

Dragons Abreast ACT & Region

www.dragonsabreast.com.au

Abreast of the news newsletter

Under the umbrella of
Breast Cancer Network Australia
P.O. Box 7191 Yarralumla ACT 2600

Issue 35

March 2010



DA ACT *Tickled Pink* team with Robyn Whytcross, CBDA, at Chinese New Year, Darling Harbour, Sydney, 28 February 2010

Coordinator's report

For a small club, we are very active with lots happening over summer at DA ACT both on and off the water. Before Christmas we had a hoot singing Christmas carols in the boats and had a great time at the Christmas Party at **Patsy Sheales'** when we awarded **Cheryl Brower** the Kashgar Cup for her work with the 2009 DA Challenge. On Australia Day we joined the CDBA flotilla for a demonstration paddle dressed in 'Aussie' gear and Australian flags.

Over summer we welcomed seven new members (currently 55 full members) and look forward to a few newbies currently trying out joining up soon. We continue to welcome members who have recently finished treatment who join us following **Val Barger** and my presentation at the **Bosom Buddies** Stepping Forward seminars.

Congratulations to us! Our team stamina and paddling ability has markedly improved over the season, due to regular training and the support of our coaches **Narelle Powers**, **Elsbeth Humphries**, **Gillian Styles** and **Sam**. We now can go much longer distances and paddle more strongly with our improved fitness levels. We provided some easy social paddles for those wanting, or having their body tell them they need a less strenuous workout at this stage. However we paddle it's been just lovely getting out on our Lake Burley Griffin.

The team enjoyed competing and volunteering at a number of local CDBA local regattas. We had a fabulous trip to Darling Harbour to paddle at

Chinese New Year on 28 February and we look forward to sending a team of 18 to **Peterborough, Canada** and joining up with three girls from **Peninsula Dragonflies** in June. Preparations for the Peterborough team are going well and we have done a number of 'registration fundraising' activities including collecting entries at the gates at the motocross track.



Back: Gillian Styles, Marion Blake, Front: Cheryl Brower, Patsy Sheales and Mary-Lou Reid sporting pink flamingo sunglasses for Mardi Gras at the Marigold Restaurant, Chinese New Year, Sydney, 27 February 2010

On 7 February we were delighted when our Patron, **Senator Kate Lundy**, and the NCA's **Burly Gryphons** donated to DA ACT 'large' cheques at the inaugural **CDBA Chinese New Year Multicultural Regatta** to go towards assisting our team members with registrations for Peterborough and other away DAA regattas such as Hobart.



See more information on page 6.

Register now <http://www.fieldofwomenlive.org.au/>



Senator Kate Lundy and the Burly Gryphons donated us 'large' cheques to DA ACT at the CDBA Chinese New Year Multicultural Regatta on 7 February 2010



Marion Blake, with Bev Sloan and Katherine Kralikas, thanks Senator Kate Lundy, Gary Rake ED and the NCA's Burly Gryphons

Colleen White, team captain, did a tremendous job in organising our enthusiastic but somewhat motley crew of rusty, experienced and newbie paddlers at the Multicultural Festival Regatta. We met the new US Ambassador and his wife (who paddled with *USAwsome* team), and were mentioned along with **Cheryl Brower** in his presentation speech. There was a lot of interesting entertainment with Karate men bashing through flaming bricks, Chinese opera singers. African Drummers and tug a wars. Thanks to our volunteers for the day, **Di Wright, Cindy Young** and **Marion Leiba**. Feedback from **Pene Lee**, Nationbuilders, one of three DIAC teams: *We had a great time. It was a terrific experience for everyone — great team building. We are all doing high fives today. Everyone wants to do it again.*



Mary-Lou Reid drumming and Marion Blake sweeping at the CDBA Australia Day Regatta 26 January 2009

We look forward to our autumn **Dragon Muster** at 6.30pm on Thursday 11 March with a dinner full of fun, laughter and information by the lake thanks to **Sue Drew** and her wonderful group who are doing the set up and catering.

Thanks to all our members for your time, skills, energy and good humour. You each help make DA ACT such great group to belong to. Paddles up!

