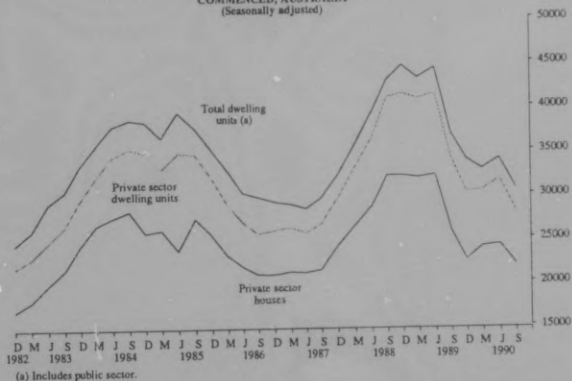


**BUILDING ACTIVITY, AUSTRALIA: DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS,
SEPTEMBER QUARTER 1990, PRELIMINARY**

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MAIN FEATURES

**NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS
COMMENCED, AUSTRALIA**
(Seasonally adjusted)



Total dwelling units commenced fell in the September quarter 1990 after an increase in June quarter. The fall in total dwelling units reflected falls in private sector houses and total private sector dwelling commencements only partly offset by an increase in public sector commencements.

Seasonally adjusted, the total number of dwelling units commenced in September quarter fell by 9.7% to 30,650 from 33,940 in June quarter. There was a fall of 16.8% from the 36,830 commencements recorded for September quarter 1989.

Private sector dwelling commencements (28,000) represents a fall of 11.4% compared with the previous quarter, and 17.7% compared with September quarter in the previous year, seasonally adjusted. For private sector house commencements the falls were 9.5% and 15.1% respectively.

In original terms, there were 32,060 dwelling units commenced in the September quarter 1990, a 2.9% decrease from the June quarter 1990 figure of 33,010. Only Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory recorded increases of 5.0%, 7.8% and 12.9% respectively on a quarterly basis. Compared with September quarter 1989 the Australian Capital Territory was the only State or Territory to record an increase.

Public sector dwelling commencements increased by 43.2% in September quarter 1990 to 3,154 from 2,202 in June quarter, in original terms. This compares with an increase of 25.5% between the corresponding quarters I. 1989. The increase in 1990 was mainly due to increases in the public sector "Other residential buildings" category in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

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

Period	Houses		Other residential buildings	Total	
	Original	Seasonally adjusted		Original	Seasonally adjusted
PRIVATE SECTOR (a)					
1987-88	100,070	..	24,775	124,840	..
1988-89	128,230	..	36,342	164,570	..
1989-90	96,410	..	29,904	126,320	..
1989—					
June qtr	31,530	32,150	8,860	40,390	41,390
Sept. qtr	26,650	25,820	8,482	35,130	34,730
Dec. qtr	23,750	22,650	8,119	31,870	30,220
1990—					
Mar. qtr	22,300	23,970	6,206	28,510	30,380
June qtr	23,710	24,200	7,097	30,810	31,610
Sept. qtr p	22,600	21,910	6,308	28,900	28,000
PUBLIC SECTOR					
1987-88	4,440	..	6,528	10,968	..
1988-89	4,148	..	6,242	10,390	..
1989-90	4,277	..	7,114	11,391	..
1989—					
June qtr	1,036	n.a.	1,673	2,709	n.a.
Sept. qtr	1,182	n.a.	2,218	3,400	n.a.
Dec. qtr	1,301	n.a.	2,276	3,577	n.a.
1990—					
Mar. qtr	900	n.a.	1,312	2,212	n.a.
June qtr	894	n.a.	1,308	2,202	n.a.
Sept. qtr p	932	n.a.	2,222	3,154	n.a.
TOTAL (a)					
1987-88	104,510	..	31,303	135,810	..
1988-89	132,380	..	42,584	174,960	..
1989-90	100,680	..	37,018	137,710	..
1989—					
June qtr	32,560	33,160	10,533	43,190	44,270
Sept. qtr	27,830	26,910	10,700	38,530	36,130
Dec. qtr	25,050	23,800	10,395	35,450	33,940
1990—					
Mar. qtr	23,200	24,890	7,518	30,720	32,790
June qtr	24,610	25,080	8,405	33,010	33,840
Sept. qtr p	23,530	22,760	8,530	32,060	30,650

(a) Figures for houses and total dwelling units are rounded to the nearest ten units.

