



# ABREAST of the NEWS

DRAGONS ABREAST CANBERRA

PO Box 7191, Yarralumla ACT 2600

DRAGONSABREAST.COM.AU

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FEBRUARY 2024



DA Come and try team members, Kate Reid and Sugar Masangcay, presented the Rookie Award wooden paddle and dragon statuette to Carol McAlwee and Kim Tito, Donna Lennon coach (right), DA Christmas party 2 December 2023 Image: Kerrie Griffin

## Coordinator's report

The events schedule for our big Silver Anniversary year is starting to take shape. We have the great good fortune of celebrating this important milestone in the Year of the Dragon! Keep an eye on the website and Facebook page for details. Thank you to graphic designer **Frances Langi** who donated her time and talents to Dragons Abreast Canberra once again to produce our 25th Anniversary logo.

Please mark your diary now for Saturday 23 November. We will need all hands on deck to prepare for and run the **2024 Social and Corporate Regatta**. We'll end the day with a cocktail party at the Canberra Southern Cross Yacht Club to celebrate 25 years of fitness, fun and camaraderie! And don't forget about the **DAA Pink Paddle Power** regatta in Hobart this October where we will celebrate with our DAA buddies from around Australia.

Since my last report, we have welcomed **Simary** and **Maree** to our club from the October come and try event. There is another [come and try event planned for 16 March](#) so please spread the word and hope for the same glorious weather we had for our last session!

<https://www.revolutionise.com.au/dacanberra/events/226505/>

Dragons Abreast Canberra members have formed a team to participate in the [National Breast Cancer Foundation '57 Squat Challenge'](#) this March. Each participant has signed up to do 57 squats every day in March representing the 57 Australians diagnosed with breast cancer every day. You can sponsor us by donating here <https://fundraise.nbcf.org.au/fundraisers/dacanberra>.

Sadly, our community has experienced significant losses over the past few months.

In December 2023, with great sadness, we acknowledged the death of **Peta Murphy MP** who was a tireless advocate for people living with metastatic breast cancer. You can read more about our tribute to Peta in this edition.

And we extend our heartfelt condolences to **Marion** and the **Leiba** family on the passing of [Courtney](#) on 5 February. Courtney was a much loved member of the Dragons Abreast community and the Canberra community as a whole. Courtney will be deeply missed.

Finally, another big thank you to **Kerrie Griffin** for giving so much of her energy to putting together another extraordinary edition of *Abreast of the News*.

Paddles up!

**Jeannie Cotterell**  
Coordinator, Dragons Abreast Canberra  
0459 981 293  
[coordinator.dac@gmail.com](mailto:coordinator.dac@gmail.com)





Jeannie Cotterell presented the Kashgar Cup to Joan White, with Cliff White 2 December 2023 *Image: Kerrie Griffin*

Now for some important thank you messages and congratulations.

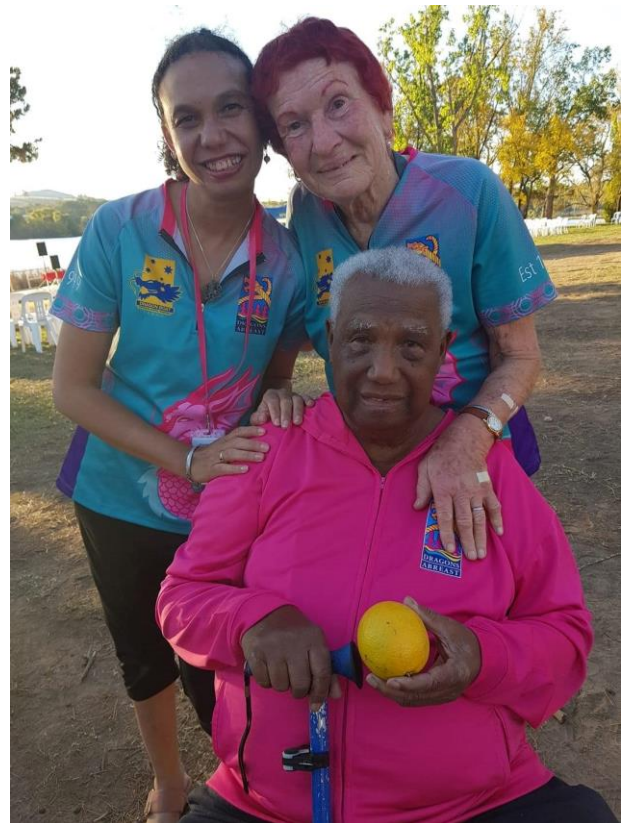
Thank you to Greg and **Clare Purcell** who generously hosted the DA Canberra Christmas party on 2 December. Thank you to the **DA social committee**, and thank you to **Janet Olsen** and **Clare** for stepping in to finalise arrangements. A wonderful time was had by all.

Congratulations to **Gillian Styles** for being recognised by [DBACT](#) as a Life Member after being nominated by her primary club, **Dragon Flyers**. Life membership publicly recognises the efforts of DBACT members who have made outstanding contributions to the sport in the ACT in a conspicuous and/or distinguished manner. We are proud to be a part of Gillian's story and we're grateful for her ongoing support of Dragons Abreast.

The [Kashgar Cup](#) is a very special award presented to a member who has 'made an extraordinary contribution to the work of DA Canberra'. This award is determined by the DA Canberra Committee who consider potential recipients' participation, volunteering and overall commitment to everything DA Canberra does from paddling to social events. This year's recipient was a very easy choice and congratulations went to our secretary **Joan White**. [Citation](#)



Donald Jenkin DBACT President presents Gillian Styles with DBACT Life membership, Sue Pidgeon Chief Official, DBACT regatta 4 13 January 2024 *Image: Kerrie Griffin*



Nadine, Marion and Courtney Leiba, AusChamps, National Dragon Boat Championships. Yarralumla April 2019 *Image: Susan Pitt*

*I remember Dad being blessed by one of the lion dancers by giving him the orange. Nadine Leiba*



Christmas carol paddle 20 December 2023 *Image:* Janet Olsen

The [Rookie Award](#) is for members who are new to the club and have shown commitment to DA Canberra events and embrace the DA Canberra spirit.

**The criteria for the Rookie Award:**

- Adhered to the DAA principles and philosophies
- Strived to learn the required skills to be an effective paddler
- Showed improvement in paddling skills over the year
- Strived to improve personal fitness
- Showed persistence in attending as many training sessions and regattas as personal circumstances permit
- Participated and volunteered in team events both on and off water.

