

BUILDING ACTIVITY
DWELLING UNIT
COMMENCEMENTS

AUSTRALIA
PRELIMINARY

EMBARGO: 11:30AM (CANBERRA TIME) THURS 22 JUNE 2000

MARCH QTR KEY FIGURES

TREND ESTIMATES	Mar qtr 00	% change Dec qtr 99 to Mar qtr 00	% change Mar qtr 99 to Mar qtr 00
Dwelling units commenced			
New private sector houses	32 561	9.7	31.2
Total dwelling units	44 736	5.0	21.4
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SEASONALLY ADJUSTED	Mar qtr 00	% change Dec qtr 99 to Mar qtr 00	% change Mar qtr 99 to Mar qtr 00
Dwelling units commenced			
New private sector houses	34 017	19.3	39.1
Total dwelling units	44 952	7.3	23.5

MARCH QTR KEY POINTS

TREND ESTIMATES

- The trend for the total number of dwelling units commenced continued its upward surge, rising by 5.0% during the March quarter 2000.
- The number of new private sector houses commenced rose even more strongly, increasing by 9.7% during the March quarter.

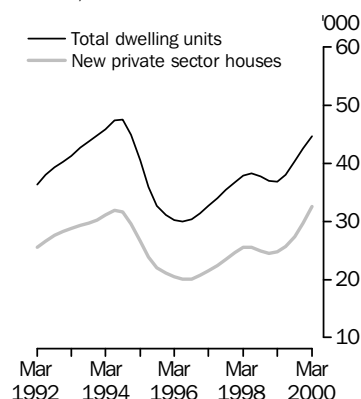
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED ESTIMATES

- In seasonally adjusted terms, the total number of dwelling units commenced during the March quarter increased by 3,067 (7.3%) to 44,952. This was 23.5% above the figure for a year earlier.
- For new private sector houses commenced, the March quarter recorded the largest ever increase, in both absolute and percentage terms, of 5,514 (19.3%) to 34,017. This was 39.1% more than for the March quarter 1999. The increase is a result of the surge in building approvals which occurred in late 1999 and the early months of 2000 which can be attributed to owner-occupiers bringing forward new house purchases prior to the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax. A fall in commencements of other dwelling units partly offset the large increase in houses.

ORIGINAL ESTIMATES

- The total number of dwelling units commenced has remained relatively stable over the last three quarters, with 42,555 commenced during the March quarter. The last period that commencements were above these levels was in 1994. A 5.4% increase to 31,565 new houses commenced was almost offset by an 11.7% fall to 10,990 other dwelling units.

Dwelling units commenced
Number, Trend



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

NOTES

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

<i>ISSUE (Quarter)</i>	<i>RELEASE DATE</i>
June 2000	14 September 2000
September 2000	15 December 2000

SIGNIFICANT REVISIONS THIS ISSUE

The total number of dwelling units commenced during the December quarter 1999 has been revised upwards by 646 (+1.5%) for Australia, including 430 (+5.0%) in Queensland, 221 (+4.1%) in Western Australia and 80 (+12.7%) in the Australian Capital Territory. New South Wales was revised downwards by 268 (-2.1%).

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

Relative standard errors for the number of new private sector houses and total dwelling units commenced in the March quarter 2000 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.

	<i>New private sector houses</i>	<i>Total dwellings</i>
	%	%
New South Wales	3.8	2.5
Victoria	3.6	2.7
Queensland	3.4	2.6
South Australia	3.9	3.3
Western Australia	4.5	3.9
Tasmania	2.1	1.8
Northern Territory
Australian Capital Territory	1.7	1.0
Australia	1.8	1.3

