



June Quarter 1996

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# **Building Activity Australia**

## **Dwelling Unit Commencements**

**Preliminary**

## BUILDING ACTIVITY NOTES

FORTHCOMING ISSUES	<i>ISSUE (Quarter)</i>	<i>RELEASE DATE</i>
	September 1996	13 December 1996
	December 1996	18 March 1997
	March 1997	17 June 1997
	June 1997	11 September 1997

CHANGES IN THIS ISSUE      There are no changes in this issue.

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 for the number of new private sector houses and total dwelling units commenced in the June quarter 1996 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

	<i>New private sector houses</i>	<i>Total dwellings</i>
	%	%
New South Wales	4.4	2.4
Victoria	3.5	2.2
Queensland	2.4	1.8
South Australia	4.0	3.5
Western Australia	4.1	3.1
Tasmania	3.9	2.9
Northern Territory	..	..
Australian Capital Territory	4.1	2.2
<b>Australia</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.1</b>

INQUIRIES      For further information about statistics in this publication and the availability of related unpublished statistics, contact Rex Porter on Adelaide (08) 8237 7496 or any ABS State office.

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Acting Australian Statistician

## MAIN FEATURES

## NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED

### SEASONALLY ADJUSTED ESTIMATES

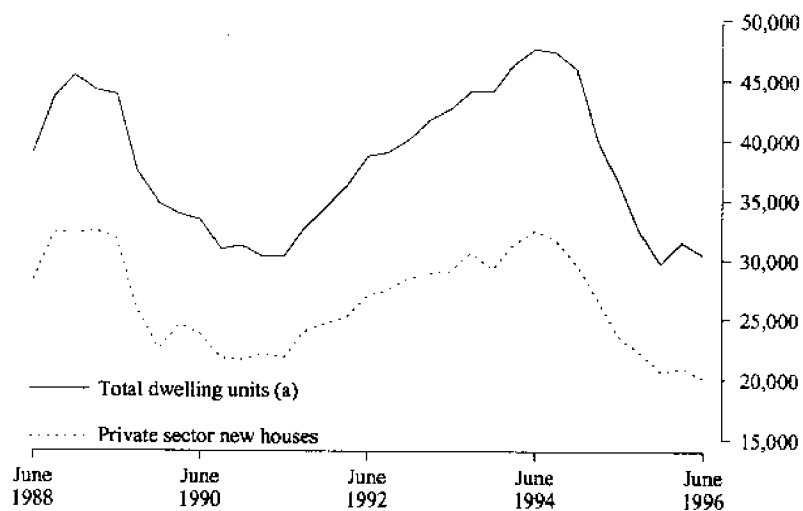
The number of dwelling units commenced in the June quarter 1996, in seasonally adjusted terms, and percentage changes from the March quarter 1996 and June quarter 1995 are summarised in the table below.

	Jun qtr 96	% change Mar qtr 96 to Jun qtr 96	% change Jun qtr 95 to Jun qtr 96
Dwelling units commenced			
New private sector houses	20 068	-4.0	-14.8
Total dwelling units	30 446	-3.2	-16.4

**Australian estimates** The preliminary estimate of the number of dwelling units commenced in the June quarter 1996 was 30,446. This was a decrease of 3.2% from the March quarter 1996 and follows an increase of 6.0% in the previous quarter. The level of commencements for the last three quarters has remained at around 30,000, approximately the same level as for the previous "trough" in the cycle in the March quarter 1991.

The number of new private sector house commencements in the June quarter was 20,068, a decrease of 4.0% from the previous quarter and 14.8% from the June quarter 1995. By comparison with total dwelling commencements, this figure is 7.1% below the level of the last "trough" in the cycle in the December quarter 1990.

NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED, AUSTRALIA (Seasonally adjusted)



(a) Includes Conversions, etc

**State estimates** The decrease in total dwelling unit commencements was mainly because of a decrease of 9.3% in New South Wales and 19.9% in Tasmania. The Australian Capital Territory recorded an increase of 14.8%. Commencements in other States were not significantly changed from the March quarter.