Recipients are selected by the DA Come and try team and share a wooden paddle trophy (donated by **Megan Dennis**), and a dragon-themed trophy (donated by **Robyn Chen**). This year's well-deserving recipients were **Carol McAlwee** and **Kim Tito**. [citations](#)



DA Canberra, Canberra Balloon Spectacular 12 March 2023 *Image:* Paul Jurak Kayakcameraman <https://kayakcameraman.com/>



Carol McAlwee, Clare Puprcell, Joanne Widdup, Kim Tito, Janet Olsen and Lyndall Milward-Bason, 14 January 2024 *Image:* Carol McAlwee

Many thanks to **Carol McAlwee** for coordinating DA Canberra's January maintenance of Grevillea Park as well as baking a cake for the volunteers.

Thank you to **Kim Tito** and the volunteers who held a DA Canberra display for [Canberra Health Services World Cancer Day](#) on 7, 8 and 9 February.

Thank you to everyone for enthusiastically participating in the **Dragon Muster** on 19 January.

Thank you to skilled photographers **Paul Jurak Kayakcameraman** <https://kayakcameraman.com/> and **Pauline Lound** who kindly gave us stunning images of DA Canberra.

Congratulations to **Che Mortimer** who participated in the Coast to Coast Dragon Boat Festival at Lake Kawana on the Sunshine Coast on 11 November 2023.



Denise Brown, Jeannie Cotterell and Clare Purcell, Christmas party 2 December 2023 *Image:* Lyndall Milward-Bason



Pene Lee, Denise Brown, Jenny Green, Simary Hackforth-Jones, Katherine Davis Kralikas, Kim Tito and Clare Purcell, Dragon muster, Ainslie Football Club 19 January 2024 *Image:* Kerrie Griffin



DA Canberra, Canberra Balloon Spectacular 12 March 2023  
 Image: Paul Jurak Kayakcameraman  
<https://kayakcameraman.com/>



DA Canberra, DBACT regatta 3 9 December 2023 Image:  
 Kerrie Griffin

Congratulations to all the participants in the **Ord River Marathon** training sessions, **8 km Springbank Island** paddle, **Bei Loon 8 km Challenge** on 3 February and **Sydney Lunar New Year Festival** at Darling Harbour on 16 February. Locally, we've enjoyed success at the DBACT regattas which would not be possible without our committed volunteers. A special thank you to our local boat captain **Lyndall Milward-Bason**, our interstate boat captain **Anita Godley**, and our coaches **Donna Lennon**, **Jenny Milward-Bason** and **Kim Tito**.



DA Canberra, DBACT regatta 4 13 January 2024 Image: Kerrie Griffin



Simary Hackforth-Jones, Marshall volunteer and Kristy, Nature Coast paddler, DBACT regatta 3 9 December 2023 Image:  
 Kerrie Griffin

Thank you to the **DA social committee**, and all the helpers, who ran a very successful cake and sandwich stall at DBACT regatta 5 on 10 February.

### **Mother's Day Classic (MDC) 12 May**

All are invited to the launch on 8 March. Check out

TeamApp for the MDC (for breast and ovarian cancer) paddle and/or MDC BCNA Stall, Rond Terrace <https://www.mothersdayclassic.com.au/>

### **Dragons Abreast clothing and equipment pool**

If you would like to donate or recycle any dragon boating and/or Dragons Abreast items please contact: **Clare Purcell** [clare@cgpurcell.com](mailto:clare@cgpurcell.com)

### **DA Canberra Facebook and website**

To ensure you keep abreast of all our news, please join us. Many thanks to **Julie Kesby** for updates.

Website <https://www.revolutionise.com.au/dacanberra/>  
 Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/DragonsAbreastCanberra/>  
 DAA website <https://www.dragonsabreast.com.au/>  
 DAA Facebook [https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=dragons%20abreast%20australia&epa=SEARCH\\_BOX](https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=dragons%20abreast%20australia&epa=SEARCH_BOX)  
 DB ACT website <http://www.dbact.com.au/home/>

### **Dragons Abreast Australia**

Philosophy: *Awareness, Participation, Inclusiveness*  
*Connect. Move. Live.*

Encourage wellness, fitness, fun and camaraderie for breast cancer survivors through the sport of dragon boating and promote breast cancer awareness throughout our community.

### **Check out our new DAA branded paddles!**

### **Paddling pants, gloves and shoes**

<https://www.typhoon8.com.au/collections/all>

**Fernwood Belconnen** Thank you for your support of DA Canberra.



Aix-les-Bains Riviera des Alpes, France 24-30 August 2026

### [2026 IBCPC Participatory Festival](#)

The [2026 IBCPC Festival](#) will welcome 4500 participants from the current 320 IBCPC member teams, from 37 countries across all continents. The Festival will take place on the shores of Lac du Bourget, France's largest natural glacial lake.

Bulletin 2: <https://ibcpcfrance2026.com/bulletin-2-2/>



DA Canberra swim assessment by Anita Godley 26 November 2023 *Image:* Anita Godley

### **Coaches' corner**

Well done to the Dragons Abreast Canberra team members who joined with local Pink Paddlers in the **Bei Loon 8 km Challenge** around Scotland Island in Sydney's Pittwater estuary. Actually, being a bit further than 8 km was not a bother as they relished the challenge and brought home a good time as well. We will see more of these types of events in our future!

Also in the longer paddle vein is the **Ord River** preparation with a build up from 2-3 to 5 hours over recent months to 7 hours of training to replicate the 55 km experience. From the outset, we are achieving the right regime because we adopted the Ord organisers' sage advice. The crew are working together to build endurance and share their wellbeing and comfort tips for the journey in June.



Donna Lennon coach, DA Christmas party 2 December 2023 *Image:* Kerrie Griffin

Participation in the DBACT regattas continues to be strong in our 10's team entries across the events on offer. The 500m 10's was successful on 10 February at DBACT regatta 5.

Congratulations to **Carol McAlwee and Kim Tito** who were presented jointly with the [Rookie Award](#).

### **Water safety session Sunday 26 November**

All paddling DB ACT members are encouraged to undertake a swim assessment according to the [AusDBF](#) rules.

This is such an essential activity for everyone, for peace-of-mind, but we would not be able to do this without the expertise of **Anita Godley**. Not only is Anita a qualified swimming instructor but she has the knack of making the most uncomfortable of us feel comfortable and safe completing these activities, which always consists of laughter. Thanks to Anita for the session on **26 November**.

