

Proposed ABP Standard – Edition 5

Frequently Asked Questions regarding the proposed ABP Standard to assist with public consultation

This guidance is designed to assist consulted parties to read and understand the changes to ABP requirements contained within the proposed ABP Standard (edition 5).

This document is applicable to the proposed ABP Standard (edition 5) at the time of initial public consultation. Alteration of the proposed ABP Standard may invalidate the FAQs contained herein.

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Definitions

ABP – The Australian Builders Plate, which is affixed to recreational vessels as required by the National Standard for The Australian Builders Plate for Recreational Boats.

ABP Standard – The current edition (edition 4) of the National Standard for The Australian Builders Plate for Recreational Boats, accessible [here](#):

ARBSC – The Australian Recreational Boating Safety Committee.

CE – Conformité Européenne (certification marking).

HIN – Hull Identification Number.

Proposed Standard – The draft National Standard for The Australian Builders Plate for Recreational Boats (Edition 5).

Specified Standards – Documents that determine vessel build standards and associated calculations. These are the three referenced standards in the National Standard for The Australian Builders Plate for Recreational Boats. The specified standards referenced are the relevant Australian Standard (**AS**), American Boat & Yacht Council (**ABYC**) Standard and the International Organisation for Standardisation (**ISO**) Standards.

General Overview

Proposed Changes

1. What major changes are proposed?

The proposed ABP Standard (ed.5) is not a major departure from the current ABP Standard (edition 4). The primary change is to rewrite the Standard in a manner which reduces ambiguity.

Changes that have been proposed include:

- **Introducing the concept of “full accordance”.**
Eg. Where the current ABP Standard requires that maximum person load is listed- “..as recommended by the boat’s builder..” the proposed Standard requires- “..the maximum person capacity for the boat as determined in accordance with the specified standard.”
- **Requiring that flotation is fitted in accordance with the specified standards (for boats less than six metres in length).**
The current ABP Standard allows ISO or ABYC standards to be nominated for a boat, without fitting flotation that meets nominated standard’s requirements. It is proposed that flotation must be fitted in accordance with the standard used. *Eg. Most outboard powered vessels (under six metres) using ISO or ABYC will be required to fit level flotation.*

As AS1799 allows basic flotation to be fitted, basic flotation will still be acceptable where AS1799 is the nominated standard.
- **Clearly state where values that don’t conform with the specified standard may be used.**
Make clear that a boat builder may list engine power rating, person capacity and maximum load that is lower (safer) than the values calculated from specified standards.
- **Move auxiliary engine mass from “outboard engine mass” to “maximum load”.**
The ABP Standard currently requires that when a boat may be fitted with an auxiliary engine, an allowance for the auxiliary engine mass is provided for in the maximum engine mass value. It is proposed that (when a boat may be fitted with an auxiliary engine) the mass of the auxiliary engine and associated masses (batteries, mounting brackets, etc) are allocated mass from the vessels maximum load.

- **Change from optional to mandatory warning statements.**

The current ABP Standard contains an optional warning statement regarding the decreasing of loading masses in certain conditions ("reduction of load"). For boats with a flybridge, it also includes an optional warning statement regarding safe passenger numbers to be carried on the flybridge.

It's proposed that these statements are made mandatory where applicable; and that the "reduction of load" warning statement references the intended operational limitations of the boat, consistent with the specified standard used.

2. What other changes are proposed?

- Where a HIN is already affixed to a boat, ensure that HIN is also displayed on the ABP.
- Provide clearer guidance regarding what constitutes a person and maximum load warning statement that is consistent with the specified standard used.
- Provide clearer guidance regarding the responsibility for determining and fixing ABPs.
- The addition of new examples/scenarios.
- The removal of unnecessary technical standards.
- Update administrative and background information.
- General restructure of document to reduce ambiguity, improve consistency and ease of understanding.

Changes in Scope and Application

3. Does the proposed Standard expand the scope of ABPs (eg. require old boats have ABPs fitted)?

No.

The proposed Standard does not expand the scope of ABP requirements beyond boats with current ABP requirements.

4. Have the objectives of the ABP Standard been changed?

No.

