



DA ACT *Ticked pink* with Mary-Lou Reid, drummer, Val Barger in left hand second bench and Debbie Whitfield, sweep, at Darling Harbour, Chinese New Year, 8 February 2009 *Image:* Val Barger

Chant for DA ACT

Lead Here we are just tickled pink

Team *Here we are just tickled pink*

Lead And we'll tell you what we think

Team *And we'll tell you what we think*

Lead We're not here to paddle slow

Team *We're not here to paddle slow*

Lead No, we're here to go, go go!

Team *No, we're here to go, go go!*

All **Go-Anna, Go-Anna, Go! Go! Go!**
Go-Anna, Go-Anna Go.....



Flowers on the Water Ceremony at Darling Harbour, Chinese New Year, 8 February 2009 *Image:* Steve Taylor

Chinese New Year 2009 memories

What a wonderful experience that I'll never forget. I was amazed at the crowd of survivors and supporters and the friendliness of everyone at my first Chinese New Year. As we competed in the races and went to the marshalling area we chatted to each other even though we were total strangers but with one thing in common — our survival. This link created joy and pleasure in what we were doing and happiness in our achievements. We squeezed the Wagga paddlers into our boat.

Teams from far and wide came to experience this occasion. When it came time to do the Flowers in the Water Ceremony some paddlers gave up their seats for others who had never experienced it. This gesture was very much appreciated. The boats lined up as we listened to the Buddhist Monks and the beautiful singing as we put flowers in the water and thought of friends and others who were not as lucky as us. It was so emotional a lot of tears were shed as arms were placed around each other in sharing this special time. As the boats spread out and circled the flowers the paddlers did a special tap paddle with all the spectators and supporters clapping and cheering us. When we disembarked there was a paddle guard of honour for everyone and hi fives all around. It was also very special for me to have my son and grandchildren there and for them to share this experience and to have this special occasion to remember and to understand. My memories will last forever.

Val Barger



Judy Cluse, paddle guard of honour, after the Flowers on the Water Ceremony at Darling Harbour, Chinese New Year, 8 February 2009 *Image:* Jan Skorich



DA ACT *Tickled pink* final with Megan Dennis, drummer, DA Wagga in green visors at Darling Harbour, Chinese New Year, 8 February 2009 *Image: Steve Taylor*



Pink Connections supporter team with Patti Pye, Claire Dennis and Edmund Kralikas, at Darling Harbour, Chinese New Year, 8 February 2009 *Image: Steve Taylor*



Wagga survivor, paddle guard of honour, Chinese New Year, 8 February 2009 *Image: Jan Skorich*

Dragons Abreast Wagga Wagga, aka *Bidgee Boobs*, wish to pass on to the DA ACT Committee our thanks to the *Tickled pink* team for including four of our breast cancer survivor paddlers in your team at CNY in Sydney. We had a great time and hope to be involved in composite teams with you in the future. We are also most appreciative of your efforts in getting our five breast cancer survivor paddlers into boats for the Flowers on the Water ceremony. Our newest paddler, Lola, was quite touched by the emotion of it all; as were our supporters onshore cheering everyone on during the lap of Cockle Bay afterwards. The ceremony is a powerful instrument through which we can raise breast cancer awareness. Our supporters who had not seen the ceremony before were amazed at the sheer number of participants on Sunday.

Lee Massey
Coordinator, Dragons Abreast Wagga



Lucy Lytton and Bec Karr, paddle guard of honour, Chinese New Year, 8 February 2009 *Image: Jan Skorich*

Congratulations to everyone who went to Sydney! We had a *tickled pink* time. Special congratulations to those paddlers who paddled in their first Chinese New Year and Flowers on the Water. Our thoughts are with Bea as her mother passed away and she was notified after our first race.

Patsy Sheales



Flowers on the Water Ceremony at Darling Harbour, Chinese New Year, 8 February 2009 *Image: Steve Taylor*

Many thanks to all the Chinese New Year team especially **Mary-Lou Reid**, our captain, stroke and drummer, **Debbie Whitfield**, sweep, and drummers **Michelle Hanton and Megan Dennis**.

