



D19/135787

19 February 2020

Ms Ann Palmer
Secretary
Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Palmer

Additional estimates hearings – Department of the Senate

In accordance with the usual practice, I attach statistics (updated as of 14 February 2020) about the operations of committees supported by the Senate Committee Office. The statistics cover the same ground as those provided in the previous parliament, but also include information about the support provided to select and joint select committees. The department is currently supporting 9 such committees. If the committee would like additional information I would be happy to provide it.

Yours sincerely

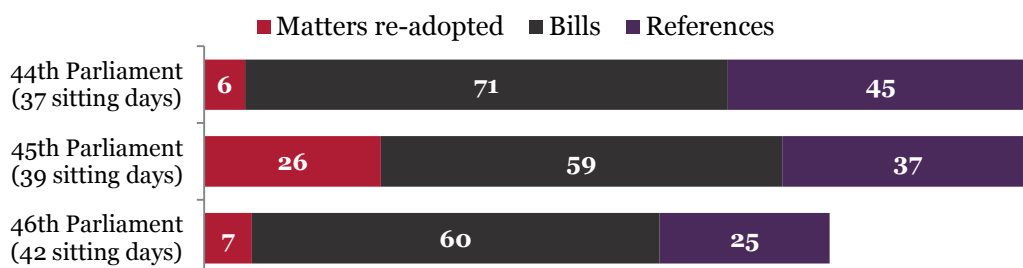
(Richard Pye)
Clerk

Senate standing committee activity

(Summary as at 14 February 2020)

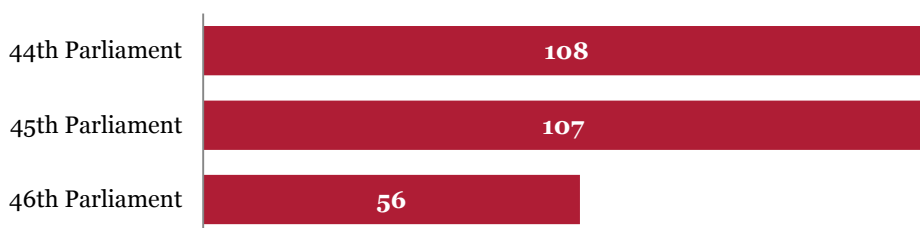
1. References

Standing Committee references in the first 8 months of each Parliament



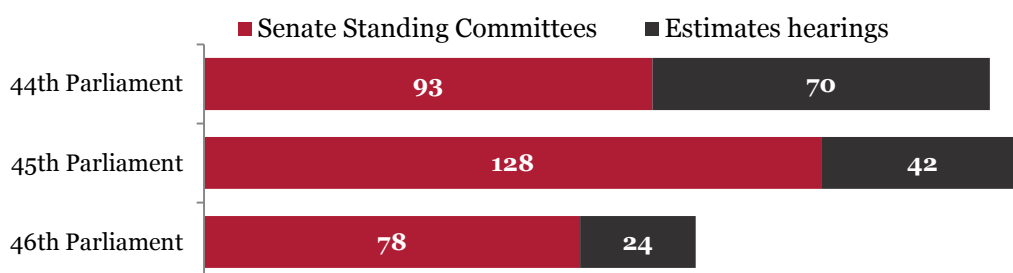
2. Reports

Standing Committee reports in the first 8 months of each Parliament



3. Hearings

Standing Committee hearings held in the first 8 months of each Parliament



Select committee activity

- Select committee (including joint select committee) activity has recently risen to levels not seen before, requiring the Senate department to support 9 such committees concurrently.
- The table below compares the number of select and joint select committees supported by the Senate Committee Office across the last four parliaments.
- After 8 months of the 46th Parliament, the Committee Office is committed to providing a total of 100 months of secretariat support to select committees, which is more than half of the total support required for the whole of the previous parliament.

Parliament	Number of selects and (joint selects)	Average length in months	Total months requiring support
43 rd	5 (4)	10	90
44 th	12 (2)	11	154
45 th	15 (1)	10	160
46 th (after 8 months)	8 (2)	10	100

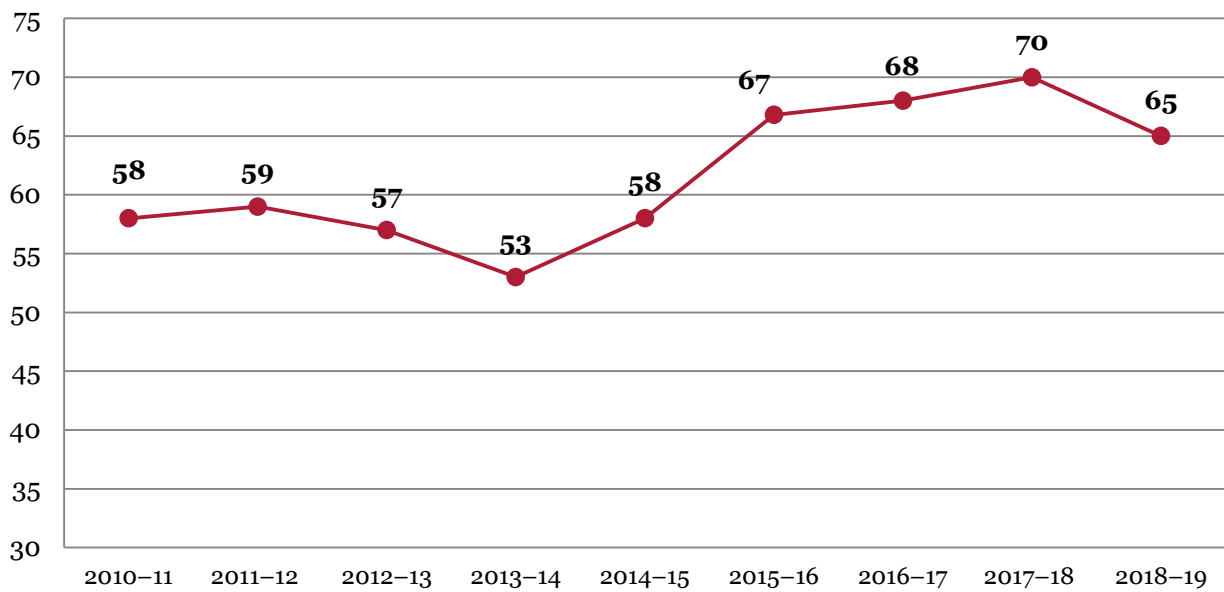
- In addition, the Committee Office also supports five joint standing committees.

Staffing

Staffing for 2019-20: At 5 February 2020, there were 62.4 Full Time Equivalent staff in the Committee Office, compared with an average FTE of 65 in 2018-19. This reduction reflects the brief downturn in committee activity as a result of the 2019 election. The Committee Office is currently returning to higher staffing levels to reflect ongoing high levels of committee activity. The following chart shows changes in average staffing levels over time.

Committee Office

Average Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staffing levels by completed financial year



Administration

The current annual budget for the Committee Office is approximately \$8.9 million. This includes employee expenses of \$8.5 million and administrative expenses (including secretariat travel, accommodation and venues for hearings) of \$0.4 million. So far in the 2019-20 financial year (as at 31 December 2019), the Committee Office actual expenditure was \$4.311 million.

Expenditure by completed financial year

