

WELS: An architect's and specifier's guide to Australia's water efficiency labelling scheme

What is WELS?

The Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS) Scheme is a joint Commonwealth, state and territory regulatory scheme requiring a range of water-using products to be labelled for water efficiency. It is designed to help Australian households save water, energy, greenhouse gas emissions and money.

Under the scheme, product suppliers are required to provide water efficiency information, and star ratings, to consumers for products such as:

- clothes washers
- dishwashers
- showers
- taps
- toilets
- registered flow controllers *and*
- urinals (not waterless urinals).

What does WELS mean for architects and specifiers?

Architects and specifiers have a unique role in influencing and promoting more environmentally sustainable buildings for the future. They are also able to advise their clients on the most energy and water efficient product options which will lead to cost and environmental savings over the life of the structure.

Architects and specifiers need to ensure that any products they specify are registered and labelled under the WELS Scheme, as these are the only products that can legally be supplied to consumers.

They also need to determine if they are considered to supply or sell products under the scheme. If this is the case they will need to meet legal obligations to ensure that the products:

- are WELS registered and labelled *and*
- have the labels clearly visible to the customer while offered for supply.

Obligations for building developments and display homes

For display homes:

- all inspection homes/units must display WELS labelled stock (as this is considered to be the point of supply) *and*
- must contain stock which is WELS compliant.

When is an architect or specifier supplying a product?

You are considered responsible for supplying a product if you:

- include product supply as part of tendering or offering work in building and construction projects or in building refurbishment and renovation *and/or*
- supply products as part of installation or repair work, or for any other purpose.

This is true whether or not the client requests a product.

Note that the WELS Scheme does not mandate installation requirements – these are specified under relevant state and territory plumbing/building codes and regulations.

How do you know if a product is registered?

All products with a WELS label should be registered. You can search for registered products on the WELS product search database at <http://search.waterrating.com.au/default.shtml>.

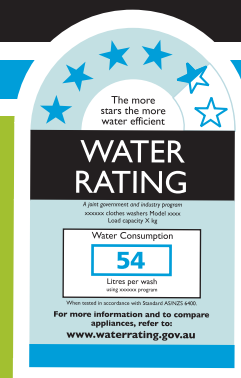
For registration support email wels@environment.gov.au or call 1800 803 772.



www.waterrating.gov.au



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How do you label a product?

The WELS Standard – *AS/NZS 6400:2005 Water efficient products – Rating and labelling* outlines how products must be labelled. All labels have required minimum dimensions.

The WELS Standard can be purchased through Standards Australia at <http://www.standards.org.au/cat.asp?catid=4>.

What happens if an architect or specifier is found to be non-compliant under WELS?

If you are non-compliant you could face fines. Under the WELS Act penalties apply for:

- failing to meet registration and labelling requirements
- failing to meet minimum efficiency and performance requirements *and*
- misusing WELS standards and information.

Strong enforcement powers under the WELS Act include the ability to:

- impose significant fines
- compel the withdrawal of a product or products from supply
- deregister products *and*
- advertise convictions.

More information?

For more information go to the WELS website at www.waterrating.gov.au or email wels@environment.gov.au or call **1800 803 772**.

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