

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

**AUSTRALIA**  
**PRELIMINARY**

EMBARGO: 11:30AM (CANBERRA TIME) FRI 20 JUN 2003

**MARCH QTR KEY FIGURES**

<b>TREND ESTIMATES</b>	<b>Mar qtr 03</b>	<b>% change Dec qtr 02 to Mar qtr 03</b>	<b>% change Mar qtr 02 to Mar qtr 03</b>
Dwelling units commenced			
New private sector houses	26 977	-4.4	-7.5
Total dwelling units	42 210	-4.1	-1.1
.....			
<b>SEASONALLY ADJUSTED</b>	<b>Mar qtr 03</b>	<b>% change Dec qtr 02 to Mar qtr 03</b>	<b>% change Mar qtr 02 to Mar qtr 03</b>
Dwelling units commenced			
New private sector houses	26 792	-2.8	-4.6
Total dwelling units	40 530	-9.6	0.2

**MARCH QTR KEY POINTS**

**TREND ESTIMATES**

- The trend estimate for the total number of dwelling units commenced fell 4.1% in the March quarter 2003, the second successive quarterly decline.
- Commencements of new private sector houses fell 4.4% in the latest quarter and follows smaller declines in each of the previous two quarters.

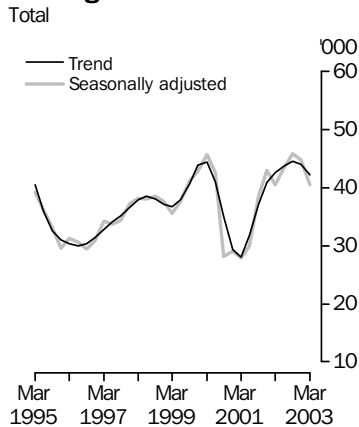
**SEASONALLY ADJUSTED ESTIMATES**

- In seasonally adjusted terms, the total number of dwelling units commenced fell for the second successive quarter, by 9.6% in the March quarter 2003, to 40,530.
- New private sector house commencements fell 2.8% to 26,792, the lowest since the September quarter 2001.

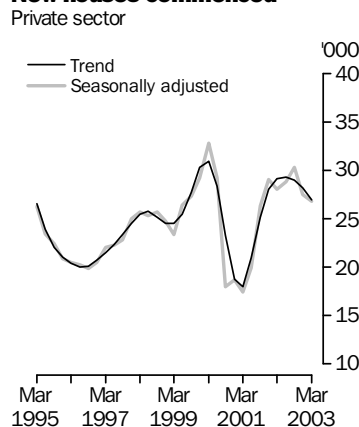
**ORIGINAL ESTIMATES**

- The total number of dwelling units commenced fell 13.3% in the March quarter 2003 to 38,561.
- Within the private sector, the total number of dwellings commenced fell 13.2% to 37,852. New house commencements fell 8.7% to 25,375 (4.7% fewer than a year earlier) and other dwellings fell 21.2% to 12,478, but were still 13.5% more than a year earlier.
- In the latest quarter, with the exception of Western Australia, all states and territories recorded falls in total private dwellings commenced. The number of houses commenced fell 17.5% in New South Wales, 15.4% in Queensland and 8.8% in Victoria but rose 17.1% in Western Australia. Other dwelling commencements fell 27.8% in New South Wales, 26.9% in Queensland and 2.2% in Victoria, but rose 21.1% in Western Australia.
- Public sector commencements fell 17.1% in the latest quarter to 708, the second lowest number since the series began in the September quarter 1984.

**Dwelling units commenced**



**New houses commenced**



- 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.

## NOTES

### FORTHCOMING ISSUES

<i>ISSUE (Quarter)</i>	<i>RELEASE DATE</i>
June 2003	12 September 2003
September 2003	16 December 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 July 2003.

