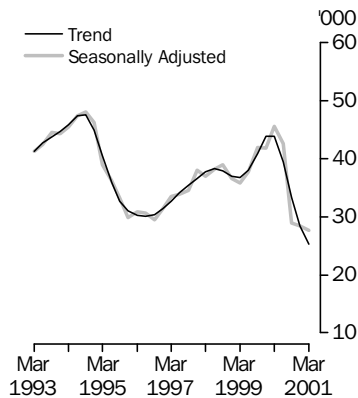


BUILDING ACTIVITY
DWELLING UNIT
COMMENCEMENTS

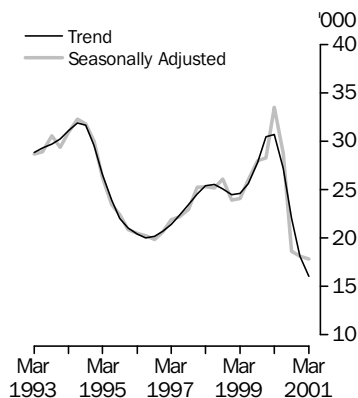
AUSTRALIA
PRELIMINARY

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Dwelling units commenced
Number, Total



New houses commenced
Number, Private sector



- 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.

MARCH QTR KEY FIGURES

TREND ESTIMATES	Mar qtr 01	% change Dec qtr 00 to Mar qtr 01	% change Mar qtr 00 to Mar qtr 01
Dwelling units commenced			
New private sector houses	16 029	-11.7	-47.9
Total dwelling units	25 284	-11.0	-42.4
.....			
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED	Mar qtr 01	% change Dec qtr 00 to Mar qtr 01	% change Mar qtr 00 to Mar qtr 01
Dwelling units commenced			
New private sector houses	17 846	-1.7	-46.9
Total dwelling units	27 603	-2.7	-39.5

MARCH QTR KEY POINTS

TREND ESTIMATES

- The trend estimate for the total number of dwelling units commenced fell by 11.0% in the March quarter 2001, following falls in each of the three previous quarters.
- In each of the four quarters to March 2001, commencements of new private sector houses recorded falls greater than those for all dwelling unit commencements. The fall in the March quarter 2001 was 11.7%.

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED ESTIMATES

- In seasonally adjusted terms, there was a 2.7% fall in the total number of dwellings commenced in the March quarter 2001. This follows a large fall of 32.1% in the September quarter 2000 and a 1.9% fall in the December quarter. The 27,603 dwellings commenced in the March quarter is 39.5% below the level of a year earlier and the lowest since the March quarter 1983.
- Commencements of private sector houses fell by 1.7% to 17,846 in the March quarter. This follows falls in the September and December quarters of 2000 of 35.4% and 2.4% respectively.

ORIGINAL ESTIMATES

- The total number of dwelling units commenced fell 7.9% to 26,575. New house commencements fell 12.1% to 16,898 but other dwellings rose slightly, up 0.5% to 9,677.

NOTES

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

<i>ISSUE (Quarter)</i>	<i>RELEASE DATE</i>
June 2001	13 September 2001
September 2001	14 December 2001

SIGNIFICANT REVISIONS THIS ISSUE

The total number of dwelling units commenced in Australia during the December quarter 2000 has been revised downwards by 193 (-0.7%) from the estimate published in *Building Activity, Australia, December Quarter 2000* (Cat. no. 8752.0) released on 18 April 2001. This was mainly the result of downward revisions of 228 (-4.1%) in Queensland and 212 (-2.6%) in Victoria being partially offset by an upward revision of 291 (+3.2%) in New South Wales.

RELIABILITY OF ESTIMATES

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 March quarter 2001 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: MARCH QUARTER 2001

	<i>New private sector houses</i>	<i>Total dwellings</i>
	%	%
New South Wales	3.9	2.1
Victoria	3.6	2.3
Queensland	2.7	1.7
South Australia	3.1	2.3
Western Australia	3.9	2.9
Tasmania	2.9	2.8
Northern Territory
Australian Capital Territory
Australia	1.7	1.1

