

## What you need to know and do

Suppliers of water-using whitegoods and domestic plumbing products play an important part in helping Australians to cut water use at home.

Suppliers must ensure that clothes washers, dishwashers, toilets, urinals, taps, showers and registered flow controllers carry the WELS water efficiency star-rating label. The label helps consumers to make product decisions that will save them water and money!

### Suppliers must ensure that:

- labels or water rating information are properly attached to the product at point of supply
- labels or water rating information remain fully visible on products while they are offered for sale
- advertising and promotional materials display the WELS label or water rating information.

## Is this you?

These requirements apply to anyone supplying WELS products through:

- shops
- showrooms
- warehouses
- by auction
- mail order
- over the internet or
- by providing products as part of selling new buildings, or through plumbing services.



## What is WELS?

WELS is Australia's Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Scheme. It is a national program established by the Australian Government in partnership with the state and territory governments. It requires certain products to be registered and labelled with their water efficiency information in accordance with the standard set under the national *Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005*.

## How is WELS enforced?

The Australian Government enforces the WELS Scheme using a permanent team of inspectors.

Inspectors may visit public areas of a business premises unannounced and:

- inspect and buy WELS products
- inspect any advertising or other written documents
- discuss product features
- observe practices relating to supplying products within the public area of the premises.

In other areas of a WELS business premises, inspectors may, with the consent of the owner:

- search the premises and anything (including vehicles) on the premises
- conduct tests on the premises
- take photographs and make video/audio recordings
- inspect records (it is an offence not to supply records when asked by an inspector)
- take extracts or make copies of records and use equipment as required on the premises.



**Did you know - an efficient showerhead can save up to 18 litres of water per minute compared with a traditional model?**

## Offences against the *Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005*

If a supplier of WELS products does not comply with labelling requirements, they are most likely breaching the *Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005*.

### Enforcement powers include:

- a penalty infringement notice
- court action or
- Federal Court injunction (e.g. to remove a non-complying product)

### Offences

- Supplying an unregistered or unlabelled product – a penalty of up to \$33 000.

## It's illegal to sell unregistered products

You can check if a product is WELS registered by searching the WELS registered products database at [www.waterrating.gov.au](http://www.waterrating.gov.au)

If you have information about supply of non-compliance products, please contact WELS at [wels@environment.gov.au](mailto:wels@environment.gov.au) or call 1800 803 772 to discuss. This may be done anonymously.

The information you provide will be regarded as confidential.

## More information

For more information go to the WELS website at:

- [www.waterrating.gov.au](http://www.waterrating.gov.au)
- or email [wels@environment.gov.au](mailto:wels@environment.gov.au)
- or telephone **1800 803 772**



Australian Government  
Department of the Environment,  
Water, Heritage and the Arts

# Legal obligations for suppliers of WELS products

*Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005*



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