### SIGNIFICANT REVISIONS THIS ISSUE

The total number of dwelling units commenced in Australia during the December quarter 2002 was virtually unchanged from the estimate published in *Building Activity, Australia, December quarter 2002* (cat. no. 8752.0) released on 17 April 2003. However, an upward revision of 192 (+1.4%) in New South Wales was offset by downward revisions of 101 (-1.0%) in Queensland and 95 (-0.8%) in Victoria.

### 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 March 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—March Quarter 2003

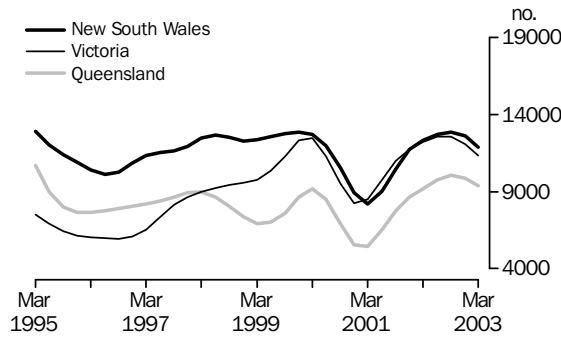
	<i>New private sector houses</i>	<i>Total new other dwellings</i>	<i>Total dwellings</i>
	%	%	%
NSW	4.3	1.5	2.2
Vic.	3.5	1.3	2.6
Qld	3.8	0.4	2.5
SA	3.8	3.9	3.1
WA	3.0	0.6	2.4
Tas.	3.3	..	3.1
NT	..	..	..
ACT	3.8	..	2.1
<b>Aust.</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>1.2</b>

Barbara Dunlop  
Acting Australian Statistician

# DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS (a) TREND ESTIMATES

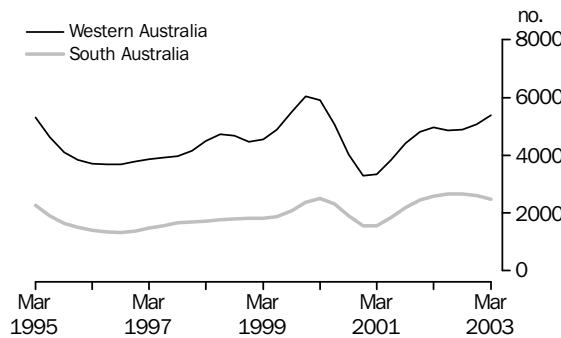
NEW SOUTH WALES  
VICTORIA  
QUEENSLAND

The trend estimates of commencements in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland have declined over both the December quarter 2002 and March quarter 2003. The declines follow six quarters of growth.



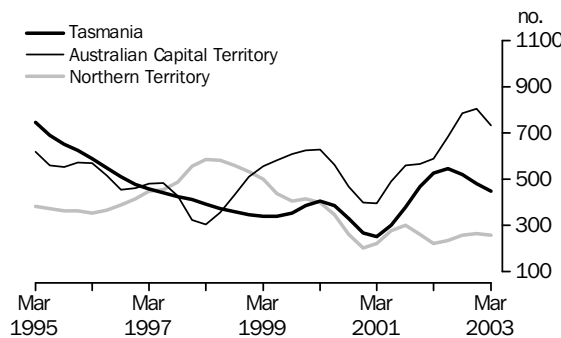
WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The trend estimates of commencements in South Australia have declined for the last two quarters following six quarters of growth from the June quarter 2001. In Western Australia, after a small decline for the June quarter 2002, the trend has resumed the growth evident since the March quarter 2001.



TASMANIA  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY  
NORTHERN TERRITORY

The trend estimates of commencements in Tasmania have declined for the last three quarters following five quarters of strong growth from the June quarter 2001. The Australian Capital Territory trend declined in the latest quarter following strong growth over the previous seven quarters. The Northern Territory trend declined in the latest quarter following three quarters of growth.