W. McLennan
Australian Statistician

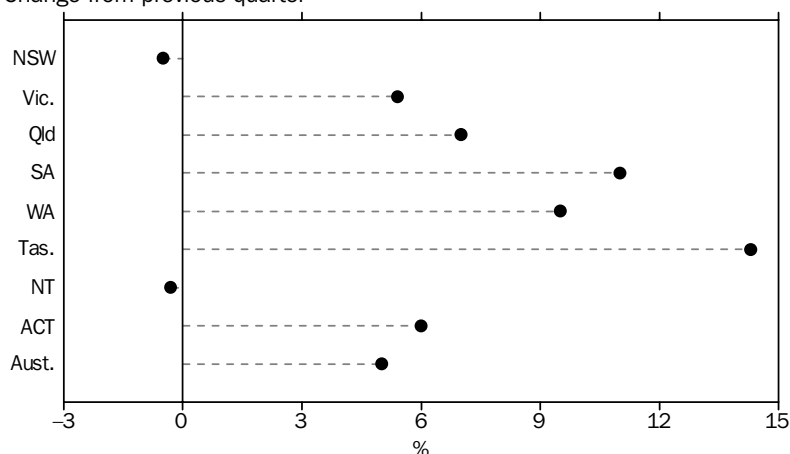
STATE ESTIMATES

TOTAL NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED

Trend estimates

- As for the December quarter 1999, the trend estimate of the total number of dwelling units commenced rose during the March quarter 2000 in all States except New South Wales and the Northern Territory. Growth in the latest quarter was strongest in Tasmania (+14.3%) followed by South Australia (+11.0%) and Western Australia (+9.5%).

Change from previous quarter



Seasonally adjusted estimates

- In seasonally adjusted terms, all States recorded increases in the total number of dwelling units commenced in the March quarter, led by Tasmania (+32.2%) and followed by South Australia (+27.7% to the highest level since 1994), Western Australia (+21.0% to the highest level since 1989), Victoria (+14.4% to the highest ever level), New South Wales (+7.5%) and Queensland (+1.3%). Only the Australian Capital Territory showed a fall (-10.0%). Commencements in Victoria exceeded those in New South Wales for the first time since the June quarter 1987.

Original estimates

- Increases in the total number of dwelling units commenced in the March quarter occurred in all States except Queensland, which fell by 14.5%. The Australian Capital Territory (-11.3%) and the Northern Territory (-4.5%) also fell.
- Tasmania (+19.2%) had the highest percentage increase in commencements of new houses, followed by New South Wales (+15.6%), Western Australia (+14.2%), South Australia (+6.9%) and Victoria (+2.3%). The Northern Territory (-8.9%) had the largest fall, followed by Queensland (-8.8%) and the Australian Capital Territory (-2.5%).
- Tasmania (+36.5%) and South Australia (+14.9%) were the only States to record increases in new other dwelling commencements. The Australian Capital Territory showed the biggest fall (-44.1%), followed by Queensland (-27.2%), Western Australia (-17.3%), New South Wales (-9.8%) and the Northern Territory (-7.9%), while Victoria (-0.1%) was virtually unchanged.

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED

<i>Period</i>	<i>New houses</i>		<i>Total dwelling units (includes conversions etc)</i>	
	<i>Private sector</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Private sector</i>	<i>Total</i>
ORIGINAL				
1998 Dec. qtr	24,866	25,542	35,971	37,206
1999 Mar. qtr	22,404	22,870	33,240	34,415
Jun. qtr	26,844	27,426	36,685	38,075
Sep. qtr	27,938	28,472	41,197	42,659
Dec. qtr	29,453	29,956	41,437	42,399
2000 Mar. qtr	31,195	31,565	41,649	42,555
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED				
1998 Dec. qtr	24,048	24,668	35,152	36,748
1999 Mar. qtr	24,451	24,977	35,173	36,395
Jun. qtr	26,403	26,948	36,332	37,606
Sep. qtr	27,051	27,621	40,318	41,447
Dec. qtr	28,503	28,942	40,503	41,885
2000 Mar. qtr	34,017	34,448	44,023	44,952
TREND ESTIMATES				
1998 Dec. qtr	24,512	25,241	35,533	37,006
1999 Mar. qtr	24,819	25,423	35,524	36,861
Jun. qtr	25,617	26,136	36,841	38,090
Sep. qtr	27,333	27,861	39,147	40,370
Dec. qtr	29,688	30,170	41,424	42,605
2000 Mar. qtr	32,561	32,876	43,661	44,736

TABLE 2. NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED, PERCENTAGE CHANGE

<i>Period</i>	<i>New houses</i>		<i>Total dwelling units (includes conversions etc)</i>	
	<i>Private sector</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Private sector</i>	<i>Total</i>
ORIGINAL (% change from previous quarter)				
1998 Dec. qtr	-5.2	-6.5	-5.1	-6.3
1999 Mar. qtr	-9.9	-10.5	-7.6	-7.5
June qtr	19.8	19.9	10.4	10.6
Sept. qtr	4.1	3.8	12.3	12.0
Dec. qtr	5.4	5.2	0.6	-0.6
2000 Mar. qtr	5.9	5.4	0.5	0.4
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED (% change from previous quarter)				
1998 Dec. qtr	-5.3	-6.9	-5.3	-4.8
1999 Mar. qtr	1.7	1.3	0.1	-1.0
June qtr	8.0	7.9	3.3	3.3
Sept. qtr	2.5	2.5	11.0	10.2
Dec. qtr	5.4	4.8	0.5	1.1
2000 Mar. qtr	19.3	19.0	8.7	7.3
TREND ESTIMATES (% change from previous quarter)				
1998 Dec. qtr	-1.6	-1.7	-2.1	-2.0
1999 Mar. qtr	1.3	0.7	—	-0.4
June qtr	3.2	2.8	3.7	3.3
Sept. qtr	6.7	6.6	6.3	6.0
Dec. qtr	8.6	8.3	5.8	5.5
2000 Mar. qtr	9.7	9.0	5.4	5.0

