



POPULATION SURVEY MONITOR

AUSTRALIA

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- For more information about other ABS statistics and services, please refer to the back cover of this publication.
- For further information about these and other related statistics, contact Jenny Dobak on Adelaide 08 8237 7317.

NOTES

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

<i>ISSUE</i>	<i>RELEASE DATE</i>
May 1999	20 July 1999
August 1999	19 October 1999

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This publication presents summary results of the Population Survey Monitor (PSM).

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

The PSM is a quarterly household survey of approximately 3,000 households conducted throughout Australia. Each survey includes a core set of socio-demographic questions and a variable set of topics requested by various Commonwealth and State Government clients.

The estimates in this publication are based on a sample survey of households throughout Australia and are subject to sampling variability because data are not collected from all households. Relative standard errors give a measure of this variability and indicate the degree of confidence that can be attached to the data (see Technical Notes on pages 16 and 17 for more information). The standard errors for some statistics are relatively high and users are advised to exercise caution when interpreting the figures. These data cells are marked with * to indicate that they should be viewed as merely indicative of the magnitude involved.

SYMBOLS AND OTHER USAGES

*	relative standard error greater than 25% — subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes
**	relative standard error greater than 50% — subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes
..	not applicable

ROUNDING

Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals. Published percentages are calculated prior to rounding of the figures and therefore some discrepancy may occur between these percentages and those that could be calculated from the rounded figures.

INQUIRIES

For information about statistics in this publication and the availability of related unpublished statistics, contact Jenny Dobak on Adelaide (08) 8237 7317.

For information about other ABS statistics and services, please refer to the back of this publication.

W. McLennan
Australian Statistician

MAIN FEATURES

FIRE SAFETY MEASURES

The most common fire safety measures installed or followed in households were smoke alarms/detectors (67.8%) and safety switch/circuit breakers (50.6%) (refer to table 1).

COMPUTER USAGE

Over 2.8 million households (40.3%) use a computer at home at least once a week (refer to table 2).

HOUSING

Over 4.9 million households (70.6%) own or are purchasing the residence in which they live. Of all separate houses, 79.8% are owned or being purchased, 13.7% are privately rented and 2.4% are publicly rented (refer to tables 3 and 4).

CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS

Almost 3.1 million households (44.1%) indicated in February 1999 that they intend to purchase a major item in the June quarter 1999. Over 1.5 million households (21.5%) indicated that they intend to buy a household item worth more than \$200 in the June quarter 1999 (refer to tables 5 and 6).

POLICE

Of persons aged 18 years and over, 50.3% were satisfied with the services provided by police and 16.2% were very satisfied (refer to table 7).

ORGANISED SPORT

In the last 12 months, 36.0% of males and 28.2% of females aged 18 years and over have participated in sport or physical activity organised by a club or association (refer to table 8).

CONCESSION CARDS

Over 4.2 million persons aged 18 years or over (31.6%) have a concession card (refer to table 9).

ORGAN OR TISSUE DONATION

Of persons aged 18 years and over, 46.2% have taken steps to be an organ or tissue donor, with 33.7% having discussed their willingness to be a donor with their family and 31.8% being listed as a donor on their driver's licence (refer to table 10).

ENERGY USAGE

Electricity is the most popular energy source used in South Australian households for cooking (51.6%) and room heating (39.1%), while gas is the main source of energy used for water heating (48.0%) (refer to table 11).

TOBACCO SMOKING

In the Northern Territory an estimated 35,500 (37.0%) persons aged 18 years or over currently smoke tobacco. Over 15,000 of those who currently smoke have tried to quit smoking in the last 12 months. Of the non smokers, 23,600 (39.1%) have smoked regularly in the past (refer to tables 12 and 13).