(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>								
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	31 379	7.5	31 889	7.8	47 094	9.7	48 227	10.5
Dec qtr	27 778	-11.5	28 304	-11.2	43 623	-7.4	44 477	-7.8
<b>2003</b>								
Mar qtr	25 375	-8.7	25 752	-9.0	37 852	-13.2	38 561	-13.3
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED								
<b>2001</b>								
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	30 352	5.1	30 802	5.0	44 952	5.3	45 829	5.4
Dec qtr	27 559	-9.2	28 053	-8.9	43 822	-2.5	44 845	-2.1
<b>2003</b>								
Mar qtr	26 792	-2.8	27 197	-3.1	39 788	-9.2	40 530	-9.6
TREND ESTIMATES								
<b>2001</b>								
Dec qtr	28 063	11.6	28 503	11.7	39 922	10.8	40 941	10.4
<b>2002</b>								
Mar qtr	29 166	3.9	29 639	4.0	41 739	4.6	42 660	4.2
Jun qtr	29 291	0.4	29 762	0.4	42 917	2.8	43 796	2.7
Sep qtr	29 011	-1.0	29 465	-1.0	43 653	1.7	44 533	1.7
Dec qtr	28 223	-2.7	28 679	-2.7	43 147	-1.2	44 036	-1.1
<b>2003</b>								
Mar qtr	26 977	-4.4	27 456	-4.3	41 344	-4.2	42 210	-4.1

(a) Includes conversions etc.

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
ORIGINAL (Number)									
<b>2001</b>									
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	13 274	13 724	11 188	2 730	5 627	499	289	896	48 227
Dec qtr	13 845	11 474	10 129	2 749	4 590	478	275	938	44 477
<b>2003</b>									
Mar qtr	10 740	10 696	8 075	2 293	5 448	467	198	645	38 561
ORIGINAL (% change from previous quarter)									
<b>2001</b>									
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	6.0	6.7	17.4	3.2	20.4	-9.3	1.8	53.8	10.5
Dec qtr	4.3	-16.4	-9.5	0.7	-18.4	-4.3	-5.0	4.7	-7.8
<b>2003</b>									
Mar qtr	-22.4	-6.8	-20.3	-16.6	18.7	-2.3	-28.0	-31.2	-13.3
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED (Number)									
<b>2001</b>									
Dec qtr	12 869	11 523	8 487	2 540	4 979	480	243	726	43 041
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	11 143	11 971	9 270	2 409	4 731	518	184	388	40 447
Jun qtr	13 083	12 468	9 243	2 739	4 873	547	265	676	43 477
Sep qtr	12 809	13 366	10 707	2 637	5 237	562	252	941	45 829
Dec qtr	13 345	11 692	10 039	2 680	4 400	429	280	774	44 845
<b>2003</b>									
Mar qtr	11 097	11 135	8 804	2 361	5 888	469	248	666	40 530
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED (% change from previous quarter)									
<b>2001</b>									
Dec qtr	21.5	-3.2	2.0	10.0	6.7	25.8	-24.8	26.8	11.7
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	-13.4	3.9	9.2	-5.2	-5.0	7.8	-24.2	-46.5	-6.0
Jun qtr	17.4	4.2	-0.3	13.7	3.0	5.7	43.9	74.4	7.5
Sep qtr	-2.1	7.2	15.8	-3.7	7.5	2.7	-5.0	39.2	5.4
Dec qtr	4.2	-12.5	-6.2	1.6	-16.0	-23.7	11.3	-17.8	-2.1
<b>2003</b>									
Mar qtr	-16.8	-4.8	-12.3	-11.9	33.8	9.2	-11.6	-13.9	-9.6
TREND ESTIMATES (Number)									
<b>2001</b>									
Dec qtr	11 742	11 728	8 632	2 442	4 798	467	263	568	40 941
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	12 309	12 250	9 192	2 578	4 963	528	221	589	42 660
Jun qtr	12 698	12 597	9 764	2 645	4 869	547	234	685	43 796
Sep qtr	12 883	12 595	10 060	2 661	4 899	521	259	787	44 533
Dec qtr	12 641	12 062	9 872	2 594	5 081	483	266	806	44 036
<b>2003</b>									
Mar qtr	11 879	11 342	9 393	2 460	5 377	450	259	735	42 210
TREND ESTIMATES (% change from previous quarter)									
<b>2001</b>									
Dec qtr	12.2	6.8	11.0	11.6	8.8	22.7	-12.5	1.3	10.4
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	4.8	4.5	6.5	5.6	3.4	13.0	-15.9	3.8	4.2
Jun qtr	3.2	2.8	6.2	2.6	-1.9	3.6	5.9	16.2	2.7
Sep qtr	1.5	—	3.0	0.6	0.6	-4.7	10.5	15.0	1.7
Dec qtr	-1.9	-4.2	-1.9	-2.5	3.7	-7.3	2.8	2.3	-1.1
<b>2003</b>									
Mar qtr	-6.0	-6.0	-4.8	-5.2	5.8	-6.8	-2.6	-8.7	-4.1

