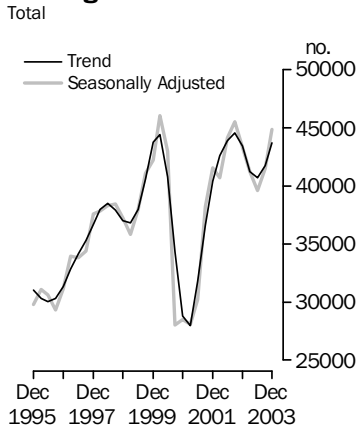


DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS

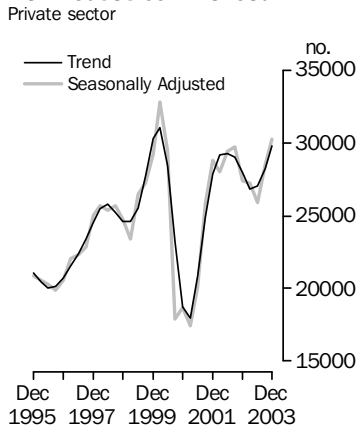
AUSTRALIA
PRELIMINARY

EMBARGO: 11.30AM (CANBERRA TIME) THURS 18 MAR 2004

Dwelling units commenced



New houses commenced



KEY FIGURES

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

TREND ESTIMATES

Dwelling units commenced

New private sector houses	29 801	5.6	6.5
Total dwelling units	43 707	4.6	0.6

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED

Dwelling units commenced

New private sector houses	30 305	6.2	10.5
Total dwelling units	44 853	8.1	3.5

KEY POINTS

TREND ESTIMATES

- The trend estimate for the total number of dwelling units commenced rose 4.6% in the December quarter 2003, the second successive quarterly increase.
- New private sector houses rose 5.6% in the latest quarter, the third successive quarterly increase.

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED ESTIMATES

- In seasonally adjusted terms, the total number of dwelling units commenced rose 8.1%, to 44,853, in the December quarter. This is 3.5% more than the number a year earlier.
- New private sector house commencements rose 6.2%, to 30,305. This is 10.5% more than a year earlier and the highest since the March quarter 2000.
- With the exception of New South Wales, all states and territories recorded increases in the total number of dwelling commencements. The Australian Capital Territory showed the largest increase (+71.4%) followed by Victoria (up 15.2% to the second highest number on record), Queensland (up 15.1% to be the highest for nine years) and Western Australia (+14.3%). New South Wales fell by 10.6% to the lowest number since the June quarter 2001.

INQUIRIES

- For further information about these and related statistics, contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070.

NOTES

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

<i>ISSUE (Quarter)</i>	<i>RELEASE DATE</i>
March 2004	22 June 2004
June 2004	14 September 2004

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This publication provides an early indication of trends in the number of dwelling units commenced. The data are estimates based on a response rate of approximately 90% of a sample of building jobs collected in the Building Activity Survey. More comprehensive and updated results will be released in *Building Activity, Australia* (cat. no. 8752.0) on 19 April 2004.

SIGNIFICANT REVISIONS THIS ISSUE

The total number of dwelling units commenced in Australia during the September quarter 2003 has been revised downwards by 360 (-0.8%) from the estimate published in *Building Activity, Australia, September quarter 2003* (cat. no. 8752.0) released on 19 January 2004.

The seasonally adjusted and trend series have been revised as a result of the annual review of concurrent seasonal factors. See paragraphs 13 to 19 of the Explanatory Notes. As part of this review, the method of generating the seasonally adjusted series has been revised and is explained in paragraph 14.

.....