Marion Blake, Coordinator DA ACT
Canberra@dragonsabreast.com.au



Marion Blake with daughter, Katie, grandchild Lucinda and Justin Hodge, December 2009 Christmas carols

Photos are coming in from everywhere, but if you have more, please email to"

dragonsabreastaustralia.dragon@picasaweb.com

Jan Skorich, DAA Regional Rep ACT and Southern NSW; DAA webmaster

Dragons Abreast Australia national newsletters. Go to our website www.dragonsabreast.com.au .

[March 2010 newsletter](#)

[February 2010 newsletter](#)

[January 2010 newsletter](#)

The **Inaugural Dragons Abreast Australia national member convention** will be held from 17 to 19 September 2010 in Hobart, Tasmania — with paddling taking place at Franklin on the Huon River on 19 September.

Friday, 17 September 7:00 AM to Sunday, 19 September: The inaugural DAA National convention incorporates a regatta, workshops, socialising and is open to all card carrying members of Dragons Abreast Australia. There will be races for supporters and survivors alike. Full details of costs and venues will be released shortly. Mark the date in your diary

<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=267683168446>



Robyne Kellett, Kel Watt and Michelle, CDBA Marshalls, Australia Day Regatta 26 January 2010



Summer warm up and training times

Don't forget to book your seat on the boat
carol.summerhayes@bigpond.com

6.30 for	6.45–7.45am	Tuesdays
5.30 for	5.45–6.45pm	Wednesday
8.00 for	8.30–9.30am	Saturdays

Saturday 20 March easy social session following normal session. Meet at 9,15am for 9.30–10am on the lake followed by coffee

Saturday 10 April (tbc) social paddle with Easter bulb planting and morning tea on the island

Some great paddling technique tips:
<http://www.dragonsabreast.com.au/NSW/PaddlesUp59March09.pdf>
(note: DA ACT paddling technique may be slightly different from Sydney, so listen to OUR coaches please!)

Remember water, hat, sunscreen and sunglasses!

If you want to have a try at sweeping contact:
Narelle Powers narelle.powers@defence.gov.au
or **Elsbeth Humphries** humphries44@ozemail.com.au

Weather watch
<http://www.canberrayachtclub.com.au>
<http://www.canberrayachtclub.com.au/webcam/cam>

- Coaching Program - Narelle Powers
- [Broad Training Plan](#)
 - [General Preparation](#)
 - [Specific Preparation](#)
 - [Pre-Competition Training](#)



DA ACT Canada team 5 March 2010

Merchandise
Look out for the DA shop on Saturdays from **Cindy Young's** car boot. She has polo shirts and paddles and pink gloves. Please bring cash or your cheque book to pay. [ACT merchandise price list](#)



DA ACT 10s winning team *Back*: Marion Leiba, Judy Cluse, June McMahon, Marion Blake, Narelle Powers, Carol Summerhayes and Sue Drew; *Front*: Mary Lou Reid and Cheryl Brower, CBDA regatta 16 January 2010

Congratulations to our DA ACT 10s team. They were the fastest ACT team in the Women's C Final, coming in 3rd just behind Merimbula and Nature Coast (Moruya), winning our first trophy for the season in windy conditions. Many thanks to **June McMahon** for volunteering as Chief Timer and **Narelle Powers** for being Team Captain.



DA ACT morning tea at the Turkish Pide House, Yarralumla, after the come and try session, January 2010



Jennifer Wallace, Lucy Lytton, Margie Perkins and Anne Baynes sporting pink flamingo sunglasses for Mardi Gras at the Marigold Restaurant, Chinese New Year, Sydney, 27 February 2010



Jane Fitzgerald, Judy Cluse, Mary-Lou Reid, Katherine Kraikas, Carolyn Pettit and Louise Muir, CBDA Regatta, January 2010

Paddling is awesome!

Joining Dragons Abreast has given me an opportunity to turn a negative event in my life into a positive and very rewarding experience. It has certainly helped me to overcome some health and emotional problems, motivated me to become much fitter and introduced me to many inspirational people. Last, but certainly not least, I am enjoying the regular opportunities to share a lot of fun and laughter with newly found friends.

