



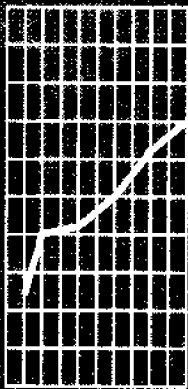
June Quarter 1997

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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 1997	15 December 1997
December 1997	18 March 1998

CHANGES IN THIS ISSUE

There are no changes in this issue.

SIGNIFICANT REVISIONS THIS ISSUE

The total number of dwelling units commenced during the March quarter 1997 has been revised upwards by 1,974 (6.7%) for Australia, including 652 (9.6%) in Queensland, 593 (10.0%) in Victoria and 452 (4.1%) in New South Wales.

From this issue, the seasonally adjusted estimates for the total number of dwelling units commenced (including conversions, etc.) and shown in Tables 1 and 2 have been derived from seasonal factors for the corresponding original series. Previously, seasonal factors for the total number of new dwelling units commenced had been used.

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 1997 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	3.6	1.9
Victoria	3.1	2.3
Queensland	2.6	1.8
South Australia	3.2	2.9
Western Australia	3.5	2.9
Tasmania	3.4	2.9
Northern Territory
Australian Capital Territory	2.3	1.1
Australia	1.5	1.0

INQUIRIES

For further information about statistics in this publication and the availability of related unpublished statistics, contact Tony Bammann on Adelaide (08) 8237 7316 or any ABS State office.

W. McLennan
Australian Statistician

MAIN FEATURES

NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED

TREND AND SEASONALLY ADJUSTED ESTIMATES

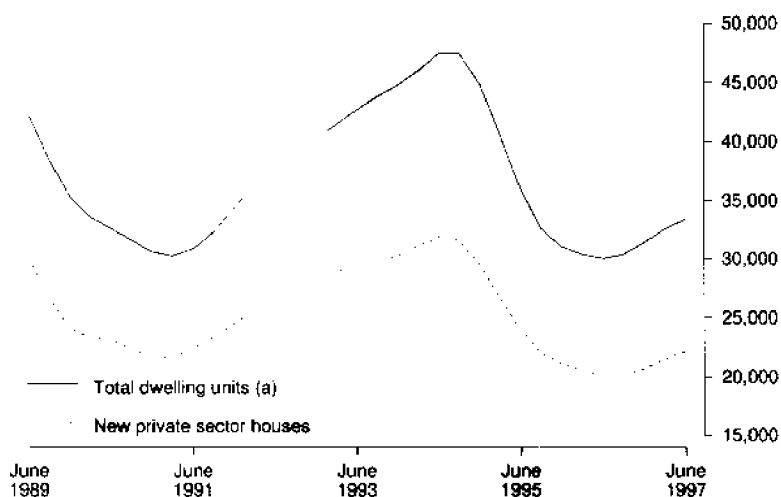
The number of dwelling units commenced in the June quarter 1997, in trend and seasonally adjusted terms, and percentage changes from the March quarter 1997 and June quarter 1996 are summarised in the table below.

	June qtr 97	% change Mar qtr 97 to June qtr 97	% change June qtr 96 to June qtr 97
TREND ESTIMATES			
Dwelling units commenced			
New private sector houses	22 177	3.1	10.6
Total dwelling units	33 372	2.5	11.1
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED			
Dwelling units commenced			
New private sector houses	21 584	-3.2	6.1
Total dwelling units	31 873	-7.0	4.3

Australian estimates The trend for the number of new private sector houses commenced rose by 3.1% in the June quarter 1997. This follows a rise of 3.8% in the March quarter 1997 and was 10.6% above the level of a year ago.

The trend for the total number of dwelling units commenced rose by 2.5% in the June quarter, displaying a slowing rate of increase when compared with the 3.7% and 3.3% increases in the March quarter 1997 and the December quarter 1996.

NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED, AUSTRALIA (Trend estimates)



(a) Includes Conversions, etc

In seasonally adjusted terms, the number of new private sector houses commenced fell by 3.2% in the June quarter to 21,584. The total number of dwelling units commenced also fell, by 7.0% to 31,873. These falls followed increases of 8.3% and 9.8% respectively in the March quarter 1997.

State estimates The largest increase in the trend estimate for the number of dwelling units commenced in the June quarter 1997 was for the Australian Capital Territory (+14.7%) followed by South Australia (+8.3%) and Victoria (+7.2%). New South Wales was steady, and Tasmania was the only State to show a decline (-8.9%). Over the last 12 months, however, the Northern Territory has shown a 22.2% increase, with South Australia (+17.9%), Victoria (+14.9%) and New South Wales (+12.9%) also recording substantial increases. Tasmania was the only State to show a decline (-25.8%).

