

2011 Dragons Abreast National Paddle Day
Summary from across the Nation for the DAA Newsletter

Congratulations to Dragon Abreast as Dragons Paddle Across Australia on National Paddle Day!

Hundreds of Dragons Abreast members and their communities across the country provided a positive start to worldwide breast cancer month of October by participating in our inaugural Dragons Abreast National Paddle Day on 2 October. The event was a fantastic way to raise awareness about Dragons Abreast Australia and brought a sense of unity and kindred ship to members knowing others across Australia were paddling with us.

Around half our member groups were able to participate, with lots of paddling, morning teas and other activities happening right across the country. Despite wild weather conditions in many regions, competition from the Rugby League Finals and limited time to prepare, the event was a great success. Many groups have reported fantastic local press coverage, raising awareness of what we do at Dragons Abreast and encouraging potential new members to join. Well done to us all and look forward to celebrating together again next year!

Here is what some of our Groups got up to on Dragons Abreast National Paddle Day

DA Penrith braved terrible weather to participate in the first ever national paddle-a-thon. A first we thought it would only be a puddle-a-thon, followed by hot coffee/chocolate, but low and behold – the downpour ceased and we were able to get on the water, then the sun came out, however briefly! How wonderful – luck **is** with us! We had a lovely paddle around the lake, thank you Ray for sweeping us, and Gil, Pauline, Barbara and Jane for swelling our numbers! The rain held off just long enough, and we were drenched as we got off the boat again!

DA Orange planned to use their Come and Try day as an opportunity to thank business houses who have supported them for last 3 years, but had to postpone due to dreadful weather on the day. They have rescheduled for October 16. DA Orange received fantastic pre event media coverage with footage on both TV stations, a radio interview as well as an article in the local paper. Local and federal MPs, Councilors, Breast Care Nurses and anyone diagnosed with breast cancer, their friends and family have been invited to paddle with DA Orange and their Colour City Supporters for a gentle paddle on their beautiful Lake Canobolas, surrounded by orchards in blossom and wineries, concluding with a sausage sizzle and chat

Dragons Abreast Coffs Coast held their National Paddle Day paddle on the Bellinger River at Mylestom at 2pm. Joining us were of

members from our sports club, a mother and daughter who had participated in our recent regatta and DACC member Maria's young son and his friend. We braved wet conditions to paddle however we were determined to be out on the water. After attending the recent DAA National regatta and experiencing strong weather conditions we felt that a little rain was not about to stop us. Fifteen minutes after winching the boat out of the water, the heavens opened with lashing winds and heavy rain. Definitely time for a well deserved cuppa and cake. A breast cancer diagnosis and treatment that follows is a daunting challenging experience. Paddling in rainy conditions is no comparison. Great idea to share in a national paddle day – we felt a sense of kindredship knowing that there were other DAA groups across Australia paddling as well. We have all made a donation to DAA nationally.

DA Bribie Island -We tried!! Oh we tried!!

Ads went in newspaper and we asked friends and others. At 6.45 the decision was made to go ahead. We started to erect the tent and the wind started. Undeterred we launched our boat and began paddling. Just as we passed under the Bribie Bridge it worsened. White caps became White Rabbits and the wind was howling. At that point we turned for home and safely returned. We met a few prospective paddlers and then had to dismantle our tent (which had already been damaged by winds at Kawana. Maybe next time we will just do it without any planning and have more success!

DA ACT held a come and try followed by coffee and massages on Lake Burley Griffin and had a radio interview

DA Albury Wodonga Bravehearts held a come and try day, but because of the inclement weather, ie RAIN!, we only had one newby turn up, to join the newby from the week before. But both ladies loved the experience and will be regulars!

DA Central Coast had a good article in the local newspaper for the National Paddle Day but unfortunately the weather beat them on the day. It was absolutely atrocious, torrential rain & windy. We were expecting at least 5 definite newbies at our Come and Try, but understandably only one very enthusiastic young 26 year old, mother of 2 young children diagnosed less than 2 years ago, turned up. She is an absolute inspiration to us and she is so excited to have come along, if only for our welcome breakfast and can't wait to start paddling. The others are still interested and I'm sure will be back for another try and we are all very excited about sharing our love of paddling with them.

DA Mackay had a truly wonderful day, even though we didn't get too many takers. We did manage to sign up one new member, as well as her daughter as a support paddler, so in our eyes the day was a huge success. Apparently, they had been looking for something that the two of them could participate in as mother and daughter and with us, they found what they had been looking for. We are looking forward to spending many more happy times with them both. For the other paddlers who weren't Breast Cancer survivors, we were able to give them information on the sports team. We followed the paddling with a scrumptious morning tea, catered for by our girls. Our weather was kind and it was an all-round good morning and we hope to do it again.

