

The Desert Mums



Information Document

"Accept the challenges so you may feel the exhilaration of victory"

A journey to eliminate breast cancer

The Desert Mums



Susan Bartell
Walking aged 44
Mother of 1
Recently migrated
to Silver Star Mountain
in British Columbia,
Canada

We are walking for
breast cancer to raise
early detection
awareness and vital
research funds to
save....



Margot Burns
Walking aged 43
Mother of 2
Resides in Adelaide

The 375,000 people
who die worldwide
each year including the
2,500 Australian
women



Debbie Shiel
Walking aged 36
Mother of 2
Resides in Melbourne

The 85 men and
11,300 women who are
diagnosed each year in
Australia.

We are walking for the
special women in all of
our lives.



Carolyn McLean
Walking aged 42
Mother of 3
Resides in Sydney

Unite in our journey to
eliminate breast
cancer.

Walk with us in spirit

Our Journey

- May 5th 2006 Walking eastwards 15kms from the 1st sandhill on the western edge of the Simpson Desert to Purni Bore. Drilled during an intensive period of petroleum exploration the near boiling water now pours freely.
- May 6th 20km trek.
- May 7th 10kms across the French Line and turning south east for a further 10kms to Mokari Airstrip.
- May 8th 25km trek.
- May 9th 25km trek.
- May 10th 25km trek.
- May 11th 25km trek.
- May 12th 10kms into the days trek we are now in the heartland of an area once inhabited by the Aboriginal Wangkangurru people. They left the desert in the year 1900 and never returned on a permanent basis. We cross the tracks of explorer David Lindsay 1886 and after days climbing endless sand dunes we break out onto the broad expanse of our first salt lake.
- May 13th Trekking now with the aid of a GPS and compass we travel x-country for 15kms to the east and a further 10kms north west up the western edge of a salt lake. This salt lake will be officially named Lake Courage in memory of all the women and men who have succumbed to Breast Cancer in Australia. A memorial plaque will be placed on the 'shore'.
- May 14th 25km trek.
- May 15th After 25kms today crossing numerous salt lakes we reach Poeppel Corner. It is here that the borders of South Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory intersect, mapped out over a century ago by surveyor Augustus Poeppel. Our 11th camp is on the eastern edge of a nearby salt lake.
- May 16th 25kms. If Queensland Park's permission can be obtained, it will now be x-country to Eyre Creek on the route originally taken by Denis Bartell. If not, along the QAA Line.
- May 17th 25kms today where the sandhills will become further apart and higher.
- May 18th 25km trek.
- May 19th 25kms today takes us over Eyre Creek to Nappanerica Sand Dune, known to most and named by Denis Bartell as "Big Red".
- May 20th We have our first rest day and 16th night at the base of the 40m high "Big Red"
- May 21st Atop of Big Red at approximately 10am The Desert Mums will release over 2,500 helium filled pink balloons in memory of the Australian women who will die this year, and each year, from Breast Cancer (the latex balloons are 100% biodegradable). At 1.30pm we trek 20kms to our final camp.
- May 22nd Our walk ends with a 15km trek into Birdsville arriving approximately 11am. With 385kms and over 1,100 parallel sand ridges behind us we charter back home to our partners and children.
- May 23rd From here on in we will always be participants in life not spectators. We will have had a test of will, a test of mind, body and spirit. Together we have made a difference.

The Simpson Desert

The Simpson Desert is recognized internationally as one of the most outstanding sand dune deserts on this earth. It is also the largest parallel sand dune desert in the world and in the driest region of Australia. Over 70% of the desert comprises a sea of parallel wind driven sand ridges around 300-500kms long covering a total area of 170,000 square kilometres. The desert also exhibits a diversity of landforms including dunes, fringing watercourses, salt lakes, claypans, gibbers and breakaways. The Simpson Desert is six times the size of Belgium, but has no permanent residents.

Although it receives slightly more rainfall than the Sahara Desert, the mean annual rainfall of 130mm is variable and unpredictable. Whilst the desert has a uniform topography and a severe climate - summer temperatures can exceed 50° C and nights can drop below freezing in winter, it is a place of extraordinary beauty, resilience and a great diversity of flora and fauna.



Support

The Desert Mums will have 2 support vehicles. Guiding the walk in the lead vehicle will be Denis Bartell, father of Susan, one of the walkers. The Australian Geographic once wrote "it might be said that Denis knows the Simpson Desert better than any white man alive or dead".

Just some of Denis' exploits include

- The first two way, widest points, solo vehicle crossing of the continent
- The first solo x-country vehicle crossing of the Simpson Desert from East to West
- A solo 2,414km walk from Australia's North to South passing through the Simpson Desert
- The first solar powered vehicle crossing of Australia (world record) from North to South
- Denis was awarded the Order of Australia Medal and the Australian Geographic Adventurer of the Year Medal
- Twenty two years ago Denis Bartell completed a solo unaided walk across the Simpson Desert. The Desert Mums will be walking, 22 years almost to the day, the exact route taken by Denis .

In the second support vehicle will be Andrew McLean, husband to another walking, Carolyn. Andrew is an avid camper and sailor having recently taken part in the Sydney to Hobart Yacht race.

Aims

Our aims are

- To raise awareness of self examination and early detection especially in young women. Breast Cancer is curable if caught early.
- To raise \$105,000 to fund a 3 year naming rights scholarship to research a cure for breast cancer.
- To participate in a life changing experience with good people for a good cause – to make a difference.

Contact

Debbie Shiell

0419 583 000

desertmums@desertmums.com

Our web site:

www.desertmums.com