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 1 Mary-Lou Reid | Annette Dean |
| 2 Megan Dennis | Jan Skorich |
| 3 Kerrie Griffin | Val Barger** |
| 4 Kate McMahon* | Patsy Sheales |
| 5 Judy Cluse** | Susi Gross |
| 6 Kathryn Kralikas | Bev Sloan |
| 7 Margie Perkins* | Marion Leiba |
| 8 Bea Brickhill* (<i>first race</i>) | Bec Karr |
| 9 Lucy Lytton* | Sue Drew** |
| 10 Cheryl Brower* | |
| Sweep: | Debbie Whitfield |

* new members

** first CNY

It was magic that all our new members, as well as members new to CNY plus Susi Gross and Wagga members, participated in the Flowers on the Water Ceremony. Thanks to Sandi Avis our cheerleader.

Kerrie Griffin



Sue Drew, paddle guard of honour, Chinese New Year, 8 February 2009 *Image: Jan Skorich*

My experience of Chinese New Year

As someone who had joined DA ACT two years ago I had never been to CNY. This year I went. Unsure of what to expect I was somewhat apprehensive about paddling at Darling Harbour and if I was up to it! What an experience, it was such great fun and so freeing. Pink everywhere, the atmosphere, the camaraderie, the shared journeys, the belonging. Living in the moment, laughing, a weekend with a great group of women. The paddling was good too!

Well run and organised. I did my best, I participated. The Flowers on the Water Ceremony was a touching and moving experience — as I sat squeezed into a seat beside two DA Sydney paddlers, dropping rose petals into the water, thoughts and feelings flooded my memory. I am grateful to DA ACT for the support, the opportunities and the wonderful women who know how to live and laugh.

Sue Drew



BAS team (including Teena Harkins and Andrew Healey), inaugural winners of the trophy at the DA ACT Regatta wrap up on 20 November 2008 *Image: Kerrie Griffin*

Coordinator's report

Presentation to highest fundraiser

A trophy was awarded to the highest fundraising team for 2008, which was Breast Activity Statement (BAS), a corporate team that paddled at the regatta. Next year's **Dragons Abreast ACT Corporate Challenge Regatta** has already been locked in for **24 October 2009** at Lotus Bay on Lake Burley Griffin.

Christmas has come and gone and Dragons Abreast ACT celebrated the festive season with singing Christmas carols on the lake — thanks to **Megan Dennis**; a party at **Margo Neale's** and morning tea by the lake.

Awards

Congratulations to two members on receiving awards in recognition of their tremendous contributions to CDBA over many years. **Anna Wellings Booth** was awarded Life Membership and **June McMahon** a President's award. **Kel Watt**, CDBA President, noted that June had just recovered from her eye surgery and was straight back volunteering as a regatta official. The applause these two remarkable women received from the large regatta crowd was long and deafening and very well deserved. Well done to both of you!

Regattas

DA ACT participated in **Australia Day celebrations** by joining CDBA teams in a demonstration paddle at Regatta Point. We participated in the local **CDBA Regatta** on 17 January with the *Tickled Pink* team putting in a great paddle, especially in the final when we clipped five seconds off our best time. There were at least five regatta virgins on board; most had only paddled a few times, so it was very exciting and a lot of fun. We even flashed our paddling in time on the WIN TV Monday evening news in the sports segment. Thanks to our members who volunteered to act as officials at this regatta — **Robyne Kellett, June McMahon, Lenyss Snellen** and **Gail Murdoch**.

Members participated in the **Chinese New Year regatta** at Darling Harbour in Sydney and also attended the DAA dinner. Our club welcomed new members who, having caught the paddling bug in trial sessions, have joined up with us. A number of visitors from DA clubs around Australia have joined us for a paddle, as have some regional NSW women staying in Canberra while undergoing treatment.

Patsy helped develop a DA ACT Chant which was fun at Chinese New Year (see page 1). We received a Grant from ACT Sport and Recreation for a \$1000 grant for a trolley for *Gecko* thanks to **Joy Tonkin**. At the CNY Regatta some **DAA ID cards** were missing their status. Please check your card to ensure that 'survivor' or 'supporter' is clearly noted. Contact vikifox@grapevine.com.au

Individual member handbook

You will receive your *Individual Member Handbook* in the mail from DAA shortly.

