



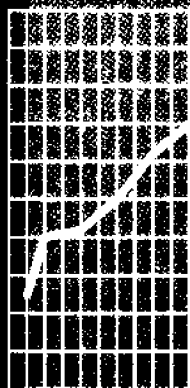
September Quarter 1996

EMBARGO: 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) FRI 13 DEC 1996

Building Activity Australia

Dwelling Unit Commencements

Preliminary



BUILDING ACTIVITY NOTES

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

<i>ISSUE (Quarter)</i>	<i>RELEASE DATE</i>
December 1996	18 March 1996
March 1997	17 June 1997
June 1997	11 September 1997
September 1997	15 December 1997

CHANGES IN THIS ISSUE

- Trend estimates are now included in tables 1 and 2. For more details on the methodology used to calculate these estimates, see paragraphs 13–15 of the Explanatory Notes.
- Some data previously included in table 1 is shown in tables 3–5.

SAMPLING ERRORS

The estimates in this publication are based on a sample survey of private sector house building activity and a complete enumeration of other building activity. Because data are not collected for all private sector house building jobs, the published estimates are subject to sampling variability. Relative standard errors give a measure of this variability and therefore indicate the degree of confidence that can be attached to the data.

Relative standard errors for the number of new private sector houses and total dwelling units commenced in the September quarter 1996 are given below. There is 67% confidence that the actual value would be within one standard error of the sample estimate, and 95% confidence that it lies within two standard errors.

RELATIVE STANDARD ERRORS

	<i>New private sector houses</i>	<i>Total dwellings</i>
	%	%
New South Wales	4.5	2.5
Victoria	3.0	2.0
Queensland	2.7	1.9
South Australia	4.6	4.2
Western Australia	4.4	3.7
Tasmania	4.0	3.1
Northern Territory
Australian Capital Territory	4.5	2.3
Australia	1.7	1.2

INQUIRIES

For further information about statistics in this publication and the availability of related unpublished statistics, contact Rex Porter on Adelaide (08) 8237 7316 or any ABS State office.

W. McLennan
Australian Statistician

MAIN FEATURES

TREND AND SEASONALLY ADJUSTED ESTIMATES

NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED

The number of dwelling units commenced in the September quarter 1996, in trend and seasonally adjusted terms, and percentage changes from the June quarter 1996 and September quarter 1995, are summarised in the table below.

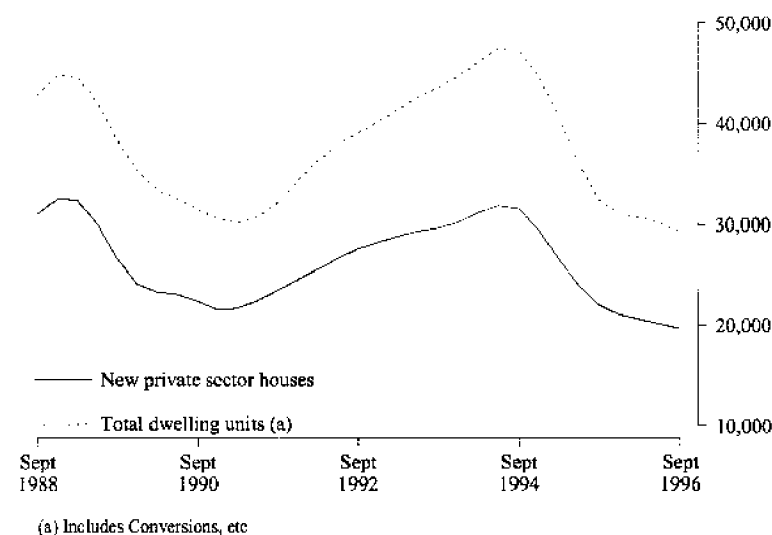
	Sep qtr 96	% change Jun qtr 96 to Sep qtr 96	% change Sep qtr 95 to Sep qtr 96
TREND ESTIMATES			
Dwelling units commenced			
New private sector houses	19 669	-2.5	-10.7
Total dwelling units	29 330	-3.0	-9.8
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED			
Dwelling units commenced			
New private sector houses	19 362	-4.8	-13.0
Total dwelling units	28 361	-7.3	-12.4

Australian estimates

The trend for the total number of dwelling units commenced continued to decline, by 3.0% in the September quarter 1996 and 9.8% over the last 12 months. This decrease over the year to September 1996 compares with a fall of 31.3% over the 12 months to September 1995.