ORIGINAL ESTIMATES

In original terms, 30,841 dwelling units were commenced in the June quarter 1996, an increase of 2,498 or 8.8% from the previous quarter. Most of the increase was attributable to a rise of 1,623 or 8.5% in the number of new houses commenced. There were also 1,012 dwelling units commenced as part of alterations and additions to existing buildings (including conversions to dwelling units) or as part of the construction of non-residential building. This was 632 more than for the March quarter.

Total private sector commencements rose 9.2% in the June quarter 1996, with new houses up 9.0% and other dwelling units (including conversions, etc.) up 9.8%.

Total public sector commencements rose by 1.3% in the June quarter 1996 with an increase of 6.7% in other dwelling units (including conversions, etc.) offsetting a fall of 12.1% in new house commencements.

During 1995-96, there were 123,919 dwelling units commenced, a decrease of 27.1% from the 1994-95 estimate of 170,071. The total number of new houses commenced fell by 25.0% to 85,882, while the total number of new other dwelling units fell by 31.3% to 35,653. The number of dwelling units commenced as a result of conversions, etc. fell by 33.4% to 2,385.

Total dwelling units commenced in the private sector fell 27.8% during 1995-96. There was a fall of 13.4% in the number of dwelling units commenced for the public sector during 1995-96, although Victoria, Tasmania and Northern Territory all recorded increases to the highest numbers since 1991-92 and the Australian Capital Territory recorded an increase to the highest since 1987-88.

Percentage movements between 1994-95 and 1995-96 in the number of dwelling units commenced were:

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
New houses	-18.5	-25.7	-25.7	-38.2	-29.1	-26.0	-8.4	-16.1	-25.0
New other residential	-27.2	13.3	-46.7	-45.2	-39.3	-0.9	5.0	-24.1	-31.3
Conversions, etc.	-51.2	-14.2	3.8	-16.4	-25.9	-33.3	9.1	1 300.0	-33.4
Total dwellings	-23.6	-20.7	-32.4	-39.1	-31.8	-21.4	-3.5	-17.2	-27.1

**TABLE 1. TOTAL NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED,  
ORIGINAL AND SEASONALLY ADJUSTED, AUSTRALIA**

Period	New houses		New other residential buildings	Conversions etc.	Total dwelling units	
	Original	Seasonally adjusted			Original	Seasonally adjusted
<b>PRIVATE SECTOR</b>						
1993-94	123,228	..	46,518	3,862	173,608	..
1994-95	111,966	..	47,053	3,522	162,541	..
1995-96 p	83,919	..	31,217	2,262	117,397	..
1995 Mar. qtr	23,814	26,681	9,978	663	34,455	38,279
June qtr	23,848	23,567	10,122	747	34,718	34,415
Sept. qtr	23,132	22,250	8,364	474	31,970	30,505
Dec. qtr	21,810	20,662	6,885	510	29,205	27,994
1996 Mar. qtr	18,651	20,914	7,846	375	26,871	29,875
June qtr p	20,325	20,068	8,122	903	29,350	29,089
<b>PUBLIC SECTOR</b>						
1993-94	3,285	..	4,891	37	8,213	..
1994-95	2,611	..	4,858	61	7,530	..
1995-96 p	1,963	..	4,436	123	6,522	..
1995 Mar. qtr	513	n.a.	989	8	1,510	n.a.
June qtr	758	n.a.	1,402	16	2,176	n.a.
Sept. qtr	676	n.a.	1,570	9	2,255	n.a.
Dec. qtr	496	n.a.	808	—	1,304	n.a.
1996 Mar. qtr	421	n.a.	1,046	5	1,472	n.a.
June qtr p	370	n.a.	1,012	109	1,491	n.a.
<b>TOTAL</b>						
1993-94	126,513	..	51,409	3,899	181,821	..
1994-95	114,577	..	51,911	3,583	170,071	..
1995-96 p	85,882	..	35,653	2,385	123,919	..
1995 Mar. qtr	24,327	27,180	10,967	671	35,965	39,895
June qtr	24,606	24,220	11,524	763	36,894	36,431
Sept. qtr	23,808	22,967	9,934	483	34,225	32,372
Dec. qtr	22,306	21,199	7,693	510	30,509	29,671
1996 Mar. qtr	19,072	21,325	8,892	380	28,343	31,451
June qtr p	20,695	20,356	9,134	1,012	30,841	30,446