Paddling is awesome with the added bonus of the wonderful environment of our beautiful Canberra, some positive reinforcement and encouragement from our sweeps, (of course, Sam's 'firm' voice during training on a Wednesday afternoon) and especially the DA paddlers — yes, we are getting fitter!.

I guess you could call me a 'newbie' (having only accumulated the grand total of six months' paddling experience) but I feel, however, that I have been participating for so much longer. In that short time I have been given the opportunity to try my hand at drumming, sweeping (albeit going around in circles!) and stroking without ever feeling any pressure to have to perform perfectly.

Finally, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to Anna Wellings Booth and all who are associated with Dragons Abreast ACT.

Colleen White

A few thoughts from a newbie

It's actually quite hard to adequately put into words all that has been so good, for me, about becoming a part of Dragons Abreast in Canberra and a member of DAA. Firstly, I don't think I've ever met a group who are so welcoming, friendly, supportive and generous-spirited. On every occasion, and in every way, people have been kind, caring, accepting and constantly helpful. Advice, humour and support are freely shared and it has been a joy to feel 'embraced' by the Dragon's Abreast family. I have never seen or heard any judgements about skill level, ability, size or shape; rather everyone is

instantly a valued part of the team, albeit at training, 'come and try' or a regatta.

There is also the other common thread which unites us — a diagnosis of breast cancer. In the past I have had a slight resistance to the whole 'pink thing', not wanting to define myself solely by having breast cancer; however, within this wonderful group of women I have again met only kindness, empathy, care, support, encouragement and the kind of helpful nurturing advice and honesty that comes with the shared understanding of the challenges and joys of this breast cancer journey.



DA ACT *Tickled Pink* team at Chinese New Year, Darling Harbour, Sydney on 28 February 2010

And then there's the paddling! Who'd have thought it could be such good fun? Being on the water is so healing, beautiful, uniting and magical; I just love it. The 'three steps forward, two steps back' development style I seem to have adopted with my paddling technique also fills me with hope, joy, delight, and a constant desire to improve along with accepting it can only get better.

So a heartfelt thank you to you all for my happy introduction to dragon boating and to Dragons Abreast. The wide welcoming smiles, the graciousness of those I splash (or drench), the encouragement, help and care so generously expressed and shared, the called greetings and goodbyes, everything has contributed to a wonderful experience. I look forward to regaining my full voice and being able to join in the chant with all the joy, gusto and enthusiasm that you each bring to dragon boating. Paddles up!

Jane Fitzgerald



Mary-Lou Reid, Val Barger, Sue Drew and Judy Cluse, sunrise, Chinese New Year, Darling Harbour, Sydney on 28 February 2010



DA ACT Tickled *Pink team* warming up at Chinese New Year, Darling Harbour, Sydney on 28 February 2010

Reconstructive surgery and how it could affect your dragon boating

Many women with breast cancer, including many Dragons Abreast members, have asked me about reconstructive surgery, and of course I tell them that this is very much a personal decision and will depend on many factors, most importantly their own feelings on the subject, and advice from their medical team.

I am one of those longterm survivors of breast cancer who came to Dragons Abreast around nine years after initial diagnosis and five years after the last of my initial reconstructive surgery, which was a series of procedures over three years.

A year after a left side mastectomy, and following chemotherapy and radiotherapy, I had reconstructive surgery using the latissimus dorsi muscle with a tissue expander. This was OK for a couple of years, but the expander was ruptured by a mammogram and I had a second procedure — TRAMflap reconstructive surgery, to the same site.

I've been with Dragons Abreast for 11 years and have become what Cynthia Kuiper (DA Sydney) describes as a 'dragon boat tragic', i.e. I just love it! What I have found, though, is the fitter I have become from dragon boating, the more obvious the deficiencies in my back muscles.

Last year I had a second mastectomy, with reconstructive surgery at the same time, using a silicon implant — the surgeon used a bit of the pectoral muscle to help hold the implant in place.

When I had the initial reconstructive surgery, using the latissimus dorsi muscle and tissue expander, I asked the surgeon about possible side effects. I was told that if I had been a champion backstroker (swimmer), I would have lost about 5% power, but that it should not affect me in my normal life. However, in the 19 years since my surgery, more studies have shown that the effects of the surgery could be more severe than previously thought.

