

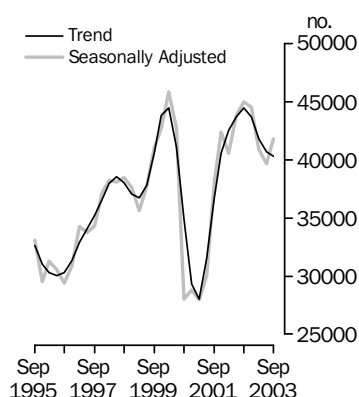
DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS

AUSTRALIA
PRELIMINARY

EMBARGO: 11.30AM (CANBERRA TIME) TUES 16 DEC 2003

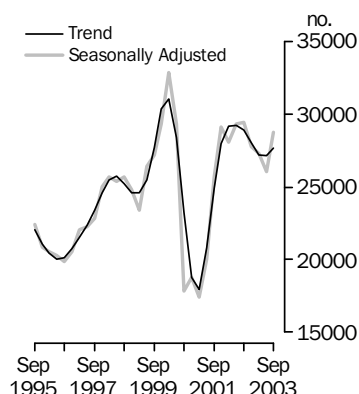
Dwelling units commenced

Total



New houses commenced

Private sector



KEY FIGURES

Sep qtr 03	Jun qtr 03 to Sep qtr 03	Sep qtr 02 to Sep qtr 03
no.	% change	% change

TREND ESTIMATES

Dwelling units commenced

New private sector houses	27 692	2.0	-4.3
Total dwelling units	40 341	-0.9	-9.4

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED

Dwelling units commenced

New private sector houses	28 785	10.4	-2.3
Total dwelling units	41 845	5.5	-7.0

KEY POINTS

TREND ESTIMATES

- The trend estimate for the total number of dwelling units commenced fell 0.9% in the September quarter 2003, the fourth successive quarterly decline. However, the rate of decline has slowed over the last two quarters.
- New private sector houses rose 2.0% in the latest quarter, following four successive quarterly declines.

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED ESTIMATES

- In seasonally adjusted terms, the total number of dwelling units commenced rose 5.5% to 41,845 in the September quarter. This is still 7.0% fewer than the number a year earlier. The increase in the September quarter follows three successive quarterly declines.
- New private sector house commencements rose 10.4% to 28,785.
- Of the states and territories, Tasmania recorded the largest percentage increase in total dwelling commencements (+14.7%) followed by Queensland (+10.1%), Victoria (+8.8%), New South Wales (+2.4%) and Western Australia (+0.6%), while the Australian Capital Territory and South Australia recorded fall of -38.1% and -0.1% respectively.

INQUIRIES

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

NOTES

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

ISSUE (Quarter)

RELEASE DATE

December 2003

18 March 2004

March 2004

22 June 2004

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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 19 January 2004.

CHANGES IN THIS ISSUE

Tables 2 and 3 have replaced the previous table 2. Comments on original estimates have been enhanced and moved from page 1 to page 3 and a separate graph for each state/territory is now included.

SIGNIFICANT REVISIONS THIS ISSUE

This issue includes revisions to recent historical data.

As reported in the October 2003 issue of *Building Approvals, Australia* (cat. no. 8731.0), significant revisions to the total number of dwellings approved in two municipalities in Queensland were made, necessitating follow-on upward revisions to the number of dwelling units commenced for the December quarter 2000 to June quarter 2003.

A review of our estimation methods has led to downward revisions in the number of dwellings commenced in all states and territories, for the September quarter 2000 to June quarter 2003.

The combined effect of these changes, together with the usual 'previous quarter' revisions for the June quarter 2003, is to revise the total number of dwellings commenced for each state and territory by the following:

.....