**TABLE 2. TOTAL NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED (a), STATES (b) AND AUSTRALIA  
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED**

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
1995 Mar. qtr	12,963	7,302	10,461	2,213	5,326	723	n.a.	656	39,895
June qtr	12,286	7,113	9,116	1,797	4,542	702	n.a.	477	36,431
Sept. qtr	10,867	6,648	7,846	1,676	4,007	638	n.a.	473	32,372
Dec. qtr	9,317	5,623	7,437	1,549	3,895	617	n.a.	787	29,671
1996 Mar. qtr	10,928	5,972	8,011	1,382	3,722	675	n.a.	474	31,451
June qtr p	9,912	5,978	8,073	1,332	3,663	541	n.a.	544	30,446

(a) Includes conversions, etc. (b) Seasonally adjusted data are not available for the Northern Territory.

**TABLE 3. 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>
<b>NEW HOUSES</b>									
1993-94	29,162	27,904	35,751	9,590	18,118	3,020	1,205	1,764	126,513
1994-95	28,222	25,846	31,047	8,210	16,225	2,548	947	1,533	114,577
1995-96 p	22,993	19,198	23,070	5,074	11,508	1,886	867	1,286	85,882
1995 Mar. qtr	6,137	5,494	6,295	1,735	3,565	576	196	329	24,327
June qtr	6,343	5,734	6,278	1,512	3,514	599	304	323	24,606
Sept. qtr	6,111	5,836	6,122	1,504	3,146	474	269	346	23,808
Dec. qtr	5,791	5,088	6,039	1,295	2,929	541	238	385	22,306
1996 Mar. qtr	5,401	4,344	4,880	1,089	2,539	469	133	217	19,072
June qtr p	5,690	3,930	6,028	1,187	2,894	401	227	338	20,695
<b>NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS</b>									
1993-94	18,019	3,562	17,334	1,891	6,682	1,092	446	2,383	51,409
1994-95	23,271	3,612	15,113	1,525	6,073	582	541	1,194	51,911
1995-96 p	16,935	4,092	8,050	836	3,689	577	568	906	35,653
1995 Mar. qtr	5,204	929	2,700	329	1,328	132	106	239	10,967
June qtr	5,823	1,067	2,947	240	1,109	93	84	161	11,524
Sept. qtr	5,057	713	2,297	256	1,126	142	139	204	9,934
Dec. qtr	3,500	943	1,557	264	873	111	85	360	7,693
1996 Mar. qtr	4,163	1,025	2,044	195	889	193	190	193	8,892
June qtr p	4,215	1,411	2,152	121	801	131	154	149	9,134
<b>CONVERSIONS, ETC</b>									
1993-94	2,141	1,198	302	20	196	17	7	18	3,899
1994-95	2,100	1,051	209	61	135	12	11	5	3,583
1995-96 p	1,025	902	217	51	100	8	12	70	2,385
1995 Mar. qtr	203	362	66	9	31	—	—	—	671
June qtr	355	330	37	11	25	—	1	4	763
Sept. qtr	331	54	61	11	13	6	7	—	483
Dec. qtr	324	15	127	28	14	1	1	—	510
1996 Mar. qtr	157	179	9	12	21	1	1	—	380
June qtr p	213	654	20	—	52	—	3	70	1,012
<b>TOTAL</b>									
1993-94	49,322	32,664	53,387	11,501	24,996	4,129	1,658	4,165	181,821
1994-95	53,592	30,509	46,369	9,796	22,433	3,142	1,499	2,732	170,071
1995-96 p	40,953	24,192	31,337	5,961	15,297	2,471	1,447	2,262	123,919
1995 Mar. qtr	11,544	6,785	9,061	2,073	4,924	708	302	568	35,965
June qtr	12,521	7,131	9,262	1,763	4,648	692	389	488	36,894
Sept. qtr	11,499	6,603	8,480	1,771	4,285	622	415	550	34,225
Dec. qtr	9,615	6,046	7,723	1,587	3,816	653	324	745	30,509
1996 Mar. qtr	9,721	5,548	6,933	1,295	3,449	663	324	410	28,343
June qtr p	10,118	5,995	8,200	1,308	3,747	532	384	557	30,841