Dennis Trewin
Australian Statistician

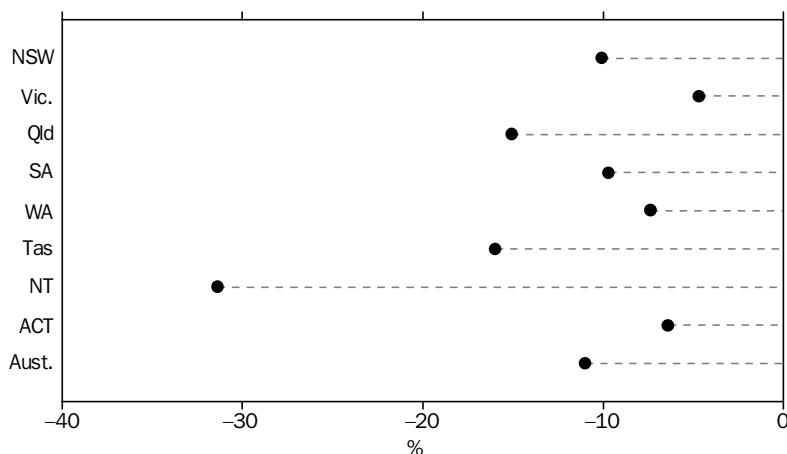
STATE ESTIMATES

TOTAL NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED

Trend estimates

- The trend estimate of the total number of dwelling units commenced during the March quarter 2001 fell for all States and Territories for the fourth successive quarter, with New South Wales, Western Australia and the two Territories having fallen for the last five quarters. For the latest quarter, the largest percentage fall was for the Northern Territory (-31.4%), followed by Tasmania (-16.0%), Queensland (-15.1%), New South Wales (-10.1%), South Australia (-9.7%), Western Australia (-7.4%) and the Australian Capital Territory (-6.4%), while Victoria (-4.7%) fell the least.

Trend percentage change from previous quarter



Seasonally adjusted estimates

- In seasonally adjusted terms, South Australia (+20.6%) recorded the largest percentage increase in the total number of dwelling units commenced followed by Victoria (+19.5%) and Queensland (+9.3%). Tasmania recorded the largest fall (-29.5%), followed by the Australian Capital Territory (-23.4%), New South Wales (-23.3%) and Western Australia (-4.8%).

Original estimates

- The Northern Territory recorded the largest percentage fall (-45.5%) in the total number of dwelling units commenced in the March quarter, followed by Tasmania (-35.5%), New South Wales (-21.3%), the Australian Capital Territory (-19.7%), Western Australia (-13.9%) and Queensland (-7.6%). Only South Australia (+6.4%) and Victoria (+11.0%) recorded increases in the latest quarter.
- New house commencements fell in all States and Territories, with falls of 631 (-13.5%) in New South Wales and 619 (-20.9%) in Western Australia accounting for more than half the total Australian fall. Other dwelling commencements also fell in New South Wales (down 1,390 or 28.8%), but this was more than offset by increases in Victoria (up 1,149 or 59.3%) and South Australia (up 253 or 155.2%) in particular.
- Public sector dwelling commencements rose 23.7% in the March quarter to 836, but the previous quarter was the lowest since the series began in 1969.

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				
1999 Dec. qtr	29,480	29,983	41,547	42,509
2000 Mar. qtr	31,293	31,675	42,956	43,892
Jun qtr	29,666	29,997	42,048	42,805
Sep. qtr	18,505	18,912	28,056	29,423
Dec. qtr	18,936	19,220	28,169	28,845
2001 Mar. qtr	16,649	16,898	25,739	26,575
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED				
1999 Dec. qtr	28,297	28,907	40,588	41,843
2000 Mar. qtr	33,580	34,011	44,609	45,632
Jun qtr	28,794	29,151	41,917	42,577
Sep. qtr	18,602	18,883	27,756	28,921
Dec. qtr	18,161	18,518	27,505	28,374
2001 Mar. qtr	17,846	18,124	26,701	27,603
TREND ESTIMATES				
1999 Dec. qtr	30,483	30,975	42,778	43,914
2000 Mar. qtr	30,763	31,207	42,906	43,900
Jun qtr	27,241	27,617	38,582	39,500
Sep. qtr	22,036	22,343	32,386	33,308
Dec. qtr	18,161	18,461	27,476	28,420
2001 Mar. qtr	16,029	16,478	24,334	25,284

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)				
1999 Dec. qtr	5.5	5.3	0.8	-0.4
2000 Mar. qtr	6.2	5.6	3.4	3.3
June qtr	-5.2	-5.3	-2.1	-2.5
Sept. qtr	-37.6	-37.0	-33.3	-31.3
Dec. qtr	2.3	1.6	0.4	-2.0
2001 Mar. qtr	-12.1	-12.1	-8.6	-7.9
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED (% change from previous quarter)				
1999 Dec. qtr	1.0	1.9	-0.6	-0.3
2000 Mar. qtr	18.7	17.7	9.9	9.1
June qtr	-14.3	-14.3	-6.0	-6.7
Sept. qtr	-35.4	-35.2	-33.8	-32.1
Dec. qtr	-2.4	-1.9	-0.9	-1.9
2001 Mar. qtr	-1.7	-2.1	-2.9	-2.7
TREND ESTIMATES (% change from previous quarter)				
1999 Dec. qtr	9.6	9.4	8.0	7.5
2000 Mar. qtr	0.9	0.7	0.3	—
June qtr	-11.5	-11.5	-10.1	-10.0
Sept. qtr	-19.1	-19.1	-16.1	-15.7
Dec. qtr	-17.6	-17.4	-15.2	-14.7
2001 Mar. qtr	-11.7	-10.7	-11.4	-11.0

