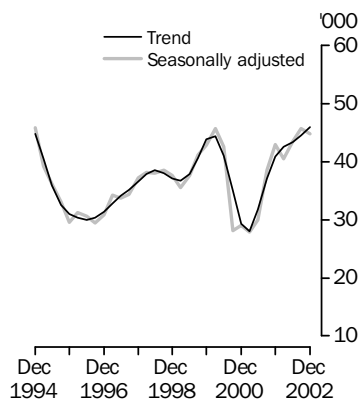


**BUILDING ACTIVITY**  
**DWELLING UNIT**  
**COMMENCEMENTS**

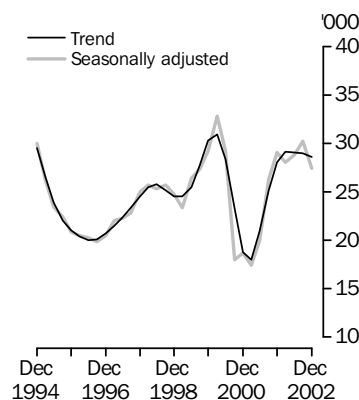
**AUSTRALIA**  
PRELIMINARY

EMBARGO: 11:30AM (CANBERRA TIME) WED 19 MAR 2003

**Dwelling units commenced**  
Total



**New houses commenced**  
Private sector



- For further information about these and related statistics, contact Tony Bammann on Adelaide 08 8237 7316, or the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070.

**DECEMBER QTR KEY FIGURES**

<b>TREND ESTIMATES</b>	<b>Dec qtr 02</b>	<b>% change Sep qtr 02 to Dec qtr 02</b>	<b>% change Dec qtr 01 to Dec qtr 02</b>
Dwelling units commenced			
New private sector houses	28 646	-1.2	2.1
Total dwelling units	45 969	3.0	12.3
.....			
<b>SEASONALLY ADJUSTED</b>	<b>Dec qtr 02</b>	<b>% change Sep qtr 02 to Dec qtr 02</b>	<b>% change Dec qtr 01 to Dec qtr 02</b>
Dwelling units commenced			
New private sector houses	27 436	-9.4	-5.8
Total dwelling units	44 864	-2.0	4.2

**DECEMBER QTR KEY POINTS**

**TREND ESTIMATES**

- The trend estimate for the total number of dwelling units commenced rose 3.0% in the December quarter 2002, the seventh successive quarterly increase.
- Commencements of new private sector houses fell 1.2% in the latest quarter and follows smaller declines in each of the previous two quarters.

**SEASONALLY ADJUSTED ESTIMATES**

- In seasonally adjusted terms, the total number of dwellings commenced fell 2.0% in the December quarter to 44,864. The previous quarter was the highest since the December quarter 1994.
- New private sector house commencements fell 9.4% to 27,436. This was 5.8% fewer than a year earlier.

**ORIGINAL ESTIMATES**

- The total number of dwellings commenced fell 7.6% in the December quarter to 44,496.
- Within the private sector, the total number of dwellings commenced fell 7.2% to 43,633. New house commencements fell 11.7% to 27,654 (5.8% fewer than a year earlier) but other dwellings rose 1.6% to 15,979 (28.6% more than a year earlier).
- The largest percentage falls in new private sector houses in the latest quarter were in the Northern Territory (-20.0%), Western Australia (-18.8%), South Australia (-17.4%) and Queensland (-13.6%), with only the Australian Capital Territory showing an increase (+20.8%). For other dwellings, South Australia had the biggest percentage increase (+136.5%), with a 17.6% increase in New South Wales being more than offset by a 67.2% fall in Victoria.
- Within the public sector, the total number of dwellings commenced fell 23.1% to 862.

## NOTES

### FORTHCOMING ISSUES

<i>ISSUE (Quarter)</i>	<i>RELEASE DATE</i>
March 2003	20 June 2003
June 2003	12 September 2003

### ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This publication provides an early indication of trends in the number of dwelling units commenced. The data are estimates based on a response rate of approximately 90% of a sample of building jobs collected in the Building Activity Survey. More comprehensive and updated results will be released in *Building Activity, Australia* (cat. no. 8752.0) on 17 April 2003.