1

FIRE SAFETY MEASURES INSTALLED OR FOLLOWED BY HOUSEHOLDS

<i>Fire safety measure</i>	<i>Metropolitan.....</i>		<i>Ex-metropolitan.....</i>		<i>Total.....</i>	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
<i>Fire safety measure installed or followed</i>						
Operational smoke alarm(s) or smoke detector(s)	3 027.9	68.3	1 710.8	67.0	4 738.7	67.8
Fire sprinkler system	*31.0	*0.7	*21.6	*0.8	52.5	0.8
Safety switch/circuit breaker	2 259.9	51.0	1 271.9	49.8	3 531.7	50.6
Fire extinguisher	966.1	21.8	717.8	28.1	1 683.9	24.1
Fire blanket	396.0	8.9	204.6	8.0	600.6	8.6
Fire evacuation plan	503.4	11.4	386.1	15.1	889.5	12.7
External water supply	241.9	5.5	604.2	23.7	846.1	12.1
Removal of external fuel sources	630.9	14.2	778.7	30.5	1 409.6	20.2
External sprinkler	597.5	13.5	679.1	26.6	1 276.5	18.3
Other fire safety measure	*19.8	*0.4	*33.9	*1.3	53.6	0.8
<i>Total households with a fire safety measure(a)</i>	3 839.5	86.7	2 303.4	90.2	6 143.0	87.9
No fire safety measure installed or followed	573.7	12.9	247.5	9.7	821.2	11.8
Don't know	*17.2	*0.4	**	**	*20.7	*0.3
Total	4 430.4	100.0	2 554.5	100.0	6 984.9	100.0

(a) For the total number of households with a fire safety measure, the sum of the components is larger than the total as a number of households may have more than one fire safety measure installed or followed.

2

HOUSEHOLD USE OF COMPUTING EQUIPMENT

<i>Computer use</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Proportion</i>
	'000	%
Households which use a computer(a)	2 813.1	40.3
Households which do not use a computer	4 171.8	59.7
Total	6 984.9	100.0

(a) Households where any member of the household uses a computer at home at least once a week.

3

TENURE OF CURRENT RESIDENCE BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

Household type	TENURE.....				TOTAL.....	
	Owner/ purchaser	Public renter	Private renter	Other	Pro- portion	Number
	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Person living alone	62.5	5.9	26.0	5.5	100.0	1 633.8
Married couple(a) only	78.6	*2.3	15.6	3.6	100.0	1 746.3
Married couple(a) with children	77.7	2.6	15.0	4.7	100.0	2 401.4
Single parent with children	56.6	14.0	27.5	*1.9	100.0	605.9
Other households	55.0	*2.7	38.6	*3.7	100.0	597.4
Total	70.6	4.3	20.8	4.3	100.0	6 984.9
	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
Total	4 931.8	300.3	1 454.4	298.4	..	6 984.9

(a) Includes de facto couples.

4

TENURE OF CURRENT RESIDENCE BY DWELLING STRUCTURE

Dwelling structure	TENURE.....				TOTAL.....	
	Owner/ purchaser	Public renter	Private renter	Other	Pro- portion	Number
	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Separate house	79.8	2.4	13.7	4.0	100.0	5 591.3
Semi-detached/row/terrace(a)	40.1	9.4	43.9	6.6	100.0	682.2
Flat/unit/apartment	21.1	15.6	59.0	*4.3	100.0	649.3
Other dwelling	91.1	**	**	**	100.0	62.2
Total	70.6	4.3	20.8	4.3	100.0	6 984.9
	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
Total	4 931.8	300.3	1 454.4	298.4	..	6 984.9

(a) Includes flat attached to house.

5

HOUSEHOLDS' INTENTION TO PURCHASE SELECTED ITEMS(a)

Item	Number	Proportion(b)
	'000	%
A new car	187.8	2.7
A second-hand car	474.8	6.8
A personal computer	286.9	4.1
Household item worth more than \$200	1 501.3	21.5
Home alterations or additions worth more than \$500	843.7	12.1
Landscaping worth more than \$500	291.6	4.2
A holiday worth more than \$500	977.8	14.0
Any other item worth more than \$500	200.0	2.9
Total(c)	3 081.1	44.1

(a) Intention to purchase in the June quarter 1999.

(b) Proportion of all households.

(c) For the total number of households intending to purchase, the sum of the components is larger than the total as a number of households intend to purchase more than one item.

6

HOUSEHOLDS' INTENTION TO PURCHASE SELECTED ITEMS(a), By Income Quintile

Household income quintile	Intend to purchase...		Do not intend to purchase.....		Total.....	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
First quintile (lowest 20%)	253.0	19.4	1 052.7	80.6	1 305.7	100.0
Second quintile	392.0	35.0	727.3	65.0	1 119.3	100.0
Third quintile	640.6	46.9	724.9	53.1	1 365.5	100.0
Fourth quintile	700.7	57.7	513.5	42.3	1 214.2	100.0
Fifth quintile (highest 20%)	773.0	66.2	395.2	33.8	1 168.1	100.0
Don't know(b)	321.9	39.6	490.2	60.4	812.1	100.0
Total	3 081.1	44.1	3 903.7	55.9	6 984.9	100.0

(a) Intention to purchase at least one of the selected items listed in table 5 in the June quarter 1999.

