

Australian Builders Plates

Questions frequently asked by dealers



1. How will my customers benefit from the ABP?

The ABP will help to accurately advise your customers about the performance of each boat including loading, capacity, maximum engine size, buoyancy and any other additional information the manufacturer wishes to provide. This information will help your customer to pick the boat that is right for their needs, from the number of people they can carry to the horsepower that they need. Because the information on the ABP is uniform your customer will also be more readily and able to compare different types and models of boats, including imported boats.

2. Will boats be any safer?

The ABP will ensure that all boats less than 6 metres possess a minimum standard of buoyancy and will float when swamped. This may encourage buyers to purchase a new boat with buoyancy over a second hand vessel without any flotation.

3. Will it cost me more to buy a boat with an ABP?

The ABP should not increase the price where the boat is already being built to a standard and is sufficiently buoyant already. However models that aren't currently built to a standard, and lack flotation will need to be upgraded to meet the ABP standard. This may result in some manufacturing cost increases.

4. Can I sell a boat without an ABP?

No. Builders or dealers will not be allowed to sell boats built after the commencement date without an ABP, unless of course it is a boat that is exempt from the ABP requirements.

5. Can I still sell my old stock?

Yes. Boats without an ABP can still be sold provided they were built before the standard is introduced through legislation.

6. Which vessels are required to have an ABP?

- All recreational boats that are built after the introduction of the standard on 28 September 2006
- Those vessels that are exempt from registration under *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulations 2004* for example: fishing vessels less than 10m, certain tenders and barges, commercial vessels with engine power of less than 3 kW and so on that are built after the introduction of the standard.

7. Which vessels are not required to have an ABP?

There are some recreational vessels that do not require an ABP, these include:

- a rowing shell used for racing or rowing training
- a second hand ship
- an amphibious vehicle
- a canoe, kayak or surf ski or similar vessel designed to be powered by paddle
- a pedal powered boat
- a sailboard or sail kite or other similar ship
- a surf row boat
- a racing boat
- a hydrofoil or hovercraft
- a sailing vessel
- a submersible
- an aquatic toy
- a boat built before the introduction of the standard.

A second hand ship means a ship that has been used previously, other than used only as follows:

- (a) in the course of being built or tested
- (b) by the owner builder of the ship
- (c) by the builder of the ship
- (d) for transporting the ship for sale
- (e) for demonstrating the ship to a purchaser.

Other exceptions include:

- vessels that are intended for commercial operational and are covered by a certificate of survey or registration
- personal watercraft (PWC) and Inflatable boats provided they comply with the requirements outlined in questions 3 and 4.

Definition of a boat built before the introduction of the standard:

- Vessels that have reached a stage of construction at which the ship was identifiable as a ship of a particular type; and a part of the ship had been fabricated and assembled and that part had a mass of at least 50 tonnes or one percent of the mass of all structural material of the proposed completed ship, whichever is lesser.

8. Will the ABP be required on personal watercraft (PWC)?

Yes. An ABP will be required on PWC that carry three or more people **UNLESS** the craft already has clearly visible information affixed to the craft by the builder specifying the number of persons the vessel may carry and the total weight of persons and equipment (expressed in kilograms) that the craft is capable of carrying as recommended by the builder.

An ABP **is not required** on PWC that are designed to carry two or less people.

9. 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.

10. Is there still a requirement to attach a capacity label to vessels that have an ABP?

Generally No – However there are exceptions. A capacity label will still need to be attached in the secondary steering position.

11. What advice should I follow if my capacity label and ABP have conflicting information?

The capacity label provides a persons capacity of a boat that does not take into account whether the boat can support that number of persons if the boat is swamped. The Australian Builders Plate person capacity for boats under 6 metres in length takes the capacity of the swamped boat into account. In the event of an inconsistency between the Capacity Label and the ABP, always assume that the lower capacity is the one to use. As a general rule, the Australian Builders Plate will provide information that is based on a more comprehensive assessment. If in doubt, obtain clarification from the manufacturer or the person who approved the information on the Australian Builders Plate.

12. Who is authorised to approve the information on an ABP?

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 supplied by the builder.

13. 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,

14. 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. They must be a legal entity in Australia. 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.

Examples

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

15. What happens if I modify a boat 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 have a new plate placed on the boat with the information on the plate approved by a competent person. Note that this only applies to new boats prior to sale to the consumer.

16. What level of modification requires a new ABP?

Any modification that renders the information on the existing plate to be inaccurate requires a new plate to be fitted to the boat. Examples:

Removal of a floatation chamber/seat to install a live bait tank would alter the buoyancy of the craft and require a new plate. The fitting of accessories such as additional seats, fish boxes, extra or larger fuel tanks, extra batteries etc would add weight to the boat and may require the stated load capacity of the boat to be reduced. Most manufacturers supply an options list with their craft.

