# ANNUAL REPORT 2025 - 2026



**DRAGONS ABREAST AUSTRALIA LTD**

**PRESENTED BY :**
Pearl Lee - Chair

**PREPARED BY :**
DAA Board of Directors

# CHAIRPERSON REPORT

*Pearl Lee - Board Chair*



It is with great pride and gratitude that I present the Dragons Abreast Australia Chair's Report for 2025-26.
This year has been one of growth, connection and achievement. Across Australia, our member groups have continued to empower breast cancer survivors to lead active, vibrant lives through the strength of community, friendship and dragon boating. Membership exceeded 1,150 members nationally, reflecting the growing impact of our movement.

Highlights of the financial year included **Pink Paddle Power Gold Coast**, the **Australian Masters Games** in Canberra, and **AusChamps** Lake Kawana, where members from across the country came together to paddle, compete, connect and celebrate survivorship. These events showcased the resilience, determination and spirit that define Dragons Abreast Australia.
The Board also focused on strengthening the organisation's future, including the successful adoption of our updated Constitution, ensuring we remain a contemporary, sustainable and well-governed national charity.

Through strong national and international advocacy, we are also delighted to see the establishment of Australia's first Aurora's Breast Cancer Paddlers (BCP) Team, which is now preparing for the IDBF World Dragon Boat Championships in Hong Kong in 2027. This is a significant milestone for breast cancer paddling in Australia and reflects our commitment to creating pathways for participation at every level. We also congratulate the newly appointed BCP Coaches and Team Manager, whose leadership will help shape this exciting new chapter for Australian breast cancer paddlers.

At the time of writing this Annual Report, more than 700 Australian breast cancer paddlers are participating in the 2026 International Breast Cancer Paddlers' Commission Festival in Aix-les-Bains, France. This extraordinary achievement represents the largest Australian contingent ever to attend an IBCPC Festival and is a powerful testament to the courage, commitment and camaraderie of our community.

On behalf of the Board, I thank our Member Group leaders, volunteers, coaches, sweeps, drummers, supporters and members for their passion and dedication. Together, you continue to create a community where survivors can move beyond diagnosis and truly thrive.
As we look ahead, we remain committed to growing our reach, supporting our member groups and ensuring more breast cancer survivors across Australia can experience the life-changing benefits of movement, connection and community.
**Together**, we paddle. **Together**, we live.




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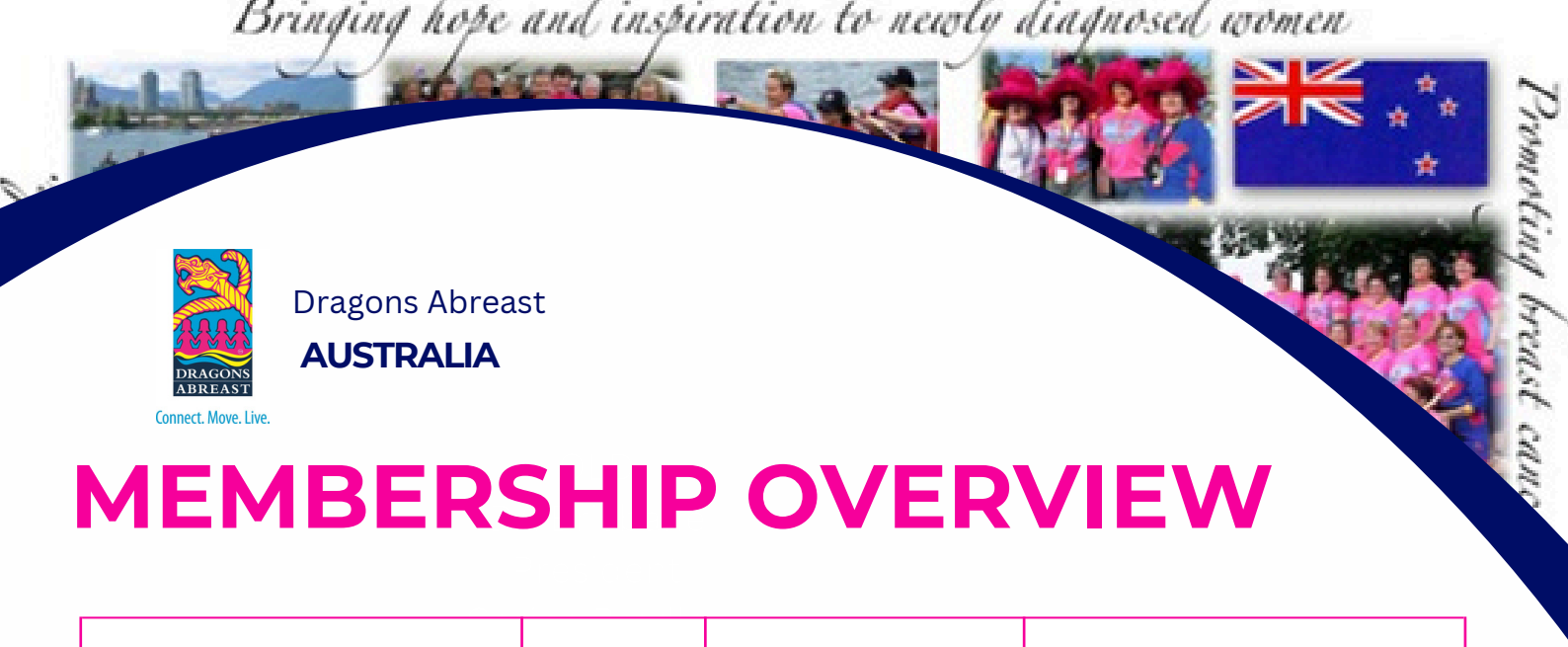
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# MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW

Dragons Abreast Australia proudly welcomed Bei Loon Pinks based in the beautiful Northern Beaches of Sydney . We also continued to celebrate having more than 1,150 members. Our organization now comprises 30 member groups, broken - 70% 764 BC Paddlers, 36 BC non-padders ; 30% 292 paddling supporters, 58 non-paddling supporters.

With the adoption of the updated Constitution, this will open opportunities for more unincorporated groups to collaborate.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| DA Canberra | ACT | Coordinator | Jeannie Cotterell |
| Bei Loon Pinks | NSW | Coordinator | Jennifer Neilson |
| DA Blue Mountains | NSW | Coordinator | Mary Claassens |
| DA Central Coast | NSW | Coordinator | Samantha Buse |
| DA Coffs Coast | NSW | Coordinator | Liz Moloney |
| DA Illawarra | NSW | Coordinator | Yvette Murada |
| DA Newcastle | NSW | Coordinator | Danielle Stewart |
| DA Penrith | NSW | Coordinator | Anne Gaudiosi |
| DA Rainbow Dragons | NSW | Coordinator | Sonia Byrne |
| DA Sydney | NSW | President | Carrol Ware |
| DA Western Region | NSW | Coordinator | Bronwyn Glasson |
| DA Brisbane | QLD | President | Janet Huth |
| DA Brisbane | QLD | Coordinator | Katrina Whitting |
| DA Gold Coast | QLD | President | Janelle Muirhead |
| DA Mackay | QLD | President | Janelle Moran |
| DA Moreton Bay Pink Snapdragons | QLD | President | Lisa Dunn |
| DA Pumicestone | QLD | President | Laraine Vanderberg |