(b) Household income not reported.

7

SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES PROVIDED BY POLICE

Level of satisfaction	AGE (YEARS).....						TOTAL.....	
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and over	Pro-portion	Number
MALES								
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Very satisfied	*6.8	13.4	10.6	16.7	22.3	17.9	14.2	947.9
Satisfied	54.4	49.6	47.2	49.3	47.0	59.7	50.8	3 393.0
Neither	25.9	20.5	17.9	12.8	16.8	10.0	17.4	1 160.7
Dissatisfied	9.1	13.2	19.3	16.4	*8.4	9.4	13.4	895.6
Very dissatisfied	**	*2.8	*2.7	*2.8	*4.1	**	2.4	163.6
Don't know	*2.1	**	*2.2	*2.0	**	*2.5	1.8	117.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	6 678.5
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
Total	918.9	1 379.9	1 408.8	1 231.4	808.3	931.2	..	6 678.5
FEMALES								
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Very satisfied	12.7	15.6	16.7	16.7	21.7	26.2	18.1	1 247.1
Satisfied	46.2	43.0	53.4	50.7	50.7	55.2	49.8	3 435.9
Neither	27.3	24.2	14.4	16.1	11.0	*5.8	16.6	1 142.3
Dissatisfied	10.2	12.4	10.5	11.7	10.8	*5.7	10.3	711.4
Very dissatisfied	*3.3	*2.9	*1.7	**	*2.8	*1.8	2.2	154.4
Don't know	**	*1.9	*3.3	*3.5	*3.1	*5.2	2.9	203.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	6 894.2
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
Total	897.1	1 410.9	1 437.8	1 222.4	796.6	1 129.4	..	6 894.2
PERSONS								
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Very satisfied	9.7	14.5	13.7	16.7	22.0	22.5	16.2	2 195.1
Satisfied	50.4	46.3	50.3	50.0	48.8	57.2	50.3	6 829.0
Neither	26.6	22.3	16.2	14.5	13.9	7.7	17.0	2 303.0
Dissatisfied	9.7	12.8	14.9	14.1	9.6	7.4	11.8	1 607.0
Very dissatisfied	*2.5	2.8	*2.2	*2.1	*3.4	*1.2	2.3	318.0
Don't know	*1.2	*1.2	2.8	*2.7	*2.2	4.0	2.4	320.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	13 572.7
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
Total	1 816.0	2 790.8	2 846.6	2 453.8	1 604.9	2 060.5	..	13 572.7

PARTICIPATION IN ORGANISED SPORT(a) IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

Participation	AGE (YEARS).....						TOTAL.....	
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and over	Pro-portion	Number
MALES								
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Participated in organised sport(a)	50.1	38.3	40.9	28.2	27.1	29.4	36.0	2 403.6
No participation in organised sport(a)	49.9	61.7	59.1	71.8	72.9	70.6	64.0	4 274.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	6 678.5
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
Total	918.9	1 379.9	1 408.8	1 231.4	808.3	931.2	..	6 678.5
FEMALES								
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Participated in organised sport(a)	33.1	35.0	33.6	22.0	24.0	18.5	28.2	1 942.8
No participation in organised sport(a)	66.9	65.0	66.4	78.0	76.0	81.5	71.8	4 951.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	6 894.2
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
Total	897.1	1 410.9	1 437.8	1 222.4	796.6	1 129.4	..	6 894.2
PERSONS								
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Participated in organised sport(a)	41.7	36.6	37.2	25.1	25.6	23.4	32.0	4 346.4
No participation in organised sport(a)	58.3	63.4	62.8	74.9	74.4	76.6	68.0	9 226.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	13 572.7
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
Total	1 816.0	2 790.8	2 846.6	2 453.8	1 604.9	2 060.5	..	13 572.7

(a) Includes sport and physical activities organised by a club or association.

