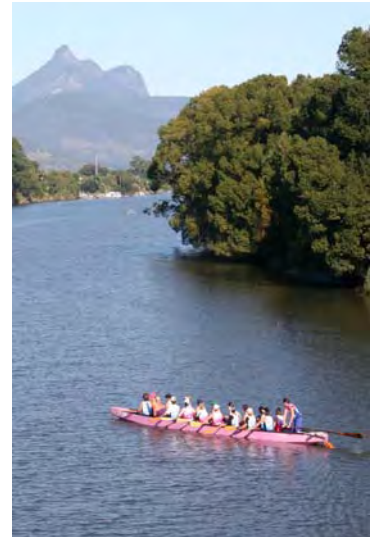


DRAGONS ABREAST MT WARNING



www.dragonsabreast.com.au/NSW/murwillumbah.htm
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Mt Warning Dragons Abreast Paddling Team is affiliated with The Mt Warning Dragon Boat Club which was formed in October 2007. Our home base is at Condong (near Murwillumbah) on the far North Coast of NSW. We paddle on the beautiful Tweed River - from the second boat ramp in McLeod Street - just down the road from the Sugar Mill and under the ever watchful presence of Mount Warning.

As a Team, we aim to raise awareness of Breast Cancer, offer friendship and companionship to our Members and encourage and support Breast Cancer Survivors in the sport of Dragon Boat Paddling.

For information regarding Dragons Abreast Mt Warning training days and times, please contact either Cheryl Beatty on 02 6676 6370 or 0402 904 412 or Robyn Sack on 02 6672 4774 or 0427 368 819.

On the first Saturday of the month we share morning tea and if any breast cancer survivor is looking for an opportunity to network or make new friends, but not necessarily paddle, please feel free to join us.



TESTIMONIALS

Since being diagnosed in 2006 and after surviving the challenge of both the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer I have been living life to the fullest conquering Ayres Rock and the crossing of the Simpson Desert and many other adventures. After reading a newspaper article calling for people interested in forming a dragon boat team I knew I would enjoy the companionship and support of other cancer survivors and also the challenge of dragon boat racing which was something I had never dreamed I would do. Since joining the Mt Warning Dragon Boat Club I have found the friendship, social activities i.e. once a month morning teas, Chinese New Year in Sydney and many more and also the fun and fitness of competing in regattas just what the Doctor ordered.

After many months of selling lots of cakes, jams, pickles and raffles to fund raise we have been able to form our own Dragons Abreast team. I would like to think that my involvement with this club, which has been one of the highlights in my life, will continue for many years and many more friendships will be made.

Cheryl Beatty - Club President

After a strong family history of cancer over the years, it was my turn in 2001. This was breast cancer which I thought had affected so many other women, why not me?

After my treatment, I was straight back to work and was approached by a friend, a breast cancer survivor, who asked me to come and paddle with her in the local dragon boat club. I declined because I thought I was too busy for that, not realizing how therapeutic the sport really is both emotionally and physically.

It has only been over the past three years that I have realized how important it is to take time out for ourselves. I have found strength, determination and character in all the women who paddle in our Club which has given me the determination and inspiration to realize that we can do anything, if we put our minds to it.

The camaraderie between the members is fantastic and the fun and fitness achieved certainly helps the mind and body.

Sue Lonie Club Secretary

I had suffered most of my adult life with chronic illness. I seemed to be diagnosed with one disease after another. There was a period in my life between 1995 and 2000 that my life was extremely difficult, but I always tried to put on a brave front and not let things get on top of me, so in 2006 when I was diagnosed with Breast Cancer it was just one more thing. I didn't really feel shock or upset I just decided that I would go in get it removed and move on. My body had other ideas and so after four separate surgeries, a lung collapse and then a major infection, I had made up my mind that I was going to fight back as if my life depended on it. I had finally had enough this was the very last straw. I picked up a brochure in hospital from Currumbin Dragons Abreast and decided that if I ever got well enough I would give it a go. During Radiation I contacted the group and had a plan to join, but my body still had plans of its own so while I was recovering from a knee operation, I read a little notice in the local paper put in by our very own Chris Lonie about starting a local Dragons Abreast Group. Over the next many months and further surgery on my hands I waited while Chris struggled through the mine field of starting a Dragon Boat Club. In October 2007 Mt Warning Dragons had its first inaugural paddle, and after putting my very unsteady feet into that boat a fully fledged Dragon was born. I am what they call a tragic, and I love everything about Dragon Boating especially the wonderful people it has brought into my life. I guess when this body decides that I can't do it anymore, there will be one little old lady sitting on the side line reminiscing about the wonderful days on the river.

