

NEWS

Working towards recovery

MURRAY Bridge woman Gail Carter could not lift her arm or perform basic household tasks following surgery for breast cancer six years ago, but all of that has changed over the last year after a city-based program made its way south.

Ms Carter's post-surgery problem was not unusual, with many women experiencing numbness, pins and needles, loss of mobility, and discomfort in their upper bodies following a mastectomy or lumpectomy.

"I was diagnosed with breast cancer six years ago," she said.

"It was an aggressive cancer and I had two and a half years of treatment which left me corded.

"This meant I couldn't lift my arm above my shoulder so I would have to hang out clothes with one hand."

Ms Carter said when she was offered the opportunity to participate in the Encore program, a pool-based exercise group run by the YWCA she had her doubts.

"I didn't think I would be able to do the exercises but by half way through the program I saw improvement," she said.

"I have all the ability in my left arm again, no back pain and now I can raise my hand to the ceiling.

"I do my exercises while driving and can do simple things like gardening and taking out the garbage again."

Murray Mallee Community Health Service Women's Health Nurse Yvonne Thomson said when the program was run at the indoor pool in Murray Bridge last year, it was the first time it had been



Encore: Janet Marshall, Joy Ayres and Gail Carter say they are pleased an exercise program that help swomen following breast cancer surgery will be run in Murray Bridge again this year.

offered outside of Adelaide.

"YWCA own the rights to the program and only have a few facilitators," she said.

"It (this program) was organised through the Lower Murray Breast Cancer Support Group."

Ms Thompson said the eight week Encore program was designed specifically for women who had experienced breast cancer and provided a supportive environment without the need to don a bikini.

"Encore are repeating the program again this year because of community donations to the program," she said.

"Last year we had people come from Tintinara and Keith.

"Then Keith Football Club raised over \$1000 which they donated to Encore.

-Details: Encore will run on Friday afternoons at the Murray Bridge Indoor Pool from February 17 to April 6. For more information contact Yvonne Thomson on 8535 6800.