Dr Cherry Koh and her team at St Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne studied a small group of

women who had undergone reconstructive surgery using the latissimus dorsi muscle. The reason she had undertaken the study was that though *available published reports suggest that loss of latissimus dorsi muscle following latissimus myocutaneous flap does not lead to functional impairment*¹, "significant functional impairment had been observed in clinical practice".

After assessing the participants, one third were found to have 'global moderate functional deficit' and were 'severely limited in their ability to carry out housework'. Three-fifths of those involved in sports reported impaired performance in sports. Those who underwent bilateral latissimus dorsi flaps experienced significant morbidity with all reporting moderate to severe impairment in their ability to return to gardening and/or sports.

The conclusion of the researchers? *'Patients undergoing this procedure should be fully informed of potential sequelae¹. Athletic patients and patients undergoing bilateral latissimus dorsi flaps should also be warned of possible reduced performance in sports. Alternatively, perforator cutaneous flaps, which preserve the latissimus muscle, should be chosen when feasible.'*

¹ Sequelae = pathological conditions resulting from disease, injury, or other trauma.

After reading the results of the study, I wrote to Dr Koh, who advised that *'the literature does suggest that other muscles do help "take over" some of the functions of latissimus dorsi but never quite completely — after all, there must be a reason why this muscle is so bulky to begin with, and as I suggested in the paper, it would be difficult to imagine that the functions of this muscle can be completely taken over by other much smaller muscles in the vicinity. I am unable to advise about the specific exercises that may help other than to say that it would seem intuitive that the actions that would rely on lat dorsi (such as overhead weight training — there is one where you have your arms apart over your head and pull weights downwards) would encourage muscle with similar actions to get stronger.'*

We all know that the Dragons Abreast experience is about much more than sporting prowess, but if you are thinking about reconstructive surgery it is certainly worth checking with your surgeon if the procedure you are about to undergo will limit your abilities, both in the boat and in your everyday life.

If you'd like a personal chat, I am happy to be contacted at webmaster@dragonsabreast.com.au. Information about the study can be found at: <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/121673066/abstract?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0>

Jan Skorich, DAA Regional Representative

Under the pink umbrella



Don't miss your chance to be a part of the *Field of Women LIVE 2010*

Breast Cancer Network Australia will bring the breast cancer statistics to life before Melbourne take on the Western Bulldogs on the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG)

We need 14,000 women and men to stand united with us

Friday 7 May 2010

The *Field of Women LIVE* is a wonderful way for the community to pay tribute to those affected by breast cancer

- Learn more about [the event](#)
- Inspire your [workplace](#) and get them involved
- Ask family and friends to [support you](#)
- Stand with our [Ambassadors](#) and [Event Champions](#) on the Field
- Be inspired. Watch the [2005 Field of Women](#) event take shape
- Check out the [latest news](#)
- Read about our [supporting teams](#)

Accommodation

Mantra is offering *Field of Women LIVE* participants a great deal to stay in any of their six CBD hotels. Not only will you receive the very best price, the Hotel group is donating 50% of all room prices to BCNA. To find out more go to:

<http://www.mantra.com.au/fields-of-women/>

How much does it cost?

Registration is \$50 per person. This includes a back pack, a poncho, a ticket to the match and includes free public transport from anywhere in Victoria.

You can also ask friends and family to sponsor you to stand on the field. This is a wonderful way for those who are not able to join you on the Field to be there in spirit. If you raise more than \$200, you will be offered the opportunity to have your \$50 registration fee back. To find out more go to:

<http://fieldofwomen.gofundraise.com.au/>

Can men be involved?

Yes, men can also register and wear a pink poncho to support the women in their lives. In 2007 many men chose to wear a pink poncho, so they could stand beside their wife, sister or mother.

Can I bring my children?

Children need to be at least 12 years of age and accompanied by a parent/ guardian if under the age of 16.

Where does my money go?

100% of the registration fee will go towards supporting Breast Cancer Network Australia's important work. Our mission is to inform, empower, represent and link together Australians personally affected by breast cancer. To learn more about BCNA's work visit <http://www.bcna.org.au/>

How do I register?