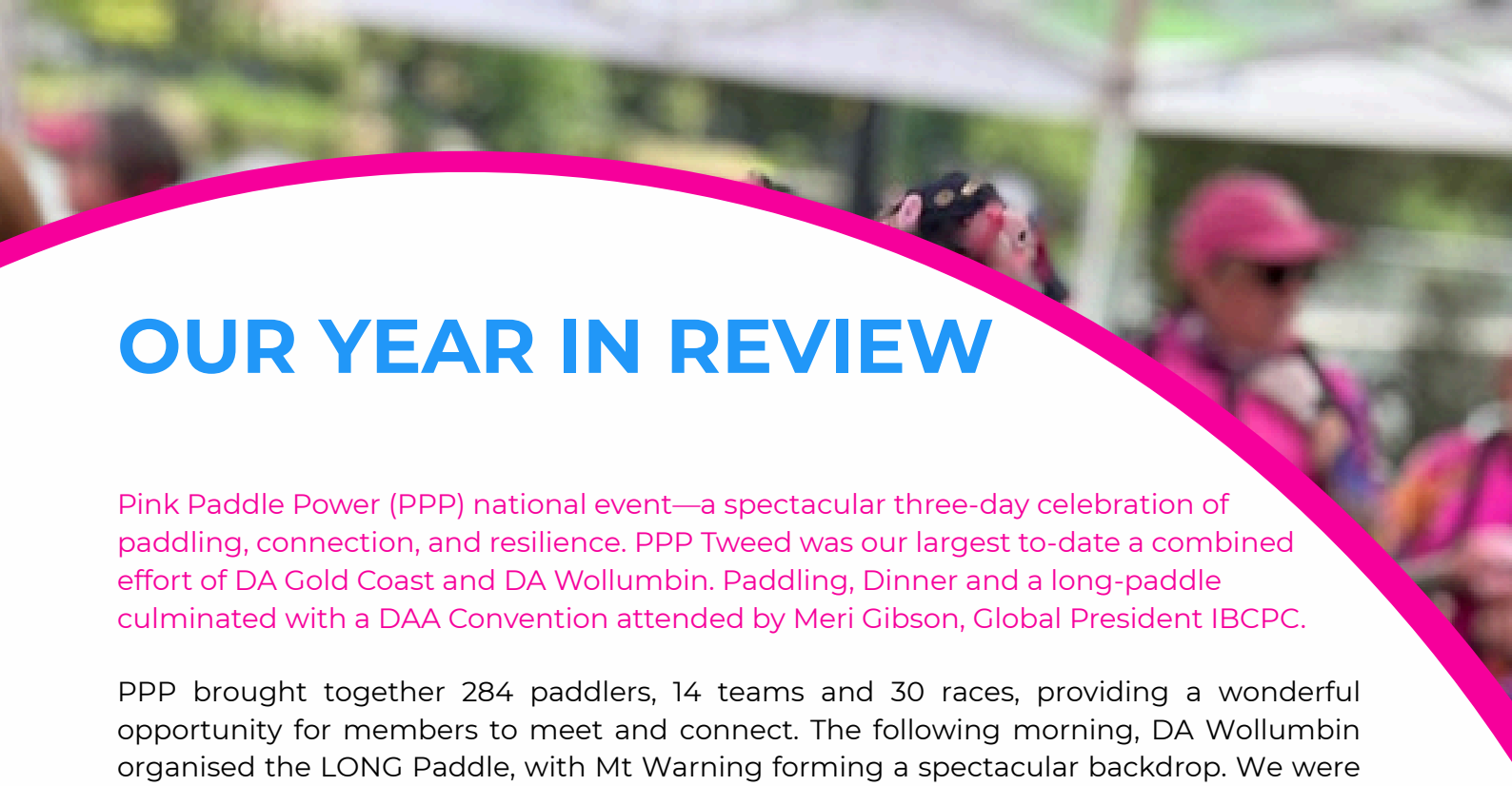



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# MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| DA Sunshine Coast | QLD | President/Co-ord | Tara Knobel |
| DA Townsville | QLD | Coordinator | Joanne Richter |
| DA Adelaide | SA | Coordinator | Debra Elfenbein |
| DA Devonport | TAS | Coordinator | Robyn Glen |
| DA Hobart | TAS | President | Susan Sanderson |
| DA Ballarat | VIC | Coordinator | Debbie McMaster |
| DA Bendigo | VIC | Coordinator | Lyn Davis |
| DA Geelong | VIC | Coordinator | Traci Brown |
| DA Gippsland Waratahs | VIC | Coordinator | Linda Crawford |
| DA Melbourne Pink Phoenix | VIC | President | Andrea Seers |
| DA Patterson Lakes | VIC | Coordinator | Lyndsay Takacs |
| DA Patterson Lakes | VIC | President | Ros Hill |
| Amazons Perth | WA | President | Margaret Little |
| Amazons Perth | WA | Coordinator | Janet Lynn |
| DA Bunbury | WA | Coordinator | Roslyn Webb |



# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

Pink Paddle Power (PPP) national event—a spectacular three-day celebration of paddling, connection, and resilience. PPP Tweed was our largest to-date a combined effort of DA Gold Coast and DA Wollumbin. Paddling, Dinner and a long-paddle culminated with a DAA Convention attended by Meri Gibson, Global President IBCPC.

PPP brought together 284 paddlers, 14 teams and 30 races, providing a wonderful opportunity for members to meet and connect. The following morning, DA Wollumbin organised the LONG Paddle, with Mt Warning forming a spectacular backdrop. We were also thrilled that Lori Ledwell, who instigated the PPP Gold Coast team, was able to join us for Sunday evening's Flamingo Extravaganza dinner, which was full of bling, feathers and energetic dancing.  Thank you to our participants, sponsors and grant funders for bringing the PPP to life.

**Strategic Planning for the Future**
A major milestone in 2025 was the DAA Board Strategy Day, held on 12 September at Twin Towns. The Board developed a long-term vision and a 25-Year Strategy mapping organisational priorities from the next six months through to the next twenty-five years. This important work will guide DAA's future growth, sustainability and impact across Australia. To further strengthen governance, DAA also engaged specialist consultants from CPR Group to undertake a comprehensive review of the constitution and develop recommendations for consultation with the membership.