The ABP objectives have not been changed. The proposed Standard is designed to better deliver the existing ABP objectives.

5. Does the proposed Standard mandate that boats are built to specified standards?

No.

The proposed Standard seeks to minimise areas where the ABP Standard moderates the specified standards and ensure relevant aspects of specified standards are complied with. It does not require full compliance with build standards.

Reasons for Changes

6. Why are these changes proposed?

The proposed changes address issues identified since the publication of the current ABP Standard (2011). They're intended to improve safety outcomes to meet the original objectives of the Standard, to clarify parts of the Standard where there may be ambiguity in its interpretation; and to make the standard easier to read and apply.

For supporting justifications of specific changes, please see Chapter 2 of this document – “Specific Changes”.

7. What were the objectives of the Standard review?

The Australian Recreational Boating Safety Committee recommended that a reviewed Standard should:

- Moderate the values obtained by the specified standards as little as possible.
- Contain clauses written in clear English, without ambiguity between ABP definition clauses and specified standard definitions.
- Ensure loading values listed on ABPs do not exceed those calculated from a specified standard.
- Encourage level flotation for vessels measuring less than 6 metres.
- Update administrative references.

Process and Timeline of this ABP Standard Review

8. Who drafted this proposed Standard?

To ensure a nationally consistent approach between marine regulators, the initial stages of this proposed review were conducted by a government Working Group comprising representatives from each of the Australian marine regulators.

The consultation phase will ensure adequate opportunity for any interested parties to participate in this review and provide comment.

9. When will a new Standard come into force?

Following the public consultation period, the proposed ABP Standard, along with consultation feedback, will be reviewed by a Working Group comprised of industry and government representatives.

Upon completion, the proposed Standard must be endorsed by the Transport & Infrastructure Council (a Council of Australian Governments sub-council) who will table a commencement date for the new Standard.

The commencement of a proposed Standard will be subject to the timeframes and priorities of the Transport & Infrastructure Council.

10. Do I have to re-plate my existing boats when the new ABP Standard is published?

Boats that were plated prior to the commencement of a new ABP Standard will not require re-plating, if they comply with the ABP Standard in force at the time of plating.

If, for any reason, a boat requires a new ABP, that ABP should comply with the ABP Standard in force at the time of plating.

11. Will the new ABP Standard require me to obtain new Builders Plates?

Potentially.

The proposed ABP Standard does not mandate ABP size or appearance beyond minimum requirements in relation to text. Boat builders may need to obtain new plates to comply with the proposed Standard, if their current plates do not have room to incorporate relevant mandatory warning statement(s).

Restructuring of ABP Standard

12. How has the ABP Standard been restructured?

Significant effort has been committed to improving the ease of understanding of the ABP Standard.

Major structural changes include:

- The addition of a “scope” for each chapter, so readers may quickly locate desired information
- Improved logic of chapter titles
- Removal of definitions not used in the Standard
- Addition of definitions used in the Standard
- Improvements to the consistency of terminology (it’s proposed that “relevant national or international standards”, “referenced standards”, “standard specified” or “nominated standards” are now termed “specified standards”)

- Moving requirements out of subordinate, small font “Notes” and into actual clauses
- Where clauses currently reference other chapters, bring the information together into a single clear clause
- Introduce a table identifying which specific standard is to be used for each item of information (Eg. ABYC Buoyancy Values = ABYC H-8)
- Introduce a reference table listing vessel requirements, so a boat builder may easily understand what is required without flipping back-and-forward in the Standard

This new structure provides a simpler presentation of information and should remove some ambiguity.

Specific Changes

13. Changes to flotation requirements (boats less than six metres in length).

The current ABP Standard allows ISO or ABYC standards to be nominated for a boat without fitting flotation that meets the ISO/ABYC requirements. The proposed Standard removes the moderation of the specified standards that allows non-conforming flotation to be fitted.

In effect, this means boat builders must choose a standard that allows basic flotation (AS1799) if they wish to fit basic flotation.

This will reduce moderation of the specified standards and encourage more builders to fit level flotation, which is a better safety outcome.