You can register online by visiting <http://www.fieldofwomenlive.org.au/> Yes, you can register up to 10 people at one time. All tickets are general admission- there are no reserved seats.

What time do I need to arrive?

Gates will open at 4.30pm and participants will be required to be seated inside the ground by 5.30pm. Please ensure you have plenty of time to arrive, collect your backpack and poncho, and take your seat for the event.

What happens once I take my seat?

When you arrive at the MCG, you will be given your back pack and pink poncho and asked to move to an allocated seating block within the MCG. There will be plenty of volunteers who will be able to direct you.

After the ceremony, you will be directed to leave the ground by volunteers. You will then take your seat for the match; seats are not allocated so you will be able to sit in all General Admission areas of the MCG. Volunteers and MCG staff will be able to help you.

Where should I arrange to meet up with my friends?

You can arrange to meet up with your friends before you arrive at the MCG. If this is not possible take your mobile phone to help find each other. There will be time after you receive your poncho to find your friends so you can walk onto the field together.

What should I wear?

Your poncho will cover most of you. Dark clothing will help us look our best on the night. The weather may be cool, so bring a pullover.

It is important to wear flat comfortable shoes - runners are best.

No high-heels will be allowed on the MCG.

What should I bring?

We recommend that you bring a small bag which you can put into your backpack and under your poncho. There will be nowhere for you to leave other items. Remember to bring your mobile phone. This will help you stay in contact with others in case you are separated. Umbrellas are not permitted — your poncho has a hood and will keep you dry if it rains. Cameras are permitted.

Welcome to Pink Bun 2010 22 April – 12 May

Bakers Delight bakeries across the nation will continue their support for Australians affected with breast cancer. 100% of the sale of specially prepared Pink Finger Buns and paper Pink Ladies will be donated to BCNA. \$1.00 from the sale of every pack of BCNA Pink Tarts will also be donated to BCNA.

To find your nearest Bakers Delight bakery click below:

<http://www.bakersdelight.com.au/BakeryLocator/>

To find answers to frequently asked questions click below:

[FAQ sheet Pink Bun 2010 63.01 Kb](#)

For ideas from Pink Bun 2009 visit our photo gallery

<http://stage.visualjazz.com.au/BakersDelightPinkBunApp/eal/photoGallery.html>

So start your Pink Bun 2010 plans today!

[Register now](#)

Bakers Delight's support of BCNA

Over the past 10 years, Bakers Delight has raised over \$3.7 million for BCNA! So get behind your local bakery and help them raise even more. All money from Pink Bun 2010 goes directly into ensuring women with breast cancer, and their families, receive the very best treatment, care and support possible, no matter who they are or where they live.

[Sexuality After Breast Cancer](#)

Sexuality is a topic not often discussed, but many women find there are changes... The summary report is available here for download:

[BCNA Sexuality after Breast Cancer Summary Report March 2010 90.94 Kb](#)

New research on Tamoxifen and Anti-depressants

<http://www.bcna.org.au/content/view/1096/1546/>

[Fact sheets](#)

New fact [Pathology fact sheet 513.76 Kb](#)



Val Barger, Judy Cluse, Sue Drew and Carol Summerhayes sporting pink flamingo sunglasses for Mardi Gras at the Marigold Restaurant, Chinese New Year, Sydney, 27 February 2010

Otis Foundation retreats

We are very privileged that Elspeth Humphries' family allows visitors to *Creekside* during summer.

Check it out:

<http://www.otisfoundation.org.au/OTISSanctuaries.asp?SanctuaryID=6>

Weight lifting in women with breast cancer related lymphoedema

Progressive weight lifting had no significant effect on arm and hand swelling associated with lymphoedema in breast cancer survivors, and resulted in decreased incidence of exacerbations of lymphoedema, reduced symptoms and increased strength. The authors also concluded that this study supports the potential benefits of a slowly progressive weight lifting program in women with breast cancer-related lymphoedema, in conjunction with appropriate use of compression garments and close monitoring for arm and hand swelling.