TABLE 3. TOTAL NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS (a) COMMENCED BY STATE

<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>
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED									
1998 Dec. qtr	11,459	9,379	7,443	1,800	4,515	357	n.a.	418	36,748
1999 Mar. qtr	12,504	9,737	6,790	1,780	4,388	350	n.a.	675	36,395
Jun qtr	12,417	10,439	7,119	1,963	4,752	339	n.a.	509	37,606
Sep. qtr	13,450	11,568	7,354	2,053	5,761	340	n.a.	555	41,447
Dec. qtr	11,956	11,277	8,585	2,123	5,621	380	n.a.	710	41,885
2000 Mar. qtr	12,853	12,896	8,692	2,712	6,802	503	n.a.	639	44,952
TREND ESTIMATES									
1998 Dec. qtr	12,283	9,486	7,349	1,806	4,509	348	519	518	37,006
1999 Mar. qtr	12,309	9,863	6,956	1,848	4,541	342	487	556	36,861
Jun qtr	12,581	10,463	7,058	1,896	4,858	337	442	570	38,090
Sep. qtr	12,758	11,162	7,601	2,052	5,412	354	416	599	40,370
Dec. qtr	12,652	11,842	8,245	2,276	5,998	402	412	634	42,605
2000 Mar. qtr	12,586	12,480	8,818	2,525	6,569	460	411	672	44,736

(a) Includes conversions, etc.

TABLE 4. TOTAL NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS(a) COMMENCED BY STATE, PERCENTAGE CHANGE

<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>
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED (% change from previous quarter)									
1998 Dec. qtr	-14.3	-1.2	-5.8	-4.3	-5.1	8.4	n.a.	-18.9	-4.8
1999 Mar. qtr	9.1	3.8	-8.8	-1.1	-2.8	-1.8	n.a.	61.5	-1.0
June qtr	-0.7	7.2	4.8	10.3	8.3	-3.2	n.a.	-24.7	3.3
Sept. qtr	8.3	10.8	3.3	4.6	21.2	0.4	n.a.	9.1	10.2
Dec. qtr	-11.1	-2.5	16.7	3.4	-2.4	11.7	n.a.	28.0	1.1
2000 Mar. qtr	7.5	14.4	1.3	27.7	21.0	32.2	n.a.	-10.0	7.3
TREND ESTIMATES (% change from previous quarter)									
1998 Dec. qtr	-2.3	1.2	-8.1	1.1	-3.5	-2.7	-8.2	23.1	-2.0
1999 Mar. qtr	0.2	4.0	-5.3	2.3	0.7	-1.5	-6.3	7.4	-0.4
June qtr	2.2	6.1	1.5	2.6	7.0	-1.5	-9.2	2.5	3.3
Sept. qtr	1.4	6.7	7.7	8.2	11.4	5.1	-5.9	5.2	6.0
Dec. qtr	-0.8	6.1	8.5	10.9	10.8	13.5	-0.8	5.7	5.5
2000 Mar. qtr	-0.5	5.4	7.0	11.0	9.5	14.3	-0.3	6.0	5.0

(a) Includes conversions, etc.

