



NMSC Feature

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Look Out for ABPs on New Boats

The National Marine Safety Committee has asked the boating public to look out for Australian Builders Plates when buying a new boat, since the ABP is now law in Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania.

NMSC CEO Maurene Horder said that as old stock is sold, more boats with ABPs will be coming onto the market this year.

"I can also confirm that all the remaining states and the Northern Territory aim to make the ABP law this year.

"The ABP helps people to choose which boat is best for their needs, allowing you to compare maximum outboard engine power and weight, the number of people that can be carried, how much equipment can be stowed, and buoyancy performance for smaller boats."

The ABP applies to most new recreational boats, including imported and owner built boats and aims to improve safety on our waterways.

Even though the Australian Builders Plate is a national initiative supported by industry, it is being introduced via state legislation, which means that implementation dates will vary. Here is a snapshot of the situation around Australia -

- Tasmania - Most recreational vessels built after 1 July 2006 will need to have an ABP
- Western Australia – most recreational vessels built on or after 2 September 2006 that are for sale to the public or are under application for registration for the 1st time in WA will require an ABP.
- Queensland - Most recreational vessels and all commercial and fishing vessels that are exempt from registration under *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulation 2004* and built after 28 September 2006 will require an ABP.
- New South Wales and South Australia have introduced a tick box in their registration forms as an interim measure to track ABP compliance prior to introducing legislation.
- Victoria and the Northern Territory are working to pass legislation by the end of 2007 making the ABP mandatory for most recreational vessels.

The Regulatory Impact Statement released in support of the Australian Builders Plate found that fatal and serious injuries associated with recreational boating costs Australians about \$52 million each year.

"What is important in safe operation of a boat is that it is used for the purpose for which it was designed, and that's where the ABP comes in," explained Ms Horder.

The ABP also represents a breakthrough in buoyancy regulation, as new boats less than 6 metres in length will now have level or basic flotation indicated on the plate.

According to Ms Horder, the ABP will require all boat builders to apply minimum safety standards to some key elements in the design of recreational boats.

“This scheme really brings Australia in line with similar regulations in the USA and Europe.”

Boats will not need a plate if they are: second hand; aquatic toys; amphibious vehicles; canoes, kayaks or similar boats designed to be paddle-powered such as surf skis; hydrofoils or hovercraft, pedal powered boats; personal watercraft carrying no more than two people; racing boats; rowing shells used for racing or rowing training; sailboards; sailing boats; submersibles and surf row boats.

The Australian Marine Industries Federation (AMIF) provides on line facilities for ordering plates (www.amif.asn.au). For more information and for a copy of Edition 3 of the ABP Standard, visit NMSC web site at www.nmsc.gov.au and follow the links to the ABP page.

For further information on how the ABP is or will be legislated in your state, contact your local marine safety agency.

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For further information, please contact NMSC communications officer Ursula Bishop on 0412 813 056.