



AUSTRALIAN SENATE

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27 January 2016

Ms Lyn Beverley
Secretary
Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Beverley

ESTIMATES HEARING 8 FEBRUARY 2016 – DEPARTMENT OF THE SENATE

In accordance with the usual practice, I attach the latest information, statistics and graphs of recent committee activity.

Yours sincerely

(Rosemary Laing)

SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

REPORT TO THE FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – FEBRUARY 2016

RECENT TRENDS

The following data shows trends and comparisons in the activities of Senate standing committees. Workload continues to increase.

- At 31 December 2015 there have been a total of 321 references in the 44th Parliament. At a similar period in the 43rd parliament there were 224 references and in the 42nd parliament there were 250 references. This is shown in **graph 1**.
- At 31 December 2015 in the 44th parliament, a total of 413 reports have been tabled. In comparison, in the 43rd parliament there were 331 reports and in the 42nd parliament there were 350 reports tabled for the same period respectively. This is shown in **graph 3**.
- There has been a significant growth in the number of public hearings (excluding estimates hearings) with 202 hearings held in 2014-15 and 133 hearings held at the half year in 2015-16 (see **graph 4**).
- Of the two busiest committees at any one time during the 44th parliament, the Legal and Constitutional Affairs committees have not exceeded the 15 previously reported inquiries, but the Economics committees were managing 18 inquiries in September 2015 and again in November 2015.
- At present, the Senate Department is also supporting 5 Select committees and 1 Joint Standing committee (NDIS).

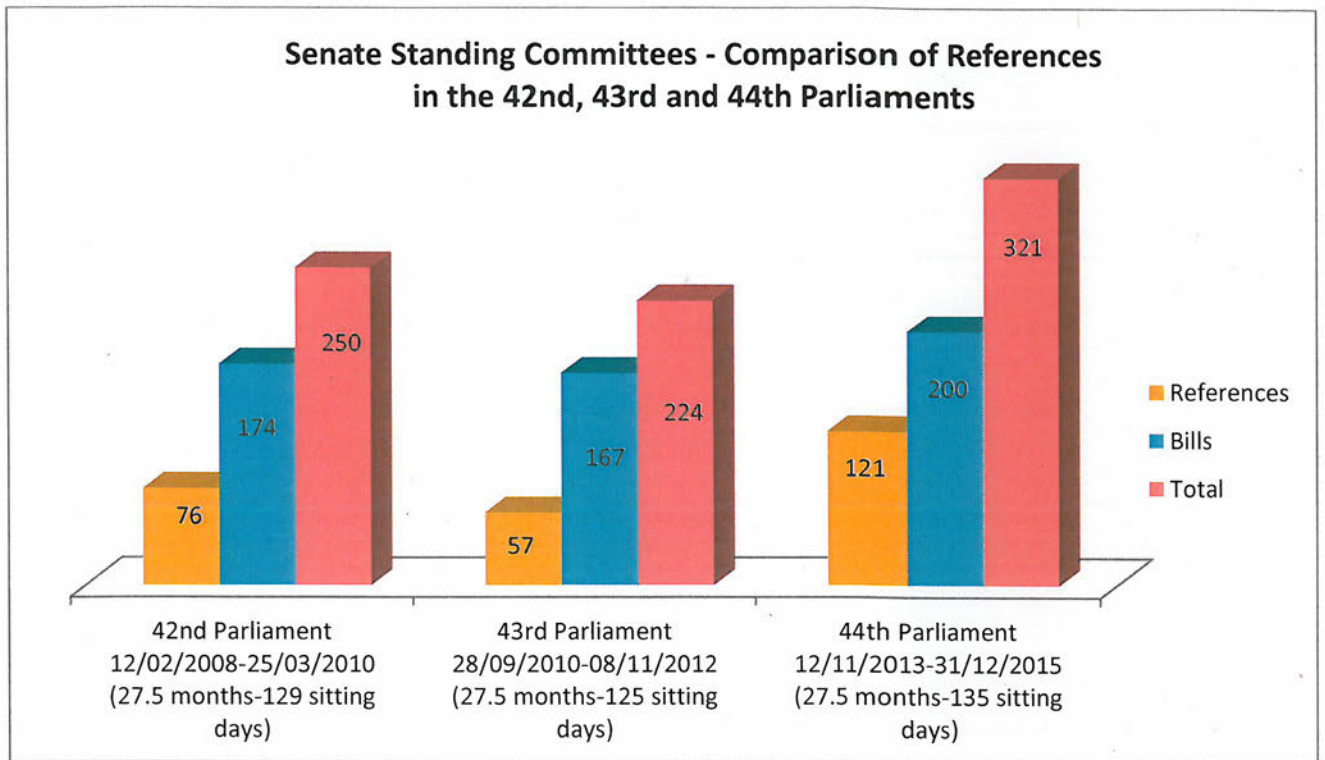
Previous trends – 41st to 43rd Parliaments

- The 43rd parliament experienced an increase in the total number of matters referred to standing committees. There were a total of 321 references to standing committees in the 43rd parliament compared to 300 references in the 42nd and 234 in the 41st respectively.
- During the 43rd parliament, there was also an increase in the number of committee reports tabled. A total of 506 reports were tabled in the last parliament, an increase from 462 reports in the 42nd parliament and 388 in the 41st parliament.
- The number of public hearings (excluding estimates hearings) increased in 2012-13 to 183. 144 public hearings were held in 2011-12 and 118 in 2010-11.
- The busiest committees at any one time during the 43rd parliament were the Legal and Constitutional Affairs committees, which twice dealt with a maximum of 12 references at one time (in November 2010 and May 2011) and the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport committees, which managed 12 references simultaneously during March 2013.