In seasonally adjusted terms, South Australia (+23.4%) and the Australian Capital Territory (+18.9%) recorded the only increases in the number of dwelling units commenced in the June quarter, while New South Wales (-18.8%) accounted for most of the fall in the Australian figure. Tasmania fell 15.2% while Queensland was down 7.4%.

ORIGINAL ESTIMATES

In original terms, 32,458 dwelling units were commenced in the June quarter 1997, an increase of 944 or 3.0% from the previous quarter. Increases of 9.3% in the number of new houses commenced and a 66.4% increase in conversions, etc. was partially offset by a 14.2% fall in new other residential dwelling units commenced.

Total private sector commencements rose by 3.9% in the June quarter with increases in new houses of 9.1% and conversions, etc. of 60.8% being partially offset by a decline in new other residential dwelling units of 11.7%.

During 1996-97, there were 126,227 dwelling units commenced, an increase of 1.2% from the 1995-96 estimate of 124,685. While the number of new houses commenced fell by 1.0% to 85,333, commencements of new other residential dwelling units rose by 3.9% to 37,526 and conversions, etc. rose by 41.5% to 3,368.

Percentage movements between 1995-96 and 1996-97 in the number of dwelling units commenced were:

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
New houses	0.9	-5.5	-1.8	-1.1	8.2	-18.7	8.4	-11.9	-1.0
New other residential	6.3	37.6	9.2	-24.3	-40.2	-46.6	21.5	-21.9	3.9
Conversions, etc.	50.5	18.5	146.5	-54.5	-17.3	275.0	216.7	-7.1	41.5
Total dwellings	4.3	2.9	2.0	-4.8	-3.7	-23.8	15.2	-15.8	1.2

**TABLE 1. NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED:
ORIGINAL, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED AND TREND ESTIMATES**

Period	New houses		Total dwelling units (includes conversions etc)	
	Private sector	Total	Private sector	Total
ORIGINAL				
1996 Mar. qtr	18,668	19,093	27,345	28,819
June qtr	20,597	20,966	29,614	31,131
Sept. qtr	20,380	20,761	28,683	30,300
Dec. qtr	21,474	21,860	30,856	31,955
1997 Mar. qtr	20,040	20,406	30,229	31,514
June qtr	21,856	22,306	31,396	32,458
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED				
1996 Mar. qtr	20,793	21,224	29,825	31,383
June qtr	20,339	20,632	29,167	30,571
Sept. qtr	19,488	19,863	27,820	29,155
Dec. qtr	20,587	21,052	29,775	31,213
1997 Mar. qtr	22,305	22,671	32,927	34,285
June qtr	21,584	21,952	30,925	31,873
TREND ESTIMATES				
1996 Mar. qtr	20,541	20,967	28,845	30,364
June qtr	20,049	20,407	28,616	30,032
Sept. qtr	20,097	20,466	29,004	30,410
Dec. qtr	20,723	21,123	30,029	31,399
1997 Mar. qtr	21,509	21,909	31,284	32,547
June qtr	22,177	22,551	32,284	33,372

**TABLE 2. TOTAL NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS (a) COMMENCED BY STATE:
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED AND TREND ESTIMATES**

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED									
1996 Mar. qtr	10,987	6,072	7,941	1,410	3,725	630	n.a.	454	31,383
June qtr	9,928	6,119	8,050	1,346	3,700	536	n.a.	575	30,571
Sept. qtr	9,760	6,202	7,343	1,245	3,265	495	n.a.	453	29,155
Dec. qtr	10,842	5,405	8,185	1,456	3,776	491	n.a.	395	31,213
1997 Mar. qtr	12,498	6,872	8,597	1,334	3,896	461	n.a.	493	34,285
June qtr	10,144	6,863	7,965	1,646	3,862	391	n.a.	586	31,873
TREND ESTIMATES									
1996 Mar. qtr	10,057	6,032	7,717	1,401	3,690	592	353	576	30,364
June qtr	9,990	5,999	7,761	1,333	3,559	551	370	511	30,032
Sept. qtr	10,362	5,958	7,863	1,312	3,539	512	394	450	30,410
Dec. qtr	10,889	6,077	8,047	1,361	3,659	480	409	452	31,399
1997 Mar. qtr	11,292	6,431	8,243	1,451	3,820	449	431	484	32,547
June qtr	11,280	6,891	8,367	1,571	3,980	409	452	555	33,372

(a) Includes conversions, etc.