9

CONCESSION CARD HOLDERS

Concession card holders	AGE (YEARS).....						TOTAL.....	Pro-portion	Number
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and over	.		
PERSONS									
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Have a concession card	24.0	17.6	20.0	17.9	33.3	88.1	31.6	4 285.6	
Don't have a concession card	76.0	82.4	80.0	82.1	66.7	11.9	68.4	9 287.2	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	13 572.7	
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	
Total	1 816.0	2 790.8	2 846.6	2 453.8	1 604.9	2 060.5	..	13 572.7	

Steps taken	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and over	Proportion	Number
MALES								
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Step taken to be a donor								
Donor on drivers licence	36.0	34.2	36.5	34.2	28.9	24.0	32.9	2 196.4
Discussed willingness to be a donor with family	32.0	30.6	37.3	34.3	26.5	17.8	30.6	2 042.8
Carry signed donor card	*3.4	*2.8	*4.9	*2.4	*3.9	**	3.1	210.0
Total persons(a)	45.5	47.7	53.2	46.7	38.8	30.4	44.9	2 997.6
No steps taken to be a donor	54.5	52.3	46.8	53.3	61.2	69.6	55.1	3 681.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	6 678.5
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
Total	918.9	1 379.9	1 408.8	1 231.4	808.3	931.2	..	6 678.5
FEMALES								
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Step taken to be a donor								
Donor on drivers licence	30.2	33.3	36.5	36.9	27.6	16.7	30.8	2 125.3
Discussed willingness to be a donor with family	40.4	43.0	39.0	45.5	30.5	17.6	36.7	2 529.5
Carry signed donor card	*3.8	7.3	*4.2	8.3	*3.5	*3.8	5.4	369.7
Total persons(a)	50.1	55.1	50.1	57.3	43.0	24.6	47.4	3 267.5
No steps taken to be a donor	49.9	44.9	49.9	42.7	57.0	75.4	52.6	3 626.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	6 894.2
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
Total	897.1	1 410.9	1 437.8	1 222.4	796.6	1 129.4	..	6 894.2
PERSONS								
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Step taken to be a donor								
Donor on drivers licence	33.1	33.7	36.5	35.6	28.3	20.0	31.8	4 321.7
Discussed willingness to be a donor with family	36.2	36.9	38.2	39.9	28.5	17.7	33.7	4 572.2
Carry signed donor card	*3.6	5.1	4.5	5.3	*3.7	*2.6	4.3	579.7
Total persons(a)	47.8	51.4	51.6	52.0	40.9	27.2	46.2	6 265.1
No steps taken to be a donor	52.2	48.6	48.4	48.0	59.1	72.8	53.8	7 307.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	13 572.7
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
Total	1 816.0	2 790.8	2 846.6	2 453.8	1 604.9	2 060.5	..	13 572.7

(a) Total number of persons who have taken steps to be an organ or tissue donor. The sum of the components is larger than the total as a number of persons may have taken more than one step.

Energy Source	Water heating.....		Cooking.....		Room heating.....	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Electricity	235.7	47.0	258.9	51.6	195.9	39.1
Gas	240.4	48.0	224.3	44.7	179.8	35.9
Solar	13.4	2.7	..	..	..	..
Wood	**	**	**	**	93.6	18.7
Other	**	**	16.8	3.4	22.9	4.6
No energy source	..	..	..	..	9.0	1.8
Don't know	8.4	1.7	..	..	..	..
Total	501.3	100.0	501.3	100.0	501.3	100.0

(a) Excludes approximately 78,000 (13.5%) households which did not provide energy consumption details.

(b) Includes data collected in the May 1998, August 1998, November 1998 and February 1999 PSM surveys.

12

PERSONS IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY WHO CURRENTLY SMOKE TOBACCO(a)

<i>Tobacco smoking</i>	<i>Males.....</i>		<i>Females.....</i>		<i>Total.....</i>	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
.....						
Currently smoke						
Tried to quit in last 12 months	7.5	15.0	7.7	16.6	15.1	15.8
Haven't tried to quit in last 12 months	12.0	24.0	8.4	18.2	20.3	21.2
<i>Total current smokers</i>	19.4	39.0	16.0	34.8	35.5	37.0
Don't currently smoke	30.4	61.0	30.1	65.2	60.5	63.0
Total	49.9	100.0	46.1	100.0	96.0	100.0

(a) Includes data collected in the May 1998, August 1998, November 1998 and February 1999 PSM surveys.

