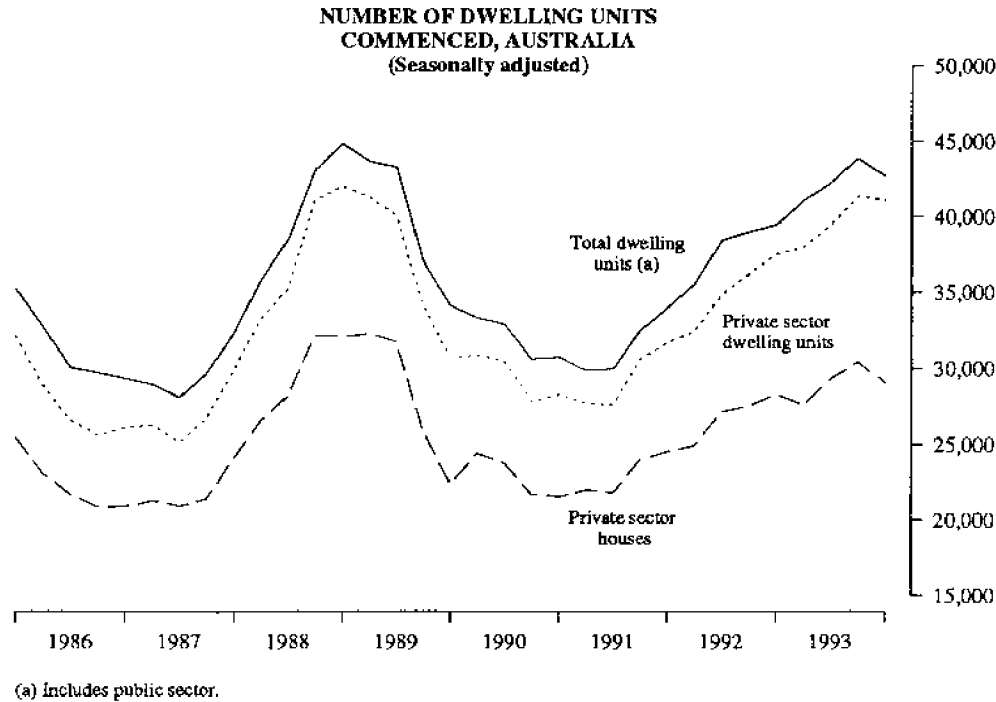


CATALOGUE NO. 8750.0
EMBARGOED UNTIL 11.30 A.M. 16 MARCH 1994

**BUILDING ACTIVITY, AUSTRALIA: DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS,
DECEMBER QUARTER 1993, PRELIMINARY**

Note: Seasonally adjusted estimates in this bulletin have been revised following the annual re-analysis of seasonal factors.

MAIN FEATURES



In *seasonally adjusted* terms, the preliminary estimate of the number of dwelling units commenced in the December quarter 1993 was 42,691, down 2.7 per cent from the high September quarter 1993 estimate, but 8.2 per cent above the December quarter 1992 estimate. Private sector house commencements fell by 4.5 per cent to 29,076 in the December quarter 1993, (again, from a high September quarter 1993 base), but remained 2.8 per cent above the December quarter 1992 estimate. With seasonally adjusted dwelling unit approvals remaining strong in December 1993 and January 1994, it is likely that March quarter 1993 dwelling unit commencements will remain around the high levels observed for the September and December quarters 1993.

Dwelling unit commencements fell in the Australian Capital Territory (-23.8%), South Australia (-12.6%), New South Wales (-4.9%), Tasmania (-2.7%) and Queensland (-1.5%). These falls more than offset rises in Victoria (8.8%) and Western Australia (7.7%).

In *original* terms, there were 44,187 dwelling units commenced in the December quarter 1993, a decrease of 3.5 per cent from the September quarter 1993 estimate of 45,801. Total private sector commencements fell slightly by 0.7 per cent (a 4.5% rise in other residential building commencements more than offset by a 2.5% fall in house commencements). Total public sector commencements fell by 46.0 per cent, mainly due to a 66.9 per cent fall in other residential building commencements. Public sector house commencements rose marginally, by 1.2 per cent.

For the calendar year 1993, there were 170,090 dwelling units commenced in Australia. Of these, 121,646 (71.5%) were separate houses, while the remaining 48,444 were medium density developments (flats, units, townhouses, apartments, etc.). Queensland led the way in dwelling unit commencements in 1993 with 51,016 or 30.0 per cent of the national total, followed by New South Wales with 45,284 (26.6%); Victoria, 29,844 (17.5%) and Western Australia where 22,719 (13.4%) dwelling units were commenced.

