

Frequently asked questions- *ABP Standard update*

National Standard for the Australian Builders Plate for Recreational Boats - Edition 5

These frequently asked questions (**FAQs**) are provided to assist with the understanding of the Australian Builders Plate Standard – Edition 5 (the Standard) as endorsed in June 2020 and its application.

No guarantees are provided for the accuracy or currency of information contained in this document, nor does it constitute legal advice. It remains the responsibility of a person calculating, fitting or otherwise interacting with an Australian Builders Plate (**ABP**) to ensure they comply with relevant legislation.

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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 Standard / ABP Standard, Edition 5 (Edition 5) – The National Standard for The Australian Builders Plate for Recreational Boats endorsed by the Transport and Infrastructure Council on 5 June 2020, accessible [here](#):

ABP Standard, Edition 4 (Edition 4) The National Standard for The Australian Builders Plate for Recreational Boats, published on 23 May, 2011 and superseded by Edition 5, accessible [here](#):

ABYC – American Boat and Yacht Council.

ARBSC – The Australian Recreational Boating Safety Committee.

Boat builder – For the purposes of this document, reference to a ‘boat builder’ means a person who holds a responsibility to fix an ABP, unless otherwise specified.

CE – Conformité Européenne (certification marking).

Determining – The process of undertaking measurements, tests and calculations required to establish the information to be listed on an ABP.

HIN – Hull Identification Number.

NMMA – National Marine Manufacturers Association (United States).

Specified Standards / Specified Technical 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 (**AS1799**), American Boat and Yacht Council (**ABYC**) Standard and the International Organisation for Standardisation (**ISO**) Standards.

FAQs – The ABP Standard Edition 5 update

Summary of Edition 5

1. When is the Standard update in force?

All states (and the Northern Territory) aim to enact the Standard update in their respective legislation by **5 June 2021**.

For the Standard update to come into force, it must be enacted by respective state or territory legislation. As this process will require legislative amendment in most jurisdictions, there may be some variation in enacting dates.

Check with your local marine safety agency to confirm the exact details in your state or territory.

2. What major changes have been implemented in the Standard?

While the overall approach of the Standard is the same as previous editions, some new requirements have been introduced. It has also been significantly restructured and rewritten to reduce ambiguity and improve ease-of-use.

Major changes that have been incorporated include:

- **Requiring that information displayed on an ABP is calculated in “full compliance” with the relevant requirements of the specified standard.**

See ABP Standard Edition 5 clause 3.3.3.

For example, where previous ABP Standard editions have required that maximum person load is displayed “*as recommended by the boat’s builder.*” the Standard now requires “*The person capacity displayed shall be the person capacity for the boat as determined in compliance with the specified standard.*”

- **Requiring that flotation is fitted in accordance with the specified standard used (for boats less than six metres in length).**

See ABP Standard Edition 5, Table 4 - Row 7.

Previous ABP Standard editions allowed builders to fit either basic or level flotation, regardless of the flotation type required by the specified standard chosen.

Under the Standard, flotation must be fitted in accordance with the requirements of the standard used. As such, most outboard powered vessels (under six metres) using ISO or ABYC as their specified standards will be required to fit level flotation.

In effect, this means boat builders must choose a standard that allows basic flotation (eg. AS1799-2009) if they wish to fit that type of flotation to a boat.

- **Changing the presentation of “person capacity” on the ABP.**

See ABP Standard Edition 5, Table 4 - Row 5.

Where previous editions have displayed the maximum person load on an ABP as “**Max Persons ## = XXXkg**” the Standard changes the requirement to “**Number Persons ## or not exceeding XXXkg**”.

This change is to allow boats to be operated in excess of the person number recommended on the ABP, when person mass is not exceeded. Boaters can follow the ‘kg’ limit rather than the ‘person number’ limit.

It should be noted that state and territory legislation may not incorporate this change and boaters may still be required to follow the person number guidance on an ABP. Check with your local marine safety agency to confirm the regulations in your state or territory.

- **Move auxiliary engine mass from ‘outboard engine mass’ to ‘maximum load’.**

See ABP Standard Edition 5, Table 4 - Row 6.

The ABP Standard edition 4 required that auxiliary outboard mass, for example, trolling or reserve outboard mass, be considered as part of the ABP’s ‘maximum outboard mass’.