13

PERSONS IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY WHO PREVIOUSLY SMOKED TOBACCO REGULARLY(a)

<i>Tobacco smoking</i>	<i>Males.....</i>		<i>Females.....</i>		<i>Total.....</i>	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
.....						
Smoked regularly(b)						
Yes	14.4	47.2	9.3	30.8	23.6	39.1
No	16.1	52.8	20.8	69.2	36.9	60.9
Total	30.4	100.0	30.1	100.0	60.5	100.0

(a) Includes data collected in the May 1998, August 1998, November 1998 and February 1999 PSM surveys.

(b) Excludes those who currently smoke.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 The Population Survey Monitor (PSM) is a quarterly household survey of approximately 3,000 households conducted throughout Australia. The PSM is designed to meet the needs of government agencies for household data. It is a user-funded survey where clients pay to include the topic of their choice. Questions for each client's topic and a set of core questions are asked of a randomly selected person aged 18 years or over within the selected household.

LIST OF TOPICS FEBRUARY 1999

2 This publication presents summary results of the PSM conducted in February 1999. The topics included in this survey were as follows:

Fire safety measures

3 Contains data on the type of fire safety measures installed or followed in private dwellings.

Computer usage

4 Contains data on the use of computing technology in the home.

Housing

5 Contains data on tenure of current residence.

Consumer expectations

6 Contains data on the anticipated purchases by households of major items in the June quarter 1999.

Satisfaction with police services

7 Contains data on community attitudes to police services.

Organised sport

8 Contains data on the sporting and physical activities undertaken by persons aged 18 years and over in the last 12 months.

Concession cards

9 Contains data on holders of a concession card.

Organ donation

10 Contains data on persons who have taken steps to be an organ or tissue donor.

Energy usage

11 Contains data on the main source of energy used by households in South Australia for water heating, cooking and room heating. This topic presents summary data collected from the May 1998 to February 1999 PSM surveys.

Tobacco Smoking

12 Contains data on tobacco smoking in the Northern Territory. This topic presents summary data collected from the May 1998 to February 1999 PSM surveys.

EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

SCOPE AND COVERAGE

13 All usual residents in private households are included in the PSM. The survey covers rural and urban areas across all States and Territories of Australia, except sparsely settled and Indigenous areas, which accounts for an estimated 84,000 persons aged 18 years and over. The exclusion of these persons will have only a minor impact on any aggregate estimates that are produced for individual States and Territories, with the exception of the Northern Territory where such persons account for approximately 18% of the population. All persons living in non-private dwellings are excluded.

SAMPLE SIZE

14 For each quarterly survey, an initial sample of approximately 4,000 private dwellings is chosen. The sample is sufficient to provide quarterly data for Australia and annual data for the States and Territories at an acceptable level of accuracy and reliability. Sample loss is allowed for through factors such as vacant dwellings inadvertently selected in the sample, non-contacts, persons out of scope, etc.

EXPECTED SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

15 Details of the approximate sample distribution for a quarterly PSM are set out below:

.....

New South Wales	482
Victoria	416
Queensland	375
South Australia	375
Western Australia	375
Tasmania	375
Northern Territory	250
Australian Capital Territory	375
Total	3 023

.....

DATA COLLECTION

16 Information is obtained in the PSM by personal interviews with adult members of selected households. Interviewers for the PSM are selected from a panel of trained interviewers who have extensive experience in conducting household surveys.

17 The willing cooperation of selected households is sought. Measures taken to encourage cooperation and maximise response include:

- advice to selected households by letter, accompanied by an information brochure explaining that their dwelling has been selected for the survey, the purposes of the survey, its official nature and the confidentiality of the information collected.
- through call-backs and follow-up at selected dwellings every effort is made to contact the occupants of each selected dwelling and to conduct the survey in those dwellings.

EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

ESTIMATION PROCEDURE

18 Estimates obtained from the survey are derived using a complex ratio estimation procedure that ensures that the survey estimates conform to an independently estimated distribution of the total population by age, sex and area, (rather than to the age-sex-area distribution within the sample itself). The estimation procedure is designed to adjust estimates in such a way as to reduce any non-response bias by adjusting the weights of persons' records in each age-sex-area cell to compensate for under-enumeration in that cell.

19 Expansion factors or 'weights' are inserted into each person's record to enable the data provided by these persons to be expanded to provide estimates relating to the whole population within the scope of the survey.