The trend in new private sector house commencements also continued to decline, by 2.5% in the latest quarter and 10.7% over the last 12 months.

NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED, AUSTRALIA (Trend estimates)



In seasonally adjusted terms, the total number of dwelling units commenced fell, down 7.3% in the September quarter 1996 to 28,361, and down 12.4% on the September quarter 1995. New private sector house commencements fell 4.8% to 19,362 or 13.0% fewer than a year earlier.

State estimates Victoria was the only State/Territory to show an increase (+1.8%) in the trend estimate of total dwelling unit commencements in the September quarter 1996. Queensland recorded the lowest percentage fall (-1.5%) while the largest percentage falls occurred in the Australian Capital Territory (-24.3%) and Tasmania (-10.0%).

In seasonally adjusted terms, all States and the Australian Capital Territory recorded decreases. Victoria and New South Wales had the lowest decreases (-1.0% and -3.5% respectively), while the largest falls were in the Australian Capital Territory (-35.8%) and Western Australia (-13.9%).

ORIGINAL ESTIMATES

In original terms, 29,993 dwelling units were commenced in the September quarter 1996, a decrease of 1,003 or 3.2% from the previous quarter.

The number of new houses commenced was down 2.6%, and data on building approvals for recent months indicates that new house commencements may fall again in the December quarter 1996. The number of conversions, etc. commenced during the September quarter was down sharply from the high number the previous quarter. However, the number of new other dwelling units (excluding conversions, etc.) increased 3.2% in the latest quarter, with increases in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. Recent data on approvals indicates that this series may increase again in the December quarter 1996.

Total private sector commencements fell by 968 or 3.3%, with new houses down 2.3% and other dwelling units (including conversions, etc.) down 5.6%.

Total public sector commencements fell by 2.3%, with an increase of 2.6% in other dwelling units (including conversions, etc.) but a fall of 17.1% in new house commencements.

**TABLE 1. NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED:
ORIGINAL, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED AND TREND ESTIMATES**

Period	New houses		Total dwelling units (includes conversions etc)	
	Private sector	Total	Private sector	Total
ORIGINAL				
1995 June qtr	23,848	24,606	34,718	36,894
Sept. qtr	23,132	23,808	31,970	34,225
Dec. qtr	21,810	22,306	29,205	30,509
1996 Mar. qtr	18,668	19,093	27,345	28,819
June qtr	20,595	20,975	29,467	30,996
Sept. qtr	20,122	20,437	28,499	29,993
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED				
1995 June qtr	23,567	24,220	34,415	36,431
Sept. qtr	22,250	22,967	30,505	32,372
Dec. qtr	20,662	21,199	27,994	29,671
1996 Mar. qtr	20,934	21,349	30,402	31,979
June qtr	20,334	20,631	29,205	30,599
Sept. qtr	19,362	19,717	27,188	28,361
TREND ESTIMATES				
1995 June qtr	23,961	24,578	34,192	36,039
Sept. qtr	22,030	22,676	30,645	32,499
Dec. qtr	21,082	21,642	29,330	31,070
1996 Mar. qtr	20,645	21,073	29,170	30,722
June qtr	20,166	20,509	28,848	30,229
Sept. qtr	19,669	19,974	28,127	29,330

**TABLE 2. TOTAL NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS (a) COMMENCED BY STATE:
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED AND TREND ESTIMATES**