TABLE 3. TOTAL NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
NEW HOUSES									
1994-95	28,222	25,846	31,047	8,210	16,225	2,548	947	1,533	114,577
1995-96	23,058	19,399	23,082	5,070	11,510	1,880	885	1,289	86,174
1996-97	23,258	18,331	22,657	5,014	12,450	1,529	959	1,135	85,333
1996 Mar. qtr	5,419	4,373	4,835	1,089	2,552	467	143	217	19,093
June qtr	5,737	4,102	6,086	1,183	2,884	398	235	342	20,966
Sept. qtr	5,627	4,453	5,691	1,207	2,897	378	223	283	20,761
Dec. qtr	6,075	4,139	6,281	1,262	3,082	462	268	290	21,860
1997 Mar. qtr	5,825	4,597	4,950	1,086	3,078	365	223	283	20,406
June qtr	5,731	5,143	5,734	1,458	3,393	324	245	278	22,306
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1994-95	23,271	3,612	15,113	1,525	6,073	582	541	1,194	51,911
1995-96	17,226	4,276	8,043	835	3,721	530	572	927	36,130
1996-97	18,303	5,883	8,780	632	2,226	283	695	724	37,526
1996 Mar. qtr	4,484	1,193	2,042	195	895	148	194	193	9,344
June qtr	4,185	1,427	2,147	120	827	129	154	170	9,159
Sept. qtr	4,327	1,722	2,142	106	530	94	134	196	9,251
Dec. qtr	4,340	1,238	2,173	266	666	52	226	116	9,077
1997 Mar. qtr	5,382	1,560	2,422	135	516	76	82	161	10,334
June qtr	4,254	1,363	2,043	125	514	61	253	251	8,864
CONVERSIONS, ETC									
1994-95	2,100	1,051	209	61	135	12	11	5	3,583
1995-96	1,002	913	217	55	104	8	12	70	2,381
1996-97	1,508	1,082	535	25	86	30	38	65	3,368
1996 Mar. qtr	158	180	9	12	21	1	1	—	382
June qtr	189	664	20	4	56	—	3	70	1,006
Sept. qtr	163	55	45	8	12	2	3	—	288
Dec. qtr	730	222	21	2	23	17	2	1	1,018
1997 Mar. qtr	268	361	73	1	29	10	31	1	774
June qtr	347	443	396	14	22	1	2	63	1,288
TOTAL									
1994-95	53,592	30,509	46,369	9,796	22,433	3,142	1,499	2,732	170,071
1995-96	41,286	24,588	31,342	5,960	15,335	2,418	1,469	2,286	124,685
1996-97	43,069	25,296	31,972	5,671	14,762	1,842	1,692	1,924	126,227
1996 Mar. qtr	10,061	5,746	6,886	1,295	3,468	616	338	410	28,819
June qtr	10,111	6,193	8,253	1,307	3,767	527	392	582	31,131
Sept. qtr	10,117	6,230	7,878	1,321	3,439	474	360	479	30,300
Dec. qtr	11,145	5,599	8,475	1,530	3,771	531	496	407	31,955
1997 Mar. qtr	11,475	6,518	7,445	1,222	3,623	451	336	445	31,514
June qtr	10,332	6,949	8,173	1,597	3,929	386	500	592	32,458