### SIGNIFICANT REVISIONS THIS ISSUE

The total number of dwelling units commenced in Australia during the September quarter 2002 has been revised downwards by 493 (–1.0%) from the estimate published in *Building Activity, Australia, September quarter 2002* (cat. no. 8752.0) released on 17 January 2003. This was mainly the result of downward revisions of 220 (–1.9%) in Queensland, 162 (–1.2%) in New South Wales and 134 (–1.0%) in Victoria.

The seasonally adjusted and trend series have been revised as a result of the annual re-analysis of seasonal factors. For more details, see Explanatory Notes 10–15.

### RELIABILITY OF ESTIMATES

The estimates in this publication are based on a sample survey of private sector residential building jobs and a complete enumeration of such public sector jobs. Because data are not collected for all private sector residential building jobs, 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, total new other dwellings and total dwellings commenced in the December quarter 2002 are given below. There is 67% confidence that the actual number would be within one standard error of the sample estimate, and 95% confidence that it lies within two standard errors.

#### RELATIVE STANDARD ERRORS—December Quarter 2002

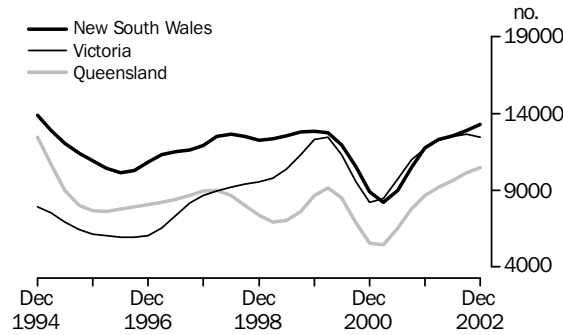
	<i>New private sector houses</i>	<i>Total new other dwellings</i>	<i>Total dwellings</i>
	%	%	%
New South Wales	3.7	1.2	1.8
Victoria	3.5	4.6	2.8
Queensland	3.1	0.5	1.9
South Australia	3.9	1.1	2.7
Western Australia	3.7	1.1	2.9
Tasmania	2.9	..	2.7
Northern Territory	..	..	..
Australian Capital Territory	2.4	..	1.3
<b>Australia</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.1</b>

Dennis Trewin  
Australian Statistician

# DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS (a) TREND ESTIMATES

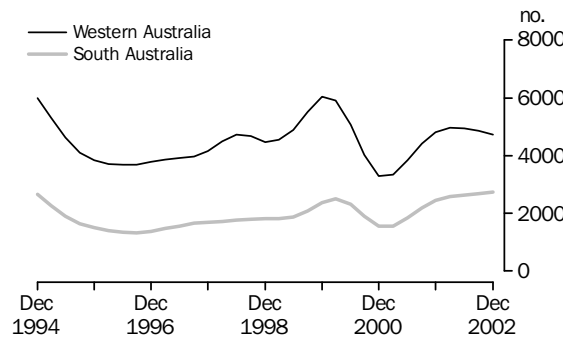
NEW SOUTH WALES  
VICTORIA  
QUEENSLAND

The trend estimates of commencements in New South Wales and Queensland continued to show strong growth, evident from the June quarter 2001. Victoria showed strong growth from the March quarter 2001, but the rate of growth has slowed over the last six quarters, with the latest quarter showing a fall of 1.5%.



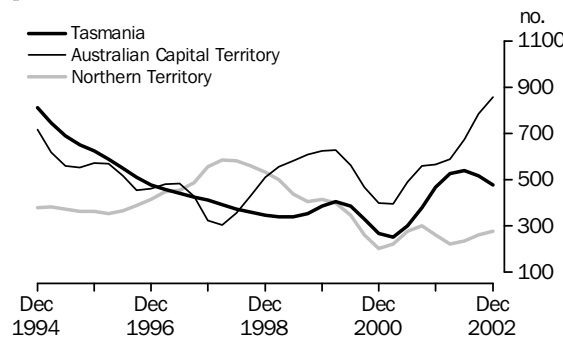
WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The trend estimates of commencements in both South Australia and Western Australia grew strongly over the four quarters from the June quarter 2001. However, while the rate of growth in South Australia has been more modest over the last three quarters, it has been negative in Western Australia.