Watch [TeamApp](#) for comments linked to each training session for any warnings, advice or cancellations. See future editions of the *Coaches' corner*. <https://www.revolutionise.com.au/dacanberra/>

### **Donna Lennon, coach**



8 km Springbank Island DBACT paddlers 3 December 2023 *Image:* Susan Pitt



Carol McAlwee sweep, Kingston 10 January 2024 *Image:* Lyndall Milward-Bason

### Rookie award sweep

It has been a year since I took my first tentative paddle with DA Canberra and what a wonderful year it has been. With the support and friendship of the group, I was able to learn how to hold the paddle, move with the rhythm of the stroke, load and unload the boat and most of all have fun while doing it all. I was made to feel comfortable to join the regattas and help where I was needed.

With more encouragement, I was able to step out of my comfort zone. 'Who wants to try out sweeping' was the call. Carol? Yeah, why not I thought. It was particularly weird at first, calling for power from the humans. No sails, no engine, just people power. Also, it quickly became apparent that I needed to work on my core, standing holding the oar requires muscles that I had been neglecting. But, I loved it. To move the oar and have the boat respond (when I remembered which way to push the oar) was a thrill. It is so much fun. Really it is!

To feel so welcome, to feel like I belonged is a privilege that I gained in my first year, so I was very surprised to be a joint recipient of the [Rookie Award](#). I was very proud to share that with **Kim Tito**, who seems like she has been part of the group for years. She is awesome.



Carol McAlwee sweep, Kingston 10 January 2024 *Image:* Lyndall Milward-Bason

I still have plenty to learn (particularly how to put my keys in the pink bag) but I am looking forward to further developing my skills in general and, in particular, how to become a sweep. Thank you for your patience and support — here is to my second year.

### Carol McAlwee

### ACT Fire squad for AusChamps April WA

Thanks everyone. I had a brilliant team that introduced me, motivated me and started me in this sport!

### Amanda Ferris

*Editor's note: watch out for Amanda's tale of the WA experience in the next issue.*



Lyndall Milward-Bason's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday party, [Norton Road Wines](#) 17 December 2023 *Image:* Steve Taylor



Deb Whitfield and Jenny Milward-Bason, DBACT regatta 4  
13 January 2024 *Image:* Carol McAlwee



[DBACT](#) Coaching course participants October 2023 *Image:*  
Kim Tito

### Our newly accredited coach

I've always had a drive to give something back, and my background in management and training technologists led me to think about coaching. The DA Canberra coaching team is extremely supportive, assisting me along the way to my accreditation which I gained in December 2023. I'm still learning every time we go out in the boat and appreciate your kindness and assistance while I'm getting my 'coach legs'.

There are eight online units which you must pass prior to attending, followed by two full days of instruction. Day One was theory and Day Two was practical in boat assessment. The theory day is risk assessments, development plans, boat plans, coaching ideas and inclusiveness training (so much paperwork!). The practical assessment involved one boat training plan you develop overnight, which is assessed by the [DBACT](#) Head Coach and your coaching candidate peers. I learned that going first has its advantages and disadvantages, and standing up in the boat facing the group and giving instruction is much harder than it might appear.

Next up is a First Aid qualification and a WWVP (working with vulnerable people) card, followed by



Elly McGuinness and Shelley Owen stroking, 27 January 2024  
*Image:* Kim Tito

ten training plans for on water sessions, a self-development plan, a risk assessment and self-evaluations. Three of your training plans are done on water (which you all had to endure) and signed off by the DA Canberra coaching team. I thank both you and our coaching team. All of these completed plans then go to [DBACT](#) for consideration.

On those occasions where you've questioned an instruction you've been given, complained about a hard training session or been admonished about listening to the on water team (coaches, sweeps and drummers) in, or out, of the boat — consider what they've all given, behind the scenes, to provide you with the wonderful experience that dragon boating presents.

While it is terrific to be recognised with the [Rookie Award](#), being singled out is really not my thing. I do things because I want to do them, because I enjoy them, and because I like to give back some of what I've been given by others. I am very grateful to everyone who nominated me for a Rookie award. Knowing that I've been able to make a meaningful contribution in my first year with the club makes me happy.

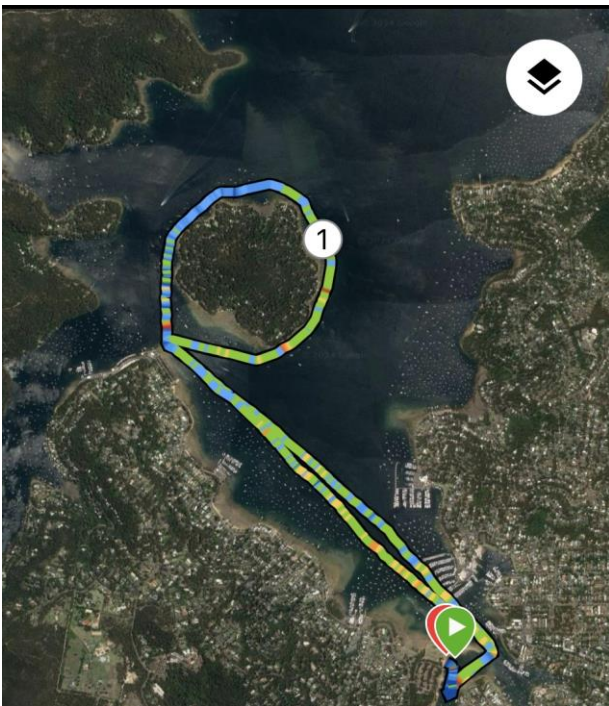
### Kim Tito



1  
Kim Tito coaching 20 January 2024 *Image:* Susan Pitt



DA Canberra including Marion and Nadine Leiba, Beess & Co Cafe, Yarralumla 6 January 2024 *Image: Joan White*



Bei Loon course 3 February 2024 *Image: Kim Tito*

### Bei Loonies

Eleven intrepid DA Canberra members ventured north to Pittwater for the annual Bei Loon Scotland Island 8 km (*\*more like 10 km*) Race. Our eleven joined ten ladies from the **Pittwater Pinks** on the water in a composite team for this fabulous event, with their own Lyn as sweep, and she knew the course intimately. In 11 years, this was only the fifth time boats had been able to circumnavigate Scotland Island. The weather gods were kind to us, and we picked a great year to attend.

If you've been in a composite boat before, you know the struggle with timing when you haven't practised together.



DA Canberra and Pittwater Pinks, Bei Loon Pittwater, 3 February 2024 *Image: Kim Tito*

But, we soon found our rhythm, and the sweep called plenty of power lifts of varying lengths. We completed two side swaps on the go which was great for Ord River training to swap in all kinds of environments. In Pittwater's picturesque surrounds we encountered houseboats, yachts, multi-million dollar mansions, big salty slap you in the face waves, smacks of jellyfish (a bit like a brick hitting your paddle, says Jo), sailing races to cut straight through the middle of, and felt the excitement of thinking you're on the home straight, only to find out that was the 'wrong' green pole.