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
NSW	-188	-618	5
Vic.	-67	-495	64
Qld	-12	347	1 114
SA	-18	-48	-28
WA	-30	-103	-228
Tas.	-4	-22	-10
NT	—	-7	-4
ACT	-4	-12	-17
Aust.	-323	-958	896

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— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

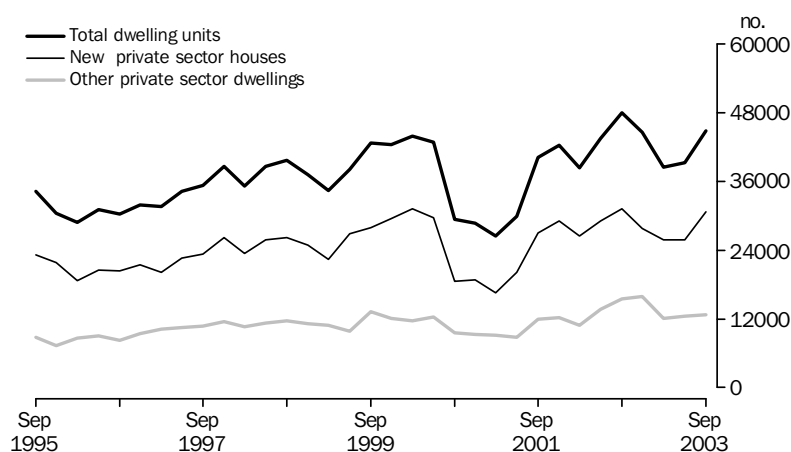
Dennis Trewin
Australian Statistician

DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS ORIGINAL

ORIGINAL ESTIMATES

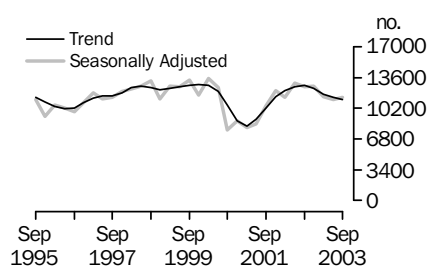
	Sep qtr 03	Jun qtr 03 to Sep qtr 03	Sep qtr 02 to Sep qtr 03
	no.	% change	% change
Dwelling units commenced			
New private sector houses	30 744	19.0	-1.7
Other private sector dwellings	12 793	2.8	-17.8
Public sector dwellings	1 255	26.3	10.8
Total dwelling units	44 792	14.0	-6.6

- The total number of dwelling units commenced rose 14.0% in the September quarter to 44,792.
- New private sector house commencements rose 19.0% to 30,744. Victoria recorded the largest percentage increase (+34.6%) followed by Queensland (+23.4%), Tasmania (+22.1%) and Western Australia (+15.9%), while only the Australian Capital Territory recorded a decrease.
- Other private sector dwellings rose 2.8% to 12,793, to be 17.8% fewer than a year earlier. The increase was due to rises in New South Wales (+18.6%) and Queensland (+9.8%) with the largest percentage falls being in the Australian Capital Territory (-81.8%), Tasmania (-55.3%), the Northern Territory (-47.8%) and Victoria (-17.8%).
- The total number of public sector dwellings commenced rose 26.3% to 1,255, with increases in both houses and other dwellings.



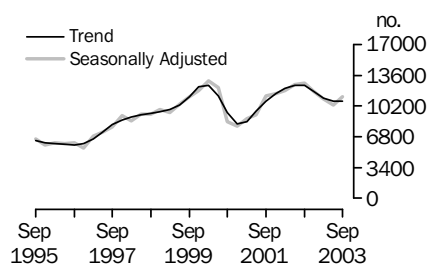
DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS STATES & TERRITORIES

NEW SOUTH WALES



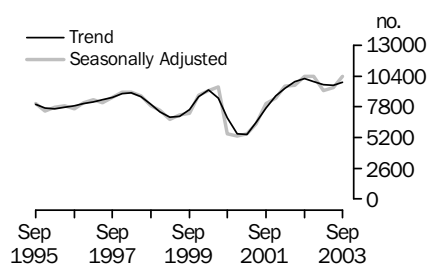
Following six quarters of growth starting with the June quarter 2001, the trend estimate of commencements has fallen for the last four quarters.

VICTORIA



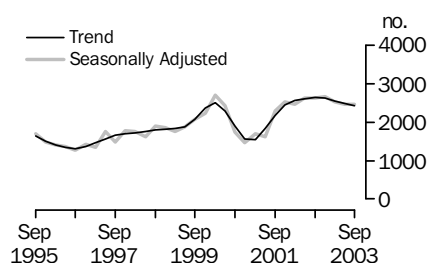
Following six quarters of growth starting with the March quarter 2001, the trend estimate of commencements fell for the next four quarters but flattened for the latest quarter.

QUEENSLAND



After a slight lull in early 2003 the trend estimate of commencements has returned to the growth which started with the June quarter 2001.