INQUIRIES

- for further information about these statistics in this publication and the availability of related unpublished statistics contact Paul Seville on Canberra (06) 252 6067 or any ABS State office.
- for information about other ABS statistics and services please refer to the back page of this publication.

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED IN NEW RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS,
ORIGINAL AND SEASONALLY ADJUSTED (a), AUSTRALIA

Period	Houses		Other residential buildings	Total	
	Original	Seasonally adjusted		Original	Seasonally adjusted
PRIVATE SECTOR					
1990-91	87,038	r	24,448	111,486	r
1991-92	100,572	..	28,896	129,468	..
1992-93	113,708	..	37,389	151,097	..
1992—					
Sept. qtr	28,572	27,579	8,895	37,467	36,240
Dec. qtr	30,003	28,289	8,899	38,902	37,516
1993—					
Mar. qtr	25,827	28,612	8,983	34,810	38,013
June qtr	29,306	29,322	10,612	39,918	39,453
Sept. qtr	31,636	30,453	11,275	42,911	41,373
Dec. qtr p	30,843	29,076	11,782	42,625	41,100
PUBLIC SECTOR					
1990-91	3,415	..	6,445	9,860	..
1991-92	3,500	..	7,279	10,779	..
1992-93	3,471	..	7,037	10,508	..
1992—					
Sept. qtr	634	n.a.	2,538	3,172	n.a.
Dec. qtr	592	n.a.	1,370	1,962	n.a.
1993—					
Mar. qtr	1,022	n.a.	1,645	2,667	n.a.
June qtr	1,223	n.a.	1,484	2,707	n.a.
Sept. qtr	889	n.a.	2,001	2,890	n.a.
Dec. qtr p	900	n.a.	662	1,562	n.a.
TOTAL					
1990-91	90,453	r	30,893	121,346	r
1991-92	104,072	..	36,175	140,247	..
1992-93	117,179	..	44,426	161,605	..
1992—					
Sept. qtr	29,206	28,272	11,433	40,639	39,001
Dec. qtr	30,595	28,986	10,269	40,864	39,465
1993—					
Mar. qtr	26,849	29,621	10,628	37,477	41,038
June qtr	30,529	30,392	12,096	42,625	42,260
Sept. qtr	32,525	31,444	13,276	45,801	43,875
Dec. qtr p	31,743	30,062	12,444	44,187	42,691

(a) Series have been revised due to annual re-analysis of seasonal adjustment factors.

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

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
1992—									
Sept. qtr	10,506	6,651	11,275	2,677	4,832	1,000	n.a.	1,175	39,001
Dec. qtr	11,056	7,089	11,087	2,820	5,138	1,019	n.a.	1,166	39,465
1993—									
Mar. qtr	11,390	7,086	11,858	3,045	5,566	1,023	n.a.	937	41,038
June qtr	11,564	7,342	12,818	3,112	5,320	940	n.a.	1,106	42,260
Sept. qtr	11,461	7,357	13,209	3,078	5,691	1,044	n.a.	1,028	43,875
Dec. qtr p	10,899	8,001	13,006	2,689	6,127	1,016	n.a.	783	42,691

(a) Seasonally adjusted data are not available for the Northern Territory. (b) Series have been revised due to annual re-analysis of seasonal adjustment factors.

TABLE 3. NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED
IN NEW RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