We were awarded a fabulous trophy, and our finish time was 60 mins and 37 seconds — **LESS THAN 12 MINUTES BEHIND THE WINNING TEAM!** We did DAA and DA Canberra proud — proving that you can tap into our resilience, throw us all together at the last minute and we can achieve big things.

We were chuffed to see our paddling besties the **Canberra Griffins**, who entered a mixed team, finished in 55 minutes and 15 seconds. The first of many great away paddling adventures coming up in 2024. See you all there again next year!

**Kim Tito**



DA Canberra members enjoyed the hilarious launch of book three in [Kaaren Sutcliffe's](http://www.kaarensutcliffe.com.au) series, Gorman House 8 December 2023 *Image: Steve Taylor* [www.kaarensutcliffe.com.au](http://www.kaarensutcliffe.com.au)





Maree Irving 20 January 2024 *Image: Lyndall Milward-Bason*

### My Chinese zodiac sign is the Dragon!

Dedicated  
Robust  
Amazing  
Genuine  
Open-minded  
Nurturing  
Safe

Active  
Brave  
Rewarding  
Enthusiastic  
Accomplished  
Supportive  
Trust

Committed  
Accepting  
Non-discriminatory  
Bold  
Entertaining  
Radiant  
Robust  
Adaptable

Breast cancer was my Christmas gift for 2019. What a shock, the word cancer just stops you in your tracks. 2020 and 2021 was spent having chemo, surgery, radiation and more surgery. Fortunately, my family was there every step of the way. Special thanks to my daughter **Hope** and my husband **Darcy**. I came to a DA Come and try session on 21 October 2023 and I haven't looked back.

I've found my support team to help me get my groove back! I'm looking forward to the journey with Dragons Abreast Canberra. I'm lucky to have found a group of wonderful people that embody the above qualities. Thanks to everyone for making me feel welcome and part of the team.

**Maree Irving**



Deb Whitfield sweep, Shona Rose, Maree Irving, Megan Davis and Denise Brown, Molongo River 3 February 2024 *Image: Donna Lennon*



Joanne Widdup, sunrise 30 January 2024 *Image: Susan Pitt*

### AIRRM

I was invited to be the dinner speaker at the **National Fertility Conference of AIRRM** (Australian Institute of Restorative Reproductive Medicine) in February 2024. It is a wonderful opportunity to share breast cancer and dragon boating information with the wider medical community. Many lovely slides (*Flowers on the water* ceremony at Penrith and ice house in winter!) will accompany the talk.

**Joanne Widdup**

[Dragon boating isn't just an adventure; it's a celebration of strength and solidarity](#)

[HerCanberra.com.au](http://HerCanberra.com.au) 11 October 2023



DA Canberra, DBACT regatta 5 10 February 2024 Image: Steve Taylor



DA Canberra, cake and sandwich stall, DBACT regatta 5 10 February 2024 Image: Kerrie Griffin



Kellie Nissen and volunteer timekeepers, DBACT regatta 5 10 February 2024 Image: Kerrie Griffin



Marion and Nadine Leiba, Jo Baumgartner, Kellie Nissen, Beess & Co Cafe, Yarralumla 6 January 2024 Image: Joan White



### Warm up and training times

#### Saturday morning:

**Extra effort:** 7.15 – 8.15am

**Saturday morning:** 8.15 – 9.30am

**Tuesday morning:** 6.00 – 7.00am

**Wednesday evening:** 5.45 – 7.00pm

**Contact:** [TeamApp  
coordinator.dac@gmail.com](mailto:TeamApp@coordinator.dac@gmail.com)

Some great paddling technique tips:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7IRbj3K8c4&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7IRbj3K8c4&feature=player_embedded)

Remember water, hat, sunscreen and sunglasses!

[Sealskinz](#) gloves and socks for winter

#### Weather watch

<http://www.eldersweather.com.au/act/act/canberra>



*A Blink in Time – Tales from GoAnna* by Kellie Nissen Image: caricatures by Dani Vittz, GoAnna's head by Susan Pitt

### A Blink in Time – Tales from GoAnna

A follow-up of sorts to my memoir, *What Cancer Said – And what I said back*, my second book *A Blink in Time – Tales from GoAnna* is part biography, part history, part narrative. Inside you'll find 22 breast cancer stories, a little bit of backstory about our club and an invitation to step into GoAnna and join us on a very long training session.

It was written to honour the 22 women who shared their stories with me and to acknowledge the other thing that bring us all together. Not breast cancer, that's a given, but dragon boating. It started out as 'something nice to do' and turned in to a passion project — one I'm looking forward to sharing with everyone in March.

**Kellie Nissen** [kellie@justrightwords.com.au](mailto:kellie@justrightwords.com.au)

Book launch 22 March with a special launch price of \$35. I'm taking pre-orders. \$5 from every sale going to DA Canberra when pre-ordered or at the launch. <https://justrightwords.com.au/shop/>



Kerrie Griffin, Janet Olsen, Natalie Evans-Sandell, Joanne Widdup, Kathy Hayes and Kim Tito, Goanna sculpture, Kingston 30 January 2024 *Image: Kerrie Griffin*

### Foreword A Blink in Time – Tales from GoAnna

I am humbled and delighted to share these feisty tales of the lived experience. Here are recurring themes of the immediacy at the time of a breast cancer diagnosis. Themes include no family history, being on a roller coaster, struggles with scanxiety and frustration about not knowing your options and the need to be your own advocate as well as to maintain a good sense of humour. Somehow, the chemo brain fog leads to beautiful trauma and a greater appreciation of family, friends, nature and life.

Breast cancer does not discriminate and you find people from eclectic and diverse backgrounds bonding in the [Dragons Abreast Canberra](#) dragon boat. These kindred spirits are stronger together as they raise awareness about breast cancer in the community. But, they don't talk about the lived experience of breast cancer because they are focused on their technique, timing and nature which is good for the soul. But, if you do need advice you instantly have this resource to point you in the right direction. The Dragons Abreast Australia tagline is appropriately *Connect. Move. Live.*

Professor Don McKenzie's 1996 groundbreaking Canadian research promoting the benefits of dragon boating resistance skills for women living with breast cancer was the catalyst for starting [Dragons Abreast Australia](#) in 1998 after the launch of Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) at Parliament House in Canberra in October 1998. *Exercise is medicine* wasn't embraced until 2010 by clinicians' research but is promoted globally.

