

Information for Importers

The requirements of the National Standard for the Australian Builders Plate for Recreational Boats (the ABP standard) apply equally to both locally built and imported boats. The scope of the standard, setting out the types of boats it covers, is within the national standard itself. If in doubt, please contact the BIA or your local State Marine Safety Agency can also provide guidance.

A person importing a recreational boat from another country will need to ensure compliance with the ABP standard before the boat is first registered. A foreign compliance plate is not considered to be a substitute for an ABP, except in the case of inflatable boats where boats certified under the European Recreational Craft Directive or the NMMA certification program may be accepted. Plates issued under the NZ CPC program are also accepted in lieu of an ABP under the terms of the Trans-Tasman Free Trade Agreement.

The person importing the boat into Australia will be treated as the 'builder' for the purpose of complying with the ABP standard. He or she will be responsible for fitting the ABP to the boat and for the accuracy of the information on the ABP. As well, the importer's name will need to be shown on the plate at the place where the builder's name would appear if the boat had been built in Australia.

The technical standard used to determine the information must be identified and shown on the ABP. The importer should have access to this standard and be able to confirm its suitability. The acceptable technical standards are listed in the ABP standard. As well, masses need to be shown on the ABP in kilograms (kg) and the buoyancy performance, either level or basic flotation, must be stated on the plate if the boat is less than 6m in length. The maximum engine power may be stated in either kilowatts or horsepower.

Importers are cautioned that it is their responsibility to verify the accuracy of information determined overseas before placing that information on the ABP. The accuracy of information on a foreign compliance plate can generally only be verified with a new boat. With boats already in service overseas, it will be difficult to trace the source of the information and be certain that the boat has not been modified.

In particular, importers should treat information shown on 'CE' plates with great care. The laws governing the fitting of a CE plate to a boat apply only within the European Union; and in the case of recreational boats, the involvement of a Notified Body is generally required. Unfortunately, the CE system is often misunderstood and misapplied outside of Europe, especially in Asia. As a result, there have been instances of boats built outside of the European Union being fitted with CE plates that contain incorrect information, then coming into Australia.

If there is any doubt, a local competent person should be engaged to assess the information to go onto the ABP.