

# Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS) scheme



## Webinar – Information for Builders and Plumbers

# Acknowledgement to Country

'In the spirit of reconciliation the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.'

## Speakers

- WELS – David Jongeneel
- WA Department of Water and Environmental Regulation – Ursula Kretzer
- ABCB – Tom Roberts
- WA Plumbing Regulator - Mike Read

# What is WELS?

- WELS stands for the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards scheme
- The WELS scheme is enforceable across Australia whenever a WELS product is supplied (sold) or offered for supply

## WELS products are:

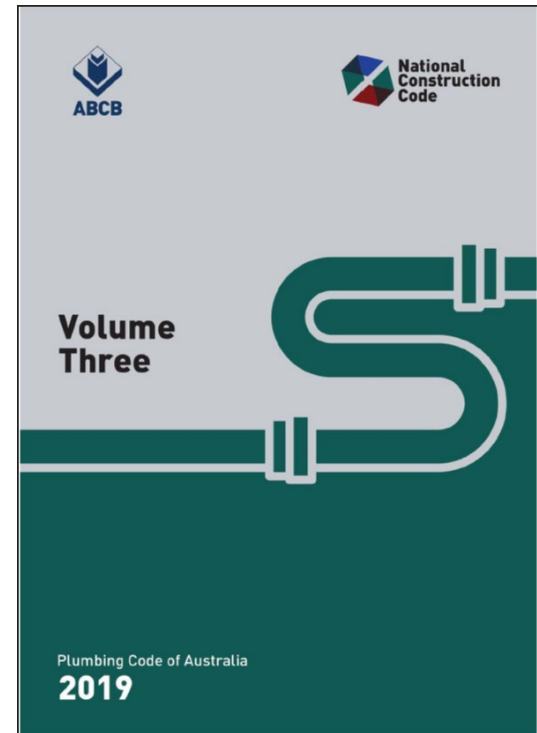
- Taps (not over a bath)
- Showers
- Toilets
- Urinals
- Flow controllers
- Dishwashers
- Clothes washing machines



# Plumbing Code of Australia, WaterMark and WELS

## Plumbing Code of Australia – part of the National Construction Code

- Technical provisions for the design and installation of plumbing and drainage systems.
- State and territory governments are responsible for enforcing the National Construction Code, including the Plumbing Code of Australia.



# Plumbing Code of Australia, WaterMark and WELS

## **WaterMark – mandatory product certification scheme**

- Certifies that plumbing and drainage products are fit for purpose and authorised for use in plumbing and drainage installations
- WaterMark scheme is owned and administered by the Australian Building Codes Board



# Plumbing Code of Australia, WaterMark and WELS

## WELS – mandatory point of sale water efficiency labelling

- Specified products are registered and labelled with water consumption information at point of sale, including when supplied as part of a modular construction component or as part of a new building or unit.
- WELS plumbing products must have WaterMark certification.
- WELS is administered by the Australian Government



# What is supply and how is this relevant to you?

**Section 7A of the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005, defines supply as**

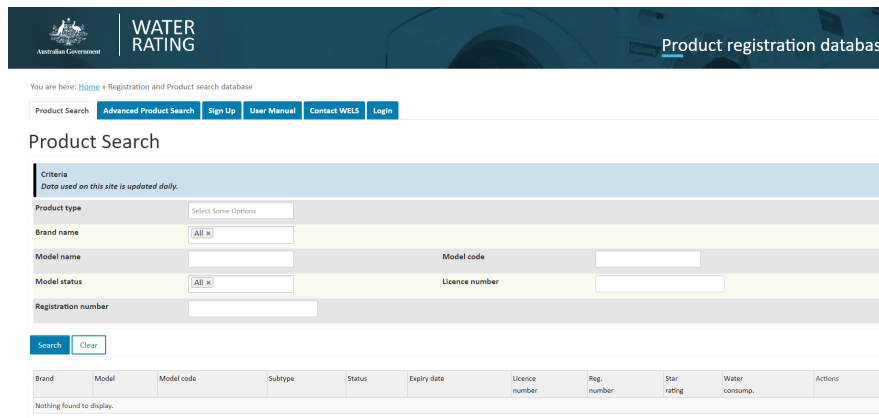
- a) 'A supply of a WELS product means a supply of the product in the course of trading or commercial activities, and includes—
  - an offer to supply; and
  - a supply (including a re-supply) by way of sale, exchange, gift, lease, loan, hire or hire-purchase; and
  - a supply as part of the supply of another thing (including as a fitting or fixture).
- b) For the purposes of subsection (a)—
  - offer to supply includes make available, expose, display or advertise; and
  - it is irrelevant whether the supply is—
  - for consideration; or
  - a wholesale or retail supply.'