In 1999, I had a melanoma removed and that was finished. In 2001, I was diagnosed with breast cancer and I felt like I was on a roller coaster but the psychosocial treatment was a distant dream in

the future. In 2015, my older sister, Lesley Thomas, was diagnosed with breast cancer and I appreciated the enormous improvements in multidisciplinary care, targeted therapies, new drugs and protocols. There's still much work to do, especially in the metastatic field. Those vital improvements are the result of lobbying by Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) and Dragons Abreast Australia.

[Breast Cancer Network Australia \(BCNA\)](#) works to ensure that Australians affected by breast cancer receive the very best support, information, treatment and care appropriate to their individual needs. BCNA provides free resources for early and metastatic breast cancer. BCNA is represented by the pink lady silhouette, symbolic of its focus on the women diagnosed with breast cancer and all those around them. *What you don't know until you do* is a fantastic and relevant new [BCNA podcast series](#).

Every cloud has a silver lining and my family and friends are very supportive. I found my tribe in Dragons Abreast Canberra and feel extremely privileged to be a member. Paddles up!

In the words of **Anna Welling Booth OAM**, founder Dragons Abreast Canberra:

*May the great dragon continue to blow us gently towards further adventures — living life to the full and making every moment count.*

A Sufi saying and motto of Dragons Abreast Canberra:

*When the heart weeps for what it has lost, the soul laughs for what it has found.*

**Kerrie Griffin OAM**

**Dragons Abreast Canberra newsletter editor**

**[Breast Cancer Network Australia](#) consumer representative** <https://www.bcna.org.au/resource-hub/>



Sisters Helen Rowcliffe and Diane Wilkinson, Peta Murphy MP tribute, flowers and BCNA silhouettes Tuesday 6am 5 December 2023 *Image: Susan Pitt*

## Under the pink umbrella



Breast  
Cancer  
Network  
Australia

[www.bcna.org.au](http://www.bcna.org.au)

Breast Cancer Network Australia

THE BEACON [Issue 96 October 2023](#)



Shelley Owen stroking, 27 January 2024 *Image: Kim Tito*

### [BCNA My Journey App](#)

In the package of material I received just after my breast cancer diagnosis was a suggestion to download the [BCNA My Journey App](#). I set to it, then entered what information I knew about my diagnosis, and started researching.

I'm ever so grateful this resource was available to me. It stopped me hours of scary googling, and instead took me to clear, reliable, relevant resources. I read about cancers like mine, symptoms, treatments, side effects, and I listened to webinars and enrolled myself in upcoming webinars I was interested in. Later, I even found a very useful PDF that had a table that listed types of likely hair loss depending on your chemo regime.

The most useful resource I found initially was information on reading and understanding your pathology results, which took me step by step through acronyms and medical jargon and informed my later specialist questions and sort of gave me back some control or understanding of my body and illness. I also liked the ease and flexibility of being able to open the App at any time I needed it, enter a few search terms, and be taken to the information I was seeking.

I probably haven't retained all my learnings, but I actually don't want to be an expert in breast cancer. That's part of the benefit of the [BCNA My Journey App](#) — its point in time reliable and available information, when you need it most.

Shelley Owen



BCNA National Roundtable Report Launch, Parliament House Canberra 29 November 2023 *Image: Kerrie Griffin*

### [Counting People with Metastatic Breast Cancer a step closer](#)

BCNA welcomes funding announced on 3 February 2024 by **Prime Minister Anthony Albanese** to help finally count the number of people diagnosed with incurable and life limiting metastatic breast cancer (MBC).

This \$1.5 million funding to the [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#) will ensure the formation of an **Australian Cancer Data Alliance**, which will see state and territory cancer registries supported to work towards routinely collecting cancer stage and recurrence data.

This funding responds to a [roadmap launched by BCNA](#) last November at Parliament House, Canberra.

The roadmap was the result of a roundtable that saw experts from across the sector work towards recommendations to improve Australia's cancer data, which aligns with one of the priorities of the first [Australian Cancer Plan](#), launched last year.

We thank everyone from across the sector, including the late [Peta Murphy MP Federal Member for Dunkley](#), our Consumer Representatives and the **MBC Lived Experience Group**, who have been on this journey with us to ensure those living with metastatic breast cancer are no longer hidden in plain sight. Read more here:

<https://www.bcna.org.au/latest-news/bcna-news/counting-people-with-metastatic-breast-cancer-a-step-closer/>

Read [Time to Count People with Metastatic Breast Cancer – A Way Forward](#):

<https://www.bcna.org.au/.../time-to-count-people-with.../>



Peta Murphy MP tribute, Commonwealth Place, heart and flowers and BCNA silhouettes Tuesday 6am 5 December 2023  
Image: Susan Pitt

### Vale Peta Murphy

On 5 December 2023, for the Dragons Abreast Canberra 6am sunrise paddle we acknowledged the work of [Peta Murphy MP Federal Member for Dunkley](#), who died on 4 December.

Dragons Abreast Canberra paddled to Commonwealth Place, in Central Basin, Lake Burley Griffin, and made a chalk heart with flowers around it and left some BCNA pink lady silhouettes as a tribute to Peta Murphy (we collected the silhouettes later).

It's a symbolic spot between Parliament House to the south and the Australian War Memorial to the north. The heart was pointing to Parliament House (both new and old).



Peta Murphy MP and Chair, Parliamentary Friends of Women's Health launch, with Kerryn Ernst and Bethel Holley, McGrath Foundation Breast Cancer nurses; and BCNA members, Parliament House 24 March 2021  
Image: Kerrie Griffin



Peta Murphy MP BCNA Field of Women MCG promotion for 18 August 2023  
Image: Sam Bisso, Stellar photoshoot. News Limited

### Vale Peta Murphy MP

It is with much sadness that Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) acknowledges the death of Peta Murphy MP on 4 December 2023.

In [Peta's maiden speech to Parliament in 2019](#), after she was elected to represent the federal seat of Dunkley, Victoria, Peta told our country that she had been diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer. In her speech, she said; 'I am neither unique nor alone in this disease, but I am someone who has a platform that I can use to benefit others and I intend to use it.'

'She was a powerful voice and advocate for all people living with metastatic breast cancer, helping to shine a light on the reality of this disease in our national parliament,' says **BCNA CEO Kirsten Pilatti**. 'As a strong supporter of BCNA, just last week Peta supported the launch of a report by BCNA calling for those with metastatic breast cancer to be counted on our registries in order to improve outcomes.'

On behalf of everyone at BCNA, we send our heartfelt condolences to Peta's husband Rod, her family and friends. We particularly want to send our love to her team and all the community of Dunkley, Victoria, a community she loved and did so much for.

Our lives are forever enriched by the life, the voice and the tenacity of **Peta Murphy MP**.