TABLE 2. NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED
IN NEW RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
HOUSES (a)									
1987-88	27,840	27,390	23,280	6,390	14,570	2,510	820	1,720	104,510
1988-89	34,400	35,180	30,370	7,580	19,680	2,660	660	1,910	132,380
1989-90	26,250	27,590	23,760	7,170	11,300	2,560	580	1,470	106,690
1989—									
June qtr	7,390	9,490	7,720	1,820	4,750	710	150	530	32,560
Sept. qtr	7,590	7,570	6,280	2,030	3,190	630	120	430	27,830
Dec. qtr	5,900	7,140	6,750	1,670	2,440	710	150	290	25,050
1990—									
Mar. qtr	6,020	6,450	4,910	1,580	3,110	570	150	420	23,200
June qtr	8,750	8,430	5,920	1,990	2,360	650	150	340	24,610
Sept. qtr p	5,740	6,190	5,860	2,150	2,710	550	100	240	23,530
OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1987-88	9,728	4,463	8,813	2,055	4,180	780	404	900	31,303
1988-89	13,827	3,456	13,624	2,655	6,942	1,010	333	737	42,564
1989-90	13,450	2,444	9,673	3,763	5,644	828	288	928	37,018
1989—									
June qtr	3,167	644	3,317	710	2,158	234	88	215	10,533
Sept. qtr	3,874	857	2,709	968	1,699	228	131	234	10,700
Dec. qtr	4,103	344	2,989	865	1,510	197	45	242	10,395
1990—									
Mar. qtr	2,379	567	1,846	1,050	1,319	160	27	170	7,518
June qtr	3,084	676	2,129	780	1,116	243	85	282	8,405
Sept. qtr p	3,017	710	2,497	744	847	217	38	460	8,530
TOTAL (a)									
1987-88	37,570	31,850	32,090	8,440	18,750	3,290	1,220	2,620	135,810
1988-89	48,230	38,630	43,990	10,240	26,620	3,670	940	2,650	174,960
1989-90	39,700	30,030	33,430	10,940	16,940	3,390	860	2,400	137,710
1989—									
June qtr	10,560	10,140	11,040	2,530	6,910	950	240	740	43,100
Sept. qtr	11,470	8,420	8,990	3,000	4,890	860	250	660	38,530
Dec. qtr	10,000	7,490	9,740	2,630	3,950	910	190	530	35,450
1990—									
Mar. qtr	8,390	7,010	6,750	2,630	4,430	730	180	590	30,720
June qtr	9,840	7,110	7,950	2,680	3,680	890	240	620	33,010
Sept. qtr p	8,760	6,900	8,350	2,890	3,560	770	140	700	32,060

(a) These figures are rounded to the nearest ten units.

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

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
HOUSES (a)									
1987-88	27,400	26,320	22,540	5,660	13,920	2,200	450	1,580	100,070
1988-89	33,800	34,270	29,330	7,130	18,980	2,460	470	1,810	128,230
1989-90	25,690	26,510	22,430	6,730	10,780	2,440	460	1,380	96,410
1989—									
June qtr	7,260	9,320	7,510	1,670	4,530	650	100	480	31,530
Sept. qtr	7,340	7,340	6,000	1,920	3,070	590	110	380	26,650
Dec. qtr	5,760	6,910	6,100	1,570	2,310	680	130	290	23,750
1990—									
Mar. qtr	5,950	6,250	4,670	1,440	2,970	540	130	360	22,300
June qtr	6,640	6,110	5,460	1,810	2,420	630	90	340	23,710
Sept. qtr p	5,540	5,870	5,730	2,040	2,570	530	70	240	22,660
OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1987-88	7,178	3,717	7,605	1,043	3,660	617	318	635	24,775
1988-89	11,839	2,770	12,037	1,690	6,216	840	244	706	36,342
1989-90	11,135	1,809	7,892	2,679	4,593	728	183	883	29,904
1989—									
June qtr	2,620	564	2,924	501	1,328	201	10	212	8,860
Sept. qtr	3,082	523	2,351	641	1,384	193	86	220	8,482
Dec. qtr	3,302	228	2,181	697	1,263	169	37	242	8,119
1990—									
Mar. qtr	2,067	441	1,457	835	1,068	141	27	170	6,206
June qtr	2,684	617	1,903	486	898	225	33	251	7,067
Sept. qtr p	2,194	486	2,018	449	580	179	9	393	6,308
TOTAL (a)									
1987-88	34,570	30,040	30,140	6,710	17,580	2,820	760	2,210	124,840
1988-89	45,640	37,040	41,350	8,820	25,190	3,300	710	2,520	164,570
1989-90	36,820	28,320	30,320	9,410	15,370	3,170	650	2,260	126,320
1989—									
June qtr	9,880	9,890	10,430	2,170	6,360	860	110	690	40,390
Sept. qtr	10,420	7,760	8,350	2,560	4,480	780	200	600	35,130
Dec. qtr	9,060	7,140	8,290	2,270	3,580	850	170	530	31,870
1990—									
Mar. qtr	8,020	6,690	6,120	2,290	4,010	680	150	530	28,510
June qtr	9,320	6,730	7,560	2,290	3,320	860	130	590	30,810
Sept. qtr p	7,740	6,360	7,750	2,490	3,150	710	70	630	28,900

