



ANNUAL REPORT

2023 - 2024

**DRAGONS ABREAST
AUSTRALIA LTD**

PRESENTED BY :
Pearl Lee - Chair

PREPARED BY :
DAA Board of Directors



CHAIRPERSON REPORT

Pearl Lee - Board Chair

The 2023-2024 year has marked significant milestones and growth for Dragons Abreast Australia, reinforcing our ongoing commitment to supporting breast cancer survivors nationwide. Our 25th Anniversary was a key moment of reflection and celebration, highlighting both our achievements and our vision for the future. However, as we celebrate our successes, we must also acknowledge the ongoing challenges that lie ahead.

This year started with a major event in Penrith, uniting members from across the country to honor 25 years of community, resilience, and empowerment. Key events such as the Lunar New Year festival in Sydney, the AusDBF National Championships in Perth, and the Ord River Marathon in Kununurra demonstrated our continued commitment to promoting physical and mental well-being for breast cancer survivors. These shared experiences are essential, moving many from survivorship to thrivership.

While the organization is financially stable, there are broader challenges that need to be addressed to ensure long-term viability. Demographic shifts, particularly an aging membership base, pose a challenge to our long-term sustainability. The need to engage younger generations and expand our membership is critical to ensure Dragons Abreast continues to thrive.

Another pressing issue is the viability of smaller groups, as many struggle to meet growing compliance demands. The risk of some of these groups becoming unsustainable is real, and we must work collaboratively to address these challenges.

In addition, our success depends heavily on the generosity of volunteers, from the Board level down to local event support. The efforts of volunteers are the lifeblood of Dragons Abreast, and the ongoing need for more people to step up cannot be overstated. While this report highlights the work being done for our members, it is essential to remind everyone that contributing beyond local groups is crucial to the vitality of the organization.

As a health promotion charity, Dragons Abreast remains dedicated to helping survivors lead active, fulfilling lives, while fostering a supportive community that addresses both their physical and emotional needs. Looking forward, we are poised to build on this year's accomplishments, expand our reach, and continue making a meaningful difference.

My heartfelt thanks go out to our members, volunteers, and supporters. Together, we can ensure the future of Dragons Abreast Australia and create a lasting positive impact for breast cancer survivors nationwide.

Warm regards,
Pearl Lee
Chair, Dragons Abreast Australia Ltd.



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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.



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023-24

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, including the 25th Anniversary and ongoing expansion, 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



Leonie Silk (Company Secretary)

"I have a deep love for being outdoors in nature and on the water. Who would have thought that through my journey with breast cancer, I would discover the art of paddling a dragon boat alongside such vibrant and inspiring individuals?"

Leonie became a member of DA Hobart in 2014, bringing with her a wealth of administrative experience from both For-Profit and Not-For-Profit sectors. She holds a Diploma in Business and is also an ordained priest in the Anglican Diocese of Tasmania.



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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 (Membership)

"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

Annie began her dragon boating journey in October 2013 with Dragons Abreast Illawarra and the Illawarra Dragon Boat Club. She serves as a Committee Member for IDBC, is a Level 3 Sweep, Level 1 Coach, and Team Hope Manager for the IBCPC NZ 2023. Since 2017, she has also been 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

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.



Robyn Ridnell

Robyn was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2011 at the age of 47, and soon after, she found a new passion in dragon boating. In 2012, she joined Dragons Abreast Bendigo, where her enthusiasm for community involvement and her skill with numbers led her to serve as treasurer beginning in 2015.

Following her retirement in 2023 after 20 years in the mapping industry, Robyn sought to give back to the community that had supported her. Joining the Dragons Abreast Australia Board has allowed her to contribute to an organization that is deeply personal to her, and she is eager to both share her expertise and grow through this role.



Vivienne Williams

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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Advisory Board