### Calls for improved metastatic breast cancer data - ABC listen

<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/radionational-breakfast/calls-for-improved-metastatic-breast-cancer-data/103161740>



Vicki Durston, Kirsten Pilatti, Stuart Diver, new BCNA Board member, Kerrie Griffin and Susan Pitt 29 November 2023  
Image: Bin Barnier

### [Appointment of new BCNA Board members](#)

BCNA are absolutely thrilled that **Dr Emma Warnecke** was interested in joining the Board given she brings her GP credentials along with her lived experience of breast cancer. She joins our other medical practitioner who has also lived experience, **Dr Mellissa Naidoo**.

**Stuart Diver** joined the BCNA Board after more than five years as an Ambassador for BCNA. During this time, Stuart has shared his story of the importance of carers reaching out for information and emotional support in a powerful way through our events and the media. As well as his lived experience, Stuart brings deep managerial and stakeholder experience as the General Manager for Thredbo Alpine Resort, where he has responsibility for over 1200 people.

<https://www.bcna.org.au/latest-news/bcna-news/appointment-of-new-bcna-board-members/>

### [Australian Cancer Plan](#)

Developed by **Cancer Australia** is a future-focused plan designed to improve cancer outcomes:

[Australia's first national cancer plan aims to improve outcomes for Indigenous and regional Australians](#) ABC 2 November 2023

### [Breast cancer statistics](#)

### [NBCF tracking progress to zero deaths from breast cancer by 2030](#)

[READ THE FULL REPORT CARD](#)

### [Breast Cancer Trials](#)

Breast clinical trials are the critical tool to identify new, improved treatments which can save and protect lives.



AIHW staff, Janet Olsen, Natalie Evans-Sandell, Kirsten Pilatti, Professors Fran Boyle AM and Vivienne Milch, Kerrie Griffin and Susan Pitt 29 November 2023 Image: Bin Barnier

### [Krysty's mammogram was 'clear' but that didn't mean she was cancer-free](#)

By [Mary Ward](#) *The Age* 7 January 2024

**BreastScreen** services in **Western Australia** and **South Australia** inform women with dense breasts of the reduced sensitivity of their mammogram.

However, **BreastScreen** services in other states do not report density, which can be assessed from a mammogram by either a radiologist or a computer program. A federal review of **BreastScreen**, which is jointly funded by federal and state governments, is due to be completed by the end of this year.

**Participate in the [Review](#) by 20 February.**

### **#HonourAWoman movement**

History will ask, 'Where were the women?' she says. The public record is very important in the long term. We need to see a diverse range of people recognised; those who have contributed over and above. Role models for women are very important. You can't be what you can't see.

### [Honour a Woman](#)

<https://honourawoman.com>

You can nominate someone you know for an Order of Australia at any time throughout the year. Learn more [here](#).

<https://www.gg.gov.au/australian-honours-and-awards/nominate-someone-award>

### **BCNA consumer representative program**

If you're interested in learning more about the BCNA program, see the following link:

<https://www.bcna.org.au/.../pol.../consumer-representatives/>

<https://www.bcna.org.au/get-involved/volunteer-for-bcna/seat-at-the-table-bcna-consumer-representative-program/>

**Kerrie Griffin OAM**  
**BCNA Consumer Representative**

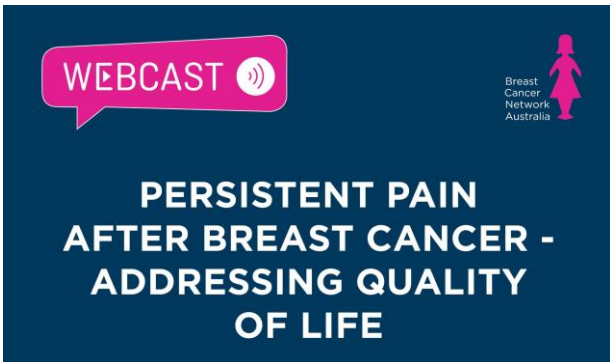


BCNA congratulates **Professor Gail Garvey** on her Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for significant service to Indigenous health, and cancer research.

Professor Garvey is a proud Kamilaroi woman and is internationally recognised for her extensive research work focused on cancer and the wellbeing of Australia's First Nations people. BCNA proudly partnered with Professor Garvey and her team on the **Fear of Cancer Recurrence (FCR)** among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women Diagnosed with Breast Cancer project.

You can read more about it here:

<https://www.bcna.org.au/.../bcna-part-of-first-ever.../>



**[Persistent pain after breast cancer](#)**

Watch it soon:

<https://www.bcna.org.au/event-directory/webcasts/persistent-pain-after-breast-cancer/>

**[When testing costs you: the genetic dilemma confronting Australians with life insurance](#)**

Daisy Dumas, *The Guardian* 1 February 2024



**[Ask the Expert: Menopause – It's more than a hot flush!](#)**

Part of our 'Ask the Expert' series with Dr Tonia Mezzini 6 December 2023 *Watch it now:*

<https://www.bcna.org.au/resource-hub/webcasts/ask-the-expert-menopause-it-s-more-than-a-hot-flush/>

For more information:

- View BCNA's My Journey article [Menopausal symptoms related to breast cancer treatment](#)
- Watch Ask the Expert – [Managing the side effects of hormone-blocking treatment](#) with Dr Michelle White
- Listen to BCNA's [The impact of breast cancer on sexual health](#) podcast

**[News](#)**

[19 December 2023](#)

**[BCNA welcomes decision to recommend two crucial breast cancer drugs for government subsidy](#)**

[4 December 2023](#)

**[Vale Peta Murphy MP](#)**

[29 November 2023](#)

**[Time to Count People with Metastatic Breast Cancer](#)**

[16 November 2023](#)

**[Appointment of new BCNA Board members](#)**

[9 November 2023](#)

**[Enhertu approved for PBS for those with HER2 metastatic breast cancer](#)**

[2 November 2023](#)

**[The power of BCNA's consumer voice at COSA](#)**

**[How does cancer spread to other parts of the body?](#)**

[Sarah Diepstraten](#) and [John \(Eddie\) La Marca](#) *The Conversation* 1 February 2024



Clinical Psychologist [Dr Charlotte Tottman](#) says a behavioural change is a change within someone's behaviour when compared with a previous behaviour and can be quite common after a cancer diagnosis and treatment.

[In episode 6 of Upfront – What You Don't Know Until You Do: Unlimited](#), Charlotte shares common behaviours are and discusses the behavioural change model and role of obstacles. We learn about the guilt and anxiety model, flexibility, the power of helpful language and other strategies that can help you adjust.

Listen to Upfront via the link <https://buff.ly/3uqu0Qe> or wherever you get your podcasts.