14. Changes to ABP location requirements.

The proposed Standard aims to clarify ABP location requirements without specifically mandating set ABP locations for different types of vessels. It does so by providing greater guidance regarding where ABPs should be fitted.

This change has been made as it has been identified that many boat builders are placing ABPs in poor locations where they're not readily seen by operators.

15. Changes to allow certain deviations from the specified standard calculated values.

The current Standard is unclear regarding whether boat builders may nominate ABP values that are more conservative/lower than those calculated in accordance with a specified standard. The proposed Standard seeks to address this by clarifying that outboard engine power, person capacity and maximum load values listed may be lower than the values calculated from a specified standard.

This change should clarify what is required when calculating an ABP and accommodate the common practice of listing conservative values. While the specified standards each contain mechanisms to reduce calculated values, it was considered beneficial to clarify this in the ABP Standard.

16. Move auxiliary engine mass to “carry-on” load.

The ABP Standard currently requires that when a boat may be fitted with an auxiliary engine, an allowance for the auxiliary engine mass is provided for in the maximum engine mass value.

This is inconsistent with the requirement that maximum outboard engine mass should be determined from a specified standard (as this mass does not include an allowance for a trolling motor).

As such, it's proposed that (when a boat may be fitted with an auxiliary engine) the mass of the auxiliary engine and associated masses (batteries, mounting brackets, etc) are allocated mass from the vessels maximum load.

This change should reduce moderation of the specified standards and improve the logic of the ABP.

17. Mandatory “area of operation” and “flybridge” warning statements

The current ABP Standard contains an optional warning statement regarding the decreasing of loading masses in certain conditions (“reduction of load”).

For boats with a flybridge, it also includes an optional warning statement regarding safe passenger numbers to be carried on the flybridge.

It's proposed that these statements are made mandatory where applicable; and that the “reduction of load” warning statement references the intended operational limitations of the boat consistent with the specified standard used. Further guidance regarding “consistency” with the specified standard operational limitations is also supplied. For example:

Where AS1799 is the specified standard, this warning statement shall state that the values listed are valid for operations within protected waters only, as defined in AS1799.1.3.32 and state that protected waters are “Lakes, rivers, bays, estuaries and similar bodies of water.”

When ABYC is the nominated standard, it requires that the intended operational limitations are consistent with AS1799. This is because ABYC does not itself contain operational limitations, but the methodology and design parameters of ABYC standards are comparable to AS1799.

These changes should assist boaters to understand the operating parameters their vessel was designed for and assist risk mitigation in relation to vessels operating in unsafe conditions.








18. Requirement to list HIN where available

The current Standard permits the choice between listing a HIN or build date on an ABP, regardless of whether a boat already has a HIN number affixed. This change is proposed to provide the best available information on an ABP and decrease the possibility of swapped ABPs.

Proposed new ABP Breakdown

The proposed Australian Builders Plate example below is intended for boats under 6 metres fitted with an outboard motor. A breakdown regarding each item of information (corresponding to the numbers in red) is provided over the page.

Plate size: 98mm (wide) x 118mm (high)

AUSTRALIAN BUILDERS PLATE ¹	
3mm	Built by [XXXXX] ²
	[HIN or BUILD DATE] ³
5mm	Max  ⁴ [xxx] hp ⁵ [xxx] kg
8mm	Max  ⁶ [#] = [xxx] kg
	Max  +  +  ⁷ [xxx] kg
	Buoyancy ⁸ [xxx] flotation
3mm	 Alteration of the boat's hull or permanent fittings may invalidate the particulars on this plate. ⁹
8mm	 The values on this plate have been calculated for operations in [XXX] waters. The maximum persons and maximum load should be reduced in bad weather, or when the boat is operated outside these waters. Refer to the owner's operating manual for more information. ¹⁰
	Information determined [XXXX] ¹¹

NOTE: Changes from the current ABP processes for determining information are highlighted below in yellow.