TABLE 4. TOTAL NUMBER OF PRIVATE SECTOR DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
NEW HOUSES									
1993-94	28,547	26,970	35,102	9,159	17,739	2,974	1,035	1,703	123,228
1994-95	27,747	25,338	30,538	7,745	15,731	2,542	804	1,522	111,966
1995-96 p	22,611	18,725	22,643	4,838	11,227	1,865	763	1,247	83,919
1995 Mar. qtr	6,090	5,360	6,170	1,631	3,469	574	192	328	23,814
June qtr	6,203	5,627	6,108	1,396	3,378	599	216	322	23,848
Sept. qtr	6,036	5,638	5,966	1,398	3,039	472	238	345	23,132
Dec. qtr	5,630	4,989	5,965	1,242	2,876	531	194	383	21,810
1996 Mar. qtr	5,315	4,269	4,768	1,044	2,468	461	109	217	18,651
June qtr p	5,630	3,829	5,943	1,155	2,844	400	222	302	20,325
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1993-94	16,385	3,130	16,187	1,534	5,495	1,031	430	2,326	46,518
1994-95	21,513	3,077	13,761	1,339	5,227	542	522	1,072	47,053
1995-96 p	15,484	3,035	7,298	801	2,888	421	451	839	31,217
1995 Mar. qtr	4,922	722	2,468	303	1,108	132	106	217	9,978
June qtr	5,120	926	2,580	227	1,010	64	70	125	10,122
Sept. qtr	4,430	380	2,039	242	841	119	139	174	8,364
Dec. qtr	3,310	640	1,403	249	753	87	83	360	6,885
1996 Mar. qtr	3,868	812	1,834	193	717	151	87	184	7,846
June qtr p	3,876	1,203	2,022	117	577	64	142	121	8,122
CONVERSIONS, ETC									
1993-94	2,126	1,195	299	19	182	16	7	18	3,862
1994-95	2,069	1,044	200	48	134	12	11	5	3,522
1995-96 p	996	881	217	51	100	8	9	—	2,262
1995 Mar. qtr	195	362	66	9	31	—	—	—	663
June qtr	348	323	35	11	25	—	1	4	747
Sept. qtr	323	54	61	11	13	6	6	—	474
Dec. qtr	324	15	127	28	14	1	1	—	510
1996 Mar. qtr	153	178	9	12	21	1	1	—	375
June qtr p	196	634	20	—	52	—	1	—	903
TOTAL									
1993-94	47,058	31,295	51,588	10,712	23,416	4,021	1,472	4,047	173,608
1994-95	51,328	29,459	44,499	9,132	21,092	3,096	1,337	2,599	162,541
1995-96 p	39,091	22,641	30,158	5,690	14,215	2,294	1,223	2,086	117,397
1995 Mar. qtr	11,207	6,444	8,704	1,943	4,608	706	298	545	34,455
June qtr	11,671	6,876	8,723	1,634	4,413	663	287	451	34,718
Sept. qtr	10,789	6,072	8,066	1,651	3,893	597	383	519	31,970
Dec. qtr	9,264	5,644	7,495	1,519	3,643	619	278	743	29,205
1996 Mar. qtr	9,336	5,259	6,611	1,248	3,206	613	197	401	26,871
June qtr p	9,702	5,666	7,985	1,272	3,473	464	365	423	29,350

