

## MEDIA RELEASE

21 February, 2018

### Dragon Boating for fun, fitness and Breast Cancer

SwanCare Australind Rise resident, Roslyn Webb is a go-getter.

Mrs Webb is an accredited Dragon Boat rowing coach and sweep, a breast cancer survivor and the motivating force behind the Bunbury Crewsaders Dragon Boat team who finished first in the 200m Splash and Dash at Champion Lakes recently.

In the Crewsaders' first regatta at Champion Lakes in Perth, the team were thrilled to out paddle more experienced teams the Albany Pirates and the Amazons.

Coach Roslyn Webb said it was an excellent result for the team, which is comprised of breast cancer survivors and their supporters.

"Our crew ranges in age from the oldest, who is 73 to the youngest, Lily who, at 12 years old is our drummer and loves coming to training to support her Nan," Mrs Webb said. "We train twice a week and aside from the paddling, we enjoy a laugh and a joke and a good chat – if that is what the team needs."

Dragon boating is one of the fastest growing water sports in Australia. The 12 metre long fibreglass boats are brightly painted and decorated with a dragon head and tail for racing. Twenty paddlers sit side-by-side on ten benches, while the sweep steers the boat and a drummer beats a large drum at the bow.

SwanCare Australind Rise manager, Margaret Robinson said communities like Australind Rise are so fortunate to have inspirational people like Roslyn Webb.

"Communities grow with the dedication and enthusiasm of residents like Roslyn, who are committed to getting involved and encourage others to join in too," Mrs Robinson said. "At Australind Rise we love to see our residents getting involved in the community and facilitating fitness and health for others."

The Crewsaders team is affiliated with Dragons Abreast, an international organisation founded following Canadian research into the benefits of Dragon Boat paddling to encourage upper body movement for post-operative rehabilitation for Breast Cancer patients.

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Mrs Webb is enthusiastic about the role of team sports for women who are inherently selfless in caring for their families and community, but should be pro-active about taking some time for themselves.

“We train twice a week and, while I would love it to be three times a week, it is hard to get the girls together for the third session in their busy lives. What is key about our group is that we are like-minded – the exercise is the drawcard, but the benefits are endless - advice is shared, we are outdoors and we are all happier and healthier as a result.”

At more than 12 metres long the boats are tricky to store, so Mrs Webb was glad to have the support of her village at SwanCare’s Australind Rise to store the boat when required.

The Crewsaders will now put in the extra endurance work for their forthcoming event.

“The race is always won at the starting block! If you get the boat up and running quickly then you are not playing catch-up to the other boats in the race,” Mrs Webb said. “The next regatta is a little harder. It is the Women’s 10s again but 500m, so a slower pace and a longer race so there is a tendency to flag and drop power.”

The Crewsaders are the only WA team representing Dragon’s Abreast, but there are 40 across Australia and more than 120 internationally, with international regattas held every four years. Mrs Webb has been fortunate to attend the regatta in Sarasota, Florida in 2014 and is looking forward to this year’s event in Florence, Italy with three of her team members where they will race in a composite team.

“The event begins with the flag being raised by the youngest breast cancer survivor who is 25 and concludes when the flag is lowered by the oldest breast cancer survivor who is 92. You can imagine there is a lot of laughter, a lot of friendship and also a lot of tears as we celebrate fun and fitness but also remember those who did not survive their breast cancer fight,” Mrs Webb said.

“I am so pleased to have our 16 team members in Bunbury - all coming down to paddle for fun and fitness and recovery, but I would love to have 30 members – the more the merrier!” Mrs Webb concluded.

**ENDS**

#### **About SwanCare**

*SwanCare has been caring for seniors in Western Australia for over 56 years since the not-for-profit organisation was established in the early 1960’s as Swan Cottage Homes.*

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*SwanCare operates WA's largest retirement and aged care site, Bentley Park, with over 1,000 residents, three aged care facilities and the SwanCare At Home service.*

*SwanCare also operates the boutique Australind Rise retirement village in the South West.*

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