<http://nbocc.org.au/health-professionals/clinical-update-breast-cancer/clinical-update-breast-cancer-issue-36>

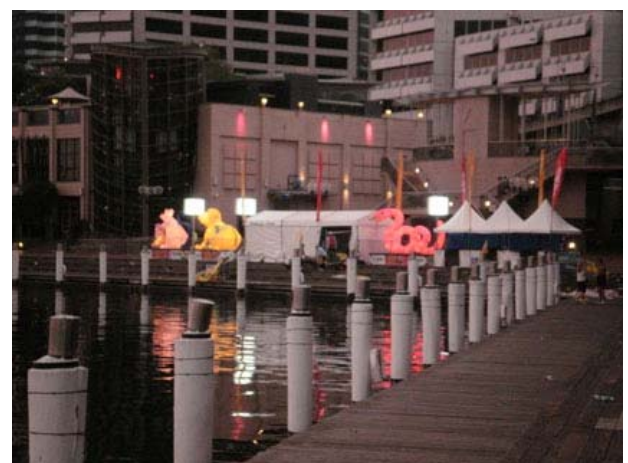


www.ywcaustralia.org.au

Website stories

We also have stories on www.bcna.org.au. If you would like to submit a story to be considered please email it to beacon@bcna.org.au with a photo.

Kerrie Griffin, Community Leader, Seat at the Table (SATT) Program, BCNA









Sunrise, Chinese New Year, Darling Harbour, Sydney, 28 February 2010

Calendar of events social below; paddling

go to www.cdba.com.au/

Sat 13 Mar 10	500m ACT State Titles and Canberra Festival Regatta	Lotus Bay	Dragons Abreast on BBQ - No paddling
Sun 14 Mar 10	200m ACT State Titles and Canberra Festival Regatta	Lotus Bay	We hope to enter a team
Sat 27 Mar 10	500m and 2000m Regatta	Lotus Bay	Uni Dragons on BBQ

Month	Date(s)	Event	Location	Notes
March 	Saturday 20 9.15am for 9.30-10am	Easy social paddle following normal session followed by coffee	Lotus Bay	Canberra@dragonsabreast.com.au
April	Saturday 10	Social paddle — Easter bulb planting and morning tea on the island	Lotus Bay	Canberra@dragonsabreast.com.au
April–May 	22 April – 12 May	Pink Bun . This is a fun morning or afternoon	Your local Bakers Delight Bakery — book in advance	http://www.bcna.org.au/content view/833/1391/ kerrie.griffin@act.gov.au and Marita pinkbun@bcna.org.au
May 	Friday 7 4.30pm	BCNA Field of Women Live! 2010	Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) Registrations now open!	www.fieldofwomenlive.org.au
	Sunday 9 8–11am	Mothers Day Classic	Rond Terrace, Lake Burley Griffin and BCNA Stall	kerrie.griffin@act.gov.au if you would like to volunteer on the BCNA Stall http://mothersdayclassic.com.au/about-us
June	11–13	2010 IBCPC International Participatory Festival , third international survivor regatta (after Vancouver and Caloundra)!	Peterborough, Canada	News coming soon to www.ibcpc.com Patsy Sheales patc@grapevine.net.au
September 	10–12	2nd National Conference for Young Women Affected by Breast Cancer	Radisson Gold Coast Resort, Queensland	www.ywcaustralia.org.au Cancer Council Queensland
October  	Saturday 23	Dragons Abreast ACT Corporate Challenge Regatta	Lotus Bay, Lake Burley Griffin	canberra@dragonsabreast.com.au
	Saturday 23 8am–3pm	BCNA Mini Field of Women at the Regatta	Canberra Yacht Club Lotus Bay	Volunteers needed for the BCNA stall! Kerrie.griffin@act.gov.au
	Monday 25 12.30–12.55 pm tbc	BCNA Mini Field of Women at Calvary Healthcare	Calvary Hospital, Bruce Speaker: tbc	Volunteers needed! robyn.chen@bigpond.com.au

Dragons Abreast Australia — Mission statement

To offer hope and inspiration to those faced with a diagnosis of breast cancer and promote the fact that there is quality of life after breast cancer.

Keeping the spirit alive!

Next issue of the DA ACT newsletter — May 2010

Thank you to all members who have contributed to this issue.

Please submit any news, items and images by 15 May 2010 to the newsletter coordinator

Kerrie.griffin@act.gov.au or taylorclan@inet.net.au