



# AUSTRALIAN BUILDERS PLATE

## Questions frequently asked by builders

### Implementation of the ABP plate

#### 1. Which boats are required to have an ABP plate?

All boats are required to have an ABP plate with the exception of second hand vessels; amphibious vehicles; 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 racing boat a sailing vessel, a submersible, an aquatic toy.

Other exceptions include vessels subject to a Certificate of Survey; and Personal Water Craft (PWC) and Inflatable boats provided they comply with other requirements.

#### 2. Who is responsible for supplying the information on the plate?

The information on an ABP can only be approved by one of 3 persons who must be a legal entity in Australia:

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

In the majority of cases the information will be expected to be supplied by the builder.

#### 3. What is a Competent person

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

Any person approving the information on the plate is assuming responsibility for the information on that plate.

**4. How does the consumer know which of these people has supplied the information on the plate?**

The person who is supplying the information on the plate needs to identify themselves by name and the capacity in which they are providing the information.

Examples

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

**5. What happens if a dealer modifies a boat I have built prior to sale?**

If a dealer modifies the boat so that the information on the plate is no longer correct, then the dealer will need to ensure that a new plate is placed on the boat prior to sale.

The dealer can request that this be done by the builder, if the builder is agreeable, or alternatively by a competent person.

**6. Will the ABP be required on Personal Water Craft?**

The ABP will not be required on a PWC designed to carry two or less people.

An ABP will be required on other PWC's unless the craft already has information attached to it that states:-

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

**7. Will an ABP be required on Inflatable boats?**

Yes

Unless the vessel 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.

## HIN numbers and the ABP plate

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

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

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

### 9. If a boat has a HIN plate attached, 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.

Note: A HIN is only required in some states in Australia.

### 10. 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 fix 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. It also provides a cross-reference to ensure that the correct plate is on the boat.

### 11. 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 of production eg: 2005

## Fixing the ABP to the boat

**12. 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. In practice this could mean the transom of a small outboard boat, or by the wheel of a larger vessel.

**13. 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 construction and design****14. Does the plate have to be made out of metal?**

No

The ABP standard does not specify the material the plate should be made out of.

**15. 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.

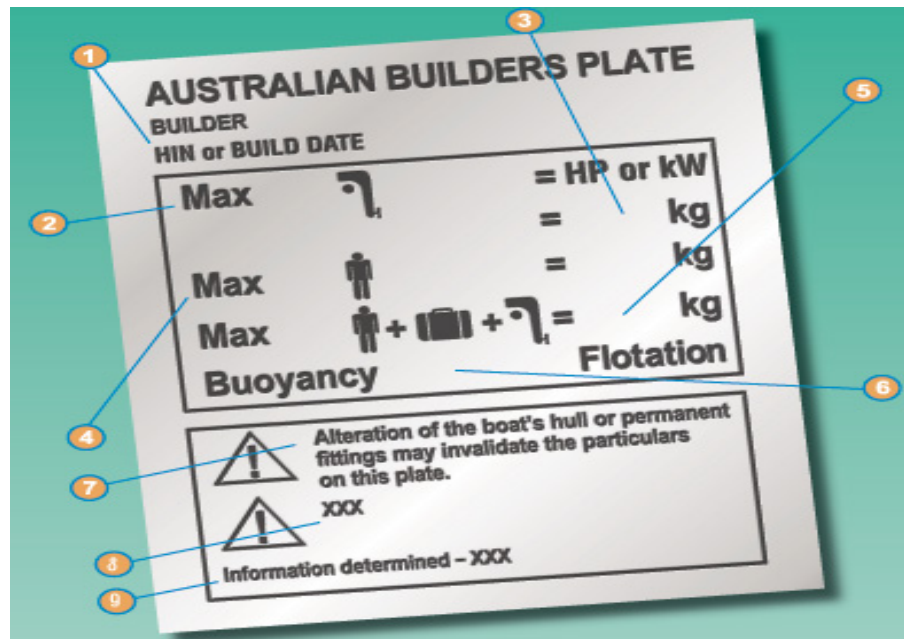
Examples of ways in which a plate might be attached include riveting, gluing, embedding, engraving or printing the plate directly onto the boat, provided that whatever method is used the plate is permanently fixed to the boat.