TABLE 5. 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									
1996-97	23,385	18,652	22,870	5,112	12,522	1,560	985	1,157	86,246
1997-98	26,764	26,004	23,754	5,823	14,790	1,387	1,219	1,022	100,764
1998-99	27,548	29,165	20,150	6,296	15,948	1,264	1,427	1,364	103,164
1998 Dec. qtr	6,239	7,399	5,159	1,699	3,987	332	450	276	25,542
1999 Mar. qtr	6,633	6,494	4,131	1,326	3,386	330	285	285	22,870
Jun qtr	7,205	7,910	5,492	1,661	4,157	304	318	379	27,426
Sep. qtr	7,368	8,155	5,439	1,792	4,879	301	279	261	28,472
Dec. qtr	7,135	8,791	6,298	2,007	4,723	359	248	396	29,956
2000 Mar. qtr	8,251	8,993	5,742	2,146	5,392	428	226	386	31,565
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1996-97	18,681	6,047	9,004	651	2,241	291	701	729	38,345
1997-98	19,852	7,598	11,222	741	2,360	231	952	236	43,192
1998-99	20,821	8,307	8,962	1,062	2,407	107	532	615	42,813
1998 Dec. qtr	5,010	1,682	2,542	263	488	54	191	145	10,375
1999 Mar. qtr	5,464	2,159	1,820	302	586	18	124	240	10,713
Jun qtr	4,549	2,466	1,973	161	731	23	97	114	10,114
Sep. qtr	6,203	3,354	1,890	369	1,088	18	178	322	13,422
Dec. qtr	4,840	2,675	2,671	308	875	52	152	311	11,884
2000 Mar. qtr	4,366	2,671	1,944	354	724	71	140	174	10,444
CONVERSIONS, ETC									
1996-97	1,667	1,131	535	26	86	30	40	65	3,580
1997-98	1,821	1,340	441	89	115	3	14	2	3,826
1998-99	1,359	1,566	213	57	92	6	15	133	3,442
1998 Dec. qtr	488	653	101	3	37	3	4	—	1,289
1999 Mar. qtr	229	355	64	16	28	—	6	133	832
Jun qtr	236	259	18	4	15	1	2	—	535
Sep. qtr	214	290	120	5	128	4	4	—	765
Dec. qtr	264	223	40	5	19	5	1	2	559
2000 Mar. qtr	94	263	20	5	77	1	17	69	546
TOTAL									
1996-97	43,733	25,831	32,409	5,789	14,849	1,881	1,726	1,951	128,172
1997-98	48,437	34,942	35,418	6,653	17,265	1,622	2,185	1,260	147,781
1998-99	49,728	39,038	29,325	7,416	18,447	1,377	1,974	2,112	149,419
1998 Dec. qtr	11,737	9,734	7,802	1,965	4,512	389	645	421	37,206
1999 Mar. qtr	12,326	9,008	6,015	1,645	4,000	348	415	658	34,415
Jun qtr	11,990	10,634	7,483	1,826	4,903	328	417	493	38,075
Sep. qtr	13,785	11,799	7,449	2,166	6,095	323	461	583	42,659
Dec. qtr	12,239	11,689	9,009	2,320	5,617	415	401	709	42,399
2000 Mar. qtr	12,711	11,927	7,706	2,505	6,193	500	383	629	42,555

TABLE 6. 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									
1996-97	23,180	18,395	22,523	5,057	12,013	1,543	815	1,116	84,645
1997-98	26,585	25,701	23,411	5,628	14,170	1,379	949	1,020	98,844
1998-99	27,155	28,512	19,714	6,091	15,383	1,263	933	1,300	100,353
1998 Dec. qtr	6,181	7,214	5,019	1,644	3,946	332	256	273	24,866
1999 Mar. qtr	6,572	6,302	4,065	1,293	3,350	330	221	271	22,404
Jun qtr	7,150	7,832	5,361	1,591	4,038	304	235	333	26,844
Sep. qtr	7,330	8,040	5,340	1,752	4,746	289	197	246	27,938
Dec. qtr	7,084	8,668	6,150	1,947	4,663	358	194	390	29,453
2000 Mar. qtr	8,202	8,870	5,670	2,134	5,324	427	189	378	31,195
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1996-97	16,878	5,636	8,314	647	1,858	246	685	711	34,975
1997-98	18,681	7,060	10,657	720	1,855	220	877	228	40,298
1998-99	19,673	7,878	8,292	1,039	1,982	107	485	611	40,067
1998 Dec. qtr	4,785	1,592	2,442	244	398	54	187	145	9,847
1999 Mar. qtr	5,106	2,038	1,770	302	426	18	109	236	10,005
Jun qtr	4,321	2,343	1,655	161	615	23	83	114	9,315
Sep. qtr	5,897	3,290	1,605	359	869	18	178	302	12,518
Dec. qtr	4,752	2,591	2,638	305	693	52	112	287	11,430
2000 Mar. qtr	4,128	2,616	1,858	354	610	71	132	168	9,937
CONVERSIONS, ETC									
1996-97	1,638	1,118	535	23	80	12	28	5	3,439
1997-98	1,807	1,317	419	89	115	3	14	2	3,767
1998-99	1,336	1,542	211	55	92	6	15	133	3,391
1998 Dec. qtr	479	632	100	3	37	3	4	—	1,258
1999 Mar. qtr	228	355	64	16	28	—	6	133	831
Jun qtr	230	257	17	4	15	1	2	—	526
Sep. qtr	201	288	120	5	119	4	4	—	741
Dec. qtr	264	222	40	5	15	5	1	2	554
2000 Mar. qtr	87	258	20	5	60	1	17	69	517
TOTAL									
1996-97	41,696	25,150	31,372	5,727	13,951	1,801	1,528	1,832	123,060
1997-98	47,073	34,078	34,488	6,437	16,140	1,603	1,840	1,250	142,908
1998-99	48,164	37,932	28,217	7,186	17,457	1,376	1,433	2,044	143,811
1998 Dec. qtr	11,445	9,438	7,561	1,891	4,381	389	447	418	35,971
1999 Mar. qtr	11,906	8,695	5,899	1,612	3,804	348	336	640	33,240
Jun qtr	11,701	10,431	7,033	1,756	4,668	328	320	447	36,685
Sep. qtr	13,428	11,618	7,065	2,116	5,734	311	379	548	41,197
Dec. qtr	12,100	11,481	8,828	2,257	5,371	414	307	679	41,437
2000 Mar. qtr	12,417	11,744	7,548	2,493	5,994	499	338	615	41,649

