

3 April 2014

MEDIA RELEASE - PADDLE4PINK

This Saturday, Luke O’Garey will paddle almost 100kms from Bridport to Devonport to raise much-needed funds for Tasmanian breast cancer research.

With tremendous support from the local community already, the **PADDLE4PINK** event hopes to raise \$7K for research to support Tasmanian women with breast cancer and to improve treatment options available for all breast cancer patients in the future.

With the idea for this fundraiser first initiated by Luke himself, this adventurous kayaker will spend around 12 hours in a kayak raising awareness and funds for a new breast cancer research study to be administered by the Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation.

"This fundraiser is great as all the funds will support Tasmanian breast cancer research. It's only a few hours or so of pain, but that’s nothing compared to what cancer patients have to go through," Mr O'Garey said.

Julie Sladden, a breast cancer survivor, doctor and occasional paddler will be right there to support Luke on his incredible journey this Saturday – waving him off from the Bridport Surf Life Saving Club at 6.00am, then welcoming him back on land at the Devonport Surf Life Saving Club at around 6.00pm that evening.

Julie first met Luke in 2013 when she started looking for a new kayak following surgery for breast cancer. After discovering her earlier kayak was now too heavy to lift but knowing that the paddling action could be valuable during recovery, Luke assisted Julie in accessing a lighter, custom-designed kayaka, in pink of course!

“During my diagnosis and treatment, I was unable to raise my arms or lift anything heavy so independent kayaking was out of the question. But being out on the water was one of the few places I was able to push aside all thoughts of my breast cancer. My paddling buddies were amazing though. One of them put me in a double kayak and just got me out there – even though I couldn’t really paddle, I was out there doing something that I loved.

“As I got stronger and was able to paddle my own boat, they helped with lifting my kayak and keeping me company on the water – in case I fell in! Just being out on the water worked wonders in my rehabilitation and over time I was able to build up my strength. With my new lighter boat I am now able to get out on the water whenever I like, and continue to get stronger every day. The paddling especially helps keep things moving in my right arm which is prone to lymphodeama, a common but painful side effect from the surgery.

“Luke’s assistance in getting me back on the water in my new boat helped in so many ways. Now that he’s had this crazy idea to paddle from Bridport to Devonport, it’s just amazing that he can contribute further - raising funds for better treatments and recovery programs for others diagnosed with breast cancer.

“I urge everyone to help us raise these vital funds for local Tasmanian breast cancer research – it means so much to know that other patients would have access to better treatment and recovery programs,” Julie said.

Donations to **Paddle4Pink** can be made via: www.rhhresearchfoundation.org

How funds will be used

With a breast cancer research project in advanced stages of development for funding through the RHH Research Foundation, vital equipment is needed to help support and extend this project further. Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in Tasmanian women – with many patients experiencing upper limb pain, fatigue, lymphoedema, weakness, restricted range of motion, joint arthralgia, neuropathy and even osteoporosis. Investigations will enable the development of medical management plans for people just like Julie, along with individualised exercise plans and rehabilitation for those Tasmanian women diagnosed with breast cancer.

Media events

Media contact: Heather Francis, CEO RHH Research Foundation - 0407 201 113

Friday 4 April

9.00am at the Devonport Surf Life Saving Club

Media interview and photo opportunity with Luke O’Garey.

Sunday 6 April

9.45am at The Gorge, Launceston

Media interview and photo opportunity with Julie Sladden, Luke O’Garey and Heather Francis (RHHRF CEO).

Expected Paddling Times – Saturday 5 April

Saturday 5 April

6.00am at the Bridport Surf Life Saving Club

Luke O’Garey sets off for a paddle of almost 100km, estimated to take approximately twelve hours.

Saturday 5 April

6.00pm at the Devonport Surf Life Saving Club

Luke arrives – fairly exhausted but equally exhilarated!