Training sessions

Thanks to **Narelle Powers** who is delivering us fantastic coaching sessions as part of a sports coaching course she is undertaking for DA. Thanks also to **Eispeth Humphries** and

now **Patsy Sheales** for taking names to ensure we have boat numbers at training sessions. Thanks to everyone for indicating attendance in advance. If you are unable to do this, still come down but make sure you are there **early** enough so we can finalise the boat and boat plan and be on the water on time.

We are now working on celebrating our **DA ACT 10th birthday** on **29 March** at the Australian National Botanic Gardens and hope to see you there. Paddles up!

Get well wishes to **Lyn Harden** who is recovering from surgery and **Sandi Avis**.

IBCPC, 11–13 June 2010 Peterborough
Peterborough is in a very pretty lakes area midway between Toronto and Ottawa, Canada. It should be a great event. Elspeth Humphries says let's get organised for the third international survivor regatta (after Vancouver and Caloundra)!

Life is not about weathering the storm but learning how to dance in the rain.

Marion Blake canberra@dragonsabreast.com.au
Coordinator DA ACT



Jan Skorich and DAS, paddle guard of honour, after the Flowers on the Water Ceremony at Darling Harbour, Chinese New Year, 8 February 2009 *Image: Alex Skorich*

Ninth Chinese New Year

Dragons Abreast Australia had a single team at the 2001 Chinese New Year Dragon Boat Regatta, it was a composite team from around Australia, including some of our ACT members. I've been to each of the CNY regattas since then, and seen it grow from that single team to the huge pink presence we saw at Darling Harbour this year. Once we had some competition, in the form of around six to ten DAA teams in the regatta, the ACT team became the stars and we won gold in 2004, silver in 2005.

In the past, I thought that was important, and in some ways it is, as we all improve our fitness through this wonderful sport of dragon boating. However, what always appeals to me



Summer warm up and training times

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

Remember water, hat, sunscreen and sunglasses!
Fact sheets are on the website.

If you want to have a try at sweeping contact

Narelle Powers narelle.powers@defence.gov.au

or **Elspeth Humphries**
humphries44@ozemail.com.au

Weather watch

<http://www.canberrayachtclub.com.au/default.asp>

in coming back to CNY each year — this year was number nine for me! — is to see the smiles on the faces of the new people in the boat. For some it is their first regatta, and the newbies are always amazed by the sheer numbers of pink paddlers and the enjoyment which is palpable in the air. We are able to catch up with friends from previous CNY regattas, heaps of hugs are exchanged, and we find out what is happening in other parts of Australia. Unfortunately, some of those who participated in those early regattas are no longer with us, but always with us in spirit during Flowers on the Water Ceremony. This is the first year that I wasn't in a boat for the ceremony, but I took many photos from the shore, and the emotion was the same from the shore as in the boat. Many of the general public were in tears along the shoreline as they cast their flowers into the harbour, and every single person respected the one minute's silence. I was just so happy that each of our newer paddlers was able to get into a boat. And weren't we lucky to have DA Wagga to help fill our boat for the races! I'll keep going to CNY as long as it continues to be about participation and raising awareness of breast cancer, which is what Dragons Abreast stands for. Nevertheless, congratulations to DA Sydney and DA Brisbane, both of whom had two full teams, and powered down the course in the finals to win gold and silver!

Masters

The ACT Grand Master's Women's Representative team has been working hard despite the closure of the lake. Land training is happening on Monday nights, and very early

mornings (before the sun comes up!) on Wednesdays and Saturdays. In between, there's the gym, jogging, weight training, the mysterious ERG in the shed, and the normal 50 push ups, etc, at home ... exhausting! The water training has been fantastic and we are all looking forward to getting back in the boat.



Claire Dennis and Patti Pye, Pink Connections supporter team at Darling Harbour, Chinese New Year, 8 February 2009 Image: Jan Skorich

Dragons Abreast members of the squad include supporters **Pat Pye, Kim Cameron, Gillian Styles, Julie Richardson, Robyne Kellett** (coach and sweep), **Cathy Powell** (drummer) and survivor **Jan Skorich**. Several other team members have dual membership of Dragons Abreast, so we are well represented! [PS: there are only some of us who can do 50 push ups, and I'm definitely not one of them! Jan]

Jan Skorich, DAA webmaster



Joy Tokin accepting a \$1000 grant from Dept of Sport & Recreation from Minister Andrew Barr, 28 January 2009