TABLE 7. 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									
1996-97	205	257	347	55	509	17	170	41	1,601
1997-98	179	303	343	195	620	8	270	2	1,920
1998-99	393	653	436	205	565	1	494	64	2,811
1998 Dec. qtr	58	185	140	55	41	—	194	3	676
1999 Mar. qtr	61	192	66	33	36	—	64	14	466
Jun qtr	55	78	131	70	119	—	83	46	582
Sep. qtr	38	115	99	40	133	12	82	15	534
Dec. qtr	51	123	148	60	60	1	54	6	503
2000 Mar. qtr	49	123	72	12	68	1	37	8	370
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1996-97	1,803	411	690	4	383	45	16	18	3,370
1997-98	1,171	538	565	21	505	11	75	8	2,894
1998-99	1,148	429	670	23	425	—	47	4	2,746
1998 Dec. qtr	225	90	100	19	90	—	4	—	528
1999 Mar. qtr	358	121	50	—	160	—	15	4	708
Jun qtr	228	123	318	—	116	—	14	—	799
Sep. qtr	306	64	285	10	219	—	—	20	904
Dec. qtr	88	84	33	3	182	—	40	24	454
2000 Mar. qtr	238	55	86	—	114	—	8	6	507
CONVERSIONS, ETC									
1996-97	29	13	—	3	6	18	12	60	141
1997-98	14	23	22	—	—	—	—	—	59
1998-99	23	24	2	2	—	—	—	—	51
1998 Dec. qtr	9	21	1	—	—	—	—	—	31
1999 Mar. qtr	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Jun qtr	6	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	9
Sep. qtr	13	2	—	—	9	—	—	—	24
Dec. qtr	—	1	—	—	4	—	—	—	5
2000 Mar. qtr	7	5	—	—	17	—	—	—	29
TOTAL									
1996-97	2,037	681	1,037	62	898	80	198	119	5,112
1997-98	1,364	864	930	216	1,125	19	345	10	4,873
1998-99	1,564	1,106	1,108	230	990	1	541	68	5,608
1998 Dec. qtr	292	296	241	74	131	—	198	3	1,235
1999 Mar. qtr	420	313	116	33	196	—	79	18	1,175
Jun qtr	289	203	450	70	235	—	97	46	1,390
Sep. qtr	357	181	384	50	361	12	82	35	1,462
Dec. qtr	139	208	181	63	246	1	94	30	962
2000 Mar. qtr	294	183	158	12	199	1	45	14	906

EXPLANATORY NOTES

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. 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. 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 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, data for regions below State and Territory level are available from the building approvals series compiled by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and based on information reported by local government and other reporting 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).

EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

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 1–4. 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 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*

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 6345.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

16 ABS publications draw extensively on information provided freely by individuals, businesses, governments and other organisations. Their continued cooperation is very much appreciated. Information received by the ABS is treated in strict confidence as required by the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

17 Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:
Building Activity, Australia (Cat. no. 8752.0)—issued quarterly
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18 Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications and Products* (Cat. no. 1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Release Advice* (Cat. no. 1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Release Advice are available from any ABS office in your State or Territory.

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19 The ABS can also make available certain building approvals and activity data which are not published. A charge may be made for providing unpublished information.

ELECTRONIC SERVICES

20 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 in your State or Territory.

SYMBOLS AND OTHER USAGES

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

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

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