# What do builders and plumbers need to do to comply with WELS?

## If you intend to supply a WELS product:

1. You should involve your client before supplying and installing products. The client may want a product with a particular water efficiency.
2. Check if the product chosen is registered at [www.waterrating.gov.au](http://www.waterrating.gov.au).

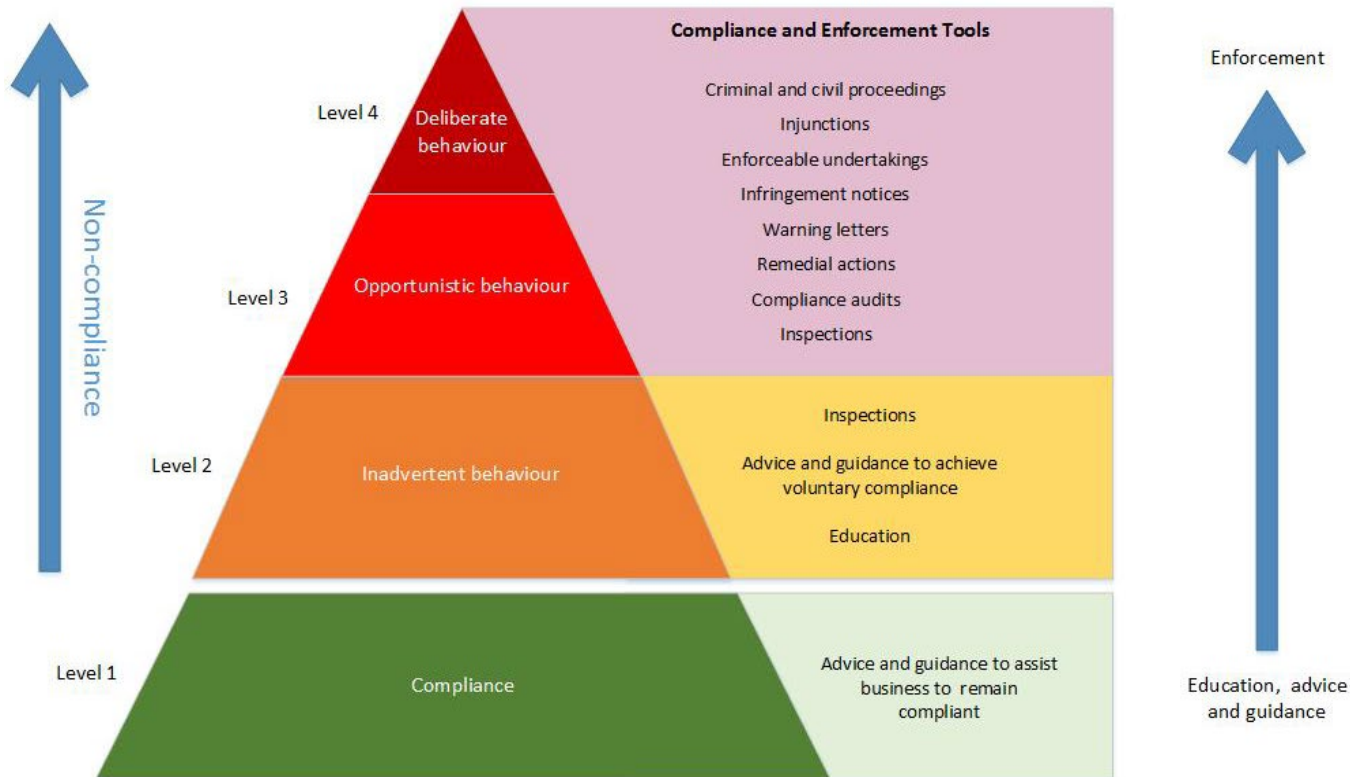


The screenshot shows the 'Product registration database' interface. At the top, there's a header with the Australian Government logo and 'WATER RATING' text. Below the header, a navigation bar includes links for 'Product Search', 'Advanced Product Search', 'Sign Up', 'User Manual', 'Contact WELS', and 'Login'. The main section is titled 'Product Search' and contains a search criteria form. The form has fields for 'Product type' (with a dropdown), 'Brand name' (with a dropdown), 'Model name' (with a dropdown), 'Model code' (with a dropdown), 'Model status' (with a dropdown), and 'Licence number' (with a dropdown). There is also a 'Registration number' field. Below the form are 'Search' and 'Clear' buttons. At the bottom, there is a table with columns: Brand, Model, Model code, Subtype, Status, Expiry date, Licence number, Reg. number, Star rating, Water consump., and Actions. The table currently shows 'Nothing found to display.'

3. Check the labelling on the product packaging before purchasing the product and see if it matches the product registration details.



# Compliance and enforcement



If you supply a product that is not WELS registered or labelled you could be given a \$6,660 infringement notice for each product you supply.

