



AUGUST 2000

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# POPULATION SURVEY MONITOR

AUSTRALIA

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- For further information about these and related statistics, contact Julie Watkinson on Adelaide 08 8237 7539, or the National Information Service on 1300 135 070.

## NOTES

### FORTHCOMING ISSUES

#### ISSUE

November 2000

#### RELEASE DATE

6 February 2001

### 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 12 and 13 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 \* or \*\* to indicate that they should be viewed as merely indicative of the magnitude involved.

### SYMBOLS AND OTHER USAGES

- \* subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes (i.e. relative standard error between 25% and 50%)
- \*\* subject to sampling variability too high for practical purposes (i.e. relative standard error greater than 50%)
- . . not applicable
- n.p. not available for publication

### 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For information about statistics in this publication and the availability of related unpublished statistics, contact Julie Watkinson on Adelaide (08) 8237 7539.

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

Dennis Trewin  
Australian Statistician

# MAIN FEATURES

## FIRE SAFETY MEASURES

The most common fire safety measures installed or followed in households were smoke alarms/detectors (72.4%) and safety switch/circuit breakers (55.3%) (refer to table 1).

## COMPUTER USAGE

Over 3.4 million households (48.2%) use a computer at home at least once a week. Over 2.2 million households (31.9%) access the internet at home at least once a week (refer to tables 2 and 3).

## HOUSING

Over 4.9 million households (69.4%) own or are purchasing the residence in which they live. For married couples with children, 79.5% own or are purchasing the residence in which they live, compared with 47.0% of single parents with children. Of all separate houses, 79.5% are owned or being purchased, 12.8% are privately rented and 4.6% are publicly rented (refer to tables 4 and 5).

## POLICE

Of persons aged 18 years and over, 50.4% were satisfied with the services provided by police and 16.9% were very satisfied (refer to table 6).

## ORGANISED SPORT

In the last 12 months, 31.8% of males and 25.8% of females aged 18 years and over have participated in sport or physical activity organised by a club or association (refer to table 7).

# 1

## FIRE SAFETY MEASURES INSTALLED OR FOLLOWED BY HOUSEHOLDS

	METROPOLITAN...		EX-METROPOLITAN..		TOTAL.....	
<i>Fire safety measure</i>	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
.....						
Fire safety measure installed or followed						
Operational smoke alarm(s) or smoke detector(s)	3 179.0	71.0	1 946.4	74.8	5 125.5	72.4
Fire sprinkler system	78.7	1.8	*20.4	*0.8	99.1	1.4
Safety switch/circuit breaker	2 425.8	54.1	1 492.1	57.3	3 917.8	55.3
Fire extinguisher	975.6	21.8	705.3	27.1	1 680.9	23.7
Fire blanket	424.3	9.5	298.8	11.5	723.1	10.2
Fire evacuation plan	588.2	13.1	523.0	20.1	1 111.1	15.7
External water supply	217.6	4.9	549.6	21.1	767.2	10.8
Removal of external fuel sources	544.2	12.1	802.7	30.9	1 346.9	19.0
External sprinkler	649.1	14.5	582.3	22.4	1 231.4	17.4
Other fire safety measure	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	53.5	0.8
<i>Total households with a fire safety measure(a)</i>	3 904.7	87.2	2 401.8	92.3	6 306.5	89.1
No fire safety measure installed or followed	547.9	12.2	194.7	7.5	742.6	10.5
Don't know	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	*32.6	*0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>4 479.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2 601.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>7 081.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(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 A COMPUTER

	Number	Proportion
<i>Computer use</i>	'000	%
Households which frequently use a computer(a)	3 415.8	48.2
Households which do not frequently use a computer	3 665.8	51.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>7 081.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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

## 3

### HOUSEHOLD USE OF THE INTERNET

	Number	Proportion
<i>Internet use</i>	'000	%
Households which frequently use the internet(a)	2 257.5	31.9
Households which do not frequently use the internet	4 824.1	68.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>7 081.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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

# 4

## 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	61.7	11.1	21.1	6.1	100.0	1 571.8
Married couple(a) only	82.2	*2.4	13.9	*1.5	100.0	1 789.0
Married couple(a) with children	79.5	3.3	14.4	2.8	100.0	2 320.9
Single parent with children	47.0	19.2	31.0	*2.8	100.0	652.6
Other households	42.8	*2.4	52.6	*2.2	100.0	747.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>69.4</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>7 081.6</b>
	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
<b>Total</b>	<b>4 911.7</b>	<b>438.4</b>	<b>1 509.1</b>	<b>222.5</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>7 081.6</b>

(a) Includes de facto couples.