ABBREVIATIONS

ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics
qtr quarter

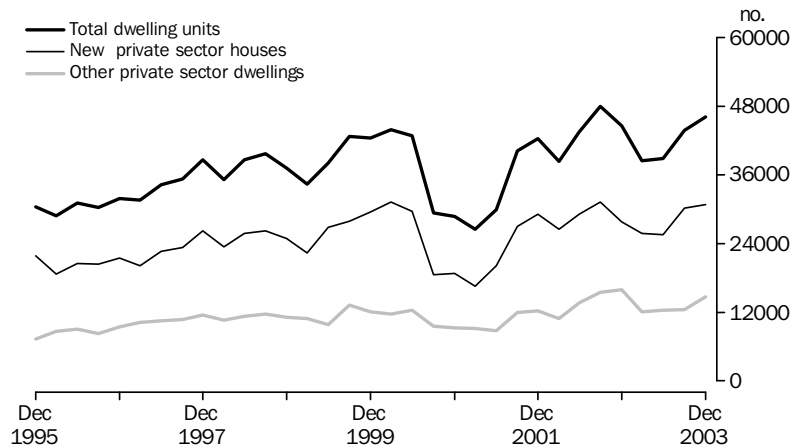
Dennis Trewin
Australian Statistician

DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS ORIGINAL

ORIGINAL ESTIMATES

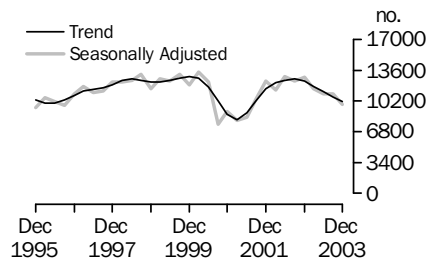
	Dec qtr 03	Sep qtr 03 to Dec qtr 03	Dec qtr 02 to Dec qtr 03
	no.	% change	% change
Dwelling units commenced			
New private sector houses	30 779	2.1	10.6
Other private sector dwellings	14 689	17.8	-7.7
Public sector dwellings	674	-45.4	-21.1
Total dwelling units	46 142	5.3	3.5

- The total number of dwelling units commenced rose 5.3% in the December quarter 2003 to 46,142.
- New private sector house commencements rose 2.1%, to 30,779. The Australian Capital Territory recorded the largest percentage increase (+21.0%) followed by Tasmania (14.6%), Western Australia (+6.8%) and New South Wales (+5.0%). Victoria, down by 5.3%, was the only state or territory to record a fall.
- Other private sector dwellings rose 17.8% to 14,689. The two territories recorded the largest percentage increases, both from a low number reported in the previous quarter. Of the states, Western Australia recorded the largest percentage increase (+76.5%), followed by Victoria (+47.3%), South Australia (+37.1%) and Queensland (+29.7%). New South Wales, down by 20.8%, was the only state to record a fall.
- The total number of public sector dwellings commenced fell 45.4% to 674, a record low.



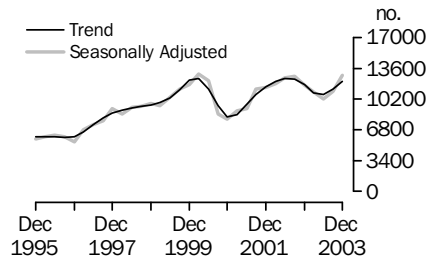
DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS STATES & TERRITORIES

NEW SOUTH WALES



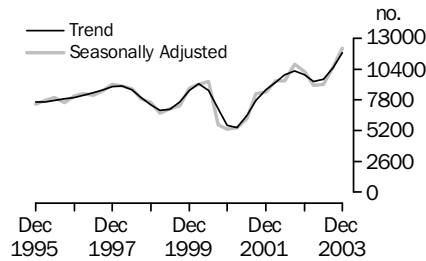
Following six quarters of growth starting with the June quarter 2001, the trend estimate of commencements has fallen for the last five quarters.

VICTORIA



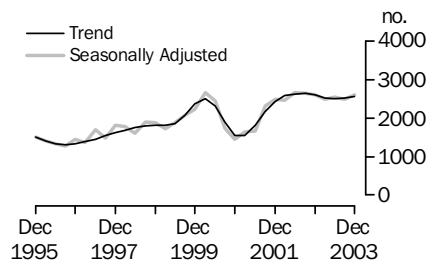
The trend estimate of commencements is now showing a rise for the last two quarters, following four quarters of decline.

QUEENSLAND



After a small downturn in late 2002 to early 2003, the trend estimate of commencements has resumed the growth which began with the June quarter 2001.

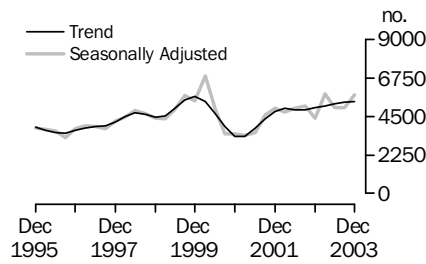
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



The trend estimate of commencements is now showing a rise for the last two quarters, following three quarters of decline.