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED									
1995 June qtr	12,286	7,113	9,116	1,797	4,542	702	n.a.	477	36,431
Sept. qtr	10,867	6,648	7,846	1,676	4,007	638	n.a.	473	32,372
Dec. qtr	9,317	5,623	7,437	1,549	3,895	617	n.a.	787	29,671
1996 Mar. qtr	11,310	6,186	7,956	1,382	3,742	627	n.a.	474	31,979
June qtr	9,897	6,119	8,061	1,333	3,694	538	n.a.	547	30,599
Sept. qtr	9,551	6,059	7,351	1,245	3,180	488	n.a.	351	28,361
TREND ESTIMATES									
1995 June qtr	11,928	7,007	9,040	1,886	4,606	688	371	555	36,039
Sept. qtr	10,855	6,442	7,963	1,643	4,088	648	360	550	32,499
Dec. qtr	10,338	6,082	7,672	1,518	3,867	628	367	604	31,070
1996 Mar. qtr	10,253	5,997	7,769	1,418	3,748	596	359	581	30,722
June qtr	10,131	6,065	7,800	1,320	3,561	551	351	489	30,229
Sept. qtr	9,860	6,173	7,683	1,237	3,309	496	339	370	29,330

(a) Includes conversions, etc.

TABLE 3. TOTAL NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED

<i>Period</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Australia</i>
NEW HOUSES									
1993-94	29,162	27,904	35,751	9,590	18,118	3,020	1,205	1,764	126,513
1994-95	28,222	25,846	31,047	8,210	16,225	2,548	947	1,533	114,577
1995-96	23,055	19,353	23,124	5,071	11,523	1,883	885	1,289	86,184
1995 June qtr	6,343	5,734	6,278	1,512	3,514	599	304	323	24,606
Sept. qtr	6,111	5,836	6,122	1,504	3,146	474	269	346	23,808
Dec. qtr	5,791	5,088	6,039	1,295	2,929	541	238	385	22,306
1996 Mar. qtr	5,419	4,373	4,835	1,089	2,552	467	143	217	19,093
June qtr	5,734	4,056	6,128	1,184	2,896	401	235	342	20,975
Sept. qtr	5,607	4,185	5,756	1,201	2,900	376	200	210	20,437
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1993-94	18,019	3,562	17,334	1,891	6,682	1,092	446	2,383	51,409
1994-95	23,271	3,612	15,113	1,525	6,073	582	541	1,194	51,911
1995-96	17,190	4,274	7,936	836	3,721	530	572	906	35,965
1995 June qtr	5,823	1,067	2,947	240	1,109	93	84	161	11,524
Sept. qtr	5,057	713	2,297	256	1,126	142	139	204	9,934
Dec. qtr	3,500	943	1,557	264	873	111	85	360	7,693
1996 Mar. qtr	4,484	1,193	2,042	195	895	148	194	193	9,344
June qtr	4,149	1,425	2,040	121	827	129	154	149	8,994
Sept. qtr	4,341	1,777	2,153	106	484	98	130	196	9,285
CONVERSIONS, ETC									
1993-94	2,141	1,198	302	20	196	17	7	18	3,899
1994-95	2,100	1,051	209	61	135	12	11	5	3,583
1995-96	1,032	905	217	55	103	8	12	70	2,402
1995 June qtr	355	330	37	11	25	—	1	4	763
Sept. qtr	331	54	61	11	13	6	7	—	483
Dec. qtr	324	15	127	28	14	1	1	—	510
1996 Mar. qtr	158	180	9	12	21	1	1	—	382
June qtr	219	656	20	4	55	—	3	70	1,027
Sept. qtr	154	48	44	8	12	2	3	—	271
TOTAL									
1993-94	49,322	32,664	53,387	11,501	24,996	4,129	1,658	4,165	181,821
1994-95	53,592	30,509	46,369	9,796	22,433	3,142	1,499	2,732	170,071
1995-96	41,277	24,532	31,277	5,962	15,347	2,421	1,469	2,265	124,550
1995 June qtr	12,521	7,131	9,262	1,763	4,648	692	389	488	36,894
Sept. qtr	11,499	6,603	8,480	1,771	4,285	622	415	550	34,225
Dec. qtr	9,615	6,046	7,723	1,587	3,816	653	324	745	30,509
1996 Mar. qtr	10,061	5,746	6,886	1,295	3,468	616	338	410	28,819
June qtr	10,102	6,137	8,188	1,309	3,778	530	392	561	30,996
Sept. qtr	10,102	6,010	7,953	1,315	3,396	476	333	406	29,993