17. Is there any way I can avoid having to change the plate if I customise a boat?

If the boat builder determines the information on the plate to allow for a generic set of "standard customisation options" that reflects normal purchaser demand plus a small margin of safety, then the dealer can option up to that level without having to alter the ABP. If modifications or customisation occurred outside of the predetermined set of "standard customisation options" then a new ABP would need to be determined.

18. 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 (for example: the builder, importer or competent person) has a legal entity in Australia. However overseas plates do not normally contain the buoyancy statement and a 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.

19. 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.

20. What happens if I sell a boat without an engine?

The ABP provides important safety information to the consumer including the maximum engine weight and horse power. This allows the owner of the vessel to fit an appropriate engine at a later date.

21. 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).

22. What happens if I fit an auxiliary outboard to the boat?

The fitting of an auxiliary mounting plate and auxiliary outboard would not affect the allowable power of the outboard on the ABP plate. The information about the maximum outboard engine power rating applies only to the boat's primary engine. The power of any reserve outboard is excluded. However the auxiliary engine would need to be counted towards the total allowable weight of outboards

specified on the plate. The reason is that the auxiliary outboard is located on or near the transom where it is likely to have a significant affect on trim.

23. What information does the plate give me about the boats engines?

The plate provides information about the maximum horsepower or kilowatts of the primary outboard engine only, and the maximum weight of all outboard engines that can be carried on or near the transom including the weight of auxiliary motor.

24. What information does the plate give me about number of people that can be carried?

The plate provides both the maximum number of people that can be carried in the boat and the total weight of those people. On some plates additional information regarding the loading may be provided in a warning statement. This statement could cover matters such as reduced loading for flybridges and adverse conditions.

Note that plates issued prior to 23 October 2009 will have persons capacity based on 75 kg per person. More recent plates based on the newer edition are based on 80 kg per person.

25. What standard has the boat been built to?

The plate will only identify which standard has been used to determine the information provided on the plate. This does not necessarily mean that the boat has been built to that standard.

26. What is meant by basic and level flotation?

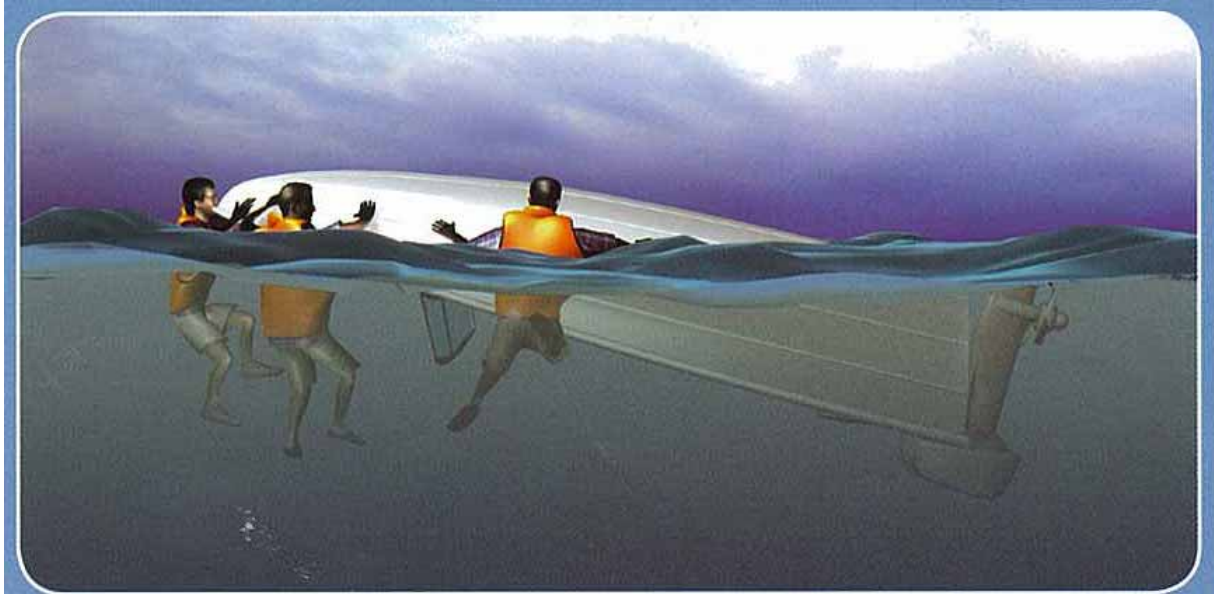
Basic Flotation

The ABP Standard defines basic flotation as “a flotation system that will prevent 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 (i.e.: ISO, AS) must be used.