Under the Standard, auxiliary outboard mass and associated equipment must be considered as part of an ABP’s generic ‘maximum load’, in compliance with the requirements of the specified standard.

- **Requiring that when a HIN is already affixed to a boat, the HIN must also be displayed on the ABP.**

See ABP Standard Edition 5, Table 4 - Row 12.

When a HIN is not present on a boat, the ABP may instead provide the build date, as permitted by previous Standards.

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

See ABP Standard Edition 5, Table 4 - Row 10.

The ABP Standard edition 4 contains an optional warning statement regarding the decreasing of loading masses in certain conditions, such as poor weather.

The Standard requires all ABP's to include a warning statement regarding the 'reduction of load in adverse conditions.'

- **Changing from optional to mandatory flybridge capacity guidance (*boats with a flybridge only*).**

See ABP Standard Edition 5, Clause 2.2.1 and Table 4 - Row 11.

The ABP Standard edition 4 contains an optional capacity statement for boats with a flybridge.

The Standard requires all boats with a flybridge to include a warning statement on their ABP stating the maximum passenger capacity of the flybridge, and to fit an additional ABP adjacent to the flybridge steering position.

3. What other changes have been incorporated into the Standard?

General changes

- The document has been completely restructured to improve ease of understanding and consistency.
- Administrative and background information has been updated.
- New examples and scenarios have been added.
- Unnecessary and outdated specified standards have been removed.
- The definitions section has been updated (*Clause 1.5*).

Changes regarding vessel exemptions

- Exempt personal watercraft compliant with ISO 13590 from Standard requirements (*Clause 1.3*).
- Update ABP exemptions for some inflatable boats (*Clause 1.3.1*).

Changes regarding ABP design

- Clarify design requirements of an ABP (*Clause 2.8*).
- Clarify that additional safety information may be provided on an ABP at the discretion of the boat builder (*Clause 2.9*).
- Add new sample ABP templates (*Annex A*).

Clarifying Standard requirements

- Provide clearer guidance regarding the responsibility for determining and fixing ABPs (*Clause 3.2.2*).
- Clarify that optional fittings (such as biminis, fish-kill tanks) shall be considered by a person determining ABP values, in line with specified standard requirements (*Clause 3.3.4*).
- Clarify that values on an ABP (excepting horsepower) shall be metric (*Clause 3.4*).
- Remove the requirement that, when calculating air flotation for buoyancy, the two largest air voids are flooded.

The introduction of reference tables

- Add a table clarifying items to be listed on an ABP in line with vessel size and type (*Clause 2.5*).
- Add a table explaining symbols that may be used on an ABP (*clause 2.6*).
- Add a table to assist persons determining ABP values to identify the specified standards required (*Table 3*).

The introduction of a table outlining the 'Requirements for the information to be displayed on an ABP' and associated changes

- Display the required information to be listed on an ABP in a single, logically constructed table, improving ease of use and reducing ambiguity (*Table 4*).
- Add the requirement that flotation meets the requirements of the technical standard (*Table 4 - Row 7*).
- Include a statement encouraging the fitting of level flotation, noting it provides better safety outcomes (*Table 4 - Row 7*).
- Clarify that boats over six metres may include a buoyancy statement at the discretion of the boat builder, including methods of buoyancy other than 'level' and 'basic' flotation (*Table 4 - Row 8*).
- Provide clearer guidance regarding the text to be used for the person and maximum load warning statement (*Table 4 - Row 10*).

4. Why have these changes been made?

The changes address issues identified since the publication of Edition 4 (2011). The changes are intended:

- to improve safety outcomes
- to ensure the Standard meets its objectives
- to ensure the Standard is relevant and applicable for industry
- to clarify parts of the Standard where there may be ambiguity in its interpretation
- to make the standard easier to read and apply.

For a full breakdown of the justifications behind these changes, please read the "ABP Standard – Edition 5 Consultation Feedback Summary" available at:

<https://www.anzsbeg.com.au/>

5. Does Edition 5 apply to boats that don't currently require ABPs?

No.

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

No.

7. Does Edition 5 require that boats are built to standards?

No.

Edition 5 seeks to minimise moderation of the specified standards and ensure relevant aspects of specified standards are complied with.

It does not require that boats are fully designed and constructed to specified standard specifications.