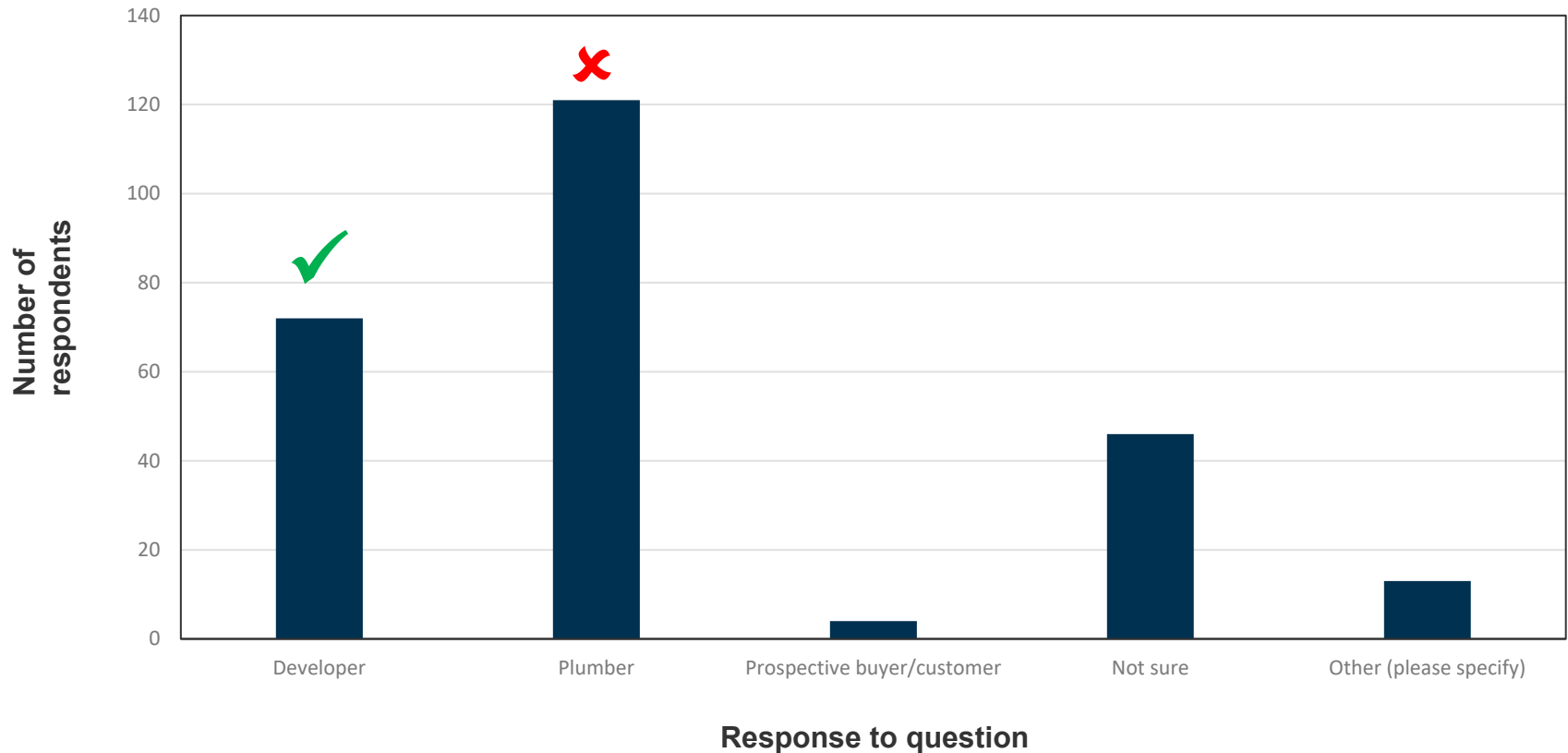
## WA WELS survey

- August 2020 survey of WA building, development and plumbing industry
  - test awareness of WELS scheme and obligations
  - Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (plumbing regulators)
  - Building industry peak bodies – Housing Industry Association, Property Council, Planning Institute
- Reach of over 28,000 ➔ 259 responses

- 60% respondents were plumbers, 17% developers.
- High level of awareness of WELS and WELS regulated products (90%)
- Most respondents knew that:
  - WELS products must also be WaterMark certified (84%)
  - supplying, displaying or installing WELS products that are not registered or correctly labelled can attract penalties (73%)
  - plumbers who supply and install WELS products are responsible for checking that the product is registered and correct information displayed (82%)
- products can be registered via the WELS website  
[www.waterrating.gov.au](http://www.waterrating.gov.au)

# Some uncertainty about developer obligations

Q6. A developer supplies, and contracts a plumber to install, 40 dishwashers in a townhouse development. Who is responsible to check that the dishwashers are registered with WELS and correctly labelled?



# Labelling requirements for new buildings

## Minimum WELS product information where products are not known

WELS product type	WELS Star Rating
Dishwasher	
Lavatory	
Shower	
Tap (Basin)	
Tap (Kitchen)	
Tap (Laundry)	
Urinal	
Clothes Washer	

# Labelling requirements for new buildings

## Minimum WELS product information where products are known

WELS product type	WELS Registration Number	Organisation WELS Licence Number	WELS Star Rating	Water Consumption (per text advice requirements)
Dishwasher				
Lavatory				
Shower				
Tap (Basin)				
Tap (Kitchen)				
Tap (Laundry)				
Urinal				
Clothes Washer				

## General levels of compliance

- We check compliance of retailers, e-Commerce platforms, manufacturers and the building industry.
- National WELS building inspection program in for stage 1 in 2017-18 found close to 100% non-compliance on inspection and builders worked with WELS to become compliant.
- Discussions with WA developers indicated low awareness of WELS obligations.