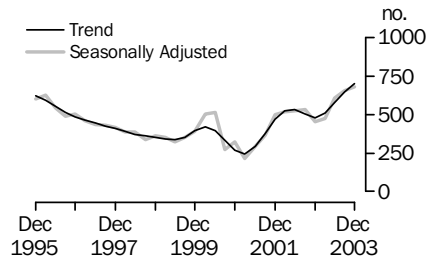
DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS STATES & TERRITORIES *continued*

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



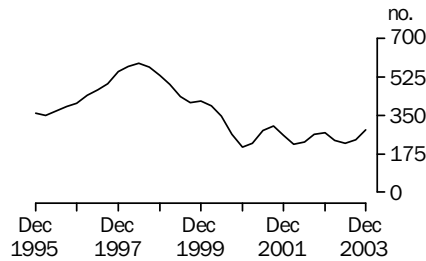
The trend estimate of commencements has risen steadily for the last 11 quarters, commencing with the June quarter 2001.

TASMANIA



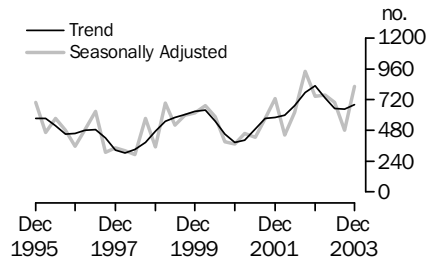
Starting with the June quarter 2001, the trend estimate of commencements has shown strong growth other than a brief lull in the last half of 2002.

NORTHERN TERRITORY



Since arresting a downward trend in the March quarter 2001, the trend estimate of commencements has been relatively flat, with the last two quarters showing growth.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY



Following falls in the previous three quarters, the trend estimate of commencements rose in the latest quarter.

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DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS

<i>Period</i>	PRIVATE NEW HOUSES		TOTAL NEW HOUSES		PRIVATE DWELLING UNITS		TOTAL DWELLING UNITS	
	no.	% change	no.	% change	no.	% change	no.	% change
ORIGINAL								
2000-01	73 958	-37.5	75 156	-37.4	110 672	-34.0	114 623	-33.3
2001-02	111 920	51.3	113 626	51.2	160 656	45.2	164 407	43.4
2002-03	110 385	-1.4	112 228	-1.2	166 262	3.5	169 945	3.4
2002								
Sep Qtr	31 277	7.2	31 786	7.5	46 848	9.5	47 981	10.2
Dec Qtr	27 819	-11.1	28 345	-10.8	43 737	-6.6	44 591	-7.1
2003								
Mar Qtr	25 761	-7.4	26 132	-7.8	37 800	-13.6	38 497	-13.7
Jun Qtr	25 528	-0.9	25 964	-0.6	37 877	0.2	38 876	1.0
Sep Qtr	30 136	18.1	30 614	17.9	42 601	12.5	43 835	12.8
Dec Qtr	30 779	2.1	31 116	1.6	45 468	6.7	46 142	5.3
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED								
2002								
Sep Qtr	29 750	1.0	30 187	1.0	44 755	3.1	45 563	3.1
Dec Qtr	27 421	-7.8	27 918	-7.5	42 337	-5.4	43 342	-4.9
2003								
Mar Qtr	27 272	-0.5	27 699	-0.8	40 383	-4.6	41 217	-4.9
Jun Qtr	25 907	-5.0	26 390	-4.7	38 553	-4.5	39 589	-3.9
Sep Qtr	28 532	10.1	28 942	9.7	40 583	5.3	41 496	4.8
Dec Qtr	30 305	6.2	30 622	5.8	44 019	8.5	44 853	8.1
TREND								
2002								
Sep Qtr	29 012	-1.0	29 455	-1.1	43 713	1.6	44 554	1.5
Dec Qtr	27 990	-3.5	28 452	-3.4	42 571	-2.6	43 460	-2.5
2003								
Mar Qtr	26 828	-4.1	27 298	-4.1	40 296	-5.3	41 247	-5.1
Jun Qtr	27 038	0.8	27 485	0.7	39 736	-1.4	40 685	-1.4
Sep Qtr	28 232	4.4	28 634	4.2	40 860	2.8	41 777	2.7
Dec Qtr	29 801	5.6	30 152	5.3	42 826	4.8	43 707	4.6

DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS, States & territories

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
<i>Period</i>	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
ORIGINAL									
2000-01	33 242	34 553	22 654	6 538	13 862	1 105	1 027	1 642	114 623
2001-02	47 035	47 384	35 592	9 943	19 136	1 916	1 028	2 373	164 407
2002-03	48 065	45 840	39 281	10 283	20 281	2 067	987	3 140	169 945
2002									
Sep Qtr	13 029	13 604	11 346	2 711	5 612	497	287	892	47 981
Dec Qtr	13 854	11 396	10 342	2 740	4 581	475	272	930	44 591
2003									
Mar Qtr	10 666	10 490	8 228	2 366	5 424	467	196	659	38 497
Jun Qtr	10 516	10 349	9 365	2 465	4 664	628	231	658	38 876
Sep Qtr	11 555	11 756	11 183	2 544	5 544	617	205	432	43 835
Dec Qtr	10 515	12 390	12 345	2 749	6 046	706	373	1 018	46 142
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED									
2002									
Sep Qtr	12 432	12 751	10 855	2 653	5 112	533	na	945	45 563
Dec Qtr	12 853	11 739	10 189	2 613	4 407	455	na	745	43 342
2003									
Mar Qtr	11 594	11 027	9 042	2 481	5 808	473	na	756	41 217
Jun Qtr	10 979	10 267	9 146	2 547	5 027	608	na	698	39 589
Sep Qtr	11 040	11 120	10 604	2 496	5 045	658	na	482	41 496
Dec Qtr	9 869	12 806	12 207	2 600	5 766	679	na	826	44 853
TREND									
2002									
Sep Qtr	12 685	12 469	10 288	2 644	4 893	502	263	779	44 554
Dec Qtr	12 448	11 812	9 942	2 601	5 037	480	269	831	43 460
2003									
Mar Qtr	11 820	10 925	9 380	2 532	5 133	507	237	735	41 247
Jun Qtr	11 213	10 765	9 563	2 517	5 228	577	221	654	40 685
Sep Qtr	10 640	11 310	10 552	2 533	5 323	647	239	648	41 777
Dec Qtr	10 171	12 201	11 825	2 568	5 399	700	283	680	43 707

na not available

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

<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>Aust.</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
ORIGINAL									
2000-01	-34.7	-28.5	-34.5	-30.5	-39.3	-37.5	-34.0	-33.8	-33.3
2001-02	41.5	37.1	57.1	52.1	38.1	73.5	0.1	44.5	43.4
2002-03	2.2	-3.3	10.4	3.4	6.0	7.9	-3.9	32.3	3.4
2002									
Sep Qtr	5.5	6.8	16.2	3.1	20.8	-8.7	2.0	54.3	10.2
Dec Qtr	6.3	-16.2	-8.9	1.0	-18.4	-4.4	-5.3	4.2	-7.1
2003									
Mar Qtr	-23.0	-7.9	-20.4	-13.6	18.4	-1.8	-27.9	-29.1	-13.7
Jun Qtr	-1.4	-1.3	13.8	4.2	-14.0	34.5	17.9	-0.2	1.0
Sep Qtr	9.9	13.6	19.4	3.2	18.9	-1.8	-11.4	-34.4	12.8
Dec Qtr	-9.0	5.4	10.4	8.1	9.1	14.4	82.0	135.6	5.3
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED									
2002									
Sep Qtr	-4.0	1.5	14.7	-0.7	3.0	1.3	na	51.7	3.1
Dec Qtr	3.4	-7.9	-6.1	-1.5	-13.8	-14.6	na	-21.2	-4.9
2003									
Mar Qtr	-9.8	-6.1	-11.3	-5.1	31.8	4.0	na	1.5	-4.9
Jun Qtr	-5.3	-6.9	1.2	2.7	-13.4	28.5	na	-7.7	-3.9
Sep Qtr	0.6	8.3	15.9	-2.0	0.4	8.2	na	-30.9	4.8
Dec Qtr	-10.6	15.2	15.1	4.2	14.3	3.2	na	71.4	8.1
TREND									
2002									
Sep Qtr	1.2	-0.2	3.6	0.6	0.1	-5.6	14.3	15.6	1.5
Dec Qtr	-1.9	-5.3	-3.4	-1.6	2.9	-4.4	2.3	6.7	-2.5
2003									
Mar Qtr	-5.0	-7.5	-5.7	-2.7	1.9	5.6	-11.9	-11.6	-5.1
Jun Qtr	-5.1	-1.5	2.0	-0.6	1.9	13.8	-6.8	-11.0	-1.4
Sep Qtr	-5.1	5.1	10.3	0.6	1.8	12.1	8.1	-0.9	2.7
Dec Qtr	-4.4	7.9	12.1	1.4	1.4	8.2	18.4	4.9	4.6