ACT Sport & Recreation grant success

Dragons Abreast put in for a grant with ACT Sport & Recreation late last year. The very good news was that we were successful in obtaining a \$1000 grant to purchase a trailer for *Gecko*. In this round we were one of 78 successful grants out of 148 applications. The trailer is designed to aid our members in launching and retrieving *Gecko*. As most members would realise, it is sometimes difficult (*Gecko* only takes 10 paddlers) to lift and launch the boat. The design of the trailer will mean that we can wheel the loaded *Gecko* into the water

to launch it and then float it back into place when we have finished our paddle. The trailer has hand rails for handling and pivoting front and rear wheels to enable ease of movement. It will also help in the storage and security of *Gecko*. The trailer will be onsite in a few months. Happy and warm paddling.

Thank you for deciding I was the recipient this year of the **Kashgar Cup**. I am delighted and would like to say how much I enjoy being able to assist Dragons Abreast ACT in their endeavours. My only hope is that *Gecko* doesn't try to go for a paddle by herself again!
Joy Tonkin



Kashgar Cup — awarded in 2008 to Joy Tonkin

This Cup is awarded annually to the DA ACT member who has made an extraordinary contribution to the work of DA ACT. It was introduced late in 2006 after Penny Birtles (long-time DA ACT member and now a member of DA Sydney), my husband Tim and I were travelling together along the Chinese part of the Silk Road during September–October. At Kashgar in far north-west China, Penny and I saw this small pink jade teapot, embellished with silver dragons, at a market stall. We thought it would be great to bring something back to DA ACT with real Chinese dragons.

With the Committee's approval to introduce this award, the Kashgar Cup was initially awarded to **Lyn Langer** in October 2006 for her sterling work in heading up/managing the 2006 DA ACT Challenge regatta while doing a wonderful job as Treasurer. In 2007 I was the lucky recipient. In 2008 the Cup was awarded to **Joy Tonkin** for her extraordinary efforts in writing successful grant submissions for the baby boat *Gecko* and subsequently, for a trailer. Joy also managed all the logistics involved in ordering and getting the boat from the factory in Germany, through containerisation, freight handlers and Customs to Lotus Bay. She is still beavering away; organising the construction of the *Gecko* trailer.

I'm sure all our members want to thank Joy warmly for all her efforts — we all love *Gecko* to bits and really appreciate the extra paddling opportunities she has been able to give us.

Judy Richmond, Assistant Coordinator



Gemma Beard, PR, Anna Wellings Booth and Shea Foster, PR, at the DA ACT Regatta wrap up on 20 November 2008
Image: Kerrie Griffin

Anna Wellings Booth received Life Membership of CDBA for her ongoing support. Anna has been a member of CDBA for 10 years and is the Founder of Dragons Abreast ACT, now celebrating its 10th anniversary. Due to her remarkable foresight, the Dragons Abreast ACT Corporate Challenge Regatta has been a recognised event in the Canberra calendar for the past seven years.

Life Membership of CDBA

Dear Kel and CDBA Committee members, You were very devious in ensuring I was there on Saturday Kel! I was quite overwhelmed with being honoured with **Life Membership of CDBA** and thank you and the Committee most sincerely. Obviously, I was very unprepared to respond to your comments and can't remember whether I fully acknowledged the tremendous support of CDBA for Dragons Abreast over the past 10 years.

It's all very well setting up a club but without the support of the peak body we wouldn't have succeeded nearly as well. Also, our October Dragons Abreast ACT Corporate Challenge Regatta could not have grown to what it is today without the outstanding generosity of members from the various clubs. Initially, there was a little bit of resistance to the idea but in the past three to four years it has become an established event on the Canberra calendar as undoubtedly the CDBA multicultural corporate regatta will also.

I may have established DA in the ACT but it is the members who made it succeed. There are only four of the originals still going — **Jan Skorich, Elspeth Humphries, June McMahan** and myself — all of whom have become involved nationally or have become officials. Many more amazing women have come, stayed a while and moved on, some extraordinary, inspirational members have died, some have moved on to sporting clubs but the important thing has always been that we have been there to welcome women who are looking for a challenge to reclaim their lives following surgery and treatment, a good

laugh and a supportive cocoon of a dragon boat full of others who understand! Thank you all so much for honouring me and Dragons Abreast — it is very much appreciated. Breast wishes to you all!