TABLE 4. TOTAL NUMBER OF PRIVATE SECTOR DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
NEW HOUSES									
1994-95	27,747	25,338	30,538	7,745	15,731	2,542	804	1,522	111,966
1995-96	22,674	18,926	22,661	4,836	11,228	1,859	773	1,250	84,208
1996-97	23,054	18,075	22,313	4,959	11,952	1,512	791	1,094	83,750
1996 Mar. qtr	5,334	4,300	4,724	1,044	2,481	459	111	217	18,668
June qtr	5,674	3,999	6,006	1,153	2,833	397	230	306	20,597
Sept. qtr	5,591	4,349	5,638	1,191	2,763	373	192	281	20,380
Dec. qtr	6,039	4,085	6,205	1,245	2,924	459	228	288	21,474
1997 Mar. qtr	5,787	4,539	4,854	1,083	2,999	357	169	253	20,040
June qtr	5,637	5,103	5,615	1,439	3,266	323	202	271	21,856
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1994-95	21,513	3,077	13,761	1,339	5,227	542	522	1,072	47,053
1995-96	15,775	3,218	7,292	800	2,920	378	455	839	31,677
1996-97	16,500	5,477	8,112	630	1,843	238	679	708	34,187
1996 Mar. qtr	4,189	980	1,832	193	723	108	91	184	8,300
June qtr	3,846	1,218	2,018	116	603	64	142	121	8,128
Sept. qtr	3,633	1,462	2,054	106	362	92	132	188	8,029
Dec. qtr	4,085	1,152	1,913	266	599	40	219	116	8,390
1997 Mar. qtr	4,772	1,526	2,252	133	467	50	80	157	9,437
June qtr	4,010	1,337	1,893	125	415	56	248	247	8,331
CONVERSIONS, ETC									
1994-95	2,069	1,044	200	48	134	12	11	5	3,522
1995-96	973	884	217	55	104	8	9	—	2,250
1996-97	1,479	1,069	535	22	80	12	26	5	3,227
1996 Mar. qtr	154	179	9	12	21	1	1	—	377
June qtr	172	636	20	4	56	—	1	—	889
Sept. qtr	152	55	45	5	12	2	3	—	274
Dec. qtr	724	221	21	2	17	4	2	1	992
1997 Mar. qtr	266	358	73	1	29	5	19	1	752
June qtr	337	434	396	14	22	1	2	3	1,209
TOTAL									
1994-95	51,328	29,459	44,499	9,132	21,092	3,096	1,337	2,599	162,541
1995-96	39,422	23,028	30,170	5,691	14,252	2,245	1,237	2,089	118,135
1996-97	41,033	24,621	30,960	5,611	13,875	1,762	1,496	1,807	121,164
1996 Mar. qtr	9,677	5,459	6,565	1,248	3,225	568	203	401	27,345
June qtr	9,692	5,853	8,044	1,273	3,492	461	373	427	29,614
Sept. qtr	9,376	5,866	7,737	1,302	3,137	467	327	469	28,683
Dec. qtr	10,848	5,458	8,139	1,513	3,540	503	449	405	30,856
1997 Mar. qtr	10,825	6,423	7,179	1,217	3,495	412	268	411	30,229
June qtr	9,984	6,874	7,904	1,578	3,703	380	452	521	31,396

TABLE 5. 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									
1994-95	475	508	509	465	494	6	143	11	2,611
1995-96	384	473	421	234	282	21	112	39	1,966
1996-97	204	256	344	55	498	17	168	41	1,583
1996 Mar. qtr	85	73	111	45	71	8	32	—	425
June qtr	63	103	80	30	51	1	5	36	369
Sept. qtr	36	104	53	16	134	5	31	2	381
Dec. qtr	36	54	76	17	158	3	40	2	386
1997 Mar. qtr	38	58	96	3	79	8	54	30	366
June qtr	94	40	119	19	127	1	43	7	450
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1994-95	1,758	535	1,352	186	846	40	19	122	4,858
1995-96	1,451	1,058	751	35	801	152	117	88	4,453
1996-97	1,803	406	668	2	383	45	16	16	3,339
1996 Mar. qtr	295	213	210	2	172	40	103	9	1,044
June qtr	339	209	129	4	224	65	12	49	1,031
Sept. qtr	694	260	88	—	168	2	2	8	1,222
Dec. qtr	255	86	260	—	67	12	7	—	687
1997 Mar. qtr	610	34	170	2	49	26	2	4	897
June qtr	244	26	150	—	99	5	5	4	533
CONVERSIONS, ETC									
1994-95	31	7	9	13	1	—	—	—	61
1995-96	29	29	—	—	—	—	3	70	131
1996-97	29	13	—	3	6	18	12	60	141
1996 Mar. qtr	4	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	5
June qtr	17	28	—	—	—	—	2	70	117
Sept. qtr	11	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	14
Dec. qtr	6	1	—	—	6	13	—	—	26
1997 Mar. qtr	2	3	—	—	—	5	12	—	22
June qtr	10	9	—	—	—	—	—	60	79
TOTAL									
1994-95	2,264	1,050	1,870	664	1,341	46	162	133	7,530
1995-96	1,864	1,560	1,172	269	1,083	173	232	197	6,550
1996-97	2,036	675	1,012	60	887	80	196	117	5,063
1996 Mar. qtr	384	287	321	47	243	48	135	9	1,474
June qtr	419	340	209	34	275	66	19	155	1,517
Sept. qtr	741	364	141	19	302	7	33	10	1,617
Dec. qtr	297	141	336	17	231	28	47	2	1,099
1997 Mar. qtr	650	95	266	5	128	39	68	34	1,285
June qtr	348	75	269	19	226	6	48	71	1,062

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* (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. 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, data for regions below State/Territory level are available from the Building Approvals series and from the monthly series of dwelling unit commencements compiled for South Australia and Western Australia 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.

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.

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 *A Guide to Interpreting Time Series - Monitoring Trends: an Overview* (1348.0) or contact the Assistant Director, Time Series Analysis on (02) 6252 6345.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

16 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

17 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

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