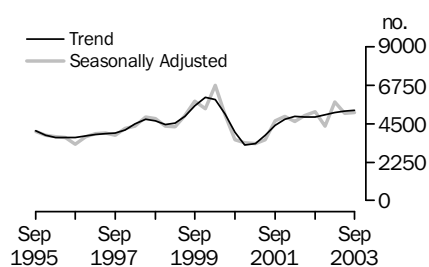
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Following six quarters of growth starting with the June quarter 2001, the trend estimate of commencements has fallen for the last four quarters.

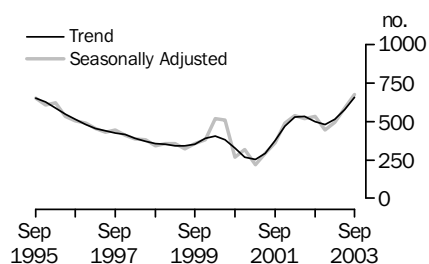
DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS STATES & TERRITORIES *continued*

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



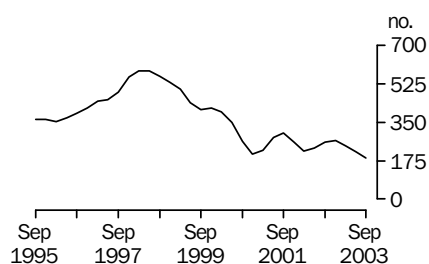
The trend estimate of commencements has risen steadily for the last 11 quarters, commencing with the March quarter 2001.

TASMANIA



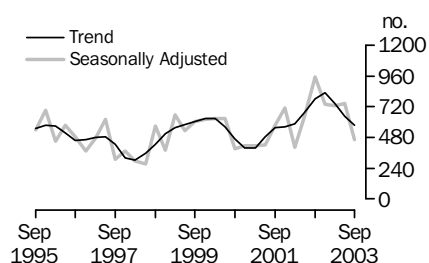
Starting with the June quarter 2001, the trend estimate of commencements has shown strong growth other than a brief lull in the last half of 2002.

NORTHERN TERRITORY



The trend estimate of commencements continues to fall, although at a slower rate than in the late 1990s.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY



Following seven quarters of growth starting with the June quarter 2001, the trend estimate of commencements has fallen for the last three quarters.

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DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS

	PRIVATE NEW HOUSES		TOTAL NEW HOUSES		PRIVATE DWELLING UNITS		TOTAL DWELLING UNITS	
<i>Period</i>	no.	% change	no.	% change	no.	% change	no.	% change
ORIGINAL								
2000-01	73 958	-37.5	75 156	-37.4	110 672	-34.0	114 623	-33.3
2001-02	111 920	51.3	113 626	51.2	160 656	45.2	164 407	43.4
2002-03	110 698	-1.1	112 541	-1.0	166 671	3.7	170 349	3.6
2002								
Jun Qtr	29 176	9.9	29 566	9.7	42 802	14.4	43 539	13.7
Sep Qtr	31 277	7.2	31 786	7.5	46 848	9.5	47 981	10.2
Dec Qtr	27 819	-11.1	28 345	-10.8	43 737	-6.6	44 591	-7.1
2003								
Mar Qtr	25 761	-7.4	26 132	-7.8	37 800	-13.6	38 497	-13.7
Jun Qtr	25 840	0.3	26 277	0.6	38 286	1.3	39 280	2.0
Sep Qtr	30 744	19.0	31 226	18.8	43 537	13.7	44 792	14.0
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED								
2002								
Jun Qtr	29 321	4.4	29 768	4.4	43 115	8.9	43 872	8.1
Sep Qtr	29 471	0.5	29 982	0.7	44 093	2.3	44 995	2.6
Dec Qtr	27 805	-5.7	28 228	-5.8	43 617	-1.1	44 581	-0.9
2003								
Mar Qtr	27 298	-1.8	27 716	-1.8	40 127	-8.0	40 909	-8.2
Jun Qtr	26 074	-4.5	26 557	-4.2	38 652	-3.7	39 672	-3.0
Sep Qtr	28 785	10.4	29 274	10.2	40 820	5.6	41 845	5.5
TREND								
2002								
Jun Qtr	29 230	0.2	29 706	0.2	42 833	2.8	43 715	2.7
Sep Qtr	28 946	-1.0	29 404	-1.0	43 650	1.9	44 510	1.8
Dec Qtr	28 059	-3.1	28 507	-3.0	42 811	-1.9	43 689	-1.8
2003								
Mar Qtr	27 213	-3.0	27 655	-3.0	40 905	-4.5	41 817	-4.3
Jun Qtr	27 150	-0.2	27 610	-0.2	39 761	-2.8	40 714	-2.6
Sep Qtr	27 692	2.0	28 177	2.1	39 324	-1.1	40 341	-0.9

DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS, States & territories

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
<i>Period</i>	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
ORIGINAL									
2000-01	33 242	34 553	22 654	6 538	13 862	1 105	1 027	1 642	114 623
2001-02	47 035	47 384	35 592	9 943	19 136	1 916	1 028	2 373	164 407
2002-03	48 166	45 902	39 429	10 292	20 364	2 063	987	3 146	170 349
2002									
Jun Qtr	12 352	12 740	9 766	2 629	4 647	545	282	578	43 539
Sep Qtr	13 029	13 604	11 346	2 711	5 612	497	287	892	47 981
Dec Qtr	13 854	11 396	10 342	2 740	4 581	475	272	930	44 591
2003									
Mar Qtr	10 666	10 490	8 228	2 366	5 424	467	196	659	38 497
Jun Qtr	10 616	10 411	9 512	2 475	4 747	624	231	664	39 280
Sep Qtr	11 836	12 095	11 467	2 545	5 573	634	205	437	44 792
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED									
2002									
Jun Qtr	13 028	12 600	9 624	2 626	4 978	517	na	648	43 872
Sep Qtr	12 616	12 726	10 391	2 624	5 212	532	na	952	44 995
Dec Qtr	12 702	11 830	10 382	2 673	4 360	445	na	739	44 581
2003									
Mar Qtr	11 505	10 956	9 154	2 519	5 762	496	na	727	40 909
Jun Qtr	11 188	10 334	9 441	2 468	5 118	590	na	745	39 672
Sep Qtr	11 459	11 246	10 391	2 465	5 148	677	na	462	41 845
TREND									
2002									
Jun Qtr	12 593	12 511	9 924	2 603	4 876	533	233	674	43 715
Sep Qtr	12 735	12 483	10 207	2 638	4 913	500	262	781	44 510
Dec Qtr	12 406	11 821	9 972	2 622	5 041	479	267	829	43 689
2003									
Mar Qtr	11 776	11 097	9 675	2 551	5 166	512	244	746	41 817
Jun Qtr	11 386	10 756	9 641	2 487	5 262	581	215	648	40 714
Sep Qtr	11 161	10 751	9 898	2 439	5 312	656	189	576	40 341
na not available									

DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS, States & territories—Change from previous period

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
Period	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

ORIGINAL

2000–01	–34.7	–28.5	–34.5	–30.5	–39.3	–37.5	–34.0	–33.8	–33.3
2001–02	41.5	37.1	57.1	52.1	38.1	73.5	0.1	44.5	43.4
2002–03	2.4	–3.1	10.8	3.5	6.4	7.7	–4.0	32.5	3.6
2002									
Jun Qtr	16.2	11.8	14.0	13.1	6.8	6.6	91.7	53.7	13.7
Sep Qtr	5.5	6.8	16.2	3.1	20.8	–8.7	2.0	54.3	10.2
Dec Qtr	6.3	–16.2	–8.9	1.0	–18.4	–4.4	–5.3	4.2	–7.1
2003									
Mar Qtr	–23.0	–7.9	–20.4	–13.6	18.4	–1.8	–27.9	–29.1	–13.7
Jun Qtr	–0.5	–0.8	15.6	4.6	–12.5	33.7	17.7	0.7	2.0
Sep Qtr	11.5	16.2	20.6	2.8	17.4	1.6	–11.3	–34.2	14.0

