



May 1996

# Population Survey Monitor

**Housing attitudes and movement patterns**

**Retirement intentions**

**Participation in sporting and physical activities**

**Household use of technology**

**Consumer expectations**



**EMBARGOED UNTIL 11.30 A.M. 17 JULY 1996**

**POPULATION SURVEY MONITOR  
MAY 1996**

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Australian Statistician**

**AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS**

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## **PREFACE**

The Population Survey Monitor (PSM) is a quarterly household survey of about 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.

This publication presents summary results of the PSM conducted in May 1996. The topics included in this survey were as follows:

<b>HOUSING</b>	This topic includes data on attitudes to medium density housing, the likelihood of respondents moving to medium density housing in the near future and tenure of the previous residence of recent movers.
<b>RETIREMENT INTENTIONS</b>	This topic contains data on the retirement behaviour of respondents and various factors that are taken into consideration when planning for retirement.
<b>PARTICIPATION IN SPORTING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES</b>	This topic examines sporting and physical activity patterns including participation by adults and school children and spectator attendance at sporting events.
<b>HOUSEHOLD USE OF TECHNOLOGY</b>	This topic contains data on the use of technology in the home, with a focus on computer equipment and usage.
<b>CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS</b>	This topic contains data on the anticipated purchases by households of major items in the September quarter 1996.

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## NOTES

### FORTHCOMING ISSUES

<i>SURVEY</i>	<i>RELEASE DATE</i>
September 1996	25 November 1996
November 1996	28 January 1997

### SAMPLING ERROR

The estimates in this publication are based on a sample survey of households throughout Australia. Because data is not collected from all households, the published estimates derived from them 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. They are more fully discussed and presented on pages 8 and 9. *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.

### INQUIRIES

For further information about statistics in this publication and the availability of related unpublished statistics, contact Theo Neumann on Adelaide 08 237 7303.

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## MAIN FEATURES

HOUSING	51.5% of males and 50.2% of females aged 18 years and over consider medium density housing in their local area is acceptable or very acceptable. (Refer to table 1).
RETIREMENT INTENTIONS	31.2% of males and 23.1% of females who are aged 45 to 74 years and are employed full-time or looking for full-time work expect that their main source of retirement income will be superannuation. (Refer to table 2).
SPORT AND RECREATION	Participation in organised sporting and physical activities decreases with age. For example, 48.4% of persons aged 18 to 24 years compared with 19.4% of persons aged 65 years and over have participated in the last twelve months. (Refer to table 3).
HOUSEHOLD USE OF TECHNOLOGY	In nearly one third of households (31.1%) at least one person frequently uses a computer at home, and 26.7% of households also use a printer. (Refer to table 4).
CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS	Over 2.8 million households (43.2%) indicated in May 1996 that they intend to purchase a major item in the September quarter 1996. Nearly 1.5 million households (22.5%) indicated they intend to buy a household item worth more than \$200 in the September quarter 1996, and 13.7% intend to go on a holiday worth more than \$500. (Refer to tables 5 and 6).



