

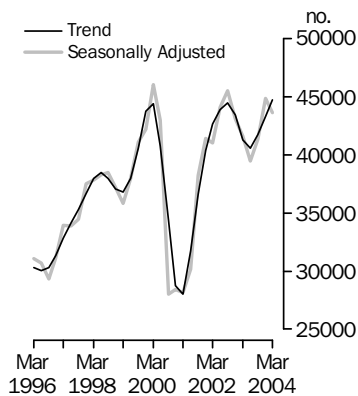
DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS

AUSTRALIA
PRELIMINARY

EMBARGO: 11.30AM (CANBERRA TIME) TUES 22 JUN 2004

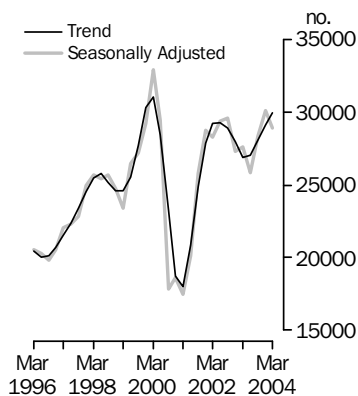
Dwelling units commenced

Total



New houses commenced

Private sector



KEY FIGURES

	<i>Mar qtr 04</i>	<i>Dec qtr 03 to Mar qtr 04</i>	<i>Mar qtr 03 to Mar qtr 04</i>
	<i>no.</i>	<i>% change</i>	<i>% change</i>

TREND ESTIMATES

Dwelling units commenced

New private sector houses	29 995	3.0	11.5
Total dwelling units	44 747	3.4	8.3

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED

Dwelling units commenced

New private sector houses	28 952	-3.9	4.8
Total dwelling units	43 637	-2.7	4.9

KEY POINTS

TREND ESTIMATES

- The trend estimate for the total number of dwelling units commenced rose 3.4% in the March quarter 2004, the third successive quarterly increase.
- New private sector houses rose 3.0% in the latest quarter, but the rate of growth has eased for the last two quarters.

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED ESTIMATES

- In seasonally adjusted terms, the total number of dwelling units commenced fell 2.7%, to 43,637, in the March quarter.
- New private sector house commencements fell 3.9%, to 28,952, following increases in the previous two quarters.
- Tasmania recorded the largest increase in the total number of dwelling commencements (+20.2%, to the highest number since the December quarter 1994), followed by New South Wales (+18.9%) and Western Australia (+3.5% to the highest for four years). The Australian Capital Territory showed the largest decrease (-20.5%), followed by Victoria (-15.1%), Queensland (-9.4%, but still the second highest since the December quarter 1994) and South Australia (-4.1%).

INQUIRIES

- For further information about these and related statistics, contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070 or Tony Bammann on Adelaide (08) 8237 7316.

NOTES

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

<i>ISSUE (Quarter)</i>	<i>RELEASE DATE</i>
June 2004	14 September 2004
September 2004	16 December 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 20 July 2004.

CHANGES IN THIS ISSUE

The Explanatory Notes have been revised by the inclusion of a separate Glossary of terms.

SIGNIFICANT REVISIONS THIS ISSUE

The total number of dwelling units commenced in Australia during the December quarter 2003 has been revised downwards by 315 (-0.7%) from the estimate published in *Building Activity, Australia, December quarter 2003* (cat. no. 8752.0) released on 19 April 2004.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics
qtr quarter

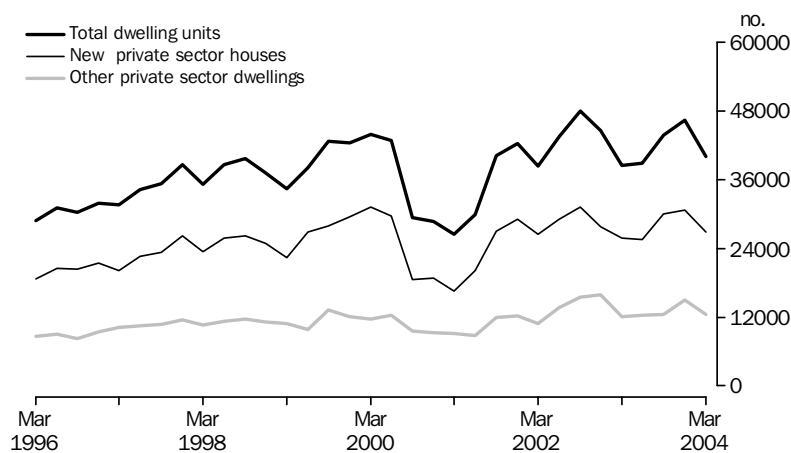
Susan Linacre
Acting Australian Statistician

DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS ORIGINAL

ORIGINAL ESTIMATES

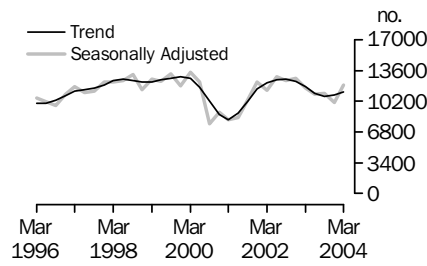
	Mar qtr 04	Dec qtr 03 to Mar qtr 04	Mar qtr 03 to Mar qtr 04
	no.	% change	% change
Dwelling units commenced			
New private sector houses	26 886	-12.6	4.4
Other private sector dwellings	12 472	-16.6	3.6
Public sector dwellings	780	14.7	11.9
Total dwelling units	40 138	-13.5	4.3

- The total number of dwelling units commenced fell 13.5% in the March quarter 2004, to 40,138.
- New private sector house commencements fell 12.6%, to 26,886. The Australian Capital Territory recorded the largest percentage decrease (-35.2%) followed by the Northern Territory (-30.3%), Queensland (-16.9%), New South Wales (-13.5%), Victoria (-13.2%), South Australia (-11.8%) and Western Australia (-2.5%). Tasmania (+2.7%) was the only state or territory to record an increase.
- Other private sector dwellings fell 16.6% to 12,472. Most states and territories recorded falls of almost 30% or more. However, Tasmania recorded an increase of more than 170% and New South Wales an increase of 18.2%.
- The total number of public sector dwellings commenced rose 14.7% to 780. The increase was from the second lowest level on record.



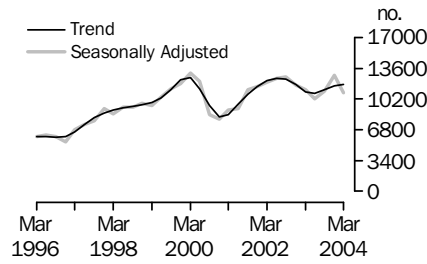
DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS STATES & TERRITORIES

NEW SOUTH WALES



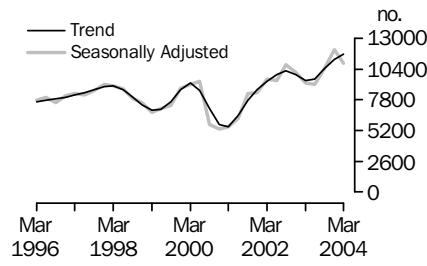
The trend estimate of commencements has risen for the last two quarters, following four quarters of decline.

VICTORIA



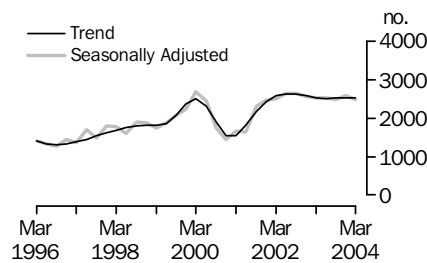
The trend estimate of commencements has risen for the last three quarters, following four quarters of decline.

QUEENSLAND



After a small downturn in late 2002 to early 2003, the trend estimate of commencements has risen for the last four quarters.

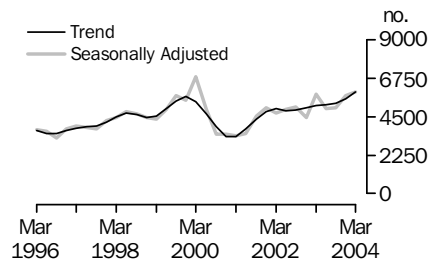
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



The trend estimate of commencements has been flat for the last four quarters.