TABLE 4. TOTAL NUMBER OF PRIVATE SECTOR DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED

<i>Period</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Australia</i>
NEW HOUSES									
1993-94	28,547	26,970	35,102	9,159	17,739	2,974	1,035	1,703	123,228
1994-95	27,747	25,338	30,538	7,745	15,731	2,542	804	1,522	111,966
1995-96	22,671	18,869	22,703	4,837	11,241	1,862	773	1,250	84,207
1995 June qtr	6,203	5,627	6,108	1,396	3,378	599	216	322	23,848
Sept. qtr	6,036	5,638	5,966	1,398	3,039	472	238	345	23,132
Dec. qtr	5,630	4,989	5,965	1,242	2,876	531	194	383	21,810
1996 Mar. qtr	5,334	4,300	4,724	1,044	2,481	459	111	217	18,668
June qtr	5,671	3,942	6,048	1,154	2,845	400	230	306	20,595
Sept. qtr	5,571	4,083	5,702	1,185	2,826	371	174	208	20,122
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1993-94	16,385	3,130	16,187	1,534	5,495	1,031	430	2,326	46,518
1994-95	21,513	3,077	13,761	1,339	5,227	542	522	1,072	47,053
1995-96	15,739	3,209	7,162	801	2,920	378	455	839	31,503
1995 June qtr	5,120	926	2,580	227	1,010	64	70	125	10,122
Sept. qtr	4,430	380	2,039	242	841	119	139	174	8,364
Dec. qtr	3,310	640	1,403	249	753	87	83	360	6,885
1996 Mar. qtr	4,189	980	1,832	193	723	108	91	184	8,300
June qtr	3,810	1,209	1,888	117	603	64	142	121	7,954
Sept. qtr	3,651	1,526	2,061	106	364	96	128	188	8,120
CONVERSIONS, ETC									
1993-94	2,126	1,195	299	19	182	16	7	18	3,862
1994-95	2,069	1,044	200	48	134	12	11	5	3,522
1995-96	1,003	884	217	55	103	8	9	—	2,279
1995 June qtr	348	323	35	11	25	—	1	4	747
Sept. qtr	323	54	61	11	13	6	6	—	474
Dec. qtr	324	15	127	28	14	1	1	—	510
1996 Mar. qtr	154	179	9	12	21	1	1	—	377
June qtr	202	636	20	4	55	—	1	—	918
Sept. qtr	143	48	44	5	12	2	3	—	257
TOTAL									
1993-94	47,058	31,295	51,588	10,712	23,416	4,021	1,472	4,047	173,608
1994-95	51,328	29,459	44,499	9,132	21,092	3,096	1,337	2,599	162,541
1995-96	39,413	22,962	30,082	5,693	14,264	2,248	1,237	2,089	117,988
1995 June qtr	11,671	6,876	8,723	1,634	4,413	663	287	451	34,718
Sept. qtr	10,789	6,072	8,066	1,651	3,893	597	383	519	31,970
Dec. qtr	9,264	5,644	7,495	1,519	3,643	619	278	743	29,205
1996 Mar. qtr	9,677	5,459	6,565	1,248	3,225	568	203	401	27,345
June qtr	9,683	5,787	7,956	1,275	3,503	464	373	427	29,467
Sept. qtr	9,365	5,657	7,807	1,296	3,202	469	305	396	28,499

TABLE 5. TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLIC SECTOR DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED

<i>Period</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Australia</i>
NEW HOUSES									
1993-94	615	934	649	431	379	46	170	61	3,285
1994-95	475	508	509	465	494	6	143	11	2,611
1995-96	384	484	421	234	282	21	112	39	1,977
1995 June qtr	140	107	170	116	136	—	88	1	758
Sept. qtr	75	198	156	106	107	2	31	1	676
Dec. qtr	161	99	74	53	53	10	44	2	496
1996 Mar. qtr	85	73	111	45	71	8	32	—	425
June qtr	63	114	80	30	51	1	5	36	380
Sept. qtr	36	102	54	16	74	5	26	2	315
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1993-94	1,634	432	1,147	357	1,187	61	16	57	4,891
1994-95	1,758	535	1,352	186	846	40	19	122	4,858
1995-96	1,451	1,065	774	35	801	152	117	67	4,462
1995 June qtr	703	141	367	13	99	29	14	36	1,402
Sept. qtr	627	333	258	14	285	23	—	30	1,570
Dec. qtr	190	303	154	15	120	24	2	—	808
1996 Mar. qtr	295	213	210	2	172	40	103	9	1,044
June qtr	339	216	152	4	224	65	12	28	1,040
Sept. qtr	690	251	92	—	120	2	2	8	1,165
CONVERSIONS, ETC									
1993-94	15	3	3	1	14	1	—	—	37
1994-95	31	7	9	13	1	—	—	—	61
1995-96	29	21	—	—	—	—	3	70	123
1995 June qtr	7	7	2	—	—	—	—	—	16
Sept. qtr	8	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	9
Dec. qtr	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1996 Mar. qtr	4	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	5
June qtr	17	20	—	—	—	—	2	70	109
Sept. qtr	11	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	14
TOTAL									
1993-94	2,264	1,369	1,799	789	1,580	108	186	118	8,213
1994-95	2,264	1,050	1,870	664	1,341	46	162	133	7,530
1995-96	1,864	1,570	1,195	269	1,083	173	232	176	6,562
1995 June qtr	850	255	539	129	235	29	102	37	2,176
Sept. qtr	710	531	414	120	392	25	32	31	2,255
Dec. qtr	351	402	228	68	173	34	46	2	1,304
1996 Mar. qtr	384	287	321	47	243	48	135	9	1,474
June qtr	419	350	232	34	275	66	19	134	1,529
Sept. qtr	737	353	146	19	194	7	28	10	1,494

EXPLANATORY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

- 1 This publication contains preliminary estimates of the number of dwelling units commenced during the September quarter 1996. More comprehensive results from the quarterly survey will be available shortly.
- 2 The statistics were compiled on the basis of returns collected from builders and other individuals and organisations engaged in building activity. The quarterly survey comprises a sample survey of private sector house building activity and a complete enumeration of other building activity. Estimates in respect of commencements of private sector houses are therefore subject to sampling variability. Relative standard errors are shown on page 2.
- 3 The use of sample survey techniques in the Building Activity Survey means that reliable estimates of private sector house commencements based on survey results are available only at the State/Territory and Australia levels. Further geographic disaggregations are not available. However, dwelling unit commencement data for regions below State/Territory level are shown in the monthly series of dwelling unit commencements compiled by the ABS. Unlike data in this publication compiled from the Building Activity Survey, the series for smaller geographic areas are based on information reported by local and other government authorities.

DEFINITIONS

- 4 A *building* is defined as a rigid, fixed and permanent structure which has a roof. Its intended purpose is primarily to house people, plant, machinery, vehicles, goods or livestock. An integral feature of a building's design, to satisfy its intended use, is the provision for regular access by persons.
- 5 A *dwelling unit* is defined as a self-contained suite of rooms, including cooking and bathing facilities and intended for *long-term* residential use. Units (whether self-contained or not) within buildings offering institutional care, such as hospitals, or temporary accommodation, such as motels, hostels and holiday apartments, are not defined as dwelling units.
- 6 A *residential building* is defined as a building predominantly consisting of one or more dwelling units. Residential buildings can be either *houses* or *other residential buildings*.
 - A *house* is defined as a detached building predominantly used for long-term residential purposes and consisting of only one dwelling unit. Thus, detached granny flats and detached dwelling units such as caretakers' residences associated with non-residential buildings are defined as houses for the purpose of these statistics.
 - An *other residential building* is defined as a building which is predominantly used for long-term residential purposes and which contains (or has attached to it) more than one dwelling unit (e.g. includes townhouses, duplexes, apartment buildings, etc.).

These statistics present the number of dwelling units in other residential buildings (and not the number of buildings).