## 1

## ACCEPTABILITY OF MEDIUM DENSITY HOUSING IN LOCAL AREA BY AGE AND SEX, MAY 1996

Acceptability	Age (years)						Total	
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and over	%	'000
MALES (%)								
Very acceptable	10.9	11.1	*3.0	*5.6	*7.4	*5.2	7.2	460.5
Acceptable	50.1	49.8	47.4	42.9	34.4	35.3	44.3	2 848.7
Not very acceptable	20.6	18.0	24.7	20.5	25.7	25.9	22.2	1 427.6
Don't know	*3.7	*0.4	*1.4	*2.0	*0.5	*3.0	1.7	111.0
Not applicable <sup>1</sup>	14.7	20.8	23.5	28.9	31.9	30.6	24.6	1 580.7
<b>Total ('000)</b>	<b>939.2</b>	<b>1 369.7</b>	<b>1 342.8</b>	<b>1 143.3</b>	<b>751.4</b>	<b>882.3</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6 428.6</b>
FEMALES (%)								
Very acceptable	18.7	4.7	*4.6	6.0	*7.1	11.7	8.2	542.4
Acceptable	52.9	46.1	42.9	39.9	33.4	34.5	42.0	2 775.1
Not very acceptable	11.6	25.6	24.2	32.3	24.0	26.5	24.5	1 615.2
Don't know	*2.3	*0.0	*1.4	*1.7	*0.1	*4.1	1.6	105.0
Not applicable <sup>1</sup>	14.5	23.5	26.9	20.1	35.5	23.3	23.7	1 563.9
<b>Total ('000)</b>	<b>911.5</b>	<b>1 392.8</b>	<b>1 377.7</b>	<b>1 119.0</b>	<b>740.7</b>	<b>1 060.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6 601.7</b>
PERSONS (%)								
Very acceptable	14.7	7.9	3.8	5.8	7.3	8.7	7.7	1 002.9
Acceptable	51.5	48.0	45.1	41.4	33.9	34.8	43.2	5 623.9
Not very acceptable	16.1	21.8	24.4	26.4	24.9	26.2	23.4	3 042.8
Don't know	*3.0	*0.2	*1.4	*1.9	*0.3	3.6	1.7	216.1
Not applicable <sup>1</sup>	14.6	22.2	25.2	24.6	33.7	26.6	24.1	3 144.6
<b>Total ('000)</b>	<b>1 850.6</b>	<b>2 762.5</b>	<b>2 720.5</b>	<b>2 262.3</b>	<b>1 492.1</b>	<b>1 942.3</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13 030.3</b>

<sup>1</sup> Medium density housing not in local area.

## 2

PERSONS AGED 45-74 YEARS WHO ARE EMPLOYED FULL-TIME OR ARE LOOKING FOR FULL-TIME WORK:  
EXPECTED MAIN SOURCE OF RETIREMENT INCOME BY SEX, FEBRUARY AND MAY 1996

Main reason	Males		Females		Persons	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Accumulated leave/compensation	*11.2	*0.7	*7.5	*1.1	*18.7	*0.9
Superannuation	466.5	31.2	154.1	23.1	620.6	28.7
Life assurance/other retirement scheme	*12.5	*0.8	-	-	*12.5	*0.6
Invalid/Age/Supporting Parent's/Widow's pension	362.4	24.2	144.8	21.7	507.2	23.4
War Disability/Repat./Service/War Widow's pension	*10.0	*0.7	*0.1	*0.0	*10.1	*0.5
Unemployment/sickness/special benefit	*33.4	*2.2	*8.5	*1.3	41.9	1.9
Rent from farm/business/property	38.9	2.6	*23.7	*3.6	62.6	2.9
Investments/interests/stocks/debentures etc.	119.2	8.0	45.1	6.8	164.3	7.6
Savings/sales of assets	49.2	3.3	*10.0	*1.5	59.2	2.7
Part-time work	75.7	5.1	*23.6	*3.5	99.2	4.6
Someone else's income	*9.1	*0.6	103.2	15.5	112.3	5.2
Other	*8.9	*0.6	*2.3	*0.3	*11.2	*0.5
Don't know	137.3	9.2	100.7	15.1	238.0	11.0
Will never retire	163.1	10.9	43.2	6.5	206.2	9.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 497.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>666.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2 164.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## 3

PARTICIPATION IN ORGANISED SPORTING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES IN THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS BY AGE AND SEX, 1995-96

Age (years)	Males	Females	Total
	Participation rate %	Participation rate %	Participation rate %
18-24 years	52.5	44.2	48.4
25-34 years	46.5	35.2	40.8
35-44 years	37.3	29.8	33.5
45-54 years	29.9	22.0	26.0
55-64 years	26.1	22.9	24.5
65 years and over	24.3	15.3	19.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>37.1</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>32.8</b>

## 4

HOUSEHOLDS WHICH USE A COMPUTER<sup>1</sup>: USE OF PERIPHERAL EQUIPMENT, MAY 1996

<i>Peripheral equipment</i>	'000	% <sup>2</sup>
Printer	1 746.9	26.7
Character/image reader or scanner	149.8	2.3
CD ROM equipment	844.3	12.9
Modem	514.5	7.8
Other equipment	262.9	4.0
<b>Total<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>2 040.0</b>	<b>31.1</b>

<sup>1</sup> Households where any member of the household frequently uses a computer at home.