(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>									
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	6 949	9 309	7 397	2 401	4 764	476	171	423	31 889
Dec qtr	6 382	8 587	6 458	1 993	3 764	448	132	540	28 304
<b>2003</b>									
Mar qtr	5 284	7 841	5 393	1 909	4 410	449	105	362	25 752
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>									
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	5 848	4 169	3 477	321	863	19	117	473	15 287
Dec qtr	7 155	2 718	3 609	740	769	30	140	398	15 559
<b>2003</b>									
Mar qtr	5 189	2 675	2 675	379	999	15	89	283	12 304
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>									
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	477	246	314	8	—	4	2	—	1 050
Dec qtr	307	168	62	16	57	—	3	—	614
<b>2003</b>									
Mar qtr	268	180	6	4	39	3	4	—	505
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>									
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	13 274	13 724	11 188	2 730	5 627	499	289	896	48 227
Dec qtr	13 845	11 474	10 129	2 749	4 590	478	275	938	44 477
<b>2003</b>									
Mar qtr	10 740	10 696	8 075	2 293	5 448	467	198	645	38 561

(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>									
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	6 940	9 253	7 353	2 300	4 537	469	129	399	31 379
Dec qtr	6 359	8 519	6 301	1 886	3 680	448	103	481	27 778
<b>2003</b>									
Mar qtr	5 249	7 771	5 332	1 821	4 309	449	85	359	25 375
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>									
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	5 745	4 079	3 309	309	625	19	105	473	14 664
Dec qtr	7 115	2 637	3 550	724	710	30	136	330	15 232
<b>2003</b>									
Mar qtr	5 087	2 564	2 632	351	951	15	89	283	11 973
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>									
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	477	246	314	8	—	4	2	—	1 050
Dec qtr	307	168	61	16	57	—	3	—	613
<b>2003</b>									
Mar qtr	268	180	6	4	39	3	4	—	505
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>									
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	13 162	13 578	10 976	2 617	5 161	492	235	872	47 094
Dec qtr	13 782	11 325	9 912	2 626	4 447	478	242	811	43 623
<b>2003</b>									
Mar qtr	10 604	10 515	7 970	2 177	5 299	467	178	642	37 852

	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>									
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	228	7	42	24	510
Dec qtr	23	68	157	107	83	—	29	59	526
<b>2003</b>									
Mar qtr	34	70	61	87	101	—	20	3	377
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>									
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	238	—	12	—	623
Dec qtr	40	81	59	16	59	—	4	68	327
<b>2003</b>									
Mar qtr	101	111	43	28	48	—	—	—	331
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>									
Dec qtr	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	2
<b>2002</b>									
Mar qtr	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Jun qtr	—	1	1	—	5	—	—	—	7
Sep qtr	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dec qtr	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
<b>2003</b>									
Mar qtr	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
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>									
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	466	7	54	24	1 133
Dec qtr	63	149	217	123	142	—	33	127	854
<b>2003</b>									
Mar qtr	136	181	104	115	149	—	20	3	708



# 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 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 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.
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