Helen McLean - Club Treasurer

At the age of 41 my life was suddenly turned upside down when I was diagnosed with breast cancer. My 3 children were still quite young at the time so my next goal in life became the fight of my life!

I became aware of a sport that was taking off in Australia and around the world called Dragon boating and the stories of women who had survived Breast cancer who were joining local Dragons Abreast teams seemed like a phenomenon.

I wanted to see such a 'flurry' of pink ladies paddling down the beautiful Tweed River in my town-Murwillumbah too. This vision did not become a reality until I was contacted by another woman in 2007 who also had such a vision. Chris Lonie, now the president of the Mt Warning dragon boat club. I am so grateful to her for her dedication and enthusiasm in bringing this club to its current membership, friendship, laughter and camaraderie.

Robyn Sack Club Liaison and Publicity Officer

I became interested in joining a dragon boat group after performing at a bush dance with my band. The dance was held in a country hall at Pigabeen near Tweed Heads and was a fundraiser and social function for the Tweed Dragon Boat Club. The enthusiastic dancers were out to have a great night and literally 'shook the termites out of the floor boards!' I met many of the paddlers including a group who were breast cancer survivors like me.

They raved about 'dragon boating' and how great it made them feel physically, mentally and socially. Naturally, when a dragon boat club was formed in my area (Murwillumbah), in 2008, I was very keen to 'give it a go' and I love it! We now have a newly formed Dragons Abreast team affiliated with our club as well. These girls are so committed; they are disappointed if they miss out on training and regattas! So, for me, its great exercise, great friendships, great fun!

My latest challenge is sweep training!

Cheryl Forrester

Dragon boating and dragons abreast gives me back my life.

I am now 60 years old and have suffered with many illnesses in my life starting with polio when I was just 6 years old. I have had too many operations to count but nothing was as bad as having a physical and mental breakdown due to work conditions in 1994/95. I still suffer from severe depression so when I was told I had breast cancer it was just something else to deal with. I had my operation on my husband's birthday the 14th of September 2005 and finished my treatment on the 23rd December 2005. Little did I know that just a few months later my life was to change. I saw Chris Lonie's add in the paper and decided to give it a go.

Ian was very worried as I have never done any exercise in my life. I arrived and got into the boat and after a lot of mistakes got out an hour later hooked. I could do this .

For the years since 1995 I would not go anywhere with out family or friends and was afraid of just about everything and everyone. I couldn't go out by myself even to walk the dog. By joining the wonderful people I have met through dragon boating and being involved in dragons abreast I have returned to the person I was before 1995. I am fitter and happier than I have ever been and my son Paul put it right when I came back to Brisbane when he said " mum your back you're the mum we had before 1995."

I have to say a big thank you to all the wonderful people I have met and hope to enjoy their company and dragon boating for many years to come.

Diane Wilson

I was diagnosed with breast cancer in October 2001. What a big shock this was for my husband, my family, and me. As I was someone who never got sick, this was something I defiantly wasn't ready for, and couldn't have my surgery soon enough. There just wasn't room or time for cancer in my body or life. I had just come home from our first caravan holiday and I had places to go and see. Then there was the worry of lymphoedema, so when I heard about dragon boating in 2007 and how good it was for breast cancer survivors I was there waiting to get in the boat at the very first meeting and the rest is history. I was soon addicted and turn up to training rain or sunshine to paddle. I particularly like the friendship in our club and when we participate at regattas everyone there are like family and can't help you and your club enough.

In 2007 our Mt. Warning Dragon Boat Club was formed thanks to our hard working president Chris Lonie who had her dream realised. In our club I have many new caring and wonderful friends who work together to make this club the success it is. We have just bought our first champion boat - a great achievement for our hard working club members. I recommend Dragon Boating to everyone young and old and watch your life change and bring out the best in you. You will reach goals you never thought possible. In our club our member's age range from 16 years to 73 years, so come on and join us and have fun.

Val Lowe

"Many years ago my Dad used to take my sister and I out in his little tinny early on a Saturday morning - fishing - on the beautiful Hawkesbury River - Dad would row and my sister and I would just enjoy. This time instilled in me an abiding love of early mornings and rivers.

When my good friend and neighbour of thirty years invited me to join the Dragons Abreast Mt Warning Dragon Boat Paddling Club all I could think of was those times with my sister and Dad. Yes my neighbour and I are both recent breast cancer survivors.

Nothing prepared me for the fun and friendship I have on Paddle morning - I now have 20 sisters - and although my Dad would not be overly impressed with the chatter coming from us girls sometimes, he would be so happy for me to be back on the river."

Yvonne Walsh