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									
1999 Dec. qtr	12,443	11,480	8,491	2,151	5,460	377	n.a.	686	41,843
2000 Mar. qtr	12,798	13,067	9,120	2,673	6,805	498	n.a.	592	45,632
Jun qtr	12,396	12,152	9,341	2,521	4,730	531	n.a.	570	42,577
Sep. qtr	7,722	8,893	5,974	1,772	3,705	275	n.a.	405	28,921
Dec. qtr	9,621	7,706	5,046	1,396	3,469	313	n.a.	483	28,374
2001 Mar. qtr	7,379	9,208	5,513	1,683	3,303	221	n.a.	370	27,603
TREND ESTIMATES									
1999 Dec. qtr	13,072	12,252	8,638	2,350	6,084	387	406	644	43,914
2000 Mar. qtr	12,510	12,478	9,085	2,508	5,881	404	383	617	43,900
Jun qtr	11,225	11,362	8,312	2,330	5,020	387	348	538	39,500
Sep. qtr	9,714	9,693	6,799	1,930	4,065	336	288	472	33,308
Dec. qtr	8,453	8,506	5,533	1,598	3,414	280	208	427	28,420
2001 Mar. qtr	7,597	8,106	4,697	1,443	3,161	235	143	400	25,284

(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)									
1999 Dec. qtr	-6.1	-1.8	11.6	1.6	-8.1	5.0	n.a.	8.2	-0.3
2000 Mar. qtr	2.8	13.8	7.4	24.2	24.6	32.1	n.a.	-13.7	9.1
June qtr	-3.1	-7.0	2.4	-5.7	-30.5	6.7	n.a.	-3.8	-6.7
Sept. qtr	-37.7	-26.8	-36.0	-29.7	-21.7	-48.3	n.a.	-29.0	-32.1
Dec. qtr	24.6	-13.3	-15.5	-21.2	-6.4	14.0	n.a.	19.1	-1.9
2001 Mar. qtr	-23.3	19.5	9.3	20.6	-4.8	-29.5	n.a.	-23.4	-2.7
TREND ESTIMATES (% change from previous quarter)									
1999 Dec. qtr	1.9	8.4	12.8	13.2	9.1	9.6	-2.7	3.5	7.5
2000 Mar. qtr	-4.3	1.8	5.2	6.7	-3.3	4.5	-5.8	-4.2	—
June qtr	-10.3	-8.9	-8.5	-7.1	-14.6	-4.4	-9.1	-12.9	-10.0
Sept. qtr	-13.5	-14.7	-18.2	-17.2	-19.0	-13.1	-17.1	-12.3	-15.7
Dec. qtr	-13.0	-12.2	-18.6	-17.2	-16.0	-16.7	-27.7	-9.4	-14.7
2001 Mar. qtr	-10.1	-4.7	-15.1	-9.7	-7.4	-16.0	-31.4	-6.4	-11.0