DA Wagga Bidgee Dragons planned a paddle on Sat 1st at Lake Albert but were defeated by cold and rainy weather

And some other activities planned were:

Rainbow DA - a Come and try and morning tea at Lake Ainsworth

DA Sunshine Coast - a Social Paddle

DA Mt Warning – a paddle from Condong to Tumbulgum and breakfast at the Tweed Mini Field

DA Port Lincoln - a Come and Try and had lots of publicity including a radio interview. We are very excited with this concept and agree it's a fantastic idea AND our members have been very keen to take part

DA Clarence Valley - a Come and try on 16 October

DA Ballarat - a paddle

DA Darwin – a paddling activity

DA Melbourne - a Come and Try on 9 October

DA Launceston – a paddle

DA Townsville - Twin Titties plan a Come and Try with Health professionals and the community at The Strand

DA Gold Coast - a DA Promotional Drive with come and try paddle and morning tea on 16 October



Claire Bundy, with other cancer survivors, praises exercise. Picture: MARK SCOTT -PP467814

Cancer survivors unite

LAUREN NICHOLLS

MORE than 20 years after battling breast cancer, Claire Bundy is set to celebrate Dragons Abreast National Paddle Day on Sunday with her Central Coast crew.

The Central Coast Dragons Abreast group formed in 2002 with a number of women whose lives had been affected by breast cancer.

Mrs Bundy, of Killarney Vale, was diagnosed with breast cancer at 31 and given less than two years to live. Five years later she had beaten the illness and was classed as being in remission.

Fun and fitness

DRAGONS Abreast Australia is a national charity that enables breast cancer survivors to get on with life after treatment through fun, fitness and the camaraderie of dragon boating together.

Central Coast Dragons Abreast will meet 8am-10am at Peel Street, Toukley, on National Paddle Day on Sunday. Inquiries: Claire Bundy 0413 808 951.

"My prognosis was not great, but I'm still here," she said.

Mrs Bundy joined the Dragons Abreast team to prove breast cancer survivors can come through the ordeal a stronger person.

"It shows you can still be really active and enjoy your life and do something

physically demanding," she said. "It's pretty amazing to get all these women in a sports team."

She hopes her courage and determination will have a positive impact on others. "If I can inspire other women and give them some hope to survive, that's great."



DA Mackay



DA Mackay

National paddling

ON OCTOBER 2 Coffs community will join thousands of paddlers across Australia paddling together to support Dragons Abreast Australia.

Dragons Abreast Australia is a national Registered Charity that enables breast cancer survivors to get on with life after treatment through the fun, fitness and camaraderie of dragon boating together.

There are 43 Dragons Abreast Groups and 2200 members across Australia – Dragons Abreast Coffs Coast is one such member group.

Local Dragons Abreast member Kerry said her involvement with Dragons Abreast began 18 months ago when she attended a 'come and try' day.

"For me the initial attraction was the ability to perform an exercise that would relieve the impact of recently diagnosed lymphoedema," she said. "But I soon discovered that the friendships developed were far more beneficial – there is a unique bond between the ladies due to our common battle with breast cancer.



IN IT TOGETHER: Kerry with Dragons Abreast Coffs Coast member Carol.

"More importantly we provide a visible face to breast cancer and demonstrate to other women that we are able to enjoy life following a breast cancer diagnosis."

Come and have fun paddling with the local Dragons Abreast group and see the benefits of dragon boating for breast cancer survivors. People aged 12 and over are invited to come and try.

For more information contact Lee on 0488 569 589.

The National paddle will take place on Sunday, October 2 at Bellinger River, Mylestom from 2pm.

DA Coffs Coast Newspaper Article



DA Penrith



DAACT



DA Bribie Island brave the rain



Tent trouble – DA Bribie Island



Dragons keep the spirits alive

Everyone is welcome to the Dragons Abreast Australia National Paddle Day event at the Regatta Centre on Sunday, October 2, starting at 2pm. It's part of a nation-wide event, with paddles being held around the country. The event is being held by the Dragons Abreast Penrith group, which belongs to Dragons Abreast Australia. Co-ordinator Gillian Brown said: "The aim of the day is to show breast-cancer survivors that there is life after breast cancer and doing the dragon boating is a terrific upper-body exercise. It's a friendship thing as well." The event marks the beginning of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. People are welcome to try dragon boating – they should come ready to have a paddle with shoes able to get wet, a cap and a bottle of water. On October 30, Penrith members will also participate in a regatta at Darling Harbour. Club members (pictured) were at a similar event at the Regatta Centre in April.

Details: Gillian, Dragons Abreast Penrith, 0413 151 467.

Picture: Kieren Tilly

Article Penrith Star