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED

2002									
Jun Qtr	14.4	5.5	0.8	6.2	7.7	–4.1	na	60.5	8.1
Sep Qtr	–3.2	1.0	8.0	–0.1	4.7	2.9	na	46.8	2.6
Dec Qtr	0.7	–7.0	–0.1	1.9	–16.3	–16.3	na	–22.4	–0.9
2003									
Mar Qtr	–9.4	–7.4	–11.8	–5.8	32.1	11.4	na	–1.7	–8.2
Jun Qtr	–2.8	–5.7	3.1	–2.0	–11.2	18.9	na	2.6	–3.0
Sep Qtr	2.4	8.8	10.1	–0.1	0.6	14.7	na	–38.1	5.5

TREND

2002									
Jun Qtr	3.1	2.5	5.9	1.2	–1.1	1.0	6.8	14.9	2.7
Sep Qtr	1.1	–0.2	2.9	1.3	0.8	–6.2	12.3	15.8	1.8
Dec Qtr	–2.6	–5.3	–2.3	–0.6	2.6	–4.1	2.1	6.1	–1.8
2003									
Mar Qtr	–5.1	–6.1	–3.0	–2.7	2.5	6.8	–8.8	–10.0	–4.3
Jun Qtr	–3.3	–3.1	–0.4	–2.5	1.9	13.4	–11.7	–13.2	–2.6
Sep Qtr	–2.0	—	2.7	–2.0	0.9	12.9	–12.3	–11.1	–0.9

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

na not available

DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS, States & territories: Original

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
Period	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
NEW HOUSES									
2000-01	17 682	24 123	14 487	5 377	10 872	1 030	577	1 007	75 156
2001-02	25 345	34 631	25 590	8 246	16 241	1 752	641	1 178	113 626
2002-03	24 237	32 663	26 320	8 262	16 886	1 863	526	1 784	112 541
2002									
Jun Qtr	6 463	9 349	6 597	2 190	3 956	481	169	361	29 566
Sep Qtr	6 817	9 198	7 571	2 388	4 749	474	169	419	31 786
Dec Qtr	6 350	8 503	6 638	1 993	3 755	445	129	532	28 345
2003									
Mar Qtr	5 372	7 848	5 697	1 903	4 380	452	103	376	26 132
Jun Qtr	5 698	7 114	6 413	1 978	4 001	492	124	456	26 277
Sep Qtr	5 895	9 525	7 932	2 081	4 662	575	154	403	31 226
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDING									
2000-01	14 713	9 560	7 820	1 115	2 586	60	446	634	36 935
2001-02	20 512	11 541	9 686	1 638	2 820	154	382	1 186	47 919
2002-03	22 526	12 329	12 738	1 986	3 339	190	451	1 361	54 921
2002									
Jun Qtr	5 474	3 125	3 056	428	643	64	113	216	13 119
Sep Qtr	5 739	4 165	3 461	315	863	19	117	473	15 152
Dec Qtr	7 197	2 724	3 664	734	769	30	140	398	15 656
2003									
Mar Qtr	5 035	2 461	2 525	460	1 010	13	89	283	11 875
Jun Qtr	4 555	2 979	3 088	477	698	128	105	207	12 237
Sep Qtr	5 649	2 406	3 471	311	904	41	48	33	12 865
CONVERSIONS, ETC.									
2000-01	846	870	347	46	404	14	4	1	2 531
2001-02	1 178	1 212	316	59	74	10	4	9	2 863
2002-03	1 403	909	370	44	139	10	10	1	2 887
2002									
Jun Qtr	415	266	112	11	48	—	—	1	854
Sep Qtr	474	241	314	8	—	4	2	—	1 042
Dec Qtr	308	168	40	13	57	—	3	—	589
2003									
Mar Qtr	259	182	6	3	34	2	4	—	490
Jun Qtr	363	318	11	20	48	4	1	1	766
Sep Qtr	292	163	64	153	7	18	3	2	701
TOTAL									
2000-01	33 242	34 553	22 654	6 538	13 862	1 105	1 027	1 642	114 623
2001-02	47 035	47 384	35 592	9 943	19 136	1 916	1 028	2 373	164 407
2002-03	48 166	45 902	39 429	10 292	20 364	2 063	987	3 146	170 349
2002									
Jun Qtr	12 352	12 740	9 766	2 629	4 647	545	282	578	43 539
Sep Qtr	13 029	13 604	11 346	2 711	5 612	497	287	892	47 981
Dec Qtr	13 854	11 396	10 342	2 740	4 581	475	272	930	44 591
2003									
Mar Qtr	10 666	10 490	8 228	2 366	5 424	467	196	659	38 497
Jun Qtr	10 616	10 411	9 512	2 475	4 747	624	231	664	39 280
Sep Qtr	11 836	12 095	11 467	2 545	5 573	634	205	437	44 792