<sup>2</sup> Percentage of all households.

<sup>3</sup> For the total number of households which use a computer, the sum of the components is larger than the total as a number of households use more than one type of peripheral equipment.

## 5

## HOUSEHOLDS INTENDING TO PURCHASE SELECTED ITEMS IN SEPTEMBER QUARTER 1996: ITEM TO BE PURCHASED, MAY 1996

<i>Item</i>	'000	% <sup>1</sup>
A new car	126.2	1.9
A second-hand car	388.7	5.9
A personal computer	271.1	4.1
Household item worth more than \$200	1 475.4	22.5
Home alterations or additions worth more than \$500	659.0	10.1
Landscaping worth more than \$500	312.2	4.8
A holiday worth more than \$500	898.0	13.7
Any other item worth more than \$500	254.9	3.9
<b>Total<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>2 830.1</b>	<b>43.2</b>

<sup>1</sup> Percentage of all households.

<sup>2</sup> 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 IN SEPTEMBER QUARTER 1996 BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME QUINTILE, MAY 1996

<i>Income quintile</i>	<i>Intend to purchase</i>		<i>Do not intend to purchase</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
First quintile (lowest 20%)	234.8	23.2	778.9	76.8	1 013.6	100.0
Second quintile	395.4	31.2	872.6	68.8	1 268.0	100.0
Third quintile	453.0	39.1	705.2	60.9	1 158.2	100.0
Fourth quintile	657.1	59.2	452.6	40.8	1 109.6	100.0
Fifth quintile (highest 20%)	629.6	68.2	293.7	31.8	923.3	100.0
Don't know <sup>1</sup>	460.3	42.5	621.9	57.5	1 082.2	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 830.1</b>	<b>43.2</b>	<b>3 724.8</b>	<b>56.8</b>	<b>6 554.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> Household income not reported.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### INTRODUCTION

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 and non profit organisations for family household data. It is a user-funded survey where clients pay to include the topic of their choice. Each survey asks a set of core questions of each usual resident aged 15 years and over within the selected household. Questions for each client's topic can be asked of a randomly selected person aged 18 years or over or of a particular person within the selected household.

### SCOPE/COVERAGE

The survey covers rural and urban areas across all States and Territories of Australia, except sparsely settled areas. All persons living in non-private dwellings are excluded. All usual residents in private households are included in the PSM.

### SAMPLE SIZE

For each quarterly survey, an initial sample of approximately 4,600 private dwellings is chosen. This sample is generally sufficient to provide quarterly data for Australia and annual data for the States and Territories at an acceptable level of accuracy and reliability after allowing for sample loss through factors such as vacant dwellings inadvertently selected in the sample, non-contacts, persons out of scope etc.

### EXPECTED SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

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
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 023</b>

## DATA COLLECTION

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

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.

## ESTIMATION PROCEDURES

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.

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

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; and 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 establishments in the survey is given by the standard error, see Technical Notes pages 8 and 9.

## SYMBOLS AND OTHER USAGES

- \* subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes
- no observations recorded

## TECHNICAL NOTES

### SAMPLING VARIABILITY

Since 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, they 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, 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 nineteen chances in twenty (95%) that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

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

From table 2 an estimated 466,500 males aged 45-74 years who are employed full-time or looking for full-time work expect that their main source of retirement income will be Superannuation. Referring to the table of standard errors (table A on page 9), an estimate of 466,500 has a standard error of approximately 27,200. 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 439,300 and 493,700 (ie. 466,500 plus or minus 27,200). There are about nineteen chances in twenty that the number lies between 412,100 and 520,900 (ie. 466,500 plus or minus 54,400).

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.