Roger Norton



Dr Kellie Toohey



Wynette Monserrat



Rose Glassock



Janelle Pritchard



Leonie Barnes

Ambassador

Robyn Moore



Bringing hope and inspiration to newly diagnosed women



Promoting breast cancer

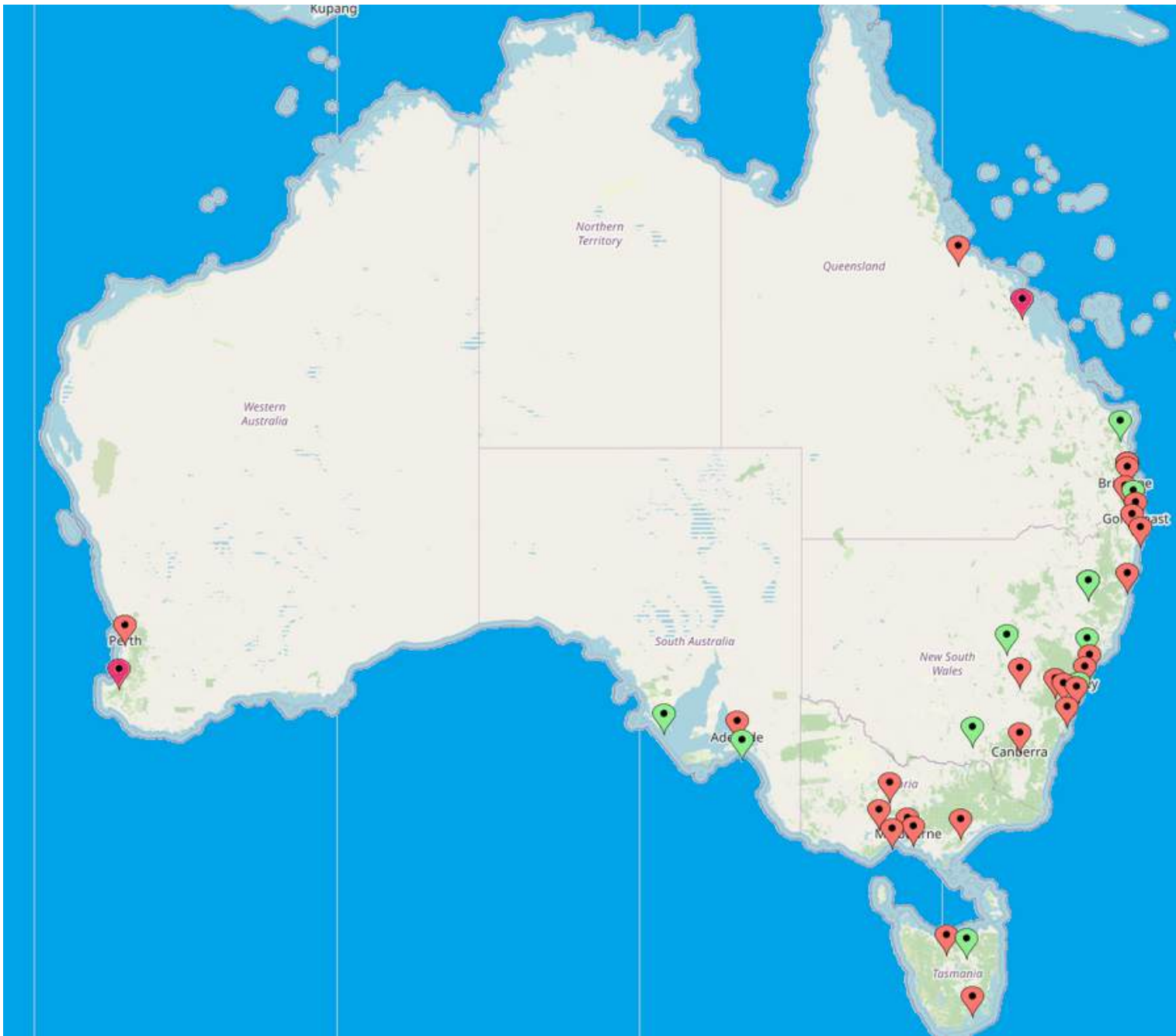


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MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW

During the 2023-24 year, Dragons Abreast Australia proudly welcomed two new member groups: Dragons Abreast Blue Mountains and Amazons Perth. We also celebrated a significant milestone with the addition of our 1000th member. Our organization now comprises 29 member groups, along with 65 individual members representing an additional 15 community dragon boat clubs across the country. These new additions reflect the continued growth and strength of our community as we extend our support to breast cancer survivors nationwide.