**DAA Member Convention**
Keynote speaker Meri Gibson and Associate Sandi Hayes joined sessions focused on the health of our organisation and skills development for member groups. The program covered governance, social media and the 25-Year Strategy, while welcoming input from Presidents, Coordinators and Committees.

**Domestic and International Events**
Domestically, our presence was strong at 2026 AusChamps at Lake Kawana, a record 12 BCP teams competed—our greatest number yet. We were proud to see Susan Pitt honoured as the DAA flagbearer for AusChamps 2026.

The Board, as at June 2026, is organising composite teams for IBCPC France, Monster the Loch. Pan Pacs Masters Games Gold Coast, AusChamps, World Masters Games Japan.

**IDBF 2027**
We are honoured that IDBF 2027 will feature the first Aurora's BCP team. Congratulations to Coaches Dianne Clohessy and Denise Ma, and Team Manager Sharon Cooper.  We wish those training and trialling out for this team, the best for 2026-27.

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# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Dragons Abreast Australia remains in a strong and stable financial position. At 30 June 2026, the organisation reported total assets of $76,101, liabilities of $6,385 and net assets of $69,716. In addition, DAA's Australian Communities Foundation Fund held $200,863, providing a significant longer-term financial reserve.

The 2025–26 financial year involved a high level of activity across the organisation. Preparations for the 2026 IBCPC Participatory Dragon Boat Festival in France, delivery of the Pink Paddle Power (PPP) program on the Gold Coast, and DAA's broader national operations resulted in more than 3,500 financial transactions being processed during the year.

During the year, DAA transitioned its accounting platform to Xero, providing a more contemporary system for financial management, reporting and oversight.

DAA continues to maintain a relatively low level of liabilities, with $53,421 held in bank accounts at year end. This position, together with the ACF Fund, provides the organisation with a sound financial base from which to meet its commitments and support future programs.

**> 3,500**
**FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS**
processed during 2025–26, including the France Festival, PPP on the Gold Coast and our ongoing operations.

**TRANSITION TO XERO**
A modern accounting platform to improve financial management, reporting and efficiency.

**SUPPORTING OUR MISSION**
A strong financial position enables DAA to continue supporting and empowering breast cancer survivors across Australia.

## FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

AS AT 30 JUNE 2026

**$200,863**
**AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION FUND**
Providing a significant longer-term reserve for future programs and opportunities.

**$53,420**
**CASH AT BANK**
Westpac bank accounts (business, everyday and gift accounts).

**$76,101**
**TOTAL ASSETS**
Comprising cash, receivables, loan to Strength in Unity Trust and office equipment.

**$6,385**
**TOTAL LIABILITIES**
A relatively low level of liabilities.

**$69,716**
**NET ASSETS**
Positioning DAA well to **meet** current commitments and support future activities.





# PINK PADDLE POWER
# GOLD COAST / WOLLUMBIN











CONNECT


CONNECT



# MASTERS GAMES CANBERRA NOVEMBER







# AUSCHAMPS LAKE KAWANA - APRIL








Annie
connect


Sunshine Coast
Sunshine Coast





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# BOARD OF DIRECTORS
## 2025-26

The Directors of Dragons Abreast Australia oversee the organization's financial health, operations, and long-term sustainability with a focus on integrity, accountability, and transparency. Their leadership nurtures the growth of member groups and supports the well-being of breast cancer survivors. Committed to promoting both physical and mental health, the Board has guided key milestones, sett in Another 25-Years Strategic Plan, while fostering a compassionate and inclusive environment for all survivors and their valued supporters.



### **Pearl Lee** (Board Chair)

"*I love being part of Dragons Abreast Australia for its strong network of women, leadership opportunities, and the joy it brings. I want to share dragon boating with those hearing 'you have breast cancer' and show them that life remains full—join us on the water..*"

With years of experience in marketing for global media companies and charities in trauma and community development, Pearl holds a BA in Film, Media, and Marketing, and has completed the AICD Not-for-Profit Governance and AIM Women Leaders courses. A breast cancer and leukemia survivor, she's been paddling since 2016 and coaches Dragons Abreast Sydney



### **Rosemary Kerrison** (Company Secretary)

*"After many years of sailing up and down the East Coast of Australia I cherish my time on the water. Dragon boating brings joy, friendship and unforgettable experiences. The rhythmic paddling and unity of the team provides emotional resilience."*

I am an inaugural member of Dragons Abreast Tasmania Hobart formed in 2003. Over the ensuing years I have had the pleasure and thrill of taking part in many International, Interstate and State Regattas as a Level 4 Sweep and paddler sharing DAA vision and mission.