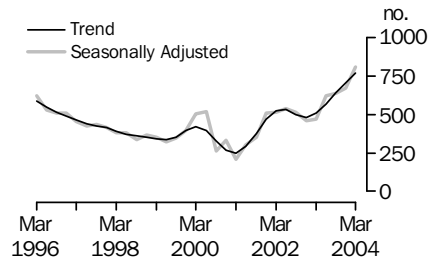
DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS STATES & TERRITORIES *continued*

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



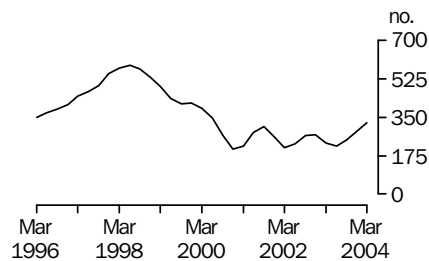
The trend estimate of commencements has risen steadily for the last three years, with an increasing rate of growth for the last three quarters.

TASMANIA



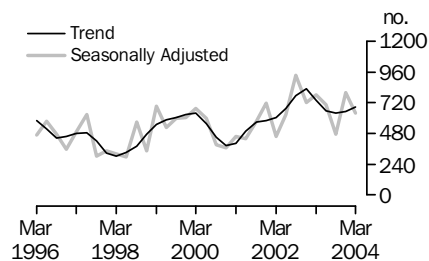
Other than a brief lull in the last half of 2002, the trend estimate of commencements has shown strong growth for the last three years.

NORTHERN TERRITORY



Since arresting a downward trend in the March quarter 2001, the trend estimate of commencements has been relatively flat, although the last three quarters have shown strong growth.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY



The trend estimate of commencements has risen for the last two quarters, following three quarters of decline.

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DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS

Period	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								
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	30 092	17.9	30 570	17.7	42 573	12.4	43 807	12.7
Dec Qtr	30 751	2.2	31 097	1.7	45 702	7.3	46 381	5.9
2004								
Mar Qtr	26 886	-12.6	27 339	-12.1	39 358	-13.9	40 138	-13.5
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED								
2002								
Dec Qtr	27 307	-7.8	27 813	-7.5	42 180	-5.6	43 158	-5.2
2003								
Mar Qtr	27 617	1.1	28 035	0.8	40 787	-3.3	41 615	-3.6
Jun Qtr	25 847	-6.4	26 331	-6.1	38 417	-5.8	39 456	-5.2
Sep Qtr	28 344	9.7	28 753	9.2	40 452	5.3	41 365	4.8
Dec Qtr	30 141	6.3	30 473	6.0	44 052	8.9	44 862	8.5
2004								
Mar Qtr	28 952	-3.9	29 463	-3.3	42 709	-3.0	43 637	-2.7
TREND								
2002								
Dec Qtr	27 996	-3.3	28 459	-3.2	42 583	-2.5	43 471	-2.4
2003								
Mar Qtr	26 913	-3.9	27 381	-3.8	40 369	-5.2	41 313	-5.0
Jun Qtr	27 034	0.5	27 470	0.3	39 642	-1.8	40 582	-1.8
Sep Qtr	28 104	4.0	28 513	3.8	40 820	3.0	41 734	2.8
Dec Qtr	29 120	3.6	29 531	3.6	42 407	3.9	43 295	3.7
2004								
Mar Qtr	29 995	3.0	30 427	3.0	43 886	3.5	44 747	3.4

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									
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	11 544	11 764	11 150	2 543	5 550	617	205	433	43 807
Dec Qtr	10 882	12 391	12 278	2 773	5 976	690	371	1 019	46 381
2004									
Mar Qtr	10 909	10 132	9 735	2 294	5 516	808	233	512	40 138
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED									
2002									
Dec Qtr	12 735	11 746	10 122	2 575	4 452	462	na	724	43 158
2003									
Mar Qtr	11 635	11 211	9 221	2 536	5 816	469	na	782	41 615
Jun Qtr	10 968	10 209	9 110	2 519	4 988	623	na	705	39 456
Sep Qtr	11 108	11 045	10 498	2 490	5 022	636	na	474	41 365
Dec Qtr	10 095	12 821	12 056	2 587	5 752	674	na	803	44 862
2004									
Mar Qtr	11 998	10 891	10 926	2 480	5 956	810	na	638	43 637
TREND									
2002									
Dec Qtr	12 426	11 829	9 944	2 596	5 047	480	269	828	43 471
2003									
Mar Qtr	11 796	10 978	9 425	2 536	5 138	508	232	740	41 313
Jun Qtr	11 107	10 811	9 574	2 517	5 192	570	219	657	40 582
Sep Qtr	10 784	11 256	10 452	2 524	5 302	643	246	641	41 734
Dec Qtr	10 913	11 662	11 225	2 527	5 543	708	287	655	43 295
2004									
Mar Qtr	11 286	11 867	11 680	2 523	5 966	772	324	686	44 747