### [BCNA's Online Network](#)

Our new-look network is more inviting, better looking and easier to use. Sign up to BCNA's [My Journey](#) to access the latest information about your breast cancer diagnosis. Featuring articles, videos, podcasts, webcasts and digital tools that empower people with breast cancer to make the best decisions about their treatment and care and manage their breast cancer experience.



[Finding My Way-Advanced](#) is an internet-based program that provides convenient, user-friendly information and strategies to help you live well with metastatic breast cancer. Background to Flinders Uni clinical trials study funded by Cancer Australia: <https://findingmywayadvanced.org.au/welcome/about-finding-my-way-advanced>

Sign up: <https://findingmywayadvanced.org.au/>



[Casting for Recovery](#), a program run by the ACT Fly Fishing Club for women who have had breast cancer at any time in their lives.

<http://www.castingforrecovery.org.au/>

[BreastScreen ACT](#) is part of a national population breast screening program aimed at reducing deaths from breast cancer through early detection. The Program provides **free screening and follow up services to ACT resident women from the age of 40 years.**

Please spread the word that **BreastScreen ACT** has appointments available for the digital mammography service in **Belconnen, Civic** or **Woden**. The service screens women from 40 years and **targets women from 50–74. Women over 74 years of age are welcome too.**

Statistics show that **only 64% of women, aged 50-74 year old**, take up the free mammograms in the ACT which is higher than the national average. Call on [13 20 50](#) to make an appointment

[Shy migrants urged to step up for free breast screening](#)



**HeadsUp Kippax Inc.**

**2/12-16 Hardwick Cres. Holt ACT 2615**

**Open 10am-4pm Tuesday-Friday**

**HeadsUp** provides a service for all women, including those going through chemotherapy, surgery, radiation, permanent alopecia and ladies from our trans community plus those just wanting a great hat or perfect hair every day. We sell a huge range wigs, hats and scarves, plus accessories.

Appointments are advisable so that we can provide individual attention, though walk-ins are also welcome. Shop in our welcoming and attractive environment, with the support of trained assistants, or browse online [www.headsup.net.au](http://www.headsup.net.au)

**For assistance call Sue Owen and her team: 02 6254 4403**

*Congratulations to **Sue Owen** of Murrumbateman who was awarded an OAM for service to community health in June.*





Gillian Horton (left) receiving the keys to Colleen's from Colleen Findley OAM. Image supplied.

### [Colleen's: Celebrating 23 years supporting women](https://canberradaily.com.au/colleens-celebrating-23-years-supporting-women/)

<https://canberradaily.com.au/colleens-celebrating-23-years-supporting-women/>

### Colleen's Lingerie and Swimwear

Colleen's post surgery fashion lingerie range including [Megami](#)

### Fiji update

Colleens accept donations of pocketed bras and breast forms. If you would like to buy a bra to donate, please contact [info@colleens.com.au](mailto:info@colleens.com.au) or call **02 6285 1311**. Your donations truly change lives!

### Gillian Horton

22 Garran Place, Garran. 2605 | T: 02 6285 1311 | E: [info@colleens.com.au](mailto:info@colleens.com.au)

**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm, Wed 9.30am to 5.30pm** Appointments and onlineshopping. [www.colleens.com.au](http://www.colleens.com.au)

<https://www.colleens.com.au/page/support-the-girls/>

[This airport is trying to end 'scanxiety' for cancer survivors](#) video

*Congratulations to **Colleen's Lingerie and Swimwear**, a local boutique cherished by cancer survivors, which was crowned a winner of [Australia Post's Local Business Heroes](#) program in June*



**Younger Women's  
Cancer Support Group**  
ACT & SURROUNDING REGION

### The Younger Women's Cancer Support Group ACT & Surrounding Region (YWCSG)

supports these women: to ask questions, vent, socialise and support each other, raising awareness of these challenges, standing up to make a difference and ultimately close up the gaps.

Join at: [www.ywcsq.com](http://www.ywcsq.com)

[ywcsq.act@gmail.com](mailto:ywcsq.act@gmail.com) [www.facebook.com/ywcsq](https://www.facebook.com/ywcsq)

[www.linkedin.com/company/ywcsq](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ywcsq)

**Beth LeFerve, Founder**



### Tips from Kellie Toohey

Exercise Physiologist for Cancer Council ACT's ENRICHing Survivorship Program

If you are interested in future ENRICHing Survivorship programs, register your interest at

<https://bit.ly/ENRICHingsurvivorship>

**Cancer Council ACT** Unit 1 (The Annex), 173 Strickland Crescent DEAKIN ACT 2600 <http://www.actcancer.org/>



### Bosom Buddies ACT Inc.

Throughout the year, Bosom Buddies hold regular morning teas, after work drinks, Young Women's Group and a variety of social events and outings. These get-togethers provide the perfect environment to meet other members, build networks and catch up with old friends!

Bosom Buddies looks forward to continuing to work with BCNA, Dragons Abreast and other organisations to ensure that those in the community with breast cancer are fully supported. If you would like to speak to a Support team member or for further information, please call **0406 376 500** or email [admin@bosombuddies.org.au](mailto:admin@bosombuddies.org.au).

Website: [www.bosombuddies.org.au](http://www.bosombuddies.org.au) or Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bosombuddiescanberra>

### Catherine Rider-Aichholzer, Executive Officer Bosom Buddies *Connecting People to Support*

### [Otis Foundation](#)

*Creekside* is a luxury chalet situated in the picturesque Thredbo Village. *Creekside* is available to people who are newly diagnosed or who have undergone active treatment for breast cancer in the 12 months prior to their stay. To enquire about a booking at *Creekside* or another retreat [www.otisfoundation.org.au](http://www.otisfoundation.org.au) or call 03 5444 1185

**Elsbeth Humphries**

## **PACES University of Canberra cancer recovery**

Leading the world's research into cancer care

**PACES** focuses its research activity on three distinct themes: prehabilitation, physical activity in people affected by cancer, and life after cancer. At its core, PACES focuses on:

- nutrition and physical activity
- supportive care
- mental health and social well-being during and post chemotherapy.

## **Abridge | Stay on Top of Your Health**

<https://www.abridge.com/> Learn how people have made Abridge a part of their health journey. 'It kept my mind focused on my appointments.'

**Article on genomic testing (tumour profiling):**

<https://myjourney.org.au/article/2181>

**Article on genetics and risk of breast cancer:**

<https://myjourney.org.au/article/3645>

## **Lymphedonna**

<http://www.lymphedonna.com.au/faqs/>  
[lymphedonna@positivemotion.com.au](mailto:lymphedonna@positivemotion.com.au)

## **Positive Motion Physiotherapy**

2/61 Dundas Court, Phillip ACT 2606 0414 809 994

**Clinic 88 Macquarie**

[Lymphatic Drainage](#)

## **Rare Cancer Australia**

Rare Cancers Australia calls for equality with clear message: Cancer is Cancer.

