



# AUSTRALIAN BUILDERS PLATE

## Questions frequently asked by boat builders

### Compliance

#### 1. Are the ABP requirements uniform around Australia?

All Australian States apply the National Standard for the Australian Builders Plate for Recreational Boats (the ABP standard) either through Maritime Safety or Consumer Protection law. There are some differences between States in the mechanism for enforcing compliance as a result of the way the local legislation is drafted; however, a boat that complies with the standard will meet the legal requirements around Australia.

### Boats requiring an ABP

#### 2. Which boats are required to have an ABP?

New boats are required to have an ABP plate with the exception of: an amphibious vehicle; a canoe, kayak or surf ski or similar vessel designed to be powered by paddle; a rowing shell used for racing or rowing training; a sailboard or sail kite; a surf row boat; a hydrofoil or hovercraft; a race boat; a sailing vessel; a submersible; and an aquatic toy.

A sailing boat with an auxiliary engine is exempt from the requirement to have an ABP fitted.

Vessels subject to a Certificate of Survey, Personal Water Craft (PWC) and Inflatable boats must comply with different requirements.

#### 3. What labelling does a Personal Watercraft require?

The ABP is not required on a PWC designed to carry up to two people.

An ABP is required on other PWC's unless the craft already has information clearly and permanently marked that states:-

- the maximum number of persons the vessel may carry, as recommended by the builder, and
- the total mass of persons and equipment (expressed in kilogram's) that the craft is designed to carry, as recommended by the builder

#### 4. What labelling will an Inflatable boat require instead of an ABP?

An inflatable boat requires an ABP UNLESS it already has a plate affixed in accordance with the European Directive 94/25/EC, or a plate attached in accordance with the requirements of the US National Marine Manufacturers Association as set out in the NMMA Certification Handbook.

## Fixing plates and determining information

### 5. Who is responsible for affixing the ABP to the boat?

The ABP must be fitted by:

- The builder if the boat is built in Australia; or
- The importer if the boat is built outside Australia.

In either case, the person or company must be a legal entity in Australia and takes responsibility for the accuracy of the information on the plate. The name of the person or company fitting the ABP to the boat is shown on the ABP.

### 6. Who can determine the information on an ABP?

The information on an ABP must be determined by a competent person.

A competent person is defined as a person who has acquired through training, qualification, experience, or a combination of these, the knowledge and skills enabling that person to competently determine the information on a builders plate.

The competent person is either:

- The builder;
- The importer; or
- A third-party competent person.

In general, a commercial boat builder is deemed to be a competent person for the purpose of the ABP standard. In the case of an owner-builder or importer, they may not meet the definition of a competent person, in which case a third-party competent person may need to be engaged to determine the information. Where this occurs, the name of the third-party competent person should be shown on the ABP, along with that of the builder or importer.

In some States, the Marine Safety Agency maintains a list of approved third-parties who can act as a competent person for the purpose of complying with the ABP standard.

Any person whose name appears on the plate is assuming responsibility for the information on that plate.

Examples

- Built by Sunhope Boats, Australia
- Imported by RayStan Holdings, Australia
- Information approved by E.R. Smith, Naval Architect, Sydney, Aust.

## HIN numbers and the ABP

### 7. Do I have to put a HIN on a boat?

The Australian Builders Plate standard requires that either a HIN or a build year is shown on the plate. It does not make showing the HIN number compulsory.

However in some Australian States other existing legislation makes having a hull identification number (HIN) mandatory. As builders generally wish to sell their boats to the widest possible customer base, most local builders place HIN numbers on all their boats allowing them to be sold anywhere in Australia.

**8. If a boat has a HIN number, does it also need an ABP?**

Yes

The hull identification number (HIN) and the Australian Builders Plate (ABP) serve different purposes and provide different information. The requirement to put an ABP on a boat is in addition to any existing requirements relating to HIN.

**9. If I put the HIN number on the ABP plate do I still have to display the HIN number on the boat?**

Yes

If a HIN is required it should still be placed on the boat in the places required by the HIN legislation. Placing the HIN on the ABP plate does not replace the requirement to mark the HIN elsewhere on the boat. The HIN number on the ABP effectively becomes the third recording of the HIN number and is used here as a means of readily identifying the build date of the boat.

**10. Do I have to put the HIN number on the ABP plate?**

No

You can either put the HIN number, or the build date on the plate. If you use the build date it should be expressed numerically as the year when construction of the boat was completed, eg: 2010.

## Fixing the ABP to the boat

**11. Where do I put the ABP on my boats?**

The ABP standard states that the ABP is required to be placed in a position where it will be readily visible to the operator of the boat when getting the boat underway, preferably in the cockpit or near the steering position. Placing the ABP on the outside of the transom of a boat is not acceptable.