na not available

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

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
Period	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
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									
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	9.8	13.7	19.1	3.1	19.0	-1.7	-11.4	-34.2	12.7
Dec Qtr	-5.7	5.3	10.1	9.1	7.7	11.8	80.9	135.3	5.9
2004									
Mar Qtr	0.2	-18.2	-20.7	-17.3	-7.7	17.1	-37.2	-49.8	-13.5
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED									
2002									
Dec Qtr	1.8	-7.1	-6.2	-2.8	-12.4	-10.3	na	-22.7	-5.2
2003									
Mar Qtr	-8.6	-4.6	-8.9	-1.5	30.6	1.5	na	8.0	-3.6
Jun Qtr	-5.7	-8.9	-1.2	-0.7	-14.2	32.8	na	-9.8	-5.2
Sep Qtr	1.3	8.2	15.2	-1.2	0.7	2.1	na	-32.8	4.8
Dec Qtr	-9.1	16.1	14.8	3.9	14.5	6.0	na	69.4	8.5
2004									
Mar Qtr	18.9	-15.1	-9.4	-4.1	3.5	20.2	na	-20.5	-2.7
TREND									
2002									
Dec Qtr	-2.1	-4.9	-3.1	-1.4	3.4	-3.8	0.7	7.0	-2.4
2003									
Mar Qtr	-5.1	-7.2	-5.2	-2.3	1.8	5.8	-13.8	-10.6	-5.0
Jun Qtr	-5.8	-1.5	1.6	-0.7	1.1	12.2	-5.6	-11.2	-1.8
Sep Qtr	-2.9	4.1	9.2	0.3	2.1	12.8	12.3	-2.4	2.8
Dec Qtr	1.2	3.6	7.4	0.1	4.5	10.1	16.7	2.2	3.7
2004									
Mar Qtr	3.4	1.8	4.1	-0.2	7.6	9.0	12.9	4.7	3.4

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									
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	5 643	9 336	7 749	2 077	4 651	562	156	397	30 570
Dec Qtr	6 146	8 780	8 034	2 141	4 736	634	143	481	31 097
2004									
Mar Qtr	5 332	7 656	6 697	1 885	4 713	656	94	307	27 339
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									
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	5 623	2 296	3 338	313	891	39	47	33	12 580
Dec Qtr	4 462	3 262	4 238	629	1 222	35	226	535	14 609
2004									
Mar Qtr	5 346	2 379	3 013	407	772	125	119	205	12 366
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									
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	277	132	64	153	8	17	2	3	656
Dec Qtr	274	349	6	3	18	21	2	3	676
2004									
Mar Qtr	231	97	25	3	31	27	20	—	433
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									
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	11 544	11 764	11 150	2 543	5 550	617	205	433	43 807
Dec Qtr	10 882	12 391	12 278	2 773	5 976	690	371	1 019	46 381
2004									
Mar Qtr	10 909	10 132	9 735	2 294	5 516	808	233	512	40 138

— 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.
<i>Period</i>	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									
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	5 619	9 320	7 674	1 985	4 442	562	100	391	30 092
Dec Qtr	6 075	8 750	7 976	2 059	4 682	634	99	474	30 751
2004									
Mar Qtr	5 255	7 595	6 630	1 816	4 563	651	69	307	26 886
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									
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	5 377	2 226	3 166	294	649	39	43	33	11 827
Dec Qtr	4 404	3 191	4 191	605	1 126	35	206	523	14 281
2004									
Mar Qtr	5 300	2 295	2 922	368	723	125	119	187	12 039
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									
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	277	130	64	153	8	17	2	3	654
Dec Qtr	274	349	6	3	12	21	2	3	670
2004									
Mar Qtr	231	97	25	3	31	27	20	—	433
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									
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	11 274	11 676	10 903	2 431	5 099	617	145	427	42 573
Dec Qtr	10 753	12 290	12 173	2 667	5 820	690	307	1 000	45 702
2004									
Mar Qtr	10 786	9 987	9 577	2 187	5 317	803	209	494	39 358