**16. 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.



This is a sample of an ABP for a boat less than 6 meters with an outboard motor, as of 5 September 2005. For further details, please refer to the National Standard for Australian Builders Plate for Recreational boats

- 1) Name of the person approving information on the plate, normally the builder or importer, and the capacity in which they approved the information and either the Hull Identification Number (HIN) or the year built
- 2) Maximum outboard engine power rating for which the boat has been designed and tested, expressed in kilowatts or horsepower
- 3) Maximum outboard engine weight for which the boat has been designed and tested expressed in kilograms, including the weight of any auxiliary outboard.
- 4) Maximum number of persons on the boat expressed as a whole number and in kilograms.
- 5) The maximum load that the boat has been designed and tested to carry when underway, This includes persons, maximum outboard engine weight allowed including any auxiliary engines, and carry-on equipment such as personal equipment, personal safety equipment, spare parts tools, dry provisions, fishing tackle, portable tanks and their contents, It does not include the mass of the contents of fixed fuel or water tanks.
- 6) For boats less than 6 metres in length there will be a buoyancy statement. Up until July 2006, the terms used may be either inadequate flotation, basic flotation, or level flotation. After July 2006 the term "inadequate flotation" will no longer be permitted for use.
- 7) A mandatory warning statement that alterations may invalidate the particulars on the Australian Builders Plate.
- 8) The person approving information on the plate may also add an optional person/load capacity warning statement or other safety information.

Examples may include.

**Warning** – the recommended maximum persons to be carried on the flybridge should not exceed 2 persons or 150 kilograms

**Warning** – the recommended maximum load should be reduced in bad weather or when the boat is operated offshore. Refer to the owner's manual before operation.

- 9) The standard used to determine the information provided on the plate.  
An Example might be:  
Information determined – AS 1799

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

The standard requires 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.

In principal the more stringent 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

## Engines

**18. The ABP standard asks for the maximum engine power to be recorded for outboard engines. If I sell a boat without an engine do I still have to complete the section relating to the engine rating.**

The ABP requires that all sections be completed correctly. For boats that do not have inboard engines this includes the maximum engine capacity for which the hull is rated.

The ABP provides important safety information to the consumer and allows the owner 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.

**19. Does the engine rating have to be in Kilowatts?**

No

The ABP standard states that the maximum engine capacity can be expressed in either Horse Power (Hp) or Kilowatts (kW).

## Maximum load

**20. What is included in the maximum load component?**

The maximum load is what a boat has been designed and tested to carry when underway. This includes persons, maximum outboard engine weight allowed including auxiliary engines, 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.

The symbols for maximum load are the passenger symbol and suitcase symbol, and in the case of outboard boats, also the outboard engine symbol.

## Symbols

### 21. 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 engine power and weight (including the weight of auxiliary engine/s);
- the person symbol shall be used to display information about a boat's maximum person capacity as a number and total weight;
- the person symbol and the suitcase symbol, and for outboard boats the outboard engine symbol shall be used to display information about a boat's maximum load capacity; and
- the warning symbol shall be used to display warning information

### 22. Does the suitcase symbol just represent carry-on equipment?

Yes.

The figure of a suitcase represents the carry-on equipment component of the maximum load such as personal equipment, personal safety equipment, spare parts, tools, dry provisions, fishing equipment, portable tanks and their contents etc.

## Warning Statements

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

Typically, a warning statement would caution the user. The ABP specifies two warning statements. The first is a mandatory 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"**

The second may relate to the maximum number of persons and load for the boat. This statement is discretionary, and a builder may decide not to include this warning on the boat.

For boats with a flybridge, the warning statement may provide max 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 150 Kilograms.

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

## Standard to Be Shown on Plate

### 24. 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 by which the standard is known, rather than its title (ie: AS 1799, ISO 12217).

EXAMPLE

Information determined - AS 1799.

## Imported and exported boats

### 25. I import new boats into Australia and these already come with a NMMA or CE plate. Will these still require an ABP plate?

Yes

Unless the plate complies with the ABP standard, and the person identifying themselves as having approved the information on the plate (eg: the builder, importer or competent person) is a legal entity in Australia.

Overseas plates do not normally contain the buoyancy statement and mandatory warning statement required by the ABP standard. Also the information may not be in metric and will not meet the requirements of the ABP standard for that reason.