Anna Wellings Booth



Annette Dean and Susi Gross, DA ACT Regatta wrap up, 20 November 2008 Image: Kerrie Griffin

DA ACT Regatta wrap up Speech by Susi Gross

Susi spoke at a wrap up meeting on 20 November to thank and explain to donors what happened to the funds raised by the Dragons Abreast ACT Corporate Challenge Regatta on 25 October 2008.

I'm here to tell you a little about how the organisations we support with the money we raised have affected and continue to affect the life of someone who is a breast cancer survivor like me. I will mention **four of the organisations** that benefit from the money raised:

- **BCNA**, Breast Cancer Network Australia, which is the national voice of Australians affected by breast cancer
- **DA ACT**, Dragons Abreast *Tickled pink*, our local dragon boating team and BCNA member
- **Dragons Abreast Australia**, our national organisation
- **Otis Foundation** which provides holiday accommodation for breast cancer survivors in beautiful locations, free of charge.

In 2004, at age 35 I was diagnosed with breast cancer; the same year I migrated to Australia and married here. Naturally, this was a huge shock. At that time I had never known anyone close with breast cancer so I didn't really know much about it.

The *My Journey Kit* issued free of charge by BCNA was very helpful in that situation. It included many brochures and information material and really helped me make informed decisions. It also made me realise that there is support out there.

About two years later, a friend, **Carolyn Parsons**, persuaded me to come and try out dragon boating here with Dragons Abreast in Canberra, the team that has organised the regatta. I loved it straight away. Dragon boating is such a fun sport for **fitness**, you get to do it on **wonderful Lake Burley Griffin**, one Canberra's great assets. If you have been out on the water on an early morning you know there is hardly anything more beautiful. I'm sure you have all had a taste of that. It was fantastic to do all that with a **group of women who had gone through the same thing** as me. You could talk about cancer related issues. I experienced this as a **new level of support**. You can talk about it but you don't talk about it all the time because you have to paddle too, and that's probably a healthy mix. I have made some great friends.

A few months later, I experienced a wonderful event organised by the national Dragons Abreast team, DA Australia. Did you know that DA Australia is celebrating its **10th anniversary** this year. DA Australia organised *Abreast in Australia*, a huge **International breast cancer survivor regatta**, in Caloundra, Queensland for about 2000 paddlers. There were lots of fantastic surrounding events. DA Australia did an amazing job organising it. We are lucky to have three people from our local team who were on the planning Committee: **Anna Wellings Booth, Jan Skorich** and **Elsbeth Humphries**. It was fun (Never underestimate fun!); you realised you are not alone with this disease and it was also a special event for me because I was able to catch up with **Carolyn Parsons** who was based in Tassie and who has since then lost her battle with breast cancer. So, I have good memories of Caloundra.

Unfortunately, in May this year I was diagnosed with a second primary and that meant surgery and chemo again. This time around my DA friends were there which made a difference. They gave me fantastic support on an emotional and a very practical level (regular calls, soups, lifts to doctor's appointments, etc.) and I am very grateful.

The Otis Foundation gives breast cancer survivors the chance to have a break —to enjoy a stay in a holiday accommodation in beautiful surroundings free of charge. In conjunction with Otis, **Elsbeth Humphries** is one of the very generous people who open their place in Thredbo to breast cancer survivors for that purpose. So, in September I spent four beautiful days in Thredbo. I wrote on all my postcards to Germany that a month after chemo I had climbed Australia's highest mountain (and I don't think I mentioned the chair lift.) Of course, being in the Snowies was beautiful but so was our

accommodation. When we first arrived there was a welcome pack from the Otis Foundation with goodies such as bubbles, tea, cosmetic samples — a great pampering experience. The best thing about the stay was that I didn't think much about breast cancer at all during that time.

As you can see BCNA, DA ACT, DA Australia and the Otis Foundation have all helped me on my breast cancer journey. So, my thank you for your support is a very personal 'thank you'.

Susi Gross

Milestones — 80 onwards

Many thanks for the birthday wishes! I've been a bit slack in the 'role model' department lately but shall now battle on to the big 80! As I haven't been able to get down to the lake for a while I bought myself a rowing machine as a birthday present. It is not quite the same though, rowing across the carpet on my own, instead of in the company of the greatest group of people I could ever know. Paddles up and paddle on!