RELIABILITY OF ESTIMATES

20 The two types of error possible in an estimate based on a sample survey are:

- Non-sampling error which arises from inaccuracies in collecting, recording and processing the data. The most significant of these errors are:
 - misreporting of data items
 - deficiencies in coverage
 - non-response
 - processing errors

Every effort is made to minimise these errors by the careful design of questionnaires, intensive training and supervision of interviewers and efficient data processing procedures.

- Sampling error which occurs because a sample, rather than the entire population is surveyed. One measure of the likely difference resulting from not including all persons in the survey is given by the standard error (see Technical Notes pages 16 and 17).

1 As the estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from occupants of a sample of dwellings they are subject to sampling variability, that is, the estimates may differ from those that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey. One measure of the likely difference is given by the standard error (see table A1, page 17), which estimates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of dwellings was included. There are about two chances in three (67%) that a sample estimate will vary by less than one standard error from the number that would have been obtained if all dwellings had been included, and about 19 chances in 20 (95%) that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

2 Another measure of the likely difference is the relative standard error (RSE), (see table A2, page 17) which is obtained by expressing the standard error as a percentage of the estimate. The RSE is a useful measure in that it provides an immediate indication of the percentage of errors likely to have occurred due to sampling.

3 From table 5 an estimated 286,900 households intend to purchase a computer in the June quarter. Referring to table A1 of standard errors (on page 17), an estimate of 286,900 has a standard error of approximately 23,600. There are two chances in three that the number that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey is between 263,300 and 310,500 (i.e. 286,900 plus or minus 23,600). There are about 19 chances in 20 that the number lies between 239,700 and 334,100 (i.e. 286,900 plus or minus 47,200).

4 Particular care should be taken when comparing figures. It is not correct to assume that an apparent difference between figures is actually significant. Such an estimate is subject to sampling error. An approximate standard error (SE) of the difference between two estimates ($x-y$) may be calculated by the following formula:

$$SE(x-y) = \sqrt{[SE(x)]^2 + [SE(y)]^2}$$

While this formula will only be exact for differences between separate and uncorrelated characteristics of sub-populations, it is expected to provide a good approximation for all differences likely to be of interest in this publication.

5 As the table of standard errors shows, the size of the standard error increases with the size of the estimate. However, the smaller the estimate the higher the RSE. Thus, large estimates will be relatively more reliable than smaller estimates. Very small estimates are subject to such high standard errors (relative to the size of the estimate) and their value for most practical purposes is unreliable. In the tables in this publication, only estimates with RSEs of 25% or less and percentages based on such estimates are considered sufficiently reliable for most purposes. However, estimates with standard errors of greater than 25% have been included and are preceded by an asterisk (e.g. *2.8) to indicate that they should be treated with caution and viewed as being merely indicative of the magnitude involved.

6 This publication contains tables which relate to different populations. Standard errors may vary depending on the population and care should be taken to use the appropriate columns in tables A1 and A2.

7 For tables 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 the columns headed *HOUSEHOLDS - February 1999 - Aust* should be used.

8 For tables 7, 8, 9 and 10 the columns headed *PERSONS 18+ YEARS - February 1999 - Aust* should be used.

TECHNICAL NOTES SAMPLING VARIABILITY *continued*

9 For table 11 the columns headed *HOUSEHOLDS - May 1998-February 1999- SA* should be used.

10 For tables 12 and 13 the columns headed *PERSONS - May 1998-February 1999- NT* should be used.

A1

STANDARD ERRORS OF ESTIMATES

Size of estimate	PERSONS 18+ YEARS		HOUSEHOLDS	
	Feb 1999 Aust	May 1998 - Feb 1999 NT	Feb 1999 Aust	May 1998 - Feb 1999 SA
'000	'000		'000	'000
5	..	0.8	3.6	1.4
10	6.9	1.1	5.1	1.9
20	9.8	1.5	7.3	2.5
50	15.1	2.3	11.3	3.7
100	20.8	3.2	15.5	4.7
200	27.9	4.4	20.9	6.0
500	40.4	..	30.2	8.1
800	48.4	..	35.0	8.9
1 000	53.0	..	39.2	..
1 500	60.0	..	43.4	..
2 000	68.2	..	50.1	..