### 26. If the boat already has an NMMA or CE plate affixed, can I add a second plate with the additional information?

Yes

Provided that they are a legal entity in Australia, the builder, importer or competent person could affix a plate that contained supplementary information to that already displayed. For example the supplementary plate could contain the weight in kilograms, the buoyancy statement, and the mandatory warning statement.

Where a supplementary plate is used, the person providing the information for the supplementary plate should be aware that they are approving the information contained on both the existing and the supplementary plate and would also need to be identified on the plate.

### 27. I build boats in Australia for export overseas; Will I need to put ABP on these boats?

No

An ABP is only required for boats sold for use in Australia.

## Flotation

### 28. 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. but in calm water should allow bailing of the boat.”

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.

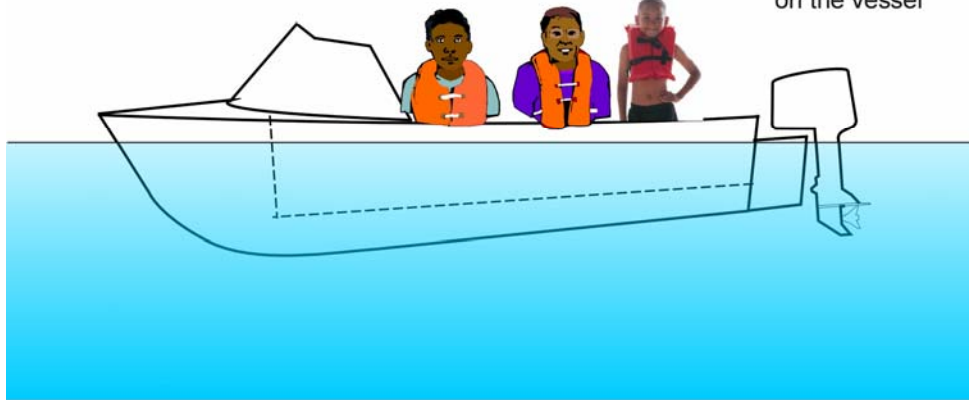
The illustration overleaf helps to explain these two terms.

# Australian Builders Plate

## Level or basic flotation requirement

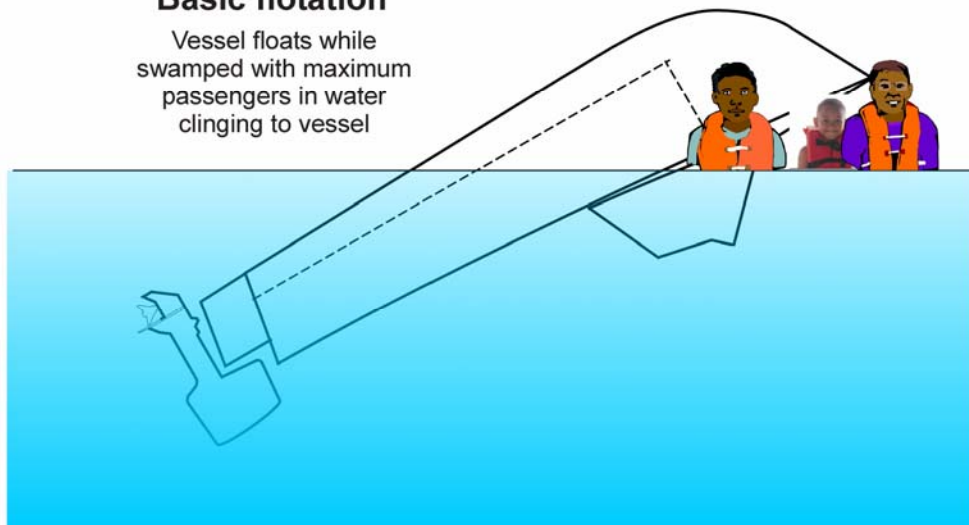
### Level flotation

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

National Marine Safety Committee  
Level 5, 9-13 Young Street, Sydney  
PO Box R1871 Royal Exchange NSW 1225  
Phone (02) 9247 2124 Fax (02) 9247 5203  
[www.nmsc.gov.au](http://www.nmsc.gov.au) [secretariat@nmsc.gov.au](mailto:secretariat@nmsc.gov.au)