Sue Evans

Sweep update

Thanks to **Elsbeth Humphries, Robyne Kellett, Gillian Styles, Narelle Powers** and **Debbie Whitfield** who give so much of their time as our wonderful, generous and committed sweeps (and anyone I missed). Well done to **Marion Blake** for becoming a probationary sweep, and keep training **Megan Dennis**! While Marion was being tested by Robyne it was terrific to have both *GoAnna* and *Gecko* on the water and thanks for the new upside down paddle routine Debbie. Thanks also to **Anna** who thoughtfully brought along the cool treats and the special crimson fire champagne for Marion.

Kerrie Griffin

Congratulations Marion, in gaining your sweep qualifications! Fantastic effort and it has been wonderful to see your success. Good on you for taking this challenge on board! All our group members will be very appreciative of having another sweep — more sweeps means less sweep droughts and more paddling chances!

Judy Richmond



Flowers on the Water Ceremony at Darling Harbour, Chinese New Year, 8 February 2009 Image: Steve Taylor

DAA merchandise local



A Dragon's Tale (DA member price) \$25

Contact: Anna Wellings Booth wbfamily@homemail.com.au

Greetings cards showing the ACT team paddling on Lake Burley Griffin (two designs and blank for your own message) @ 50 cents each

Pink spray jacket (smaller sizes) \$40

Pink dress shirts (sizes 10–20) \$45

Contact: Cindy Young
dancin_young@yahoo.com.au

DAA merchandise — national direct

DAA key ring of hope \$15

Members may also order these shirts separately and many other items from the merchandise page on the DAA website at www.dragonsabreast.com.au/Admin/merchandise.htm

DAA National office prefers credit card payment as it allows us to only charge you for what we supply.

Under the pink umbrella



www.bcna.org.au



BCNA members greet Deborah De Williams and her dog, Maggie, at Old Parliament House, 15 January 2009

Running pink

Intrepid **Susan Pitt**, with hot pink finishing line tape and BCNA balloons, **Bosom Buddies** including Steph, as well as **Anna Wellings Booth**, **Marion Blake** and **Kerrie Griffin**, with BCNA pink silhouettes, greeted **Deborah De Williams** and her dog, Maggie (border collie) and husband, on her

whirlwind run to iconic Old Parliament House on 15 January. It was a scorching 38°C without shade but Deborah is inspirational and running around Australia to raise awareness about breast cancer as well as funds for NBCF. She aims to raise \$300,000 for a research team. WIN TV News captured Deborah's enthusiasm. Go to www.runningpink.com.au

BCNA liaison

It is continually rewarding and wonderful to see how women come together to help others and improve conditions for the next generations. Newly diagnosed women are amazed at the level of support available. So many people (outside the breast cancer community) comment that they wish that they had such a supportive network for other diseases such as ms and I point out the research on breast cancer will benefit everyone as the ramifications go beyond breast cancer. Already, other health areas are adapting the multi-disciplinary approach which was pioneered by breast cancer advocates.

Kerrie Griffin



One journey many people

578 delegates from 44 countries already registered!

Reach to Recovery. Brisbane 13–15 May 2009

15th UICC Reach to Recovery International Breast Cancer Support Conference — the first ever worldwide forum across Asia-Pacific, Europe, Africa as well as North, Central and South America for breast cancer consumers, support organisations and health professionals to meet and address common goals.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women. In 2002 more than one million new cases of breast cancer were diagnosed globally — this represents 10 per cent of the world's cancer burden and 23 per cent of all female cancers. There are now more than four million women living with breast cancer worldwide. Breast cancer is a local, national and global concern. [The Cancer Council Queensland](http://www.cancer.org.au) warmly invite you.

Contact us for regular updates:
<https://www.astmanagement.com.au/uiccRegister/>

NBOCC features <http://www.nbocc.org.au> ovarian cancer awareness month

February 2009 is Australia's first ovarian cancer awareness month. Five things women should know...[more »](#)

Appropriate referral for women with suspected ovarian cancer... [more »](#)
NBOCC's ovarian cancer awareness campaign... [more »](#)

Latest news

February 2009

guide for women with early breast cancer

NBOCC's eagerly anticipated revised *Guide for women with early breast cancer* will be available for order from 1 March 2009. To view an online go to: [Guide for women with early breast cancer \(pdf 5.2MB 212 pgs\) »](#)

2 February 2009

New Australian study: ovarian cancer not a 'silent killer'

Ovarian cancer has often been referred to as a 'silent killer', but new preliminary findings from an Australian study show the disease is in fact not silent — these latest data show most women (83 per cent) experience at least one symptom of ovarian cancer in the year prior to their diagnosis... [more »](#)

Passing on articles found by Alex and Jan Skorich:

Embrace those hot flushes!