A2

RELATIVE STANDARD ERRORS OF ESTIMATES

Size of estimate	PERSONS 18+ YEARS		HOUSEHOLDS	
	Feb 1999 Aust	May 1998 - Feb 1999 NT	Feb 1999 Aust	May 1998 - Feb 1999 SA
'000	%		%	%
5	..	15.6	71.2	28.0
10	69.3	11.0	51.3	19.0
20	48.8	7.5	36.4	12.5
50	30.3	4.6	22.6	7.3
100	20.8	3.2	15.5	4.7
200	13.9	2.2	10.4	3.0
500	8.1	..	6.0	1.6
800	6.0	..	4.4	1.1
1 000	5.3	..	3.9	..
1 500	4.0	..	2.9	..
2 000	3.4	..	2.5	..

GLOSSARY

Age	The age of persons on their last birthday.
Computer	Portable, desktop and dedicated computers, and items such as pocket computers or 'personal organisers' which can be plugged into larger computers, are considered to be computers if they are usually in working order.
Concession cards	Concession cards are issued to recipients of Commonwealth income support payments (excludes State Government Seniors Card).
Consumer expectations	See 'Households intending to purchase'.
Dwelling structure	Categories include; separate house: where a house stands separately in its own grounds separated from other dwellings by at least a metre, semi-detached, row or terrace house: where the dwelling has its own private grounds and no other dwelling above or below it, flat or apartment: these dwellings do not have their own private grounds and usually share a common entrance, foyer or stairwell.
External sprinkler	A heavy duty sprinkler capable of wetting the home externally in order to help it become fire resistant.
External water supply	Refers to a non mains external water supply which is suitable for fighting fire. It includes pools, dams or creeks.
Fire blanket	Fire blankets are used to extinguish small fires, and fires involving cooking oils and fats. The blankets may also be used as a thermal barrier against radiated heat and to control clothing fires.
Fire evacuation plan	Refers to any fire evacuation plan that the respondent has set out in case of an emergency. For example, how residents should evacuate the building, and what they should do once they have evacuated the building.
Fire extinguisher	A fire extinguisher is a container that contains either water, carbon dioxide or foam and is designed to spray at and extinguish fires.
Fire sprinkler system	A fire sprinkler system is usually installed in the ceiling and is an automatic sprinkler which is activated by heat or smoke.
Household	A group of one or more persons in a private dwelling who consider themselves to be separate from other persons (if any) in the dwelling, and who make regular provision to take meals separately from other persons, i.e. at other times or in different rooms. Lodgers who receive accommodation but not meals are treated as separate households. Boarders who receive both accommodation and meals are not treated as separate households. A household may consist of any number of family and non-family members.
Household income	Household income is the sum of personal income from all members of the household aged 15 years and over. Personal income is gross income from all sources and includes government pensions/benefits, workers compensation, royalties, rent, etc. It excludes money from the sale of assets, gambling, lottery wins, gifts, bequests or lump sum settlements.

GLOSSARY *continued*

Household's intending to purchase	A household in which any person within the household expects to buy, pay for or make some payment towards an item with an individual worth of \$200 or more for a household item or \$500 or more for other items. Planned purchases must be for the period 1 April 1999 to 30 June 1999.
Metropolitan	Metropolitan refers to the capital city statistical divisions. These delimit an area which is stable for general statistical purposes. The boundary is defined to contain the anticipated development of the city for a period of at least 20 years. They contain more than just the urban centre, and represent the city in the wider sense.
Organ donation	An indication by a person of their willingness to donate their organs or tissue in the event of their death.
Organised sport	Sport and physical activities that are organised by a club or association.
Police services	Services provided by officers of Federal and State police departments.
Private renters	Private renters rent their home from a private landlord or real estate agent.
Public renters	Public renters rent their home from a government agency whose main activity is to provide housing to the public. This does not include government departments that provide housing to their employees.
Removal of external fuel sources	Refers to removal of all possible sources of fuel for a bushfire. This includes such measures as removing overhanging eucalypt trees, removing dry leaves/firewood from around the home etc.
Safety switch/circuit breaker	A safety switch/circuit breaker is a device intended to isolate electricity supply to protected circuits, socket outlets or electrical equipment in the event of a current flow to earth which exceeds a predetermined value.
Smoke detector/smoke alarm	Smoke detectors or smoke alarms are used for the detection and warning of smoke from fires and not for the detection of cigarette smoke.
Tobacco smoking	Tobacco smoking includes manufactured (packet) cigarettes, roll-your-own, pipes and cigars but excludes chewing tobacco.

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POST Client Services, ABS, PO Box 10, Belconnen ACT 2616

EMAIL client.services@abs.gov.au