TASMANIA  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY  
NORTHERN TERRITORY

The trend estimates of commencements in the Australian Capital Territory continue to show strong growth, evident from the June quarter 2001. While the trend in Tasmania also grew strongly from the June quarter 2001, it has declined over the last two quarters. The trend in the Northern Territory has risen in the last three quarters following two quarters of decline.



(a) Includes conversions etc.

# 1

## DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS, Australia

Period	NEW HOUSES.....				TOTAL DWELLING UNITS(a).....			
	Private sector.....		Total.....		Private sector.....		Total.....	
	no.	% change from previous period	no.	% change from previous period	no.	% change from previous period	no.	% change from previous period
ORIGINAL								
<b>1999-00</b>	118 378	18.0	120 128	16.4	167 748	16.6	171 865	15.0
<b>2000-01</b>	74 128	-37.4	75 330	-37.3	110 977	-33.8	114 945	-33.1
<b>2001-02</b>	112 370	51.6	114 077	51.4	161 613	45.6	165 368	43.9
<b>2001</b>								
Sep qtr	27 192	34.7	27 501	34.5	39 302	35.5	40 492	34.6
Dec qtr	29 353	7.9	29 962	8.9	41 776	6.3	42 705	5.5
<b>2002</b>								
Mar qtr	26 625	-9.3	27 024	-9.8	37 621	-9.9	38 519	-9.8
Jun qtr	29 200	9.7	29 590	9.5	42 914	14.1	43 651	13.3
Sep qtr	31 314	7.2	31 812	7.5	47 034	9.6	48 155	10.3
Dec qtr	27 654	-11.7	28 190	-11.4	43 633	-7.2	44 496	-7.6
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED								
<b>2001</b>								
Sep qtr	26 342	32.0	26 587	31.2	37 577	30.2	38 540	28.6
Dec qtr	29 115	10.5	29 696	11.7	41 945	11.6	43 041	11.7
<b>2002</b>								
Mar qtr	28 097	-3.5	28 520	-4.0	39 504	-5.8	40 447	-6.0
Jun qtr	28 883	2.8	29 340	2.9	42 700	8.1	43 477	7.5
Sep qtr	30 289	4.9	30 728	4.7	44 896	5.1	45 761	5.3
Dec qtr	27 436	-9.4	27 940	-9.1	43 832	-2.4	44 864	-2.0
TREND ESTIMATES								
<b>2001</b>								
Sep qtr	25 155	20.1	25 517	20.2	36 039	17.2	37 099	16.9
Dec qtr	28 067	11.6	28 508	11.7	39 925	10.8	40 945	10.4
<b>2002</b>								
Mar qtr	29 170	3.9	29 642	4.0	41 735	4.5	42 655	4.2
Jun qtr	29 116	-0.2	29 578	-0.2	42 533	1.9	43 400	1.7
Sep qtr	28 985	-0.5	29 440	-0.5	43 742	2.8	44 622	2.8
Dec qtr	28 646	-1.2	29 135	-1.0	45 009	2.9	45 969	3.0

(a) Includes conversions etc.

