

Kudos to Christine Lonie



Members of the DA Club will have recently read "[In the Loop.](#)" that Chris was awarded a position on the Honour Roll. Helen McLean (with the approval of the other DA ladies nominated her for the Dragon Spirit Award in August. Attached below is Helen's original nomination as the newsletter only picked out a minor area to print.

Christine Lonie is everything that Dragons Abreast epitomises. Christine has been dealing with Breast Cancer its complications, heartaches, highs and lows since she was eighteen years old when her Mother was first diagnosed. Christine has lost her mother, and her older sister Annette to the disease, but her younger sister Susan and fellow Dragons Abreast paddler has survived since her diagnosis in 2001.

Because of this family history Christine was very determined to bring awareness to the disease. Her dream was a Dragons Abreast team in Murwillumbah, but she really did not have any idea how to go about doing this. Christine (Chris) and her sister Susan decided to go up to Currumbin on Sunday mornings to paddle to get some experience. An ad was placed in the local paper asking Breast Cancer survivors and supporters for a show of interest and for a period of months Chris single handily worked through all the red tape of starting and registering a Dragon Boat Club, finding a boat to paddle in and someone to coach us.

In September 2007 a motley crew of survivors and supporters first put our paddles in the water under the bridge and around the islands of South Tweed Heads, and the rest as they say is history.

We paddled in the Kids in Need Regatta in October 2007 in our tie died pink shirts and bandanas showing the world how far we had come since our diagnosis and that there is indeed a positive life after breast cancer.

Chris has gone on to form the sporting club Coolangatta Mt Warning Dragons and its sub club of Dragons Abreast Mt Warning. She is an accredited sweep and coach, and with her beloved Susan by her side has paddled in the State Team, and competed at the National Competition in 2011. Together with her role as Red Cross Co-ordinator in Murwillumbah she has become a renowned speaker for our cause and is often invited to talk at functions and club meetings in our area.

She was granted an award in the Wonderful Women of Tweed 2011 for services to aged care and community health. This lady has earned respect from all who know her, she is quietly spoken, determined, strong and very much a lady. Mt Warning Dragons named their first boat after her sister "Lady Annette". Our Pink Dragons Abreast boat has been named by unanimous vote "Lady Christine".

A sad note to this nomination is that Christine has now been diagnosed with Breast Cancer herself, after returning from paddling in the Nationals this year. In her usual grace and style she is still working for her beloved cause. She has undergone surgery and is currently being treated with chemotherapy. Chris never makes a fuss, but she certainly has a presence that encourages all to achieve there personal best and to keep moving forward. I have no doubt that Christine Lonie will be an even stronger advocate for Dragons Abreast and Breast Cancer Awareness in the years to come. We at Mt Warning are so blessed to have her as our founding member, she has given so many of us a new realisation that life is what you make it, and that can be a wonderful purposeful life.

*Dragons Abreast Mt Warning
Helen McLean*