# 5

## TENURE OF CURRENT RESIDENCE BY DWELLING STRUCTURE

Dwelling structure	TENURE.....				TOTAL.....	
	Owner/ purchaser	Public renter	Private renter	Other	Pro- portion	Number
	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Separate house	79.5	4.6	12.8	3.1	100.0	5 408.6
Semi-detached/row/terrace(a)	44.1	12.5	39.8	*3.6	100.0	667.8
Flat/unit/apartment	30.5	10.8	55.5	*3.3	100.0	981.8
<b>Total(b)</b>	<b>69.4</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>7 081.6</b>
	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
<b>Total(b)</b>	<b>4 911.7</b>	<b>438.4</b>	<b>1 509.1</b>	<b>222.5</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>7 081.6</b>

(a) Includes flat attached to house.

(b) Includes other dwelling structures.

	AGE (YEARS).....						TOTAL.....	
Level of satisfaction	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and over	Pro-portion	Number
.....								
MALES								
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Very satisfied	*3.8	10.7	11.8	12.1	18.2	29.0	13.7	936.1
Satisfied	51.6	45.2	52.8	54.3	44.8	56.5	50.9	3 476.1
Neither	19.6	23.5	14.5	15.5	12.0	*4.3	15.5	1 059.5
Dissatisfied	21.5	14.3	14.8	10.6	18.3	*6.1	14.1	961.4
Very dissatisfied	**2.1	*2.9	*4.2	*2.4	*5.8	**1.8	3.2	215.8
Don't know	**1.4	*3.4	*1.9	*5.1	**1.0	**2.3	2.7	183.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	6 832.1
.....								
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
Total	936.5	1 399.0	1 429.8	1 270.5	847.7	948.5	..	6 832.1
.....								
FEMALES								
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Very satisfied	10.4	13.0	21.9	23.2	22.6	28.0	19.9	1 397.0
Satisfied	54.8	47.7	45.7	47.3	50.6	56.1	49.8	3 492.8
Neither	23.7	21.6	18.4	13.6	12.5	*5.0	16.0	1 120.6
Dissatisfied	*9.7	9.8	7.9	10.0	*7.8	*4.3	8.3	580.7
Very dissatisfied	n.p.	*3.2	**0.3	*3.0	*3.3	n.p.	1.9	132.2
Don't know	n.p.	*4.7	*5.8	*2.8	*3.1	n.p.	4.1	284.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	7 008.3
.....								
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
Total	906.3	1 415.8	1 457.0	1 261.8	833.0	1 134.4	..	7 008.3
.....								
PERSONS								
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Very satisfied	7.1	11.8	16.9	17.7	20.4	28.4	16.9	2 333.1
Satisfied	53.2	46.5	49.3	50.8	47.7	56.2	50.4	6 968.9
Neither	21.6	22.6	16.5	14.6	12.3	4.6	15.8	2 180.1
Dissatisfied	15.7	12.0	11.3	10.3	13.1	5.1	11.1	1 542.1
Very dissatisfied	*1.3	*3.0	*2.2	*2.7	*4.6	*1.4	2.5	348.0
Don't know	**1.1	4.1	3.9	4.0	*2.1	*4.1	3.4	468.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	13 840.3
.....								
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
Total	1 842.7	2 814.9	2 886.9	2 532.3	1 680.8	2 082.9	..	13 840.3
.....								

	AGE (YEARS).....						TOTAL.....	
Participation	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and over	Pro-portion	Number
.....								
MALES								
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Participated in organised sport	37.6	44.5	31.2	25.4	25.1	22.8	31.8	2 173.3
No participation in organised sport	62.4	55.5	68.8	74.6	74.9	77.2	68.2	4 658.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	6 832.1
.....								
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
Total	936.5	1 399.0	1 429.8	1 270.5	847.7	948.5	..	6 832.1
.....								
FEMALES								
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Participated in organised sport	36.2	33.1	23.2	26.1	18.5	17.0	25.8	1 810.8
No participation in organised sport	63.8	66.9	76.8	73.9	81.5	83.0	74.2	5 197.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	7 008.3
.....								
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
Total	906.3	1 415.8	1 457.0	1 261.8	833.0	1 134.4	..	7 008.3
.....								
PERSONS								
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	'000
Participated in organised sport	36.9	38.8	27.2	25.7	21.8	19.7	28.8	3 984.1
No participation in organised sport	63.1	61.2	72.8	74.3	78.2	80.3	71.2	9 856.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	13 840.3
.....								
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000		'000
Total	1 842.7	2 814.9	2 886.9	2 532.3	1 680.8	2 082.9	..	13 840.3

(a) Includes sport and physical activities undertaken by players and non-players which are organised by a club or association.