**12. My boats have more than one steering position. Do I need to put an ABP plate at each steering position?**

The plate is only required in the primary steering position, however there is nothing preventing multiple plates or a warning plate at an access point such as on a ladder to the flybridge.

## Plate design and construction

**13. Does the plate have to be made out of metal?**

No

The ABP standard does not specify the construction material of the plate.

**14. How do I fix the plate to the boat?**

The standard states that the plate has to be permanently fixed to the boat so that is resistant to removal without leaving some obvious mark. Examples of ways in which a plate might be attached include riveting, gluing, embedding, engraving or printing the plate directly onto the boat, provided that whatever method is used the plate is permanently fixed to the boat.

**15. Does the plate have to be a particular shape or size?**

No

The ABP standard does not specify that the plate has to be a particular size or shape. The standard does however specify the size of the text and symbols that are to be used on the plate. The standard also specifies the information on the plate. The plate can be any size and shape provided the plate complies with the requirements relating to text and symbol size and legibility, and displays all the information required by the standard. The standard provides a sample plate that meets the requirements of the standard to assist manufacturers in designing their own plate.

**16. Can I use the same plate style for boats less than 6 metres, and 6 metres or more in length?**

The standard makes reference to different plates for vessels 6 metres or more in length from those less than 6 metres in length. Boats less than 6 metres in length require buoyancy information, whereas those boats that are 6 metres or more in length are not required to state their buoyancy performance. In principal the more onerous plate (ie: the one for vessels under 6 m) could be used on all vessels, however in practice it may be simpler to use different plates.

**Motors****17. The ABP standard asks for the maximum power to be recorded for outboard motors. If I supply a boat without a motor do I still have to complete the section relating to the engine rating?**

The ABP standard requires that a boat not fitted with an inboard engine must show the maximum engine capacity for which the hull is rated on the plate.

The ABP provides important safety information to the consumer and allows the purchaser of the vessel to fit an appropriate engine at a later date. This applies in all cases even if the boat is sold with a smaller outboard motor or no outboard motor at all.

**18. Does the power rating have to be in Kilowatts?**

No

The ABP standard states that the maximum power capacity can be expressed in either Horse Power (HP) or Kilowatts (kW). The mass of the outboard motor must, however, be specified in kilograms.

## Maximum load capacity

### 19. What is included in the maximum load capacity?

The maximum load capacity represents the maximum mass a boat has been designed and tested to safely carry when underway determined in accordance with the selected technical standard . This includes the mass of persons, the outboard, including auxiliary outboards, portable fuel tanks, and carry on equipment such as personal equipment, personal safety equipment, spare parts, tools, dry provisions, fishing tackle, portable tanks and their contents, etc. It does **not** include the mass of the contents of fixed fuel and water tanks when full.

## Symbols

### 20. Which symbols can be used on the ABP?

Symbols that may be used include an outboard engine symbol, a person symbol, a suitcase symbol, and a warning symbol.

If symbols are used—

- The outboard engine symbol shall be used to display information about a boat's maximum outboard power capacity and mass.
- The person symbol shall be used to display information about a boat's maximum person capacity as the number of adults and their total mass.
- The person symbol combined with the suitcase symbol and the outboard symbol (in the case of a boat not fitted with an inboard engine) shall be used to display the boat's maximum load capacity.
- The warning symbol shall be used to display warning information

## Warning statements

### 21. What constitutes a warning statement on the ABP?

A warning statement would caution the user. The ABP specifies one mandatory warning that must be displayed on all boats, with following words being used.

**"Alteration of the boat's hull or permanent fittings may invalidate the particulars on this plate"**

In addition, builders may include additional warnings that are relevant to the boat in question. For boats with a flybridge, the warning statement may provide maximum passenger numbers to be carried on the flybridge or, a warning statement may refer the user to the owner's manual before operating the boat.

#### **Example of warning statement that refers to flybridge boats:**

"WARNING – The recommended maximum number of person to be carried on the flybridge at anytime should not exceed 2 persons or 160 Kilograms."

If a warning is used, it must be consistent with any limitations expressed or implied with the standards used.

## Standards

### 22. Does the plate have to show the standard used to determine the information provided on the plate?

Yes.

The name of the standard used to determine the information on the plate has to be shown on the plate. This should be expressed as: *“Information determined (insert name of appropriate standard)”*. The name of the standard may be expressed as the standard number or abbreviation by which the standard is known, rather than its title (ie: AS 1799, ISO 12217, ABYC).

#### EXAMPLE

Information determined AS 1799.

### 23. Do I need to use the same standard to determine all the information on the plate?

Yes.

The same standard must be used to determine, the buoyancy performance, the load/persons capacity and the maximum outboard power. That is either ABYC, AS 1799 or ISO. If the ISO suite of standards are used, this will mean quoting several different standard numbers, all with the ISO prefix.