- (1) The title “Australian Builders Plate”.
- (2) The name of the boat’s builder, determined in accordance with the Standard and relevant legislation.
- (3) The HIN or build date – **where a HIN is present, it must be used.**
- (4) *For boats with an outboard motor* - The outboard engine power rating, as determined in accordance with the specified standard.
- (5) *For boats with an outboard motor* - The maximum outboard engine mass for the boat as determined in accordance with the specified standard.
- (6) The maximum person capacity for the boat as determined in accordance with the specified standard.
- (7) The maximum load capacity for the boat as determined in accordance with the specified standard. **(Including the mass of any auxiliary outboard engine that may be carried.)**
- (8) The buoyancy statement specifying whether the boat, as designed and tested, meets the requirements for either Basic flotation or Level flotation. **Where the specified standard requires that level flotation be fitted to the boat, the boat shall have level flotation fitted.**
- (9) The mandatory statement: “WARNING – Alteration of the boat’s hull or permanent fittings may invalidate the particulars on this plate”.
- (10) The **mandatory** operating capacity warning statement/s (consistent with the specified standard) providing information to the consumer as to any operational limitations, or reductions required to the maximum load or maximum person capacity in different operating conditions. **Where ABYC standards are the specified standard, this warning statement shall be consistent with the operational capacity contained within AS1799.**
- (11) The name of the standard used to determine the information on the plate.

Australian Builders Plate – Miscellaneous questions raised during the ABP Consultation process (2019)

The following guidance is applicable to both the current and proposed ABP Standards.

Question 1.

For the determination of ABP information (such as flotation), can I elect to choose values based on “calculations only” or “tests only,” or do I have to do both (calculations + tests) and use the most conservative results?

Answer

The requirements as listed in the specified standard shall be met.

For example, when determining flotation, AS1799 (Appendix B2.) states:

“The equations and methods of calculation set out in this Appendix provide a guide to the minimum volume and appropriate distribution of flotation material required to maintain basic or level flotation.....

Level flotation needs to be verified by a test in accordance with Appendix C.”

Therefore, AS1799 indicates that a calculation for basic flotation is acceptable, but for level flotation a calculation to estimate the amount and position of flotation material and a verification swamp test is required. The swamp test result would ultimately determine the amount and placement of foam.

Question 2.

Importers were advised at the BIA - ABP Forum (Southport Yacht Club, June 2019) that:

- a. They need to fix an ABP to vessels they supply.
- b. The presence of an ABYC or CE “capacity plate” is not a sufficient replacement for an ABP.
- c. The information would need to be on an Australian Builders Plate.

Why would you put another plate on the vessel when it already complies with the information?

Answer

The main reasons an ABP is still required when ABYC or CE plates are fitted are:

1. The initial information may have been calculated by a non-Australian entity, leaving little recourse in the case of incorrect information.
2. CE plates don't include all the information on an ABP (they have no flotation statement and no warning statement re. modification)
3. ABYC plates have no flotation statement, no outboard mass, no build date, no warning statement and are typically listed in pounds (not kgs)

4. ABPs allow consumers to easily compare boats like-for-like and make informed decisions.

Question 3.

At the BIA - ABP Forum (Southport Yacht Club, June 2019) some requirements of boat dealers were discussed. Significant interest was paid to the requirement that suppliers of new boats must recalculate ABP values if they fit modifications which invalidate ABP values.

Is this requirement correct?

Answer

Yes.

If a boat dealer fits modifications or accessories to a boat prior to the first supply of that vessel to a consumer, they assume the responsibility to ensure that ABP values are correct.

If the modifications or accessories invalidate the values on the ABP, they must ensure ABP values are recalculated and a new, compliant ABP is fitted to the vessel.

Example:

If a boat displays an ABP with:

- *a maximum load of 350 kg comprised of*
- *a maximum person load of 160 kg;*
- *a maximum outboard mass of 150 kg; and*
- *a carry-on mass of 40 kg.*

And a boat dealer then fits:

- *an outboard motor and controls weighing 150 kg; and*
- *an auxiliary trolling motor and 2 batteries weighing 65 kg*

This invalidates the ABP by exceeding the stated values. The dealer then assumes the responsibilities of the builder and must re-calculate the ABP values and fit a new ABP while removing the initial ABP.

In this example the result is likely to be a reduction in passenger numbers and carry on load.