— 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.
<i>Period</i>	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									
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	209	—	56	6	478
Dec Qtr	71	30	58	82	54	—	44	7	346
2004									
Mar Qtr	77	61	67	69	150	5	25	—	453
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									
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	71	47	24	96	—	20	12	328
2004									
Mar Qtr	46	84	91	38	50	—	—	18	327
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									
Dec Qtr	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
2003									
Mar Qtr	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jun Qtr	—	12	—	—	—	—	—	—	12
Sep Qtr	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Dec Qtr	—	—	—	—	6	—	—	—	6
2004									
Mar Qtr	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
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									
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	451	—	60	6	1 234
Dec Qtr	129	101	105	106	156	—	64	19	680
2004									
Mar Qtr	123	145	158	107	199	5	25	18	780

— 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).

SCOPE AND COVERAGE

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
- a complete enumeration of all such public sector residential building jobs.

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 Approval series compiled by the ABS.

CLASSIFICATION

4 *Ownership*. The ownership of a building is classified as either *private sector* or *public 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.

5 Building jobs are classified both by the TYPE OF BUILDING (e.g. 'house', 'other residential building') and by the TYPE OF WORK involved (i.e. 'new' and 'conversions, etc'). These classifications are used in conjunction with each other and are defined in the Glossary.

RELIABILITY OF THE ESTIMATES

6 Since the estimates are based on a sample of approved private sector residential building jobs, the estimates of commencements of private sector dwellings and total dwellings 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.

7 Relative standard errors for the number of dwellings commenced in the March quarter 2004 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, March Quarter 2004

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
New private sector houses	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.4	2.5	—	4.1	1.6
Total new other dwellings	1.8	1.9	1.3	5.1	0.9	—	—	—	0.9
Total dwellings	2.0	2.6	2.4	2.9	2.8	2.0	—	2.4	1.1

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

8 In addition, 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 for the last two quarters are therefore subject to revision.

EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

SEASONAL ADJUSTMENT

9 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.

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. 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.

11 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 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.

12 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

13 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.

14 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.

15 While the smoothing technique described in paragraphs 13 and 14 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, 2003* (cat. no. 1349.0) or contact the Assistant Director, Time Series Analysis on Canberra 02 6252 6540 or email <timeseries@abs.gov.au>.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

16 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

17 All tables in this publication are available in electronic form on the ABS website <<http://www.abs.gov.au>>.

EXPLANATORY NOTES *continued*

RELATED PRODUCTS *continued*

18 Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:

Building Activity, Australia, cat. no. 8752.0

Building Approvals, Australia, cat. no. 8731.0

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

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

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

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

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

19 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 the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070 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

20 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.

GLOSSARY

Building	A building is 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.
Commenced	A building is 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).
Conversions, etc	A conversion is building activity which converts a non-residential building to a residential building, e.g. conversion of a warehouse to residential apartments. Conversion is considered to be a special type of alteration. "Conversions, etc" are the number of dwelling units created as part of alterations and additions to, or conversions of, existing residential or non-residential buildings and as part of the construction of non-residential building. "Conversions, etc" are shown separately in tables 4 to 6 and are included in the total number of dwelling units.
Dwelling unit	A dwelling unit is a self-contained suite of rooms, including cooking and bathing facilities and intended for <i>long-term</i> 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.
House	A house is 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.
New	Building activity which will result in the creation of a building which previously did not exist.
Number of dwelling unit commencements	For other residential building, these statistics present the number of dwelling units in such buildings (and not the number of buildings). For example, if a new building with 25 apartments is commenced, then 25 is included in the number of dwelling unit commencements under 'new other residential building'. Residential building activity involving a number of residential buildings of the same type of building and which are being built on the same site are sometimes grouped. Thus, when a project involving the construction of, say, a group of 10 houses is commenced in the sense that work has started on the first one or two houses, then all 10 houses may be counted as commencements in the statistics.
Other residential building	An other residential building is a building other than a house primarily used for long-term residential purposes and which contains (or has attached to it) more than one dwelling unit (e.g. includes blocks of flats, home units, attached townhouses, villa units, terrace houses, semi-detached houses, maisonettes, duplexes, apartment buildings, etc.).
Residential building	A residential building is a building predominantly consisting of one or more dwelling units. Residential buildings can be either <i>houses</i> or <i>other residential buildings</i> .

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- 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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