na not available

DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS, States & territories: Original

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
Period	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
NEW HOUSES									
2000-01	17 682	24 123	14 487	5 377	10 872	1 030	577	1 007	75 156
2001-02	25 345	34 631	25 590	8 246	16 241	1 752	641	1 178	113 626
2002-03	24 218	32 607	26 157	8 263	16 814	1 866	526	1 778	112 228
2002									
Sep Qtr	6 817	9 198	7 571	2 388	4 749	474	169	419	31 786
Dec Qtr	6 350	8 503	6 638	1 993	3 755	445	129	532	28 345
2003									
Mar Qtr	5 372	7 848	5 697	1 903	4 380	452	103	376	26 132
Jun Qtr	5 679	7 058	6 250	1 979	3 930	495	124	450	25 964
Sep Qtr	5 665	9 325	7 779	2 078	4 653	562	156	397	30 614
Dec Qtr	5 987	8 844	8 106	2 110	4 800	644	144	479	31 116
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDING									
2000-01	14 713	9 560	7 820	1 115	2 586	60	446	634	36 935
2001-02	20 512	11 541	9 686	1 638	2 820	154	382	1 186	47 919
2002-03	22 442	12 324	12 754	1 976	3 328	190	452	1 361	54 827
2002									
Sep Qtr	5 739	4 165	3 461	315	863	19	117	473	15 152
Dec Qtr	7 197	2 724	3 664	734	769	30	140	398	15 656
2003									
Mar Qtr	5 035	2 461	2 525	460	1 010	13	89	283	11 875
Jun Qtr	4 471	2 974	3 104	467	686	128	106	207	12 143
Sep Qtr	5 612	2 298	3 340	313	882	39	47	33	12 565
Dec Qtr	4 250	3 211	4 225	636	1 228	42	227	535	14 355
CONVERSIONS, ETC.									
2000-01	846	870	347	46	404	14	4	1	2 531
2001-02	1 178	1 212	316	59	74	10	4	9	2 863
2002-03	1 405	909	371	44	139	11	10	1	2 890
2002									
Sep Qtr	474	241	314	8	—	4	2	—	1 042
Dec Qtr	308	168	40	13	57	—	3	—	589
2003									
Mar Qtr	259	182	6	3	34	2	4	—	490
Jun Qtr	365	317	11	20	48	5	1	1	769
Sep Qtr	279	132	64	153	8	17	2	2	656
Dec Qtr	278	334	13	3	18	20	2	4	672
TOTAL									
2000-01	33 242	34 553	22 654	6 538	13 862	1 105	1 027	1 642	114 623
2001-02	47 035	47 384	35 592	9 943	19 136	1 916	1 028	2 373	164 407
2002-03	48 065	45 840	39 281	10 283	20 281	2 067	987	3 140	169 945
2002									
Sep Qtr	13 029	13 604	11 346	2 711	5 612	497	287	892	47 981
Dec Qtr	13 854	11 396	10 342	2 740	4 581	475	272	930	44 591
2003									
Mar Qtr	10 666	10 490	8 228	2 366	5 424	467	196	659	38 497
Jun Qtr	10 516	10 349	9 365	2 465	4 664	628	231	658	38 876
Sep Qtr	11 555	11 756	11 183	2 544	5 544	617	205	432	43 835
Dec Qtr	10 515	12 390	12 345	2 749	6 046	706	373	1 018	46 142