# 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 AUGUST 2000

Fire safety measures

**2** This publication presents summary results of the PSM conducted in August 2000. The topics included in this publication are as follows:

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

Computing technology

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

Housing

**5** Contains data on tenure of current residence.

Satisfaction with police  
services

**6** Contains data on community attitudes to police services.

Organised sport

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

## SCOPE AND COVERAGE

**8** 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 approximately 85,000 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 19% of the population. All persons living in non-private dwellings are excluded.

EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

SAMPLE SIZE

**9** 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

**10** 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

**11** 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.

**12** 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 PROCEDURE

**13** 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.

**14** 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

**15** 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 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 12 and 13).

**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 13), 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 13) 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 6 an estimated 936,100 males were very satisfied with the services provided by the police. Referring to table A1 of standard errors (on page 13), an estimate of 936,100 has a standard error of approximately 58,000. 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 878,100 and 994,100 (i.e. 936,100 plus or minus 58,000). There are about 19 chances in 20 that the number lies between 820,100 and 1,052,100 (i.e. 936,100 plus or minus 116,000).

**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. Estimates with a RSE between 25% and 50% have been included but 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. Estimates with a RSE greater than 50% have also been included but are preceded by a double asterisk (e.g. \*\*2.4) to indicate that they should be treated with extreme caution.

**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, and 5 the columns headed *HOUSEHOLDS - August 2000 - Aust* should be used.

8 For tables 6 and 7 the columns headed *PERSONS 18+ YEARS - August 2000 - Aust* should be used.

# A1

## STANDARD ERRORS OF ESTIMATES

	PERSONS 18+ YEARS	HOUSEHOLDS
Size of estimate	Aug 2000 Aust	Aug 2000 Aust
'000	'000	'000
5	..	3.6
10	7.1	5.1
20	10.5	7.3
50	17.0	11.3
100	23.8	15.5
200	32.4	20.9
500	46.6	30.2
800	55.2	35.0
1 000	59.5	39.2
1 500	67.7	43.4
2 000	73.8	50.1

# A2

## RELATIVE STANDARD ERRORS OF ESTIMATES

	PERSONS 18+ YEARS	HOUSEHOLDS
Size of estimate	Aug 2000 Aust	Aug 2000 Aust
'000	%	%
5	..	71.2
10	70.1	51.3
20	52.3	36.4
50	34.0	22.6
100	23.8	15.5
200	16.2	10.4
500	9.4	6.0
800	6.9	4.4
1 000	6.0	3.9
1 500	4.6	2.9
2 000	3.7	2.5

## GLOSSARY

<b>Age</b>	The age of persons on their last birthday.
<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.
<b>Dwelling structure</b>	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. Other dwelling structures include a flat or house attached to any commercial or non-residential building.
<b>External sprinkler</b>	A heavy duty sprinkler capable of wetting the home externally in order to help it become fire resistant.
<b>External water supply</b>	Refers to a non-mains external water supply which is suitable for fighting fire. It includes pools, dams or creeks.
<b>Fire blanket</b>	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.
<b>Fire evacuation plan</b>	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.
<b>Fire extinguisher</b>	A fire extinguisher is a container that contains either water, carbon dioxide or foam and is designed to spray at and extinguish fires.
<b>Fire sprinkler system</b>	A fire sprinkler system is usually installed in the ceiling and is an automatic sprinkler which is activated by heat or smoke.
<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>Internet</b>	A facility that enables the user to access a wide range of information facilities, home pages or websites and allows users to send and receive electronic mail (email) messages.
<b>Metropolitan</b>	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.
<b>Organised sport</b>	Sport and physical activities that are organised by a club or association.
<b>Police services</b>	Services provided by officers of Federal and State police departments.

**GLOSSARY** *continued*



<b>Private renters</b>	Private renters rent their home from a private landlord or real estate agent.
<b>Public renters</b>	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.
<b>Removal of external fuel sources</b>	Refers to removal of all possible sources of fuel for a bushfire. This includes such measures as removing overhanging trees, removing dry leaves/firewood from around the home etc.
<b>Safety switch/circuit breaker</b>	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.
<b>Smoke detector/smoke alarm</b>	Smoke detectors or smoke alarms are used for the detection and warning of smoke from fires and not for the detection of cigarette smoke.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION...

- INTERNET** [www.abs.gov.au](http://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.
- LIBRARY** A range of ABS publications is available from public and tertiary libraries Australia-wide. Contact your nearest library to determine whether it has the ABS statistics you require, or visit our web site for a list of libraries.
- CPI INFOLINE** For current and historical Consumer Price Index data, call 1902 981 074 (call cost 77c per minute).
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