

## Our story

It began in 1996 with Dr Don McKenzie, a Professor and exercise physiologist at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada.

Dr McKenzie challenged the medical thinking that women treated for breast cancer should avoid rigorous upper body exercise for fear of developing lymphedema, a debilitating and chronic side effect of treatment. He invited a number of breast cancer survivors to participate in a program to test the theory that strenuous, repetitive upper body exercise would lead to better health and wellbeing. He chose dragon boating to test this theory and the program was a success. Program participants found they were fitter, healthier and happier and they wanted to keep paddling! The first breast cancer dragon boat team was formed – 'Abreast in a Boat'.

The Australian breast cancer survivor dragon boat movement - Dragons Abreast Australia - started in Darwin in 1998, and is now a national organisation with member groups in every State and Territory. Our members, and some very special supporters, come from a great variety of backgrounds, athletic abilities, ages and interests.

Research continues to show that an active lifestyle can reduce the incidence of cancer occurrence and re-occurrence. As well as promoting breast cancer awareness, Dragons Abreast Australia unites those who have experienced a breast cancer diagnosis, with others traveling the same road.



## Our Aims

### Philosophy

Awareness, Participation, Inclusiveness

### Mission

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

### Vision

Dragons Abreast is a leader in the movement for people affected by breast cancer; spreading awareness, empowering individuals, and educating on the benefits of an active lifestyle after diagnosis.

### What are we?

Dragons Abreast Australia is a national organisation comprised of breast cancer survivors (and some very special supporters) of various ages from a great variety of backgrounds, athletic abilities and interests. Dragons Abreast members provide a "face" for the breast cancer statistics whilst spreading the message of breast cancer awareness through participation in the wonderful and strenuous sport of dragon boat racing.



## Why join Dragons Abreast?

What happens once the treatment phase of breast cancer is over, and the radiation and/or chemotherapy has finished? For many, it is a jolting change of pace – switching from a whirlwind of medically driven activity to suddenly being in charge of rebuilding health, fitness and confidence. Being able to do these things in the company of others who have traveled the same path can often help restore confidence, spark and a sense of adventure.

We come in all shapes, sizes and ages. Sporting prowess is not a criteria for participation. High on our list of priorities is having fun, meeting interesting people and being involved in a challenging and physical activity.

**If you want to:  
Get Fitter!  
Make new friends!  
Have fun!**

Dragons Abreast Australia  
may be the group for **YOU!**

## Testimonials

*"Paddling with Dragons Abreast Australia was not only a great way to keep fit and have fun with a positive group of women, but also an opportunity for travel, to find a type of spirituality on the water and achieve personal fulfillment"*

**Marion Blake**

*"Just give it a go!"*

**Thelma Garey**

*"I love what Dragons Abreast Australia represents. I have been witness to some amazing changes in the women I have met, both physically and emotionally."*

**Jo Parry**

*"The peace, focus and rhythm of paddling was very satisfying...I likened it to 'meditative exercise'. I was amazed that as a 'Virgin Paddler', I had travelled so far (10kms) on this trip... without any physical duress."*

**Robyn Moore – Dragons Abreast Ambassador**

*"Dragons Abreast provides an understanding support network for women after a diagnosis of breast cancer, and dragon boat paddling is a tangible activity that draws out the innate qualities of breast cancer survivors – hope, inspiration, excitement and determination – to beat a dreaded disease faced by millions of women around the world."*

**Professor John Boyages**



For more information please contact

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**[www.dragonsabreast.com.au](http://www.dragonsabreast.com.au)**

## Support Dragons Abreast Australia

All donations to Dragons Abreast Australia are sincerely appreciated, and help us spread our message of hope and inspiration to those who are faced with a diagnosis of breast cancer.

**Donations can be made online via  
[www.dragonsabreast.com.au/give](http://www.dragonsabreast.com.au/give)**

*Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.*



**DRAGONS  
ABREAST**

Connect. Move. Live.

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