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS, States & territories—Private sector: Original

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
Period	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
NEW HOUSES									
2000-01	17 550	23 879	14 246	5 290	10 567	1 023	434	969	73 958
2001-02	25 245	34 221	25 333	7 995	15 794	1 694	510	1 128	111 920
2002-03	24 107	32 419	26 015	7 921	16 312	1 835	397	1 690	110 698
2002									
Jun Qtr	6 454	9 299	6 541	2 113	3 830	460	119	361	29 176
Sep Qtr	6 808	9 142	7 527	2 288	4 522	467	127	395	31 277
Dec Qtr	6 327	8 435	6 482	1 886	3 672	445	100	473	27 819
2003									
Mar Qtr	5 339	7 778	5 637	1 821	4 278	452	83	373	25 761
Jun Qtr	5 634	7 064	6 369	1 926	3 841	471	86	448	25 840
Sep Qtr	5 870	9 508	7 857	1 989	4 450	575	98	397	30 744
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDING									
2000-01	13 675	9 411	7 307	1 092	1 964	55	307	562	34 374
2001-02	19 894	11 197	9 409	1 600	2 227	143	276	1 156	45 902
2002-03	22 167	11 798	12 418	1 910	2 921	190	419	1 277	53 100
2002									
Jun Qtr	5 349	3 037	2 994	424	586	64	113	212	12 779
Sep Qtr	5 636	4 075	3 293	303	625	19	105	473	14 529
Dec Qtr	7 157	2 643	3 605	718	710	30	136	330	15 329
2003									
Mar Qtr	4 937	2 350	2 482	429	966	13	89	283	11 550
Jun Qtr	4 437	2 730	3 037	459	621	128	89	191	11 692
Sep Qtr	5 403	2 336	3 282	292	662	41	44	33	12 094
CONVERSIONS, ETC.									
2000-01	838	867	345	42	234	11	3	1	2 340
2001-02	1 176	1 211	297	59	67	10	4	9	2 834
2002-03	1 403	897	369	44	139	10	10	1	2 874
2002									
Jun Qtr	415	265	111	11	43	—	—	1	847
Sep Qtr	474	241	314	8	—	4	2	—	1 042
Dec Qtr	308	168	39	13	57	—	3	—	588
2003									
Mar Qtr	259	182	6	3	34	2	4	—	490
Jun Qtr	363	306	11	20	48	4	1	1	754
Sep Qtr	292	161	64	153	7	18	3	2	699
TOTAL									
2000-01	32 063	34 157	21 898	6 424	12 765	1 090	744	1 532	110 672
2001-02	46 315	46 629	35 038	9 654	18 089	1 847	791	2 293	160 656
2002-03	47 677	45 115	38 802	9 875	19 373	2 035	825	2 968	166 671
2002									
Jun Qtr	12 218	12 601	9 647	2 548	4 459	524	232	574	42 802
Sep Qtr	12 917	13 458	11 134	2 599	5 147	490	233	868	46 848
Dec Qtr	13 791	11 247	10 125	2 617	4 439	475	239	803	43 737
2003									
Mar Qtr	10 535	10 309	8 125	2 254	5 278	467	176	656	37 800
Jun Qtr	10 434	10 100	9 417	2 405	4 510	603	176	640	38 286
Sep Qtr	11 566	12 006	11 203	2 434	5 119	634	144	431	43 537

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS, States & territories—Public sector: **Original**

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
<i>Period</i>	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.