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
ORIGINAL (Number)									
<b>2001</b>									
Sep qtr	11 009	12 192	8 634	2 400	5 002	339	364	551	40 492
Dec qtr	13 335	11 332	8 588	2 613	5 190	534	239	875	42 705
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	10 792	11 488	8 490	2 335	4 374	515	148	378	38 519
Jun qtr	12 517	12 867	9 533	2 644	4 674	550	284	582	43 651
Sep qtr	13 277	13 718	11 145	2 735	5 595	498	290	896	48 155
Dec qtr	13 656	11 527	10 249	2 779	4 621	472	274	918	44 496
ORIGINAL (% change from previous quarter)									
<b>2001</b>									
Sep qtr	35.1	30.1	32.8	47.4	48.0	10.3	-5.1	46.6	34.6
Dec qtr	21.1	-7.1	-0.5	8.9	3.8	57.6	-34.3	58.6	5.5
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	-19.1	1.4	-1.1	-10.6	-15.7	-3.5	-38.1	-56.8	-9.8
Jun qtr	16.0	12.0	12.3	13.3	6.9	6.8	91.7	54.1	13.3
Sep qtr	6.1	6.6	16.9	3.4	19.7	-9.5	2.0	53.9	10.3
Dec qtr	2.9	-16.0	-8.0	1.6	-17.4	-5.2	-5.5	2.5	-7.6
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED (Number)									
<b>2001</b>									
Sep qtr	10 591	11 902	8 319	2 308	4 667	382	n.a.	572	38 540
Dec qtr	12 869	11 523	8 487	2 540	4 979	480	n.a.	726	43 041
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	11 143	11 971	9 270	2 409	4 731	518	n.a.	388	40 447
Jun qtr	13 083	12 468	9 243	2 739	4 873	547	n.a.	676	43 477
Sep qtr	12 812	13 360	10 666	2 642	5 207	561	n.a.	942	45 761
Dec qtr	13 163	11 746	10 158	2 710	4 430	424	n.a.	757	44 864
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED (% change from previous quarter)									
<b>2001</b>									
Sep qtr	24.2	31.2	32.6	36.4	33.2	24.9	n.a.	30.2	28.6
Dec qtr	21.5	-3.2	2.0	10.0	6.7	25.8	n.a.	26.8	11.7
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	-13.4	3.9	9.2	-5.2	-5.0	7.8	n.a.	-46.5	-6.0
Jun qtr	17.4	4.2	-0.3	13.7	3.0	5.7	n.a.	74.4	7.5
Sep qtr	-2.1	7.2	15.4	-3.5	6.8	2.5	n.a.	39.3	5.3
Dec qtr	2.7	-12.1	-4.8	2.6	-14.9	-24.4	n.a.	-19.6	-2.0
TREND ESTIMATES (Number)									
<b>2001</b>									
Sep qtr	10 469	10 983	7 778	2 187	4 409	381	301	561	37 099
Dec qtr	11 741	11 728	8 634	2 441	4 800	467	263	568	40 945
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	12 320	12 247	9 182	2 577	4 960	528	221	590	42 655
Jun qtr	12 539	12 509	9 636	2 622	4 928	542	234	675	43 400
Sep qtr	12 881	12 641	10 119	2 680	4 870	519	260	787	44 622
Dec qtr	13 313	12 449	10 461	2 729	4 744	479	277	858	45 969
TREND ESTIMATES (% change from previous quarter)									
<b>2001</b>									
Sep qtr	16.1	12.6	19.3	18.0	15.2	26.9	8.1	14.5	16.9
Dec qtr	12.2	6.8	11.0	11.6	8.9	22.8	-12.5	1.3	10.4
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	4.9	4.4	6.3	5.5	3.3	13.0	-15.9	4.0	4.2
Jun qtr	1.8	2.1	4.9	1.7	-0.6	2.7	5.9	14.3	1.7
Sep qtr	2.7	1.1	5.0	2.2	-1.2	-4.2	10.7	16.7	2.8
Dec qtr	3.4	-1.5	3.4	1.8	-2.6	-7.7	6.7	8.9	3.0

(a) Includes conversions, etc.

