinese Lion Dance is often called upon at Dragon Boat Festivals not only to provide entertainment and a cultural display. It plays a very important part in expelling evil spirits along with the Blessing Ceremony.

The Lion Dance is also called "Game of the Lion" which in its true form, is a demon

Lion Dances are performed to expel any evil spirits that may harm a Dragon Boat Regatta

expelling ritual. In the early Eastern Han Dynasty (AD25-AD220), emissaries from the Kingdom of Ancient Persia brought lions to the court as tribute. Because Lions are not indigenous to China, the "Kings of the Beasts" were highly valued. These rare and powerful animals eventually took on a mythical aura and became symbolically associated with purity and protection.

With choreographic innovations incorporated into the dance during the Tang Dynasty, this performance became increasingly vivid and expressive. Observe the stretching and scratching of the lion as it wakes, how it revels in life prancing around, the way it marks its territory to protect it from demons.

Today the lion dance is mainly performed at

auspicious occasions such as shop openings, house openings, religious occasions, Dragon Boat festivals.



Blessing and prayers by Taoist / Buddhist Priest is a very important part in acknowledgement of and asking permission from the Guardian Spirit to hold the Dragon Boat Regatta, seeking good fortune and blessings on the participants and the organisers.

I call it giving back...

Sunday 5 June saw a crowd of assorted Darwinites gathered at Cullen Bay beach for the annual Dragons Abreast NT Corporate Regatta, DANT's annual regatta held to raise funds for our parent body DAA. It was a glorious Dry Season day, cool and sunny and despite competition from the City to Surf, Garden Fair, Adelaide River Races and other events which always crowd into our Dry Season weekends, it was a load of fun.

It was especially good for me, as I have just celebrated my 10 years survival, 10 years during which Dragons Abreast, dragon boating and breast cancer advocacy have become part and parcel of my life. As with most people I knew no one who had experienced breast cancer, much less survived the diagnosis, 10 years ago. But I soon found out I did know women who had been through it before. Penny Lasette and Jenny Scott, both long term survivors and inspirations to us all, were friends who both were there to help me through. Through these two admirable women I was introduced to other passionate women – Susan Tulley, Judy Smith and Michelle Hanton and then many others - and a world of breast cancer advocacy and dragon boating, a life which 10 years ago I would never have anticipated.

Dragon boating took me first to the Gold Coast, then New Zealand, Canberra, Shanghai, the Ord River, Singapore and Canada. It has also given me friends all over Australia and indeed

around the world. And what better way to celebrate 10 years on than to be asked to join the Northern Territory women's master's team to compete in the National titles in Canberra this April.

So when I got a call from Penny Lasette to say that they wanted my help on the DANT committee, even though I am presently on leave in Brisbane I knew that it was time to give back. I agreed to be the Public Officer (with approval from the regulatory body because I'm presently



living interstate) as the committee commenced to refocus DANT on its core business. As with any organisation there comes a time when we have to review what we do and how we best meet the needs of our client group, women with breast cancer, and this is what we have been doing.

But back to the Regatta. I was able to schedule

to be in Darwin the days leading up to it to be of help with the organising and then take part on the day. It was wonderful fun and an opportunity to catch up with many friends. I spoke during the presentations for the highest fund raiser of the event about how privileged I felt to be part of this organisation and, more importantly, add something to what DAA does.

Without our parent body none of us in the member groups can achieve what we do and we probably wouldn't survive. We rely on the public face which Dragons Abreast has nationally to tap into the goodwill of the public, and we are able to compete at national and international level because of DAA. This is our organisation and if we want to continue to have national and international regattas this is the way we can.

But more importantly this is how we help newly diagnosed women. In all our individual communities across Australia, DAA is there to offer a path to women after their diagnosis.

So I am giving back, following the efforts of the women who were there for me when I was diagnosed.

*Pat Hancock
Dragons Abreast NT*

Dragons Abreast NT Regatta - 5th June 2011