## Flotation

### 24. What is meant by basic and level flotation?

#### Basic Flotation

The ABP Standard defines basic flotation as “a flotation system that will keep a boat carrying its maximum load from sinking when swamped, assuming the occupants of the boat have left it and are in the water clinging to it. With basic flotation the swamped boat may float at any attitude.” This is a general definition to explain the concept.

However, when determining buoyancy for a boat the specific definition and performance requirement (or its equivalent) for basic flotation in the standard you are using (ie: ISO, AS) must be used.

#### Level Flotation

Level flotation is defined in the ABP standard as being “a flotation system that will keep a boat carrying its maximum load from sinking when swamped, assuming the occupants remain within the boat and supported by the flotation system. The flotation system must be such that it will keep the swamped boat floating level and prevent it from capsizing in calm water. Level flotation does not provide a self righting capacity.”

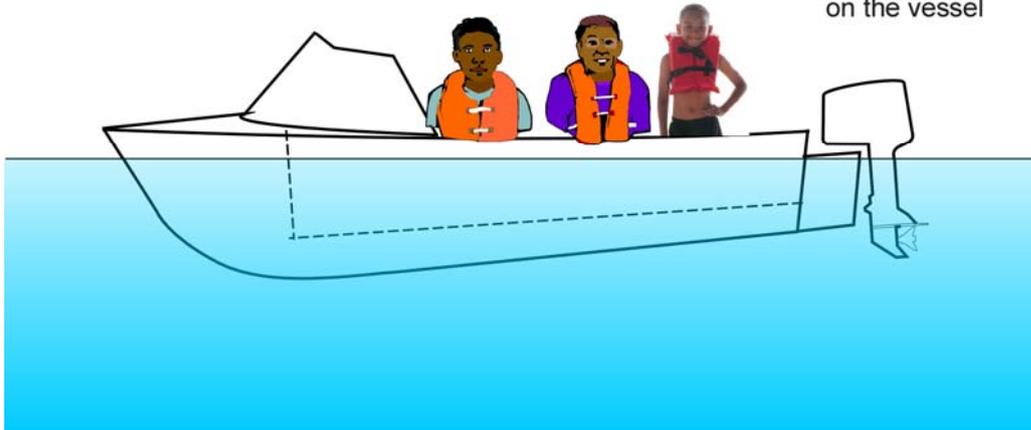
Once again, when determining buoyancy for a boat the specific definition and performance requirement (or its equivalent) for level flotation in the standard you are using (ie: ISO, AS) must be used.

# Australian Builders Plate

## Level or basic flotation requirement

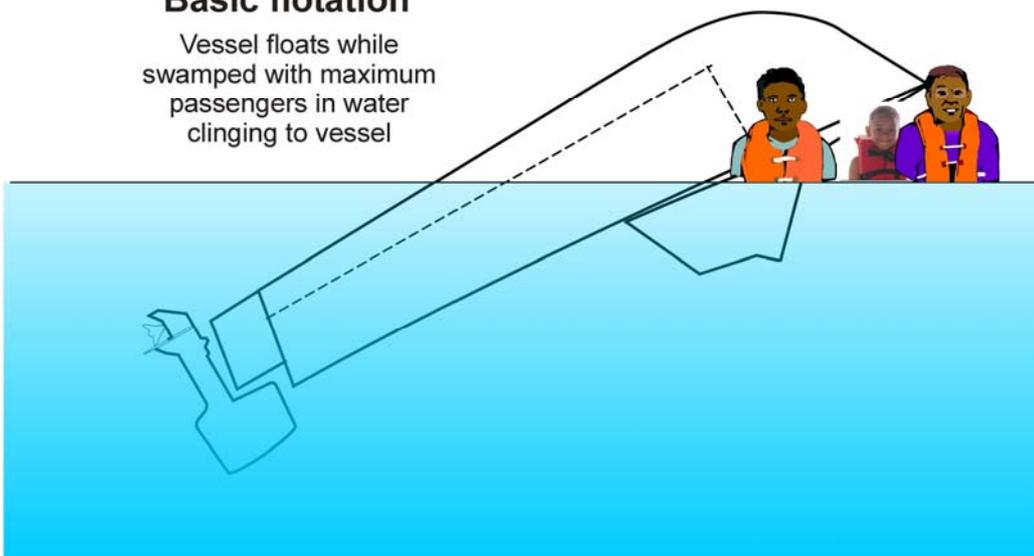
### Level flotation

Vessel floats upright when swamped with maximum passengers remaining on the vessel



### Basic flotation

Vessel floats while swamped with maximum passengers in water clinging to vessel



**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**Contact your local Maritime Safety Agency**