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## Sue Von Richter (Treasurer and Public Officer)

*"Breast cancer has reshaped my life in many unexpected ways. Discovering dragon boating after my diagnosis has only deepened my lifelong love for the water. As a passionate sailor in my younger years and someone who cherishes a week on K'Gari for holidays, dragon boating has become my true happy place."*

Sue serves as DAA's Finance Director and Public Officer, bringing a wealth of accounting and auditing expertise. A breast cancer survivor, she embodies resilience and passion, which she extends into her role as a dedicated coach, inspiring those around her both personally and professionally



## Sharon Cooper (Operations)

*"Being diagnosed with breast cancer at 39 was a complete shock. But when I look back at all I've accomplished since then, and the joy I've found in dragon boating, I feel inspired to share this sport with others. I want to help those navigating their post-cancer journey discover a fun, active, and exciting life after their diagnosis."*

Sharon is a business owner, coach, sweep, and official. Based in Orange, she loves traveling, exploring new places, and recently completed the Ord River Marathon.



## Ann Boulton (Membership)

*Annie began her dragon boating journey in October 2013 with Dragons Abreast Illawarra and the Illawarra Dragon Boat Club. She is currently a Level 3 Sweep and Level 1 Coach. Previously, she held the positions of DA Illawarra Coordinator and IDBC committee member. Annie was the Team Hope Manager for the IBCPC NZ 2023 and France 2026 festival, plus Monster the Loch, Scotland 2026.*
*Between 2017 and 2023, she was the YWCA Encore Facilitator for the South Coast.*
*With extensive senior management experience across marketing, sales, commercial operations, and data management, Annie is excited to collaborate with the Board to expand the sport within the breast cancer community, helping others experience the fitness, fun, and camaraderie of Dragons Abreast*



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## **Desley Ralph** (Finance)

Since joining Dragons Abreast Townsville in 2008, after being inspired by an Encore program speaker, Desley has become an integral part of the community. As a founding committee member of the sports club, a Level 4 sweep mentor, and regional Sweep Coordinator, she has led teams through both local and international events, including IBCPC Florence 2018 and IBCPC NZ 2023.

Passionate about breast cancer awareness and living actively post-diagnosis, Desley brings valuable experience in finance, business ownership, and community service, which she looks forward to contributing in a director's role.



## **Carolyn Keily** (Governance)

As a dynamic public servant with 25+ years of leadership experience in program delivery, governance, risk management, and stakeholder engagement within the government sector. Proven ability to develop strategy, implement complex initiatives, and drive accountability through strong governance and compliance frameworks. A breast cancer survivor and passionate advocate for empowering others through sport and community connection.



## **Vivienne Williams** (Stakeholders)

*Vivienne joined Pendragons Abreast in 2017 after her breast cancer diagnosis and has since embraced the sport, participating in IBCPC events in Florence (2018) and New Zealand (2023). As President of Sunshine Coast Dragons Abreast in 2021, she gained experience in building a successful member group and now serves as a coach focused on techniques for breast cancer survivors and older paddlers.*

*Vivienne is passionate about Dragons Abreast Australia's mission to support survivors through competition, communication, and camaraderie. She is eager to contribute her skills and ideas as a Board member to further strengthen the organization's impact.*

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# THANK YOU

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Dragons Abreast Australia Ltd, we offer our sincere thanks to Merlin Paddles for their donations, our social media, grants, project volunteers, each of you for the passion and dedication you bring to our community. Your courage, compassion, and energy continue to drive our mission of supporting breast cancer survivors as they move beyond diagnosis into strength and thriving. Through your efforts—whether paddling together on the water or supporting one another off it—you create a powerful environment of connection, healing, and encouragement that inspires all who are part of it. Dragons Abreast Australia remains a source of hope and empowerment because of you, and we are honoured to share this journey alongside you.

## CONTACT US :


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# VISION AND MISSION



## VISION

Empowering more breast cancer survivors to lead active, vibrant lives, helping them thrive through movement and community.

## PURPOSE

Dragon Abreast Australia is a health promotion charity supporting Breast Cancer Survivors (BCS) through a supportive paddling community with shared experiences. To support BCS from survivorship to thrivership focusing on the whole person – physical and mental. To be a supportive community-based movement both on and off the water for all Breast Cancer Survivors.