Level Flotation

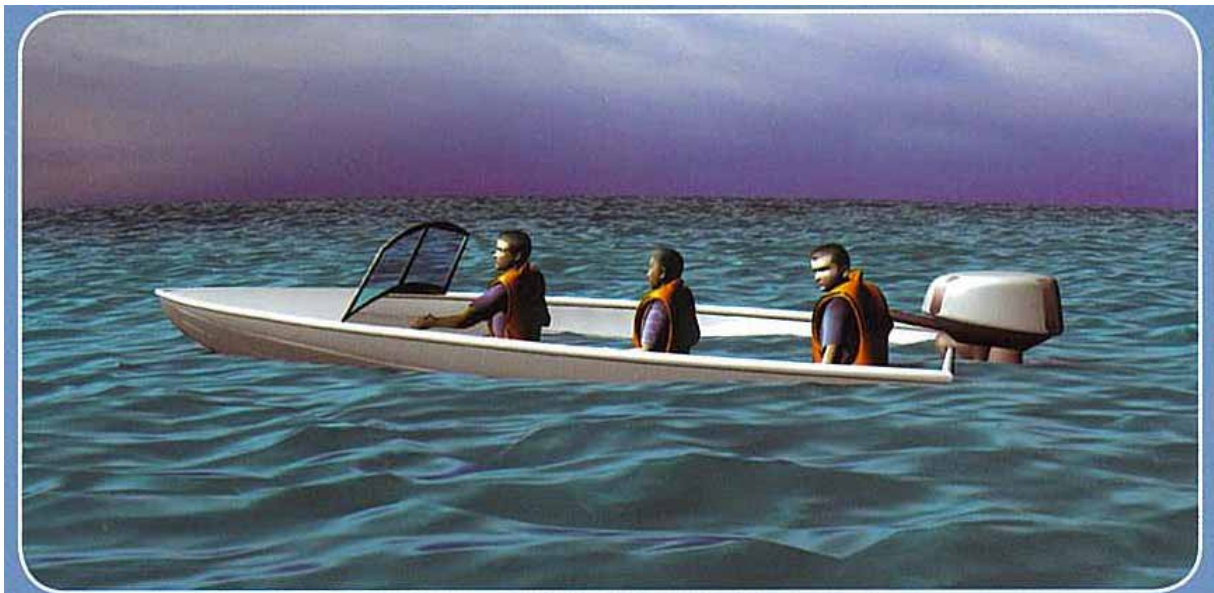
Level flotation is defined in the ABP standard as being “a flotation system that will prevent a boat carrying its maximum load from sinking when swamped, assuming the occupants remain within the boat supported by the flotation system. The flotation system must be such that it will keep the swamped boat 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 (i.e.: ISO, AS) must be used. The illustrations below help to explain this.

Basic flotation

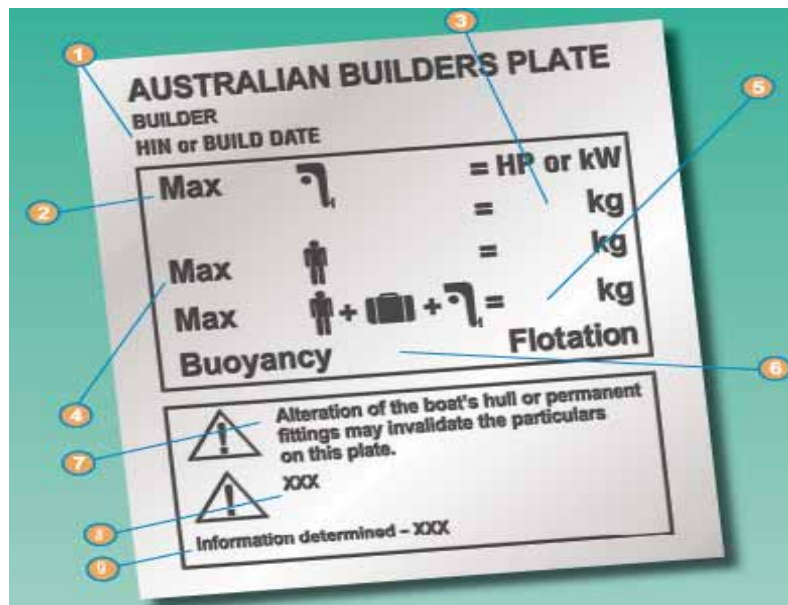


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This is a sample of an ABP.



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 carryon 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. An example may include. Warning – the recommended maximum persons to be carried on the flybridge should not exceed 2 persons.

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

For more information

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