

‘Breast Friends’ tackle one tough Tri for Outback women

Three women from Outback Queensland are redefining the term ‘bosom buddies’ by uniting to raise funds and awareness for breast cancer in a whole new way – competing in one of Australia’s toughest triathlons.

Belinda Murphy, Sally Eales and Keri Prandolini – who’ve dubbed themselves the ‘Breast Friends’ – will take on the challenge of the [Julia Creek Cannington Dirt n Dust Triathlon](#) this April in a bid to better Breast Screening services for women in North West Queensland.

Belinda, who’ll complete the team’s 5km running leg, said the Dirt n Dust Triathlon seemed like the perfect opportunity to raise the profile of Breast Screening facilities – or lack thereof – in rural towns.

“The three of us had been talking about entering the Triathlon as a team, but felt we needed a cause to light a fire in our bellies and keep us motivated,” said Belinda.

“All of our lives had been touched by breast cancer – my step-mum; Sally’s aunt and grandmother; and Keri’s colleague – so raising funds for Breast Screening was an obvious choice.”

Breast Screening facilities are scarce in the Outback. A mobile screening unit visits each town just once a year and only women over 40 years of age are eligible to access the facility.

Team swimmer, Sally said the Breast Friends have worked hard to ensure their fundraising efforts will go directly back to benefitting women in the West.

“As it is, most of the funds raised for Breast Cancer go into research or improving facilities in the big cities, so we’re incredibly proud to be helping women in our own backyard,” said Sally.

“Currently, if you miss the Mobile Screening Unit’s annual visit, you either wait another 12 months or tackle the eight-hour drive to Townsville to be screened – that’s a long way to go for potentially earth-shattering news.

“It’s great to know that our fundraising efforts could support more frequent Outback visits – even to North Western hubs – and potentially, help save lives.”



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While the Breast Friends hope to raise \$5,000 for Breast Screen Queensland, the Dirt n Dust Triathlon will not be a walk in the park. None of the girls have entered a Triathlon before and to start with the one that even professional triathletes find tough is proving to be a real challenge.

Keri, who'll cycle 25km 'across the horizon', said she has a lot of training to do before April.

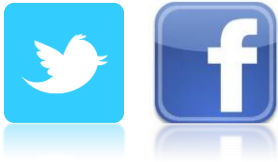
"I started preparation for my cycle leg by going on a few 10km bike rides, but quickly learned that it wasn't a good idea to go so hard, so fast. The first ride had me shaking and feeling absolutely awful," said Keri.

"I quit smoking a few months ago, so for me the Dirt n Dust Triathlon isn't just about improving early detection of breast cancer for others, but also taking the first steps to a healthier lifestyle for myself.

The Breast Friends will join hundreds of Dirt n Dust triathletes in Julia Creek on April 21, 2012 for the 18th annual Dirt n Dust Triathlon. The Triathlon is a major draw card for the three-day Julia Creek Dirt n Dust Festival which also includes bullrides, horse races, live music and entertainment, a ute muster and novelty events such as Australia's Best Butt competition and bog snorkeling.

To make a donation to the Breast Friends Trust go to www.dirtndust.com and click on 'Buy Tickets'. An auction will also be held for the Breast Friends during the Julia Creek Dirt n Dust Festival, with three bikes donated by BNG Sports up for grabs.

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For more information or to arrange an interview with Belinda Murphy, Sally Eales or Keri Prandolini, please contact Sarah Mathiesen from Harshmellow Media + Design on 0400 712 861.