A study has found that women treated with Tamoxifen or anastrozole who report side-effects of these endocrine therapies such as vasomotor symptoms (eg. hot flushes) and joint symptoms including arthralgia (painful joints) and arthritis (inflamed joints) within the first 3 months of starting treatment are less likely to experience breast cancer recurrence.

The researchers concluded that the appearance of new vasomotor or joint symptoms within the first 3 months of treatment may be a useful biomarker, suggesting a greater response to endocrine treatment compared to women without these symptoms. For the full story, see National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre website <http://www.nbcc.org.au/resources/research/Side-effects-endocrinotherapy.html>

Menopause drug linked to breast cancer relapse

A study has found a synthetic steroid used to treat menopause symptoms and prevent osteoporosis significantly increases the risk of a relapse in breast cancer patients.

The steroid, called **tibolone**, should not be prescribed to a woman who has had or is suspected of having breast cancer, concluded the study, published in the British medical journal *The Lancet Oncology*.

Women with breast cancer undergoing chemotherapy are often beset with the debilitating symptoms of menopause, including hot flushes, night sweats, and bone loss. Tibolone is licensed for use in 90 countries for alleviating these symptoms, and 55 countries have approved its use in treating osteoporosis, according to the study.

But concern that the drugs might also cause a recurrence of cancer have led to their being ruled out for patients with breast cancer. Still, many patients with breast cancer use the drug, often available without prescription, to counteract the effects of menopause. In clinical trials led by Peter Kenemans of the VU University Medical Centre in Amsterdam, 3,098 women who had been surgically treated for breast cancer and who were experiencing hot flushes along with other related symptoms were divided into two groups.

The first was given a daily dose of 2.5 milligrams of tibolone, and the second a look-alike placebo.

Just over 10 per cent of the women who had taken the dummy medication suffered a cancer relapse, compared to more than 15 per cent of the women who had taken the steroid, an increased risk of 40 per cent.

Seventy per cent of the recurrences among the tibolone group were so-called 'distant metastases', which are invariably fatal.

The increased risk was so pronounced that the trial was stopped six months early.

'Although the trial was intended to show the non-inferiority of tibolone compared with placebo, the findings clearly show that although effective against hot flushes, tibolone does increase the risk of breast-cancer recurrence,' the study said.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/02/18/2494494.htm?section=justin>

MRI rebates

The Federal Government's new scheme to provide Medicare rebates for annual MRI scans for women at high risk of developing breast cancer commenced 2 February 2009. To be eligible for the rebate, women must be under the age of 50 and have either have a known genetic mutation or a strong family history of breast cancer. The rebate does not apply to women who have previously been diagnosed with breast cancer. In addition, referrals for MRI must be made by a specialist, and must be conducted on a Medicare-eligible MRI unit. A list of eligible units will soon be published and we will update you when this information is available.

For more information about the eligibility criteria, and what constitutes strong family history

<http://www.bcna.org.au/content/view/502/528/>

The Department of Health and Ageing, the Federal Government department responsible for this initiative, are in the process of developing a question and answer sheet on the new MRI rebate. We will advise you by email when this is available. If you have any questions or comments contact us by email policy@bcna.org.au or phone 1800 500 258 (freecall).

Abraxane

BCNA are pleased to advise that Abraxane, a type of taxane used in the treatment of secondary breast cancer, is now available to women in Australia at no cost. Unlike the most commonly known taxane Paclitaxel which contains solvents, Abraxane is albumin bound. This means that women do not need to take steroids as part of their treatment. The lack of both solvents and steroids is likely to mean fewer side effects for women. Abraxane also has a fast infusion process, taking approximately thirty minutes while Paclitaxel takes four hours to infuse.