(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									
1997-1998	26,764	26,004	23,754	5,823	14,790	1,387	1,219	1,022	100,764
1998-1999	27,548	29,165	20,150	6,296	15,948	1,264	1,427	1,364	103,164
1999-2000	30,754	34,716	24,218	7,857	18,650	1,538	936	1,460	120,127
1999 Dec. qtr	7,142	8,817	6,315	2,007	4,698	359	249	396	29,983
2000 Mar. qtr	8,364	8,975	5,941	2,064	5,303	431	217	380	31,675
Jun qtr	7,880	8,769	6,523	1,994	3,770	447	191	423	29,997
Sep. qtr	4,404	6,138	3,389	1,419	2,915	235	179	235	18,912
Dec. qtr	4,674	5,917	3,593	1,347	2,957	305	120	307	19,220
2001 Mar. qtr	4,043	5,635	3,154	1,190	2,338	212	96	230	16,898
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1997-1998	19,852	7,598	11,222	741	2,360	231	952	236	43,192
1998-1999	20,821	8,307	8,962	1,062	2,407	107	532	615	42,813
1999-2000	19,430	11,725	10,130	1,398	3,916	185	594	948	48,326
1999 Dec. qtr	4,902	2,680	2,679	315	875	52	152	311	11,966
2000 Mar. qtr	4,456	2,856	2,261	422	934	70	138	181	11,318
Jun qtr	3,869	2,835	3,300	292	1,019	45	126	134	11,620
Sep. qtr	3,433	2,430	2,376	378	813	6	157	138	9,731
Dec. qtr	4,622	1,749	1,669	161	585	36	78	190	9,090
2001 Mar. qtr	3,166	2,994	1,775	399	616	9	11	169	9,140
CONVERSIONS, ETC									
1997-1998	1,821	1,340	441	89	115	3	14	2	3,826
1998-1999	1,359	1,566	213	57	92	6	15	133	3,442
1999-2000	723	1,896	229	156	266	44	27	71	3,412
1999 Dec. qtr	264	224	40	5	19	5	1	2	560
2000 Mar. qtr	117	539	20	58	78	1	17	69	899
Jun qtr	128	843	49	88	41	34	5	—	1,188
Sep. qtr	224	392	61	22	72	5	2	1	779
Dec. qtr	202	190	120	2	18	4	—	—	535
2001 Mar. qtr	268	94	45	17	111	2	1	—	537
TOTAL									
1997-1998	48,437	34,942	35,418	6,653	17,265	1,622	2,185	1,260	147,781
1998-1999	49,728	39,038	29,325	7,416	18,447	1,377	1,974	2,112	149,419
1999-2000	50,907	48,337	34,577	9,411	22,832	1,766	1,557	2,479	171,865
1999 Dec. qtr	12,308	11,721	9,034	2,327	5,592	415	402	709	42,509
2000 Mar. qtr	12,937	12,370	8,222	2,544	6,315	502	372	630	43,892
Jun qtr	11,877	12,447	9,872	2,374	4,830	526	322	557	42,805
Sep. qtr	8,061	8,960	5,826	1,819	3,800	246	338	374	29,423
Dec. qtr	9,497	7,856	5,381	1,510	3,560	346	198	497	28,845
2001 Mar. qtr	7,477	8,723	4,973	1,606	3,065	223	108	399	26,575

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									
1997-1998	26,585	25,701	23,411	5,628	14,170	1,379	949	1,020	98,844
1998-1999	27,155	28,512	19,714	6,091	15,383	1,263	933	1,300	100,353
1999-2000	30,566	34,269	23,823	7,730	18,310	1,519	732	1,430	118,377
1999 Dec. qtr	7,091	8,694	6,167	1,947	4,638	358	195	390	29,480
2000 Mar. qtr	8,315	8,850	5,861	2,054	5,231	430	180	372	31,293
Jun qtr	7,830	8,685	6,455	1,977	3,695	442	160	422	29,666
Sep. qtr	4,363	6,081	3,332	1,380	2,774	228	124	225	18,505
Dec. qtr	4,658	5,857	3,535	1,342	2,845	305	92	301	18,936
2001 Mar. qtr	4,009	5,559	3,094	1,168	2,322	212	60	226	16,649
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1997-1998	18,681	7,060	10,657	720	1,855	220	877	228	40,298
1998-1999	19,673	7,878	8,292	1,039	1,982	107	485	611	40,067
1999-2000	18,646	11,502	9,645	1,381	3,264	181	523	898	46,040
1999 Dec. qtr	4,814	2,596	2,646	312	693	52	112	287	11,512
2000 Mar. qtr	4,218	2,799	2,173	422	810	70	128	175	10,795
Jun qtr	3,717	2,817	3,221	288	892	41	105	134	11,215
Sep. qtr	3,125	2,374	2,171	378	488	4	129	129	8,798
Dec. qtr	4,443	1,702	1,620	153	518	33	43	190	8,702
2001 Mar. qtr	2,882	2,970	1,673	386	570	9	3	169	8,663
CONVERSIONS, ETC									
1997-1998	1,807	1,317	419	89	115	3	14	2	3,767
1998-1999	1,336	1,542	211	55	92	6	15	133	3,391
1999-2000	702	1,874	228	156	230	43	27	71	3,331
1999 Dec. qtr	264	223	40	5	15	5	1	2	555
2000 Mar. qtr	110	532	20	58	61	1	17	69	868
Jun qtr	127	831	48	88	35	33	5	—	1,167
Sep. qtr	219	391	61	19	55	4	2	1	752
Dec. qtr	200	190	120	1	18	4	—	—	532
2001 Mar. qtr	268	92	43	17	6	—	1	—	426
TOTAL									
1997-1998	47,073	34,078	34,488	6,437	16,140	1,603	1,840	1,250	142,908
1998-1999	48,164	37,932	28,217	7,186	17,457	1,376	1,433	2,044	143,811
1999-2000	49,914	47,645	33,696	9,267	21,804	1,742	1,282	2,399	167,748
1999 Dec. qtr	12,169	11,513	8,853	2,264	5,346	414	308	679	41,547
2000 Mar. qtr	12,643	12,181	8,054	2,534	6,102	501	325	616	42,956
Jun qtr	11,674	12,333	9,724	2,353	4,622	516	270	556	42,048
Sep. qtr	7,707	8,846	5,564	1,777	3,317	236	255	355	28,056
Dec. qtr	9,300	7,749	5,274	1,496	3,381	343	135	491	28,169
2001 Mar. qtr	7,159	8,621	4,810	1,571	2,898	221	64	395	25,739

