



Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards scheme

This bulletin has been published to provide information on the objectives and requirements of the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS) scheme. Registered builders and licensed plumbers need to be aware of their obligations under the current regulatory requirements.

WELS legislation and enforcement

WELS is a federally based scheme that requires certain water using products to be rated and appropriately labelled. WELS is a mandatory point of sale requirement under the *Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005* (the Act), meaning these products cannot be legally sold in Australia without a WELS label. WELS was implemented in 2005 after it was identified that substantial water savings and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions would be achieved.

Monitoring and enforcement of rating and labelling requirements is carried out by WELS Regulator Inspectors. Breaches of the Act may result in infringement notices being issued, significant fines and penalties, the withdrawal of a product from the market, deregistration of a product or commencement of prosecution procedures.

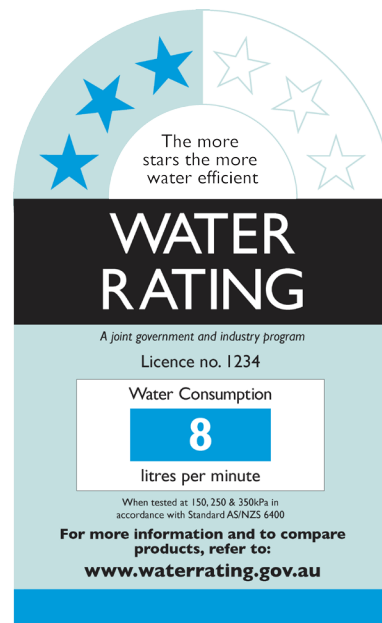
Non-compliant products may be reported through the submission of a complaint to the WELS regulator.

Water-using products

WELS currently covers the following water-using products:

- showers
- taps
- flow controllers
- toilets
- urinals
- clothes washing machines
- dishwashers.

WELS rated products are required to be certified under the WaterMark Certification Scheme. WELS excludes second-hand products, products imported into Australia for personal use, and waterless urinals.



Typical WELS water rating label.

Building regulation

Requirements for WELS rated plumbing products to be installed in new Class 1 buildings are currently in the Western Australian addition (WA 2.3) of the Building Code of Australia (BCA), Volume two of the National Construction Code (NCC) series.

Although WELS is not specifically referenced, there is parallel water saving requirements contained in the Plumbing Code of Australia (Part B1), Volume 3 of the NCC series. Registered builders and licensed plumbers should be aware of the requirements of their respective legislation and ensure the correct WELS rated and WaterMark certified products are installed in building projects.

WELS taps and shower ratings

The WELS star ratings reflect the flow in litres per minute flowing through the plumbing fitting, as indicated in the following tables:

Table 1: Tap WELS rating

WELS rating	Flow rate (L/min)
0 star	>16
1 star	>12 <16
2 star	>9 <12
3 star	>7.5 <9
4 star	>6 <7.5
5 star	>4.5 <6
6 star	<4

Table 2: Shower WELS rating

WELS rating	Flow rate (L/min)
0 star	>16
1 star	>12-16
2 star	>9-12
3 star	>7.5-9
4 star	N/A
5 star	N/A
6 star	N/A

Toilets and washing machines

Toilets are rated as either 3 star with a nominal discharge volume of 6L full flush and 3L half flush or rated as 4 star with a nominal discharge volume of 4.5L full flush and 3L half flush. However all toilets associated with new Class 1 buildings, or associated Class 10a buildings, must be a minimum of 4 stars WELS rated dual flush under clause 2.3.1 of the BCA Volume 2 of the NCC series.

Washing machines shall not be less than 3 stars for a machine 5kg or more capacity, or less than 2.5 stars for a machine less than 5kg capacity.

Further information

More information about WELS can be found on the [WELS website](#). For more information about WaterMark, visit the [Australian Building Codes Board website](#).

Disclaimer

The information contained in this bulletin is provided as general information only and should not be relied upon as legal advice or as an accurate statement of the relevant legislation provisions. If you are uncertain as to your legal obligations you should obtain independent legal advice.

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