Abraxane will be listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) from approximately July 2009. In the meantime, the pharmaceutical company that developed Abraxane, Specialised Therapeutics Australia, have established a patient access program which will provide Abraxane free to women until then. If you would like more information about Abraxane, you may like to speak to your oncologist or a member of your medical team.

Ami Seabrook

Research & Policy Officer, BCNA

www.bcna.org.au

[Helping a Friend or Colleague with Breast Cancer 557.79 Kb](#)

http://www.chemocare.com/managing/low_blood_counts.asp



Has someone close to you been affected by breast cancer?

Breast Cancer Network Australia knows that messages from loved ones can be a wonderful and powerful support following a breast cancer diagnosis.

Leave a message today and let your friend or family member know you are thinking of them.

Visit www.fieldofwomen.org.au

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






Flowers on the Water Ceremony, Abreast in Australia regatta, October 2007
postcard produced and inserted for free in the JetStar magazine, January 2009— competition won by Kerrie Griffin

Calendar of events paddling go to www.cdba.com.au/

Sun 22 Feb 09	Flowing Festival	Lake Jindabyne	Contact DBNSW for further details
Sat 14 - Sun 15 Mar 09	Canberra Festival (500m Saturday, 200m Sunday)	Lotus Bay Canberra Yacht Club	BBQ - Grammar / ADFA
Sat 28 Mar 09	CDBA 500m + 2000m Regatta <i>Point Scoring</i>	Lotus Bay Canberra Yacht Club	BBQ - Ice Dragons
Sat 4 Apr 09	200m Regatta <i>Point Scoring</i>	Lotus Bay Canberra Yacht Club	BBQ - Blue Gums
Thu 23 – Sun 26 Apr 09	AusDBF National Championships	Sunshine Coast	
June 09	Sprint / Marathon	Port Macquarie	Contact DBNSW for further details

Calendar of events social

Month	Date(s)	Event	Location	Notes
February	Saturday 28 1.30–3.30pm	Bosom Buddies free workshop for newly diagnosed	Southern Cross Club, Woden	RSVP by 25 February. phone: 0406 376 500 or 6290 1984 bosombuddies@shout.org.au
 March	Saturday 14	Regional Reps meeting in Canberra	Venue tbc	Details to be confirmed, but DA ACT welcome to attend some of the meetings
	Sunday 22	DAACT Family and friends Day An opportunity to invite family and friends to experience the fun of paddling	Lotus Bay, Yarralumla Bring a plate/drinks	Names to canberra@dragonsabreast.com.au
	Friday 27	Relay for Life 24 hour relay run by Cancer Council ACT	AIS athletics track DAACT Members will take part in survivors lap	See DAACT Update for more information
	Sunday 29 6.30 for 7.00pm	DA ACT 10th Anniversary celebration	Hudson's Cafe, Australian National Botanic Gardens \$45	RSVP ACT10birthday@dragonsabreast.com.au
April	Sunday 5	Gear up Girl Challenge The Cervical Screening Program ACT promotes regular two yearly Pap testing. So cycle with your family and friends	Weston Park. Bring a picnic, bring a BBQ	To register and for more information go to www.gearupgirl.com.au
May	13-15	Reach to Recovery International Breast Cancer Support Conference	Brisbane	www.reachtorecovery2009.org
May	Sunday 10	Mothers Day Classic	Walk or paddle around Lake Burley Griffin	More details in DAACT Updates
September	12–13	Wasabi Paddling Club — Inaugural Dana Nelson Challenge Cup Regatta	Willamette River, Portland, Oregon, USA	RSVP Joan cavanaghj@comcast.net www.travelportland.com/visitors/canberra@dragonsabreast.com.au
October	Saturday 24	Dragons Abreast ACT Corporate Challenge Regatta	Lotus Bay, Lake Burley Griffin	
October 	1–10	Amazon Heart Adventure See images and stories of the 2007 adventure: http://ahodysseyblog.amazonheart.org/	Amazon Heart Thunder, LA to San Francisco, US by motorbike	To register for this and other adventures info@amazonheart.org . www.amazonheart.org
2010 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
	4 terms per year	YWCA Encore 8 week gentle exercise program	http://www.ywcaencore.org.au/	contact Gordana Morphet, YWCA of Canberra, on 6278 5298 or encore@ywca-canberra.org.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 2009

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

Please submit any news, items and images by 14 April 2009 to the newsletter coordinator

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