- The WELS Compliance team worked with all inspected businesses and WA developers to educate them about their obligations and to assist with changing their practices towards becoming compliant.
- WELS plans to visit Perth in May 2021 to assess levels of ongoing compliance and to continue to increase compliance across the industry.
- A recent visit to Adelaide showed a substantial increase in labelling compliance
- Compliance with the scheme is mandatory.



## How can you help

1. Check the registration of products
2. Check the labelling of products
3. Undertake a flow test – if it is excessive report it
4. Only buy products that are labelled
5. Don't remove flow controllers –
  - this will make the products non-compliant under WaterMark and you liable to replacing products or being fined.
  - This could impact on the building hydraulics and therefore the effective functioning of the reticulated water system
6. Don't substitute parts or inferior products

## Key activities for the WELS Regulator in 2021

1. Complete 3rd independent review of the WELS scheme.
2. Updates to AS/NZS to clarify WELS-labelling requirements for building developments
3. Working on a proposal to develop an in-service test standard for products
4. Continue national inspections of building industry
5. Continue monitoring and enforcing compliance on e-commerce platforms
6. Re-commence retailer inspections
7. Exploring opportunities to introduce WELS requirements into the national training package and CPD for builders and plumbers.

## Further information

- Email - [welscompliance@awe.gov.au](mailto:welscompliance@awe.gov.au)
- Phone - 1800 372 746
- Website - [www.waterrating.gov.au](http://www.waterrating.gov.au)
- Subscribe to our InkWELS newsletter



Australian Government

## Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS) scheme

**Know your legal obligations.**  
When planning a new building or re-fitting,  
you must supply WELS registered and  
labelled products.



[www.waterrating.gov.au](http://www.waterrating.gov.au)

# Thank you and Questions?

We would appreciate if you can take the time to complete a survey as well as subscribing to our newsletter for important updates to the scheme that may impact on you