

For immediate release
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Airlie Beach Race Week entries open

Entry to Airlie Beach Race Week 2021 is open and organisers at Whitsunday Sailing Club (WSC) are confident of large numbers following the success of last year's event, one of the rare major sporting events to go ahead in Australia since March 2020, and yachties are keen to return to racing following a hiatus.

Last year's Whitsundays Festival of Sailing was held under strict COVID regulations which have been relaxed in recent times. Competitors will be pleased to see the Festival Village return following last year's scaled-back event.

Tourism Whitsundays Chief Executive Officer, Tash Wheeler, says she is thrilled to see the return of Airlie Beach Race Week in 2021.

"The Whitsundays is the heart of sailing, and this event is a great reminder of just how premier sailing is at this time of year. Airlie Beach Race Week is an iconic event on the Australian sailing calendar, complemented by a great array of onshore events throughout the week," Wheeler says.

"It was one of the few events to run in The Whitsundays in 2020, so it is fantastic to see these events evolving post-COVID."

WSC Event Chairman, Ross Chisholm, agrees: "It will allow us to create a bigger and better experience for all," he says of the event to be held from 12-19 August.

"We're also pleased to announce that Airlie Beach Race Week will include the Australian Multihull Championships for the 33rd running of our popular event," he adds.

The Championship was last hosted by WSC at Airlie Beach Race Week in 2019 when local sailor Paul Mitchell skippered Ullman Sails to an unequivocal Division 1 win. Mitchell was pushed by four Extreme 40s. Recent additions to Australia at the time, understanding the Extremes and improved crew work means the competition has ratcheted up a notch or two since then.

Division 2 of the Championship went to Clive Kennedy's Evil Gnome. The Farrier 85 from NSW decimated her opposition too - beating her nearest rivals by six and 15 points respectively.

This year the Multihull Championship is expected to be even more hotly contested. Mitchell's brother, Dale, skippered the newly acquired ORMA 60 design, also named ORMA 60, to a win over Michel Van Der Zwaard's Extreme 40, Back in Black in Multihull Division 1 last year.

The final race win to Mitchell decided the outcome, but the two finished the series on equal points. The multihull magician Mitchell brothers, with multiple trophies to their names, always have a target on their backs, so all rivals will have the Whitsunday sailors in their sights.

Dale Mitchell admitted last year: "A couple of races through the middle of the series, we identified that in wind, the Extremes sailed better to their rating. For us, it was best for it to be under 8 knots, rather than have a bigger breeze to go and have fun in."

Airlie Beach Race Week is also open to entries in IRC Passage, Performance Racing, Cruising, Non-Spinnaker Cruising, Sports Boats, Trailable Yachts and Multihull Passage divisions.

MEDIA RELEASE



THE HEART
The Whitsundays
OF EVENTS

Yachties around Australia and beyond suffered a sailing drought and travel restrictions throughout 2020 and are champing at the bit to return to the race track, which will no doubt boost entries to the annual event.

The recent announcement of the Australian Yachting Championships returning to Hamilton Island as part of Race Week in 2021 and 2022 is also sure to attract more than the usual top IRC entries to Airlie Beach Race Week too.

Airlie Beach Race Week Whitsundays Festival of Sailing is supported by the Queensland Government through Tourism and Events Queensland and is a feature on the It's Live! in Queensland events calendar.

Enter Airlie Beach Race Week Whitsundays Festival of Sailing online now and download the Notice of Race at www.abrw.com.au

A full calendar of events and information can be found at www.whitsundaysailingclub.com.au or by contacting the sailing manager at sailing@whitsundaysailingclub.com.au

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About Tourism Whitsundays: *Tourism Whitsundays (TW) is the organisation responsible for destination marketing and visitor attraction for the Whitsunday region. It is the lead agency recognised by Tourism and Events Queensland and the Whitsunday Regional Council to lead the promotion of the region as a tourism destination. Tourism Whitsundays markets all aspects of the region including the Great Barrier Reef, Whitsunday Islands and Coast, accommodation, boating and sailing, fishing, touring, recreational activities, adventure, dining, shopping, weddings and honeymoons, conferencing and business events.*

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