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

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

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
Period	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
NEW HOUSES									
2000-01	17 550	23 879	14 246	5 290	10 567	1 023	434	969	73 958
2001-02	25 245	34 221	25 333	7 995	15 794	1 694	510	1 128	111 920
2002-03	24 089	32 363	25 852	7 922	16 241	1 838	397	1 684	110 385
2002									
Sep Qtr	6 808	9 142	7 527	2 288	4 522	467	127	395	31 277
Dec Qtr	6 327	8 435	6 482	1 886	3 672	445	100	473	27 819
2003									
Mar Qtr	5 339	7 778	5 637	1 821	4 278	452	83	373	25 761
Jun Qtr	5 616	7 008	6 206	1 927	3 770	474	86	442	25 528
Sep Qtr	5 641	9 309	7 704	1 986	4 444	562	100	391	30 136
Dec Qtr	5 924	8 813	8 049	2 030	4 748	644	100	473	30 779
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDING									
2000-01	13 675	9 411	7 307	1 092	1 964	55	307	562	34 374
2001-02	19 894	11 197	9 409	1 600	2 227	143	276	1 156	45 902
2002-03	22 083	11 793	12 428	1 900	2 910	190	419	1 277	53 000
2002									
Sep Qtr	5 636	4 075	3 293	303	625	19	105	473	14 529
Dec Qtr	7 157	2 643	3 605	718	710	30	136	330	15 329
2003									
Mar Qtr	4 937	2 350	2 482	429	966	13	89	283	11 550
Jun Qtr	4 353	2 725	3 048	449	609	128	89	191	11 593
Sep Qtr	5 366	2 228	3 168	294	640	39	43	33	11 812
Dec Qtr	4 191	3 139	4 178	610	1 132	42	207	523	14 023
CONVERSIONS, ETC.									
2000-01	838	867	345	42	234	11	3	1	2 340
2001-02	1 176	1 211	297	59	67	10	4	9	2 834
2002-03	1 405	897	370	44	139	11	10	1	2 877
2002									
Sep Qtr	474	241	314	8	—	4	2	—	1 042
Dec Qtr	308	168	39	13	57	—	3	—	588
2003									
Mar Qtr	259	182	6	3	34	2	4	—	490
Jun Qtr	365	305	11	20	48	5	1	1	757
Sep Qtr	279	130	64	153	8	17	2	2	654
Dec Qtr	278	334	13	3	12	20	2	4	666
TOTAL									
2000-01	32 063	34 157	21 898	6 424	12 765	1 090	744	1 532	110 672
2001-02	46 315	46 629	35 038	9 654	18 089	1 847	791	2 293	160 656
2002-03	47 577	45 053	38 650	9 866	19 290	2 039	825	2 962	166 262
2002									
Sep Qtr	12 917	13 458	11 134	2 599	5 147	490	233	868	46 848
Dec Qtr	13 791	11 247	10 125	2 617	4 439	475	239	803	43 737
2003									
Mar Qtr	10 535	10 309	8 125	2 254	5 278	467	176	656	37 800
Jun Qtr	10 334	10 038	9 265	2 396	4 427	607	176	634	37 877
Sep Qtr	11 285	11 668	10 936	2 432	5 092	617	145	426	42 601
Dec Qtr	10 393	12 286	12 241	2 643	5 892	706	309	999	45 468