As the standard errors in tables A and B show, the size of the standard error increases with the size of the estimate. However, the smaller the estimate the higher the relative standard error. 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) as to detract seriously from their value for most reasonable uses. In the tables in this publication, only estimates with relative standard errors 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 (eg \*2.8) to indicate that they should be treated with caution and viewed as being merely indicative of the magnitude involved.

### A STANDARD ERRORS OF ESTIMATES

Size of estimate ('000)	Standard error of estimate ('000)			
	Persons 18+ yrs			Hholds
	May 1996	Feb & May 1996	1995-96	May 1996
10	6.6	4.7	3.5	—
20	9.4	6.6	5.0	—
50	14.5	10.3	7.7	9.9
100	19.7	13.9	10.4	13.3
200	26.5	18.7	14.0	17.8
500	38.5	27.2	20.4	25.2
800	46.1	32.6	24.4	29.5
1 000	50.4	35.6	26.7	32.3
1 500	57.1	40.4	30.2	37.1
2 000	65.0	46.0	34.4	41.8

### B RELATIVE STANDARD ERRORS OF ESTIMATES

Size of estimate ('000)	Relative standard error of estimate (%)			
	Persons 18+ yrs			Hholds
	May 1996	Feb & May 1996	1995-96	May 1996
10	66.5	47.0	35.0	—
20	47.0	33.0	25.0	—
50	29.0	20.6	15.4	19.8
100	19.7	13.9	10.4	13.3
200	13.3	9.4	7.0	8.9
500	7.7	5.4	4.1	5.0
800	5.8	4.1	3.1	3.7
1 000	5.0	3.6	2.7	3.2
1 500	3.8	2.7	2.0	2.5
2 000	3.3	2.3	1.7	2.1

## GLOSSARY

<b>Age</b>	The age of persons at their last birthday.
<b>CD ROM equipment</b>	CD ROM (Compact Disk Read Only Memory) equipment refers to CD ROM drives which read CDs that contain digital data for use by a computer. The CD ROM drive can be a separate unit or, in newer equipment, integrated within the machine. Audio CD equipment (ie. music CD players) are excluded.
<b>Character/image reader or scanner</b>	Devices which scan a page of printed text or graphics and turn them into a form which can be read by a computer or communications network.
<b>Computer</b>	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. Calculators, and machines where restoration to working order is not being planned, are excluded.
<b>Full-time employment</b>	If a person usually works 35 hours or more in a week they are considered to be employed full-time.
<b>Household</b>	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.
<b>Household income</b>	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.
<b>Households intending to purchase</b>	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 July 1996 and 30 September 1996.



<b>Households which use a computer</b>	Households which use a computer are those where any member of the household frequently uses a computer at home. "Frequently" is defined by the respondent. The computer used does not necessarily have to be owned by the household, for example, if a member of the household frequently brings a computer home from work to use, that household is considered to use a computer. Households which have a computer but no member of the household uses it frequently are not considered to use a computer.
<b>Medium density housing</b>	Includes semi-detached, row, terrace, town houses and flats. Medium density flats are those with no more than two storeys.
<b>Modem</b>	Modems are devices that connect the computer to a telephone system which enables communication between computers. They may either be integrated into the computer or may be a separate box attached to the computer by a lead.
<b>Organised sporting and physical activities</b>	Organised activities are those which were organised by a club, association or school. The club or association need not be sporting, it may include a respondent's work social club, church group, old scholars' association, or aerobics at the local gymnasium. Activities such as running or jogging, walking and gardening are excluded unless these activities are done for a club or association.
<b>Participation</b>	Participation includes playing the sport or being a coach/teacher/instructor, a referee/umpire or administrator/committee member at any time within the twelve months prior to the survey.
<b>Peripheral equipment</b>	Peripheral equipment includes equipment which must be plugged into a computer, eg. printers, character/image readers or scanners, CD ROM equipment, modems and other equipment such as additional keyboards and external disk or tape drives. Additional memory or storage which is added internally to the computer and is therefore integrated within the machine is excluded.
<b>Printer</b>	A device used for printing computer output onto paper, eg. dot matrix, bubble jet and laser printers.





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