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
Period	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
NEW HOUSES									
<b>1999-00</b>	30 753	34 716	24 218	7 856	18 650	1 538	936	1 460	120 128
<b>2000-01</b>	17 751	24 166	14 505	5 390	10 895	1 035	577	1 011	75 330
<b>2001-02</b>	25 548	35 039	25 274	8 281	16 324	1 774	646	1 191	114 077
<b>2001</b>									
Sep qtr	5 827	8 436	6 473	1 857	4 112	324	186	287	27 501
Dec qtr	7 201	8 811	6 391	2 273	4 365	470	161	291	29 962
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	6 001	8 332	6 006	1 949	3 865	494	130	248	27 024
Jun qtr	6 520	9 460	6 404	2 202	3 982	486	169	365	29 590
Sep qtr	6 950	9 298	7 352	2 406	4 737	476	172	423	31 812
Dec qtr	6 300	8 536	6 469	2 010	3 760	443	132	541	28 190
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
<b>1999-00</b>	19 430	11 725	10 130	1 398	3 916	185	594	948	48 326
<b>2000-01</b>	14 829	9 584	7 814	1 120	2 592	60	446	634	37 079
<b>2001-02</b>	20 908	11 617	9 653	1 651	2 839	154	385	1 186	48 395
<b>2001</b>									
Sep qtr	4 916	3 414	2 097	535	877	10	178	263	12 289
Dec qtr	5 927	2 374	2 165	310	820	63	77	584	12 320
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	4 488	2 698	2 376	376	499	17	15	123	10 592
Jun qtr	5 578	3 131	3 016	431	643	64	115	216	13 194
Sep qtr	5 857	4 174	3 479	322	858	19	117	473	15 299
Dec qtr	7 031	2 837	3 717	752	804	29	139	377	15 686
CONVERSIONS, ETC.									
<b>1999-00</b>	723	1 896	229	156	266	44	27	71	3 411
<b>2000-01</b>	849	871	347	46	404	14	4	1	2 536
<b>2001-02</b>	1 196	1 224	318	59	76	10	4	9	2 897
<b>2001</b>									
Sep qtr	267	343	65	8	13	5	—	1	701
Dec qtr	208	147	33	30	5	1	1	—	424
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	303	458	108	10	10	4	3	7	904
Jun qtr	419	276	112	11	48	—	—	1	868
Sep qtr	469	247	314	8	—	4	2	—	1 043
Dec qtr	326	155	63	16	57	—	3	—	620
TOTAL									
<b>1999-00</b>	50 906	48 337	34 577	9 410	22 832	1 767	1 557	2 479	171 865
<b>2000-01</b>	33 429	34 620	22 666	6 556	13 891	1 109	1 027	1 646	114 945
<b>2001-02</b>	47 653	47 880	35 245	9 991	19 239	1 938	1 036	2 386	165 368
<b>2001</b>									
Sep qtr	11 009	12 192	8 634	2 400	5 002	339	364	551	40 492
Dec qtr	13 335	11 332	8 588	2 613	5 190	534	239	875	42 705
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	10 792	11 488	8 490	2 335	4 374	515	148	378	38 519
Jun qtr	12 517	12 867	9 533	2 644	4 674	550	284	582	43 651
Sep qtr	13 277	13 718	11 145	2 735	5 595	498	290	896	48 155
Dec qtr	13 656	11 527	10 249	2 779	4 621	472	274	918	44 496

(a) Includes conversions, etc.