7 *Conversions, etc.* Dwelling units can also be created as part of alterations and additions to existing buildings (including conversions to dwelling units) and as part of the construction of non-residential buildings. Such dwelling units are referred to in this publication under the heading of Conversions, etc.

8 *Commenced.* A building is regarded as commenced when the first physical building activity has been performed on site in the form of materials fixed in place and/or labour expended (this includes site preparation but excludes delivery of building materials, the drawing of plans and specifications and the construction of non-building infrastructures, such as roads).

9 *Ownership.* The ownership of a building is classified as either public sector or private sector according to the sector of the intended owner of the completed building as evident at the time of approval. Residential buildings being constructed by private sector builders under government housing authority schemes whereby the authority has contracted, or intends to contract, to purchase the buildings on or before completion, are classified as public sector.

SEASONAL ADJUSTMENT

10 Seasonally adjusted building statistics are shown in tables 1 and 2. In the seasonally adjusted series, account has been taken of normal seasonal factors and the effect of movement in the date of Easter which may, in successive years, affect figures for different quarters. Details regarding the methods used in seasonally adjusting the series are available on request.

11 Since seasonally adjusted statistics reflect both irregular and trend movements, an upward or downward movement in a seasonally adjusted series does not necessarily indicate a change of trend. Particular care should therefore be taken in interpreting individual quarter to quarter movements. Each of the component series shown has been seasonally adjusted independently. As a consequence, while the unadjusted components in the original series shown add to the totals, the adjusted components may not add to the adjusted totals. Further, the difference between independently seasonally adjusted series does not necessarily produce series which are optimal or even adequate adjustments of the similarly derived original series. Thus the figures which can be derived by subtracting seasonally adjusted private sector dwelling units from the seasonally adjusted total dwelling units should not be used to represent seasonally adjusted public sector dwelling units.

12 As happens with all seasonally adjusted series, the seasonal factors are reviewed annually to take account of each additional year's data. For Building Activity, the results of the latest review are shown in the December quarter issue each year.

TREND ESTIMATES

13 Seasonally adjusted series can be smoothed to reduce the impact of the irregular component in the adjusted series. This smoothed seasonally adjusted series is called a trend estimate.

14 The trend estimates are derived by applying a 7-term Henderson moving average to the seasonally adjusted series. The 7-term Henderson average (like all Henderson averages) is symmetric but, as the end of a time series is approached, asymmetric forms of the average are applied. Unlike weights of the standard 7-term Henderson moving average, the weights employed here have been tailored to suit the particular characteristics of individual series.

15 While the smoothing technique described in paragraphs 13 and 14 enables trend estimates to be produced for recent quarters, it does result in revisions to the estimates for the most recent three quarters as additional observations become available. There may also be revisions because of changes in the original data and as a result of the re-estimation of the seasonal factors. For further information, see *A Guide to Interpreting Time Series - Monitoring 'Trends': an Overview* (1348.0) or contact the Assistant Director, Time Series Analysis on (06) 252 6345.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

16 Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:

Building Approvals, Australia (8731.0) – issued monthly

Building Activity, Australia (8752.0) – issued quarterly

Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia (5609.0) – issued monthly

Price Index of Materials Used in House Building (6408.0) – issued monthly

Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building (6407.0) – issued monthly

House Price Indexes: Eight Capital Cities (6416.0) – issued quarterly

17 Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications and Products, Australia* (1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Release Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Release Advice are available from any ABS office.

UNPUBLISHED STATISTICS

18 The ABS can also make available certain building approvals and activity data which are not published. Where it is not practicable to provide the required information by telephone, data can be provided in the following forms: photocopy, computer printout, floppy disk and clerically extracted tabulation. A charge may be made for providing unpublished information in these forms.

ELECTRONIC SERVICES

19 A large range of data is available via on-line services, diskette, magnetic tape, tape cartridge and CD ROM. For more details about our electronic data services, contact the ABS Office.

20 Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

SYMBOLS AND OTHER USAGES

n.a. not available
— nil or rounded to zero
.. not applicable

For more information . . .

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