(a) These figures are rounded to the nearest ten units.

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

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
HOUSES									
1987-88	442	1,066	741	724	453	308	370	136	4,440
1988-89	602	911	1,085	448	698	198	134	102	4,148
1989-90	566	1,078	1,335	440	524	123	113	98	4,277
1989— June qtr	129	172	213	154	217	58	44	49	1,056
Sept. qtr	256	328	285	110	115	38	9	41	1,182
Dec. qtr	139	235	649	97	129	36	16	—	1,301
1990— Mar. qtr	65	195	241	139	140	36	27	57	900
June qtr	106	320	160	94	140	13	61	—	894
Sept. qtr p	201	312	126	101	136	20	36	—	932
OTHER RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS									
1987-88	2,550	746	1,208	1,010	500	163	86	265	6,528
1988-89	1,988	686	1,587	965	726	170	89	31	6,242
1989-90	2,315	635	1,781	1,084	1,049	100	105	45	7,114
1989— June qtr	547	80	393	209	330	33	78	3	1,673
Sept. qtr	792	334	358	327	313	35	45	14	2,218
Dec. qtr	801	116	808	268	267	28	8	—	2,276
1990— Mar. qtr	312	126	389	195	271	19	—	—	1,312
June qtr	410	59	226	294	218	18	52	31	1,308
Sept. qtr p	823	224	479	295	267	38	29	67	2,222
TOTAL									
1987-88	2,992	1,812	1,949	1,734	1,153	471	456	401	10,968
1988-89	2,990	1,597	2,642	1,413	1,424	368	223	133	10,390
1989-90	2,881	1,713	3,116	1,524	1,573	223	218	143	11,391
1989— June qtr	676	252	606	363	547	91	122	52	2,709
Sept. qtr	1,048	662	643	437	428	73	54	55	3,400
Dec. qtr	940	351	1,457	365	376	64	24	—	3,577
1990— Mar. qtr	377	321	630	334	411	55	27	57	2,212
June qtr	516	379	386	388	358	31	113	31	2,202
Sept. qtr p	1,024	536	605	396	403	58	65	67	3,154

TABLE 5. NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS COMMENCED, SEPTEMBER QUARTER 1990
RELATIVE STANDARD ERRORS (PER CENT)

State and Territory	Private sector		Total	
	Houses	Total	Houses	Total
NSW	4.3	3.1	4.1	2.7
Vic.	3.6	3.3	3.4	3.1
Qld	2.8	2.1	2.7	1.9
SA	2.7	2.2	2.6	1.9
WA	4.4	3.6	4.2	3.2
Tas.	2.8	2.1	2.7	1.9
NT	7.4	6.5	4.8	3.5
ACT	1.5	0.6	1.3	0.5
Australia	1.7	1.3	1.6	1.2

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

This publication contains preliminary estimates of the number of dwelling units commenced during the September quarter 1990. 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 September quarter 1990 are shown in Table 5. 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 State offices of 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. Original and seasonally adjusted building statistics are shown in Table 1. 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.

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 building and construction 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 Survey, Australia (8762.0) — 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

- 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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W. McLENNAN
Acting Australian Statistician

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