## 4

## DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS, Private Sector: Original

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
Period	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
NEW HOUSES									
<b>1999-00</b>	30 565	34 269	23 823	7 729	18 310	1 519	732	1 430	118 378
<b>2000-01</b>	17 618	23 921	14 260	5 303	10 590	1 028	434	973	74 128
<b>2001-02</b>	25 448	34 628	25 017	8 030	15 875	1 716	515	1 141	112 370
<b>2001</b>									
Sep qtr	5 811	8 340	6 420	1 835	4 005	320	178	282	27 192
Dec qtr	7 136	8 628	6 293	2 217	4 242	468	108	262	29 353
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	5 990	8 249	5 955	1 853	3 772	463	110	232	26 625
Jun qtr	6 511	9 410	6 348	2 125	3 856	465	119	365	29 200
Sep qtr	6 941	9 242	7 308	2 305	4 521	469	130	399	31 314
Dec qtr	6 268	8 468	6 312	1 905	3 672	443	104	482	27 654
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
<b>1999-00</b>	18 646	11 502	9 645	1 381	3 264	181	523	898	46 040
<b>2000-01</b>	13 791	9 435	7 289	1 097	1 968	55	307	562	34 504
<b>2001-02</b>	20 290	11 271	9 376	1 613	2 246	143	279	1 156	46 376
<b>2001</b>									
Sep qtr	4 786	3 310	1 930	522	527	8	83	263	11 428
Dec qtr	5 795	2 332	2 137	296	738	63	75	564	12 000
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	4 257	2 586	2 356	369	395	8	6	117	10 094
Jun qtr	5 453	3 043	2 954	427	586	64	115	212	12 854
Sep qtr	5 754	4 084	3 311	310	621	19	105	473	14 677
Dec qtr	6 991	2 756	3 658	736	745	29	136	309	15 360
CONVERSIONS, ETC.									
<b>1999-00</b>	702	1 874	228	156	230	43	27	71	3 330
<b>2000-01</b>	841	868	345	42	234	11	3	1	2 345
<b>2001-02</b>	1 194	1 223	299	59	69	10	4	9	2 868
<b>2001</b>									
Sep qtr	267	343	47	8	12	5	—	1	682
Dec qtr	207	147	33	30	4	1	1	—	422
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	302	458	108	10	10	4	3	7	903
Jun qtr	419	275	111	11	43	—	—	1	861
Sep qtr	469	247	314	8	—	4	2	—	1 043
Dec qtr	326	155	62	16	57	—	3	—	619
TOTAL									
<b>1999-00</b>	49 913	47 645	33 696	9 266	21 804	1 743	1 282	2 399	167 748
<b>2000-01</b>	32 251	34 224	21 895	6 442	12 792	1 094	744	1 536	110 977
<b>2001-02</b>	46 933	47 122	34 691	9 702	18 191	1 869	799	2 306	161 613
<b>2001</b>									
Sep qtr	10 864	11 993	8 396	2 365	4 544	333	261	546	39 302
Dec qtr	13 137	11 108	8 463	2 543	4 984	532	184	826	41 776
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	10 550	11 294	8 419	2 232	4 177	475	119	356	37 621
Jun qtr	12 383	12 728	9 414	2 563	4 486	529	234	578	42 914
Sep qtr	13 165	13 572	10 933	2 623	5 142	491	236	872	47 034
Dec qtr	13 585	11 379	10 032	2 658	4 474	472	243	791	43 633

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
Period	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
NEW HOUSES									
<b>1999-00</b>	188	447	395	127	340	19	204	30	1 750
<b>2000-01</b>	133	245	245	87	305	7	143	38	1 202
<b>2001-02</b>	100	411	258	251	448	58	131	50	1 707
<b>2001</b>									
Sep qtr	16	95	53	22	106	4	8	5	309
Dec qtr	65	183	98	56	123	2	53	29	608
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	10	82	51	96	93	31	20	16	399
Jun qtr	9	51	56	77	126	21	50	—	390
Sep qtr	9	56	44	101	216	7	42	24	498
Dec qtr	32	68	157	105	88	—	28	59	536
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
<b>1999-00</b>	784	223	485	17	652	4	71	50	2 286
<b>2000-01</b>	1 038	149	525	23	624	5	139	72	2 575
<b>2001-02</b>	618	346	277	38	593	11	106	30	2 019
<b>2001</b>									
Sep qtr	130	104	167	13	350	2	95	—	861
Dec qtr	132	41	28	14	82	—	2	20	319
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	231	112	20	7	104	9	9	6	498
Jun qtr	125	88	62	4	57	—	—	4	340
Sep qtr	103	90	168	12	237	—	12	—	622
Dec qtr	40	81	59	16	59	—	3	68	326
CONVERSIONS, ETC.									
<b>1999-00</b>	21	22	1	—	36	1	—	—	81
<b>2000-01</b>	8	3	2	4	170	3	1	—	191
<b>2001-02</b>	2	1	19	—	7	—	—	—	29
<b>2001</b>									
Sep qtr	—	—	18	—	1	—	—	—	19
Dec qtr	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	2
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Jun qtr	—	1	1	—	5	—	—	—	7
Sep qtr	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dec qtr	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
TOTAL									
<b>1999-00</b>	993	692	881	144	1 028	24	275	80	4 117
<b>2000-01</b>	1 179	397	772	114	1 099	15	283	110	3 968
<b>2001-02</b>	720	758	554	289	1 048	69	237	80	3 754
<b>2001</b>									
Sep qtr	146	200	238	35	457	6	103	5	1 190
Dec qtr	198	224	126	70	206	2	55	49	930
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	242	194	71	103	197	40	29	22	898
Jun qtr	134	140	119	81	188	21	50	4	737
Sep qtr	112	146	212	113	453	7	54	24	1 121
Dec qtr	72	149	217	121	147	—	31	127	862



# EXPLANATORY NOTES

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## INTRODUCTION

**1** This publication contains preliminary estimates from the quarterly Building Activity Survey of the number of dwelling units commenced. More comprehensive updated results for the last two quarters will be available shortly in *Building Activity, Australia* (cat. no. 8752.0).