TABLE 5. TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLIC SECTOR DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
NEW HOUSES									
1993-94	615	934	649	431	379	46	170	61	3,285
1994-95	475	508	509	465	494	6	143	11	2,611
1995-96 p	382	473	427	236	281	21	104	39	1,963
1995 Mar. qtr	47	134	125	104	96	2	4	1	513
June qtr	140	107	170	116	136	—	88	1	758
Sept. qtr	75	198	156	106	107	2	31	1	676
Dec. qtr	161	99	74	53	53	10	44	2	496
1996 Mar. qtr	86	75	112	45	71	8	24	—	421
June qtr p	60	101	85	32	50	1	5	36	370
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1993-94	1,634	432	1,147	357	1,187	61	16	57	4,891
1994-95	1,758	535	1,352	186	846	40	19	122	4,858
1995-96 p	1,451	1,057	752	35	801	156	117	67	4,436
1995 Mar. qtr	282	207	232	26	220	—	—	22	989
June qtr	703	141	367	13	99	29	14	36	1,402
Sept. qtr	627	333	258	14	285	23	—	30	1,570
Dec. qtr	190	303	154	15	120	24	2	—	808
1996 Mar. qtr	295	213	210	2	172	42	103	9	1,046
June qtr p	339	208	130	4	224	67	12	28	1,012
CONVERSIONS, ETC									
1993-94	15	3	3	1	14	1	—	—	37
1994-95	31	7	9	13	1	—	—	—	61
1995-96 p	29	21	—	—	—	—	3	70	123
1995 Mar. qtr	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8
June qtr	7	7	2	—	—	—	—	—	16
Sept. qtr	8	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	9
Dec. qtr	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1996 Mar. qtr	4	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	5
June qtr p	17	20	—	—	—	—	2	70	109
TOTAL									
1993-94	2,264	1,369	1,799	789	1,580	108	186	118	8,213
1994-95	2,264	1,050	1,870	664	1,341	46	162	133	7,530
1995-96 p	1,862	1,551	1,179	271	1,082	177	224	176	6,522
1995 Mar. qtr	337	341	357	130	316	2	4	23	1,510
June qtr	850	255	539	129	235	29	102	37	2,176
Sept. qtr	710	531	414	120	392	25	32	31	2,255
Dec. qtr	351	402	228	68	173	34	46	2	1,304
1996 Mar. qtr	385	289	322	47	243	50	127	9	1,472
June qtr p	416	329	215	36	274	68	19	134	1,491



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### INTRODUCTION

- 1** This publication contains preliminary estimates of the number of dwelling units commenced during the June quarter 1996. More comprehensive results from the quarterly survey will be available shortly.
- 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. Relative standard errors are shown on page 2.
- 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, dwelling unit commencement data for regions below State/Territory level are shown in the monthly series of dwelling unit commencements compiled by the ABS. Unlike data in this publication compiled from the Building Activity Survey, the series for smaller geographic areas are based on information reported by local and other government 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).

**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. 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 Building Activity, the results of the latest review are shown in the December quarter issue each year.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

**13** Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:

*Building Approvals, Australia* (8731.0) – issued monthly

*Building Activity, Australia* (8752.0) – issued quarterly

*Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia* (5609.0) – issued monthly

*Price Index of Materials Used in House Building* (6408.0) – issued monthly

*Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building* (6407.0) – issued monthly

*House Price Indexes: Eight Capital Cities* (6416.0) – issued quarterly

**14** Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications and Products, Australia* (1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Release Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Release Advice are available from any ABS office.

UNPUBLISHED STATISTICS

**15** The ABS can also make available certain building approvals and activity data which are not published. Where it is not practicable to provide the required information by telephone, data can be provided in the following forms: photocopy, computer printout, floppy disk and clerically extracted tabulation. A charge may be made for providing unpublished information in these forms.

ELECTRONIC SERVICES

**16** 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.

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

SYMBOLS AND OTHER USAGES

n.a. not available  
— nil or rounded to zero  
p preliminary – figures or series subject to revision  
r figures or series revised since previous issue  
.. not applicable

## For more information . . .

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