Transition arrangements for parties responsible for fitting ABPs

8. Do I have to re-plate boats (which already have ABPs fitted) when the new Standard is published?

No, provided the boat complied with the ABP Standard in force at the time of plating.

If a boat requires a new ABP, that ABP should comply with the ABP Standard in force at that time.

9. Will the Standard update require me to obtain new Builders Plate templates?

If you are a party responsible for fitting ABPs, yes.

The change to the display of 'person number' and the switch to mandatory warning statements require new information to be listed on an ABP, which necessitates changes to ABP templates.

10. What if I supply boats into another Australian state, which requires a different edition of the Standard?

All states (and the Northern Territory) aim to enact the Standard update in their respective legislation by **5 June 2021**. However, there may be some variation with enacting dates on a state by state basis. This may mean that during the transition period some states have enacted Edition 5 before others.

Persons responsible for fitting an ABP are only required to comply with their local legislative requirements. Boat suppliers may freely trade across state or territory boundaries regardless of ABP transition dates, if boats comply with 'place-of-origin' ABP requirements.*

**The Mutual Recognition Act 1992 allows goods sold in one Australian state or territory to be sold in another without needing to meet further requirements.*

Consultation conducted and further information

11. How was Edition 5 drafted and was there a consultation process?

Edition 5 was initially drafted by representatives of Australian marine regulators overseen by the Australian Recreational Boating Safety Committee.

Public comment on the proposed update was invited between 1 November 2019 and 31 January 2020 and public forums were held in Queensland, NSW and Victoria. A total of 37 formal submissions were received - 24 via a consultation web-survey hosted by Maritime Safety Queensland and 13 via other means.

Of the 37 submissions received:

- 28 were broadly supportive of the ABP Standard update.
- 3 were broadly against the ABP Standard update.
- 6 were neutral.

An ABP Reference Group of industry and government representatives from across Australia was formed to review consultation feedback and assist in the finalisation of the Standard update. Group members included aluminium, fibreglass and polyethylene boat builders, major boat dealers and representatives from the Boating Industry Association (BIA), including the BIA Manufacturers Division.

The Reference Group met in Brisbane in February 2020, reviewed all feedback and reached majority consensus on the final draft of the ABP Standard update.

Edition 5 - Example ABP template

Plate size: 98mm (wide) x 123mm (high)

	1	AUSTRALIAN BUILDERS PLATE
3mm	2	Built by [XXXXX]
	3	[HIN or BUILD DATE]
5mm	Max	 4 [xxx] hp 5 [xxx] kg
8mm	Number	 6 [#] or not exceeding 7 [xxx] kg
	Max	 +  +  8 [xxx] kg
	Buoyancy	9 [xxx] flotation
3mm	10	 Alteration of the boat's hull or permanent fittings may invalidate the particulars on this plate.
8mm	11	 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.
	12	Information determined [XXXX]

The ABP example above is intended for boats less than six metres in length, fitted with an outboard motor.

NOTE: Changes from previous ABP Standard Editions are displayed in red and underlined below

- (1) The title: AUSTRALIAN BUILDERS PLATE.
- (2) The name of the boat builder (*or importer/competent person*), determined in compliance with the Standard and relevant legislation.
- (3) The HIN or build date – when a HIN is present, it must be used.
- (4) *For boats with an outboard motor* - the outboard engine power rating, as determined in compliance with the specified standard.
- (5) *For boats with an outboard motor* - the maximum outboard engine mass for the boat as determined in compliance with the specified standard.
- (6) The maximum number of persons for the boat as determined in compliance with the specified standard.
- (7) The maximum mass of persons for the boat, as determined in compliance with the specified standard.
- (8) The maximum load capacity for the boat as determined in compliance with the specified standard. The mass of any auxiliary outboard engine that may be carried shall be included here.
- (9) The buoyancy statement specifying whether the boat, as designed and tested, meets the requirements for either basic flotation or level flotation. When the specified standard requires that level flotation be fitted to the boat, it must be fitted.
- (10) The mandatory statement: “WARNING – Alteration of the boat’s hull or permanent fittings may invalidate the particulars on this plate”.
- (11) The mandatory operating capacity warning statement/s (consistent with the specified standard). These provide information to the consumer about any operational limitations, reductions required to the maximum load or maximum person capacity in different operating conditions.
- (12) The name of the standard used to determine the information on the plate.