<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>
HOUSES									
1990-91	23,185	21,094	23,566	8,177	10,319	2,401	596	1,115	90,453
1991-92	26,387	22,392	29,016	8,344	12,279	2,702	921	2,029	104,072
1992-93	27,397	25,717	33,516	9,416	15,011	2,878	828	2,417	117,179
<i>1992—</i>									
Sept. qtr	6,943	6,176	8,482	2,353	3,677	668	199	707	29,206
Dec. qtr	7,031	6,935	8,908	2,356	3,704	791	199	672	30,595
<i>1993—</i>									
Mar. qtr	6,304	5,852	7,497	2,204	3,651	703	176	462	26,849
June qtr	7,120	6,753	8,629	2,504	3,978	716	254	576	30,529
Sept. qtr	7,582	6,779	9,329	2,724	4,506	720	279	606	32,525
Dec. qtr p	6,943	7,527	9,008	2,386	4,471	768	247	394	31,743
OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1990-91	12,307	2,486	8,203	2,644	3,059	875	258	1,061	30,893
1991-92	14,351	3,029	9,525	2,327	4,044	962	436	1,501	36,175
1992-93	17,064	2,438	13,469	2,219	5,778	1,099	366	1,993	44,426
<i>1992—</i>									
Sept. qtr	4,172	583	3,523	442	1,555	322	108	728	11,433
Dec. qtr	4,625	464	2,574	551	1,324	282	76	373	10,269
<i>1993—</i>									
Mar. qtr	4,125	757	2,909	706	1,458	249	81	343	10,628
June qtr	4,142	634	4,463	520	1,441	246	101	549	12,096
Sept. qtr	4,506	709	4,760	474	1,683	319	162	663	13,276
Dec. qtr p	4,562	833	4,421	386	1,531	301	107	303	12,444
TOTAL									
1990-91	35,492	23,580	31,769	10,821	13,378	3,276	854	2,176	121,346
1991-92	40,738	25,421	38,541	10,671	16,323	3,664	1,357	3,530	140,247
1992-93	44,461	28,155	46,985	11,635	20,789	3,977	1,194	4,410	161,605
<i>1992—</i>									
Sept. qtr	11,115	6,759	12,005	2,795	5,232	990	307	1,435	40,639
Dec. qtr	11,656	7,399	11,482	2,907	5,028	1,073	275	1,045	40,864
<i>1993—</i>									
Mar. qtr	10,429	6,609	10,406	2,910	5,109	952	257	805	37,477
June qtr	11,262	7,387	13,092	3,024	5,419	962	355	1,125	42,625
Sept. qtr	12,088	7,488	14,089	3,198	6,189	1,039	441	1,269	45,801
Dec. qtr p	11,505	8,360	13,429	2,772	6,002	1,069	354	697	44,187

TABLE 4. NUMBER OF PRIVATE SECTOR DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED
IN NEW RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

<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>
HOUSES									
1990-91	22,632	20,032	22,654	7,863	9,971	2,310	465	1,111	87,038
1991-92	25,412	21,827	28,068	8,036	11,921	2,609	669	2,028	100,572
1992-93	26,554	24,633	32,793	9,122	14,615	2,840	744	2,408	113,708
<i>1992--</i>									
Sept. qtr	6,775	6,019	8,328	2,293	3,628	651	177	700	28,572
Dec. qtr	6,896	6,715	8,788	2,325	3,628	786	196	670	30,003
<i>1993---</i>									
Mar. qtr	6,105	5,484	7,314	2,136	3,479	687	160	462	25,827
June qtr	6,779	6,414	8,363	2,369	3,879	716	211	576	29,306
Sept. qtr	7,382	6,553	9,155	2,559	4,395	720	270	602	31,636
Dec. qtr p	6,855	7,116	8,813	2,329	4,366	762	209	394	30,843
OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1990-91	9,939	1,883	6,496	1,810	2,453	771	189	907	24,448
1991-92	11,542	1,887	8,595	1,572	2,657	877	390	1,376	28,896
1992-93	14,225	2,155	12,096	1,759	3,955	997	353	1,849	37,389
<i>1992--</i>									
Sept. qtr	3,169	522	2,852	288	988	309	102	665	8,895
Dec. qtr	3,976	340	2,439	477	973	257	76	361	8,899
<i>1993--</i>									
Mar. qtr	3,518	735	2,712	568	910	185	81	274	8,983
June qtr	3,562	558	4,093	426	1,084	246	94	549	10,612
Sept. qtr	3,825	663	4,058	372	1,226	319	160	652	11,275
Dec. qtr p	4,320	825	4,228	336	1,374	301	105	293	11,782
TOTAL									
1990-91	32,571	21,915	29,150	9,673	12,424	3,081	654	2,018	111,486
1991-92	36,954	23,714	36,663	9,608	14,578	3,486	1,059	3,404	129,468
1992-93	40,779	26,788	44,889	10,881	18,570	3,837	1,097	4,257	151,097
<i>1992--</i>									
Sept. qtr	9,944	6,541	11,180	2,581	4,616	960	279	1,365	37,467
Dec. qtr	10,872	7,055	11,227	2,802	4,601	1,043	272	1,031	38,902
<i>1993--</i>									
Mar. qtr	9,623	6,219	10,026	2,704	4,389	872	241	736	34,810
June qtr	10,341	6,972	12,456	2,795	4,963	962	305	1,125	39,918
Sept. qtr	11,207	7,216	13,213	2,931	5,621	1,039	430	1,254	42,911
Dec. qtr p	11,175	7,941	13,041	2,665	5,740	1,063	314	687	42,625

TABLE 5. NUMBER OF PUBLIC SECTOR DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED
IN NEW RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