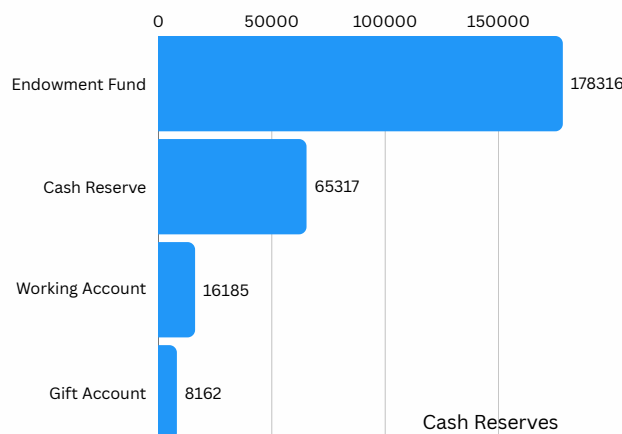


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FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Dragons Abreast Australia Ltd. continues to manage its finances with integrity and responsibility, ensuring that resources are aligned with our mission of supporting breast cancer survivors. Our ability to maintain financial stability while growing our programs is a testament to the commitment of our members, donors, and sponsors. Moving forward, we are confident in our capacity to meet the challenges ahead and expand our impact across Australia.



Investing in Qld Women Grant

Dragons Abreast Australia successfully received a grant of \$23,040, enabling us to host two training camps at the Sunshine Coast with International Dragon Boat Coach and breast cancer survivor Kamini Jain.

This funding will support the 'Clinical Breast Cancer Paddling Coaches Training Camps,' designed to provide specialized training for coaches of breast cancer survivor paddlers. The camps will equip coaches with the skills to better address the specific physical and mental health needs of breast cancer survivors, ultimately enhancing their ability to support and guide survivor paddler teams more effectively.

These camps will be followed by online training sessions, allowing even more coaches to benefit from this highly specialized initiative.

Funded by



Queensland
Government



OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

As we reflect on 2024, Dragons Abreast Australia celebrates a truly remarkable milestone—our 25th Anniversary. This year marks not only a significant chapter in our journey but also serves as a celebration of the countless lives we've touched and the strong, supportive community we've built over the past quarter-century,

We began the year with a grand celebration in Penrith, where members from all corners of the country gathered to reflect on our collective achievements and shared experiences. In partnership with DBNSW, this event truly highlighted the strength of our collaboration. Dragons Abreast Penrith played a crucial role in organizing a stunning dinner, complete with elegant floral arrangements and a beautifully donated \$600 cake as the centerpiece. This celebration wasn't just about honoring the past 25 years but also about cherishing the unbreakable spirit and unity that continues to define Dragons Abreast. It was a moment of gratitude, reflection, and inspiration for the future.

Our year continued with spirited participation at Sydney's Lunar New Year festival, where our composite crews showcased their paddling prowess alongside their signature spirit of unity. The energy of the event captured the essence of Dragons Abreast, as our paddlers not only demonstrated their physical skills but also embodied the strength and sense of belonging that permeates our community.

This same energy and camaraderie carried us into the AusDBF National Championships in Perth, where our teams took to the water with determination, representing breast cancer survivors on a national stage. A particularly proud moment came when Robyn Venn from DA Wollumbin served as DAA's Flagbearer, proudly standing alongside state dragon boat representatives, symbolizing the strength and resilience of our entire community.

One of the year's standout moments was our participation in the Ord River Marathon in Kununurra. Paddling through the breathtaking landscapes of Western Australia, our four teams, made up of both BCS and supporter paddlers from across the country, embraced the physical and emotional challenges of this iconic marathon. This event was not just a test of endurance but also a powerful bonding experience, as paddlers drew strength from one another and found renewed purpose through teamwork and shared accomplishment.

Throughout 2024, our focus has remained steadfast on our mission to help breast cancer survivors move from survivorship to thrivership. Every paddle stroke, every event, and every moment of support has been a step toward empowering each member to live fully and thrive within our community. Whether on the water or through mutual support on land, Dragons Abreast continues to provide an environment where survivors can connect, heal, and inspire one another.

As we look to the future, we do so with immense pride in everything we've achieved this year. The 25th Anniversary has been a celebration of resilience, community, and hope, but we know our journey is far from over. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to every member, volunteer, and supporter who has contributed to making this milestone year one to remember. Together, we look forward to the next 25 years of making a difference in the lives of breast cancer survivors across Australia.



Happy 25th Birthday DAA





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THANK YOU

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Dragons Abreast Australia Ltd, we extend our deepest gratitude to each of you for your unwavering dedication to our community. Your resilience, strength, and compassion are the driving forces behind our mission to support breast cancer survivors from survivorship to thrivership. Whether on or off the water, your collective efforts create a space of healing, empowerment, and unity, inspiring others to thrive. Thank you for making Dragons Abreast Australia a lifeline for so many—we are proud to stand with you in this journey.

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