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

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

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
Period	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
NEW HOUSES									
2000-01	133	245	241	87	305	7	143	38	1 198
2001-02	100	410	258	251	448	58	131	50	1 705
2002-03	129	244	305	341	573	28	129	94	1 843
2002									
Sep Qtr	9	56	44	100	228	7	42	24	510
Dec Qtr	23	68	157	107	83	—	29	59	526
2003									
Mar Qtr	33	70	60	82	102	—	20	3	371
Jun Qtr	64	50	44	52	160	21	38	8	436
Sep Qtr	24	16	75	92	210	—	56	6	479
Dec Qtr	64	32	57	80	53	—	44	7	337
NEW OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDING									
2000-01	1 038	149	513	23	622	5	139	72	2 561
2001-02	618	344	277	38	593	11	106	30	2 017
2002-03	359	531	326	76	418	—	33	84	1 827
2002									
Sep Qtr	103	90	168	12	238	—	12	—	623
Dec Qtr	40	81	59	16	59	—	4	68	327
2003									
Mar Qtr	98	111	43	30	44	—	—	—	326
Jun Qtr	118	249	56	18	77	—	17	16	551
Sep Qtr	246	70	172	19	242	—	4	—	753
Dec Qtr	58	72	47	26	96	—	20	12	332
CONVERSIONS, ETC.									
2000-01	8	3	2	4	170	3	1	—	191
2001-02	2	1	19	—	7	—	—	—	29
2002-03	—	12	1	—	—	—	—	—	13
2002									
Sep Qtr	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dec Qtr	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
2003									
Mar Qtr	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jun Qtr	—	12	—	—	—	—	—	—	12
Sep Qtr	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Dec Qtr	—	—	—	—	6	—	—	—	6
TOTAL									
2000-01	1 179	397	756	114	1 097	15	283	110	3 950
2001-02	720	755	554	289	1 048	69	237	80	3 751
2002-03	488	787	632	417	991	28	162	178	3 682
2002									
Sep Qtr	112	146	212	112	466	7	54	24	1 133
Dec Qtr	63	149	217	123	142	—	33	127	854
2003									
Mar Qtr	131	181	103	112	146	—	20	3	697
Jun Qtr	182	311	100	70	237	21	55	24	999
Sep Qtr	270	88	247	111	452	—	60	6	1 234
Dec Qtr	122	104	104	107	155	—	64	19	674

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

EXPLANATORY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 This publication contains preliminary estimates from the quarterly Building Activity Survey of the number of dwelling units commenced during the current quarter and revised estimates for the previous two quarters. More comprehensive and updated results will be available shortly in *Building Activity, Australia* (cat. no. 8752.0).

2 The statistics were compiled on the basis of returns collected from builders and other individuals and organisations engaged in building activity. From the March quarter 2002, the quarterly survey consists of a sample survey of private sector residential building jobs valued at \$10,000 or more and a complete enumeration of all such public sector residential building jobs. Estimates in respect of commencements of private sector dwellings and total dwellings are therefore subject to sampling variability. The relative standard errors for these estimates are shown in paragraph 12. Also, some returns containing jobs not known to have commenced are not received in time for inclusion in these estimates. Allowance is made for a proportion of these jobs, based on past experience, to have commenced. Estimates in this issue are therefore subject to revision.

3 The use of sample survey techniques in the Building Activity Survey means that reliable estimates of the number of private sector dwelling commencements are generally available only at state, territory and Australia levels. Although subject to higher relative standard errors, a range of sub-state estimates of dwelling commencements may be available. Reliable small area data are available for the Northern Territory, which has been completely enumerated since the June quarter 1991. Detailed data on Building Approvals, based on information reported by local government and other reporting authorities, are available for regions below state and territory level from the Building Approvals series compiled by the ABS.

DEFINITIONS

4 A *building* is defined as a rigid, fixed and permanent structure which has a roof. Its intended purpose is primarily to house people, plant, machinery, vehicles, goods or livestock. An integral feature of a building's design, to satisfy its intended use, is the provision for regular access by persons.

5 A *dwelling unit* is defined as a self-contained suite of rooms, including cooking and bathing facilities and intended for *long-term* residential use. Units (whether self-contained or not) within buildings offering institutional care, such as hospitals, or temporary accommodation, such as motels, hostels and holiday apartments, are not defined as dwelling units.

6 A *residential building* is defined as a building predominantly consisting of one or more dwelling units. Residential buildings can be either *houses* or *other residential buildings*.

- A *house* is defined as a detached building predominantly used for long-term residential purposes and consisting of only one dwelling unit. Thus, detached granny flats and detached dwelling units such as caretakers' residences associated with non-residential buildings are defined as houses for the purpose of these statistics.

- An *other residential building* is defined as a building which is predominantly used for long-term residential purposes and which contains (or has attached to it) more than one dwelling unit (e.g. includes townhouses, duplexes, apartment buildings, etc.).

7 These statistics present the number of dwelling units in other residential buildings (and not the number of buildings).

8 *Conversions, etc.* Dwelling units can also be created as part of alterations and additions to existing buildings (including conversions to dwelling units) and as part of the construction of non-residential buildings. Such dwelling units are referred to in this publication under the heading of Conversions, etc.

EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

DEFINITIONS *continued*

9 Commenced. A building is regarded as commenced when the first physical building activity has been performed on site in the form of materials fixed in place and/or labour expended (this includes site preparation but excludes delivery of building materials, the drawing of plans and specifications and the construction of non-building infrastructures, such as roads).

10 Ownership. The ownership of a building is classified as either public sector or private sector according to the sector of the intended owner of the completed building as evident at the time of approval. Residential buildings being constructed by private sector builders under government housing authority schemes whereby the authority has contracted, or intends to contract, to purchase the buildings on or before completion, are classified as public sector.

RELIABILITY OF THE ESTIMATES

11 The estimates in this publication are based on a sample survey of private sector residential building jobs and a complete enumeration of such public sector jobs. Because data are not collected for all private sector residential building jobs, estimates are subject to sampling variability. Relative standard errors give a measure of this variability and therefore indicate the degree of confidence that can be attached to the data.

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

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
New private sector houses	3.7	3.9	3.5	3.5	3.5	2.7	—	3.0	1.7
Total new other dwellings	2.3	1.7	1.0	2.9	0.8	—	—	—	0.9
Total dwellings	2.3	2.8	2.3	2.6	2.7	2.5	—	1.4	1.2

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

SEASONAL ADJUSTMENT

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

14 Since seasonally adjusted statistics reflect both irregular and trend movements, an upward or downward movement in a seasonally adjusted series does not necessarily indicate a change of trend. Particular care should therefore be taken in interpreting individual quarter-to-quarter movements. The seasonally adjusted series for total dwellings for Australia and each state and territory has been produced by summing the respective seasonally adjusted series for each of "new houses", "new other residential dwellings" and "conversions, etc". However, the states and Australia are adjusted independently, which means that the sum of the adjusted state series may not add to the adjusted Australian total.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

SEASONAL ADJUSTMENT

continued

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

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

TREND ESTIMATES

17 Seasonally adjusted series can be smoothed to reduce the impact of the irregular component in the adjusted series. This smoothed seasonally adjusted series is called a trend estimate.

18 The trend estimates are derived by applying a 7-term Henderson moving average to the seasonally adjusted series. The 7-term Henderson average (like all Henderson averages) is symmetric but, as the end of a time series is approached, asymmetric forms of the average are applied. Unlike weights of the standard 7-term Henderson moving average, the weights employed here have been tailored to suit the particular characteristics of individual series.

19 While the smoothing technique described in paragraphs 17 and 18 enables trend estimates to be produced for recent quarters, it does result in revisions to the estimates for the most recent three quarters as additional observations become available. There may also be revisions because of changes in the original data. For further information, see *Information Paper: A Guide to Interpreting Time Series—Monitoring Trends: an Overview* (cat. no. 1348.0) or contact the Assistant Director, Time Series Analysis on Canberra 02 6252 6540 or email <timeseries@abs.gov.au>.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

20 ABS publications draw extensively on information provided freely by individuals, businesses, governments and other organisations. Their continued cooperation is very much appreciated: without it, the wide range of statistics published by the ABS would not be available. Information received by the ABS is treated in strict confidence as required by the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

RELATED PRODUCTS

21 Users may also wish to refer to the following publications which are available from ABS Bookshops:

Building Activity, Australia, cat. no. 8752.0, quarterly

Building Approvals, Australia, cat. no. 8731.0, monthly

Construction Work Done, Australia, Preliminary, cat. no. 8755.0, quarterly

House Price Indexes: Eight Capital Cities, cat. no. 6416.0, quarterly

Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia, cat. no. 5609.0, monthly

Producer Price Indexes, Australia, cat. no. 6427.0, quarterly

Private Sector Construction Industry, Australia, 1996–97, cat. no. 8772.0.

22 Current publications and other products released by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications and Products* (cat. no. 1101.0). The Catalogue is available from any ABS office or the ABS web site <<http://www.abs.gov.au>>. The ABS also issues a daily Release Advice on the web site which details products to be released in the week ahead.

ABS DATA AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

23 As well as the statistics included in this and related publications, the ABS may have other relevant data available on request. Inquiries should be made to the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070.

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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- CPI INFOLINE* For current and historical Consumer Price Index data, call 1902 981 074 (call cost 77c per minute).
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