



Countdown is on for race week

THE warm northern Australian waters will this year attract large numbers of sailors for a series of major regattas, with the first of these being Meridien Marinas Airlie Beach Race Week which is just four months away.

The Notice-of-Race has been published and entries are already starting to come in.

The Australian Sports Boat Association (ASBA) has enthusiastically endorsed this regatta as one of the main events on the Sports Boat calendar in Australia, which should ensure that the week is well attended and as popular as ever.

The unique flavour of our local race week will not be changed in 2009 but there have been some changes aimed to improve it for competitors both on the water and ashore.

Abel Point has had a lot of action over summer, including improve-



The cruising with spinnaker fleet rounds the mark at Airlie Beach Race Week 2008. A Whitsunday Sailing Club yacht (left) is right in the mix.

ments to landscaping around the waterfront and surrounds.

The event organisers are hoping that this will add to the ambience of the competitors' marquee where a lot of the socialising takes place.

One thing that has caused problems for the race week in past

years has been the gradual build up of silt in the pen areas, which has been a hassle for the bigger boats getting in and out of the marina.

This should be a concern that doesn't raise its head again, with a lot of dredging happening in the marina area, particularly on the arms that are used for race week berthage.

This will allow more of the deeper draft boats to enjoy the pleasures of race week.

Event Director Denis Thompson said he was looking forward to seeing a huge contingent of boats.

"It's time to dig into the back of the wardrobe for your loudest floral shirt and best sunscreen," Thompson said.

To enter in the regatta go to the website at www.airliebeachrace-week.com.au.