<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>
HOUSES									
1990-91	553	1,062	912	314	348	91	131	4	3,415
1991-92	975	565	948	308	358	93	252	1	3,500
1992-93	843	1,084	723	294	396	38	84	9	3,471
<i>1992—</i>									
Sept. qtr	168	157	154	60	49	17	22	7	634
Dec. qtr	135	220	120	31	76	5	3	2	592
<i>1993—</i>									
Mar. qtr	199	368	183	68	172	16	16	—	1,022
June qtr	341	339	266	135	99	—	43	—	1,223
Sept. qtr	200	226	174	165	111	—	9	4	889
Dec. qtr p	88	411	195	57	105	6	38	—	900
OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1990-91	2,368	603	1,707	834	606	104	69	154	6,445
1991-92	2,809	1,142	930	755	1,387	85	46	125	7,279
1992-93	2,839	283	1,373	460	1,823	102	13	144	7,037
<i>1992—</i>									
Sept. qtr	1,003	61	671	154	567	13	6	63	2,538
Dec. qtr	649	124	135	74	351	25	—	12	1,370
<i>1993—</i>									
Mar. qtr	607	22	197	138	548	64	—	69	1,645
June qtr	580	76	370	94	357	—	7	—	1,484
Sept. qtr	681	46	702	102	457	—	2	11	2,001
Dec. qtr p	242	8	193	50	157	—	2	10	662
TOTAL									
1990-91	2,921	1,665	2,619	1,148	954	195	200	158	9,860
1991-92	3,784	1,707	1,878	1,063	1,745	178	298	126	10,779
1992-93	3,682	1,367	2,096	754	2,219	140	97	153	10,508
<i>1992—</i>									
Sept. qtr	1,171	218	825	214	616	30	28	70	3,172
Dec. qtr	784	344	255	105	427	30	3	14	1,962
<i>1993—</i>									
Mar. qtr	806	390	380	206	720	80	16	69	2,667
June qtr	921	415	636	229	456	—	50	—	2,707
Sept. qtr	881	272	876	267	568	—	11	15	2,890
Dec. qtr p	330	419	388	107	262	6	40	10	1,562

TABLE 6. NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED, DECEMBER QUARTER 1993
RELATIVE STANDARD ERRORS (PER CENT)

<i>State and Territory</i>	<i>Private sector</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Total</i>
NSW	3.8	2.3	3.8	2.3
Vic.	2.5	2.3	2.4	2.1
Qld	2.2	1.5	2.1	1.5
SA	3.0	2.6	2.9	2.5
WA	3.3	2.5	3.2	2.4
Tas.	2.3	1.6	2.3	1.6
NT	1.9	1.2	1.6	1.1
ACT	2.7	1.5	2.7	1.5
<i>Australia</i>	<i>1.3</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>1.3</i>	<i>0.9</i>

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

This publication contains preliminary estimates of the number of dwelling units commenced during the December quarter 1993. More comprehensive results from the quarterly survey will be published in ABS publication 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 for the December quarter 1993 are shown in Table 6. More details regarding sampling variability for the survey are shown in publication 8752.0.

3. The use of sample survey techniques in the Building Activity Survey means that reliable estimates of private sector house commencements based on survey results are available only at the State/Territory and Australia levels. Further geographic disaggregations are not available. However, dwelling unit commencement data for regions below State/Territory level are shown in the monthly series of dwelling unit commencements compiled by the ABS. Data from this series, unlike those compiled from the Building Activity Survey, 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) 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.

(b) 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. *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).

8. *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

9. 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. As happens with all seasonally adjusted series, the seasonal factors are reviewed annually to take account of each additional years data. The results of the latest review were used to compile the revised seasonally adjusted estimates contained in this bulletin. Regular subscribers can obtain a complimentary copy of the full revised series on request.

10. 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.

Unpublished data and related publications

11. The ABS can also make available certain building activity data which are not published. Where it is not

practicable to provide the required information by telephone, data can be provided in the following forms: microfiche, photocopy, computer printout and clerically extracted tabulation. A charge may be made for providing unpublished information in these forms.

12. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications which are available on request:

Building Approvals, Australia (8731.0) — issued monthly

Building Activity, Australia (8752.0) — issued quarterly

Construction Activity at Constant Prices Australia (8782.0) — issued quarterly

Engineering Construction Activity, Australia (8762.0) — issued quarterly

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

Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra (6408.0) — issued monthly

Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Eight Capital Cities (6407.0) — issued monthly

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

13. 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 *Publications Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The *Catalogue* and *Publications Advice* are available from any ABS office.

Symbols and other usages

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

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

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