NEW HOUSES

2000-01	133	245	241	87	305	7	143	38	1 198
2001-02	100	410	258	251	448	58	131	50	1 705
2002-03	129	244	305	341	573	28	129	94	1 843
2002									
Jun Qtr	9	50	56	77	126	21	50	—	389
Sep Qtr	9	56	44	100	228	7	42	24	510
Dec Qtr	23	68	157	107	83	—	29	59	526
2003									
Mar Qtr	33	70	60	82	102	—	20	3	371
Jun Qtr	64	50	44	52	160	21	38	8	437
Sep Qtr	25	17	75	92	211	—	56	6	482

NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDING

2000-01	1 038	149	513	23	622	5	139	72	2 561
2001-02	618	344	277	38	593	11	106	30	2 017
2002-03	359	531	321	76	418	—	32	84	1 821
2002									
Jun Qtr	125	88	62	4	57	—	—	4	340
Sep Qtr	103	90	168	12	238	—	12	—	623
Dec Qtr	40	81	59	16	59	—	4	68	327
2003									
Mar Qtr	98	111	43	30	44	—	—	—	326
Jun Qtr	118	249	51	18	77	—	16	16	545
Sep Qtr	246	70	189	19	242	—	4	—	771

CONVERSIONS, ETC.

2000-01	8	3	2	4	170	3	1	—	191
2001-02	2	1	19	—	7	—	—	—	29
2002-03	—	12	1	—	—	—	—	—	13
2002									
Jun Qtr	—	1	1	—	5	—	—	—	7
Sep Qtr	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dec Qtr	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
2003									
Mar Qtr	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jun Qtr	—	12	—	—	—	—	—	—	12
Sep Qtr	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2

TOTAL

2000-01	1 179	397	756	114	1 097	15	283	110	3 950
2001-02	720	755	554	289	1 048	69	237	80	3 751
2002-03	488	787	627	417	991	28	161	178	3 677
2002									
Jun Qtr	134	139	119	81	188	21	50	4	736
Sep Qtr	112	146	212	112	466	7	54	24	1 133
Dec Qtr	63	149	217	123	142	—	33	127	854
2003									
Mar Qtr	131	181	103	112	146	—	20	3	697
Jun Qtr	182	311	95	70	237	21	54	24	994
Sep Qtr	271	89	264	111	453	—	60	6	1 255

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

EXPLANATORY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

- 1** This publication contains preliminary estimates from the quarterly Building Activity Survey of the number of dwelling units commenced during the current quarter and revised estimates for the previous two quarters. More comprehensive and updated results 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 in paragraph 12. 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.).
- 7** These statistics present the number of dwelling units in other residential buildings (and not the number of buildings).
- 8** *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.

EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

DEFINITIONS *continued*

9 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).

10 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.

RELIABILITY OF THE ESTIMATES

11 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.

12 Relative standard errors for the number of dwellings commenced in the September quarter 2003 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, September Quarter 2003

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
New private sector houses	4.3	3.6	2.9	3.6	3.3	2.9	—	3.4	1.7
Total new other dwellings	1.6	1.8	1.1	4.8	1.6	—	—	—	0.9
Total dwellings	2.3	2.9	2.0	2.9	2.7	2.7	—	3.1	1.2

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

SEASONAL ADJUSTMENT

13 Seasonally adjusted building statistics are shown in tables 1-3. In the seasonally adjusted series, account has been taken of normal seasonal factors, 'trading day' effects arising from the varying numbers of working days in a quarter and the effect of movement in the date of Easter which may, in successive years, affect figures for different quarters.

14 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.

15 From the June quarter 2003, the seasonally adjusted estimates are produced by the concurrent seasonal adjustment method which takes account of the latest available original estimates. The concurrent seasonal adjustment methodology replaces the forward factor methodology previously used, when seasonal factors were only revised following an annual re-analysis. The concurrent method improves the estimation of seasonal factors and, therefore, the seasonally adjusted and trend estimates for the

EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

SEASONAL ADJUSTMENT *continued*

current and previous quarters. As a result of this improvement, revisions to the seasonally adjusted and trend estimates will be observed for recent periods. In most instances, the only noticeable revisions will be to the previous quarter and the same quarter of a year earlier.

16 A more detailed review of concurrent seasonal factors will be conducted annually, generally prior to the release of data for the December quarter.

TREND ESTIMATES

17 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.

18 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.

19 While the smoothing technique described in paragraphs 17 and 18 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. 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 6540 or email <timeseries@abs.gov.au>.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

20 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

21 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.

22 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

23 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.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics
qtr quarter

FOR MORE INFORMATION . . .

<i>INTERNET</i>	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.
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<i>DIAL-A-STATISTIC</i>	For the latest figures for National Accounts, Balance of Payments, Labour Force, Average Weekly Earnings, Estimated Resident Population and the Consumer Price Index call 1900 986 400 (call cost 77c per minute).

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