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									
1997-1998	179	303	343	195	620	8	270	2	1,920
1998-1999	393	653	436	205	565	1	494	64	2,811
1999-2000	188	447	395	127	340	19	204	30	1,750
1999 Dec. qtr	51	123	148	60	60	1	54	6	503
2000 Mar. qtr	49	125	80	10	72	1	37	8	382
Jun qtr	50	84	68	17	75	5	31	1	331
Sep. qtr	41	57	57	39	141	7	55	10	407
Dec. qtr	16	60	58	5	112	—	28	6	285
2001 Mar. qtr	34	76	60	22	16	—	36	4	248
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1997-1998	1,171	538	565	21	505	11	75	8	2,894
1998-1999	1,148	429	670	23	425	—	47	4	2,746
1999-2000	784	223	485	17	652	4	71	50	2,286
1999 Dec. qtr	88	84	33	3	182	—	40	24	454
2000 Mar. qtr	238	57	88	—	124	—	10	6	523
Jun qtr	152	18	79	4	127	4	21	—	405
Sep. qtr	308	56	205	—	325	2	28	9	933
Dec. qtr	179	47	49	8	67	3	35	—	388
2001 Mar. qtr	284	24	102	13	46	—	8	—	477
CONVERSIONS, ETC									
1997-1998	14	23	22	—	—	—	—	—	59
1998-1999	23	24	2	2	—	—	—	—	51
1999-2000	21	22	1	—	36	1	—	—	81
1999 Dec. qtr	—	1	—	—	4	—	—	—	5
2000 Mar. qtr	7	7	—	—	17	—	—	—	31
Jun qtr	1	12	1	—	6	1	—	—	21
Sep. qtr	5	1	—	3	17	1	—	—	27
Dec. qtr	2	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	3
2001 Mar. qtr	—	2	2	—	105	2	—	—	111
TOTAL									
1997-1998	1,364	864	930	216	1,125	19	345	10	4,873
1998-1999	1,564	1,106	1,108	230	990	1	541	68	5,608
1999-2000	993	692	881	144	1,028	24	275	80	4,117
1999 Dec. qtr	139	208	181	63	246	1	94	30	962
2000 Mar. qtr	294	189	168	10	213	1	47	14	936
Jun qtr	203	114	148	21	208	10	52	1	757
Sep. qtr	354	114	262	42	483	10	83	19	1,367
Dec. qtr	197	107	107	14	179	3	63	6	676
2001 Mar. qtr	318	102	164	35	167	2	44	4	836

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 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)—issued quarterly
- Building Approvals, Australia* (Cat. no. 8731.0)—issued monthly
- House Price Indexes: Eight Capital Cities* (Cat. no. 6416.0)—issued quarterly
- Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia* (Cat. no. 5609.0)
—issued monthly
- Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building*
(Cat. no. 6407.0)—issued quarterly
- Price Index of Materials Used in House Building* (Cat. no. 6408.0)
—issued quarterly
- Private Sector Construction Industry, Australia, 1996–97* (Cat. no. 8772.0)

18 Current publications and other products produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications and Products, Australia* (Cat. no. 1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Release Advice* (Cat. no. 1105.0) which lists products to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Release Advice are available from any ABS office.

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 Service on 1300 135 070.

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.

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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INFORMATION SERVICE

Data which have been published and can be provided within five minutes are free of charge. Our information consultants can also help you to access the full range of ABS information—ABS user-pays services can be tailored to your needs, time frame and budget. Publications may be purchased. Specialists are on hand to help you with analytical or methodological advice.

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