## **Brain Tumour Alliance Australia Inc.**

[www.btaa.org.au](http://www.btaa.org.au)

## **So Brave | Young Women's Breast Cancer Charity - So Brave**

[goingflat](#)

<https://notputtingonashirt.org/livingflat/>

**Jean Hailes Foundation** <http://www.jeanhailes.org.au>

**Kerrie Griffin OAM**


**Consumer Representative**



**Seat at the Table (SATT) Program, BCNA**



## **Calendar of events**

Dates and events may change – please check <http://www.dbact.com.au/events>

Month	Date(s)	Event	Location	Notes
February	Saturday 16 – Sunday 18	Lunar new year Festival Regatta Darling Harbour	Sydney NSW	TeamApp RSVP
	Saturday 9	DB ACT Regatta 6 2 km (20s, 10s) 200 m (20s)	Grevillea Park	TeamApp RSVP
	Saturday 16	DA Canberra Come and try	Grevillea Park	TeamApp RSVP
	Saturday 23 – Sunday 24	ACT Championships Regatta	Grevillea Park	TeamApp RSVP
April	Saturday 13 – Sunday 14	Relay for Life, Cancer Council ACT	AIS arena	TeamApp RSVP Amanda Ferris

April 	Wednesday 17 – Sunday 21	<a href="#">AusChamps - Australian Dragon Boat Federation</a> Champion Lakes, Armadale, Perth WA 20-21 April BCS races	Perth WA	TeamApp RSVP
May	Sunday 12	Mother's Day Classic paddle or Mother's Day Classic BCNA stall, Rond Terrace	Grevillea Park	TeamApp RSVP BCNA stall volunteers required <a href="mailto:kerrie.griffin22@gmail.com">kerrie.griffin22@gmail.com</a>
June	Sunday 9	<a href="#">Ord River Marathon – 9 June, 2024</a>	Ord River, WA	TeamApp RSVP
October	Saturday 26 – Sunday 27	<a href="#">DAA Pink Paddle Power regatta, Derwent River</a>	Hobart, Tasmania	TeamApp RSVP
November 	Saturday 23	Silver screen theme, DA Canberra Social and Corporate Regatta and BCNA Mini Field of Women	Grevillea Park	TeamApp RSVP
	Saturday 23	Silver screen theme, DA Canberra Social 25 <sup>th</sup> anniversary cocktail evening, Canberra Southern Cross Yacht Club, Yarralumla	CSCC, Yarralumla	TeamApp RSVP
2026 August	Mon. 24 – Sun. 30	International Breast Cancer Paddlers Commission (IBCPC) Participatory Festival <a href="https://ibcpfrance2026.com/">https://ibcpfrance2026.com/</a>	Luc du Bourget, Aix- les-Bains, France	TeamApp RSVP Clare Purcell

### Dragons Abreast Australia — Mission statement

<http://www.dragonsabreast.com.au/>

Encourage wellness, fitness, fun and camaraderie for breast cancer survivors through the sport of dragon boating and promote breast cancer awareness throughout our community.

*Keeping the spirit alive!*

**Next issue of the DA Canberra newsletter — May 2024**

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

Please submit any news, items and images by **10 May 2024** to the newsletter coordinator

[Kerrie.griffin22@gmail.com](mailto:kerrie.griffin22@gmail.com)

[Previous newsletters](#)



Sunrise paddle, Lake Burley Griffin 12 December 2023 sunrise  
Image: Pauline Lound



Jeannie Cotterell sweeping, DA Canberra, Canberra Balloon Spectacular 12 March 2023 Image: Paul Jurak Kayakcameraman  
<https://kayakcameraman.com/>



Janet Olsen, Anne Baynes, Elly McGinness and Megan Davis, DA Christmas party 2 December 2023 *Image: Kerrie Griffin*



Danny O'Dea volunteer wrangler, DBACT regatta 3 9 December 2023 *Image: Kerrie Griffin*



Maureen Wild, Katherine Davis Kralikas MC, Jenny Milward-Bason, DA Christmas party 2 December 2023 *Image: Kerrie Griffin*



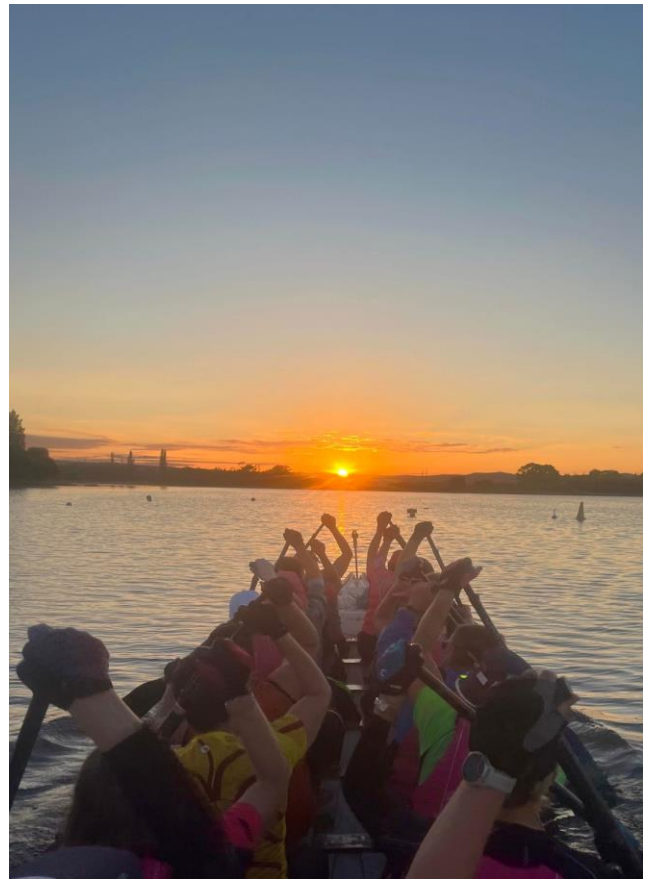
DA Canberra, Bittersweet Cafe, Kingston 30 January 2024 *Image: Kerrie Griffin*



Sugar Masangcay, Anita Godley, Maureen Wild and Janet Olsen, DA Christmas party 2 December 2023 *Image: Kerrie Griffin*



Kate Reid, Kim Tito and Joanne Widdup 30 January 2024 *Image: Susa Pitt*



Sunrise 30 January 2024 *Image: Jeannie Cotterell*