**2** The statistics were compiled on the basis of returns collected from builders and other individuals and organisations engaged in building activity. From the March quarter 2002, the quarterly survey consists of a sample survey of private sector residential building jobs valued at \$10,000 or more and a complete enumeration of all such public sector residential building jobs. Estimates in respect of commencements of private sector dwellings and total dwellings are therefore subject to sampling variability. The relative standard errors for these estimates are shown on page 2. Also, some returns containing jobs not known to have commenced are not received in time for inclusion in these estimates. Allowance is made for a proportion of these jobs, based on past experience, to have commenced. Estimates in this issue are therefore subject to revision.

**3** The use of sample survey techniques in the Building Activity Survey means that reliable estimates of the number of private sector dwelling commencements are generally available only at state, territory and Australia levels. Although subject to higher relative standard errors, a range of sub-state estimates of dwelling commencements may be available. Reliable small area data are available for the Northern Territory, which has been completely enumerated since the June quarter 1991. Detailed data on Building Approvals, based on information reported by local government and other reporting authorities, are available for regions below state and territory level from the Building Approvals series compiled by the ABS.

## 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).

## EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

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### DEFINITIONS *continued*

**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.

**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. Thus, for example, 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 the Building Activity Survey, 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.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

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### TREND ESTIMATES *continued*

**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 *Information Paper: A Guide to Interpreting Time Series—Monitoring 'Trends': an Overview* (cat. no. 1348.0) or contact the Assistant Director, Time Series Analysis on Canberra 02 6252 6076.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

**16** ABS publications draw extensively on information provided freely by individuals, businesses, governments and other organisations. Their continued cooperation is very much appreciated: without it, the wide range of statistics published by the ABS would not be available. Information received by the ABS is treated in strict confidence as required by the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

### RELATED PRODUCTS

**17** Users may also wish to refer to the following publications which are available from ABS Bookshops:

*Building Activity, Australia* (cat. no. 8752.0) Quarterly  
*Building Approvals, Australia* (cat. no. 8731.0) Monthly  
*Construction Work Done, Australia, Preliminary* (cat. no. 8755.0) Quarterly  
*House Price Indexes: Eight Capital Cities* (cat. no. 6416.0) Quarterly  
*Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia* (cat. no. 5609.0) Monthly  
*Producer Price Indexes, Australia* (cat. no. 6427.0) Quarterly  
*Private Sector Construction Industry, Australia, 1996–97* (cat. no. 8772.0).

**18** Current publications and other products released by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications and Products* (cat. no. 1101.0). The Catalogue is available from any ABS office or the ABS web site <<http://www.abs.gov.au>>. The ABS also issues a daily Release Advice on the web site which details products to be released in the week ahead.

### ABS DATA AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

**19** As well as the statistics included in this and related publications, the ABS may have other relevant data available on request. Inquiries should be made to the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070.

### SYMBOLS AND OTHER USAGES

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
n.a.	not available
qtr	quarter
—	nil or rounded to zero
..	not applicable

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

## FOR MORE INFORMATION...

- INTERNET* **www.abs.gov.au** the ABS web site is the best place to start for access to summary data from our latest publications, information about the ABS, advice about upcoming releases, our catalogue, and Australia Now—a statistical profile.
- LIBRARY* A range of ABS publications is available from public and tertiary libraries Australia-wide. Contact your nearest library to determine whether it has the ABS statistics you require, or visit our web site for a list of libraries.
- CPI INFOLINE* For current and historical Consumer Price Index data, call 1902 981 074 (call cost 77c per minute).
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