

16 February 2022

Chair, Australian Recreational Boating Safety Committee
Director, Maritime & Transport Safety Strategy & Policy
Safety, Environment & Regulation Division
Transport for NSW
7 Harvest Place
Macquarie Park NSW 2113

Attention: Mr Peter Harvey by email

Dear Peter,

Re: Australian Builders Plate

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the ARBSC regarding the Australian Builders Plate and industry concern regarding the lack of a supporting regulatory system for compliance.

The updated ABP has potential to deliver a significant improvement in vessel standards, safety and consumer confidence. These gains are being jeopardised and put at risk by the lack of an appropriate supporting regulatory framework for education and compliance by regulators.

The industry backed the review of the ABP and believes weaknesses that allow modifications to be made with little oversight or quality assurance regarding who can amend the plate and sporadic regulatory control, with little or no national consistency in deployment and compliance will undermine the intended positives of the ABP and, as a consequence, is leading to unsafe vessels in the market.

As an example, the BIA is aware of a self-declared certifier who is changing the maximum horsepower and/ or load capacity of new and used vessels, and issuing new, amended ABP plates to owners. This is a service where the public can fill out an online form for the certifier, attach photos, fill out desired load capacity and desired power rating fields online, and without in-person inspection or in-water testing, are able to have a new plate issued.

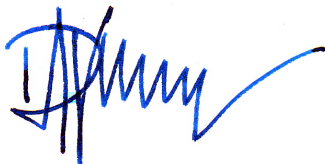
The ARBSC has a remit of national policy, guidelines and standards for recreational vessels, and should investigate this as an urgent matter of consumer confidence and public safety. Furthermore, the ARBSC should set a national guideline for audit and compliance of the ABP for adoption as appropriate by the States and Territories.

The BIA calls for urgent attention by ARBSC to respond to the following:

1. A compliance policy is required in 2022 for adoption as appropriate by State and Territory regulators across the nation to support consistency and safety;
2. ARBSC to advise ANZSBEG to make ABP a priority action in its annual workplan with education actions aimed at: the public; manufacturers; and importers. This action is necessary as compliance is only effective if there is education.
3. An ABP Reference Group comprised of regulators and key stakeholders, including BIA, is established in 2022 to promote ongoing consultation until the issues of education, audit and compliance are resolved. The BIA is ready and willing to nominate several appropriate industry representatives upon request.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mr Neil Patchett, Co General Manager at neil@bia.org.au or on 0418 279 465 to progress this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Boating Industry Association Ltd

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Darren Vaux', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Darren Vaux
President