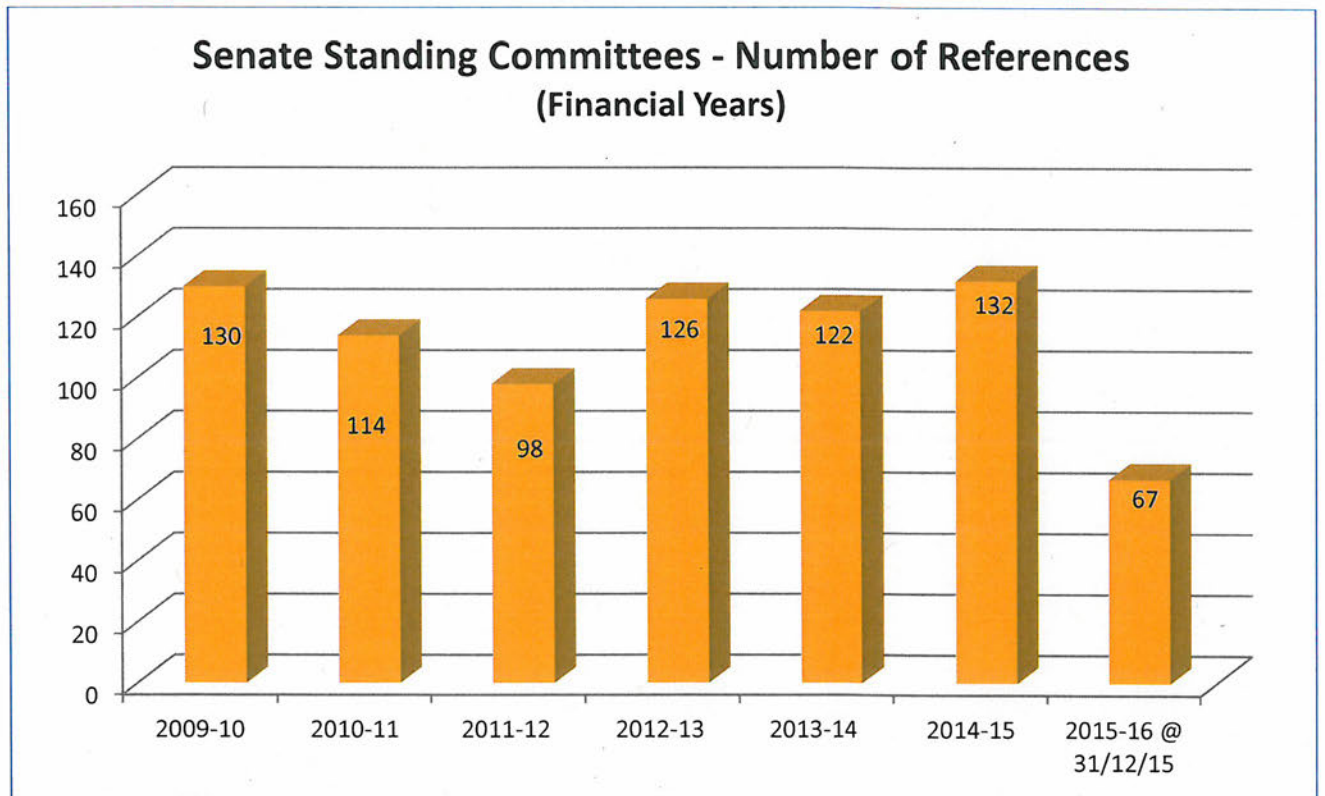
Average staffing for 2015-16: At the last pay in December 2015 there were 69 Full Time Equivalent staff in the Committee Office (**see FTE graph**). Recruitment has been undertaken to ensure there is adequate support for Committees as the Committee Office workload has increased. There was a minor error in the FTE graph provided to the committee in October 2015 (FTE as at September 2015 was labelled as FTE for 2014-15 instead of 2015-16). This is corrected in the graph attached.

Cost of running Senate committees: The current budget for the Committee Office is \$8.5 million (cash). In 2014-15, operational costs for the Committee Office were \$8.9 million (note that this figure includes corporate overheads). The attached financial summary includes estimated costs incurred 'by category of committee' for the four years 2011-12 to 2014-15. These staffing costs are based on an estimate of time allocated by departmental staff and are a guide only.

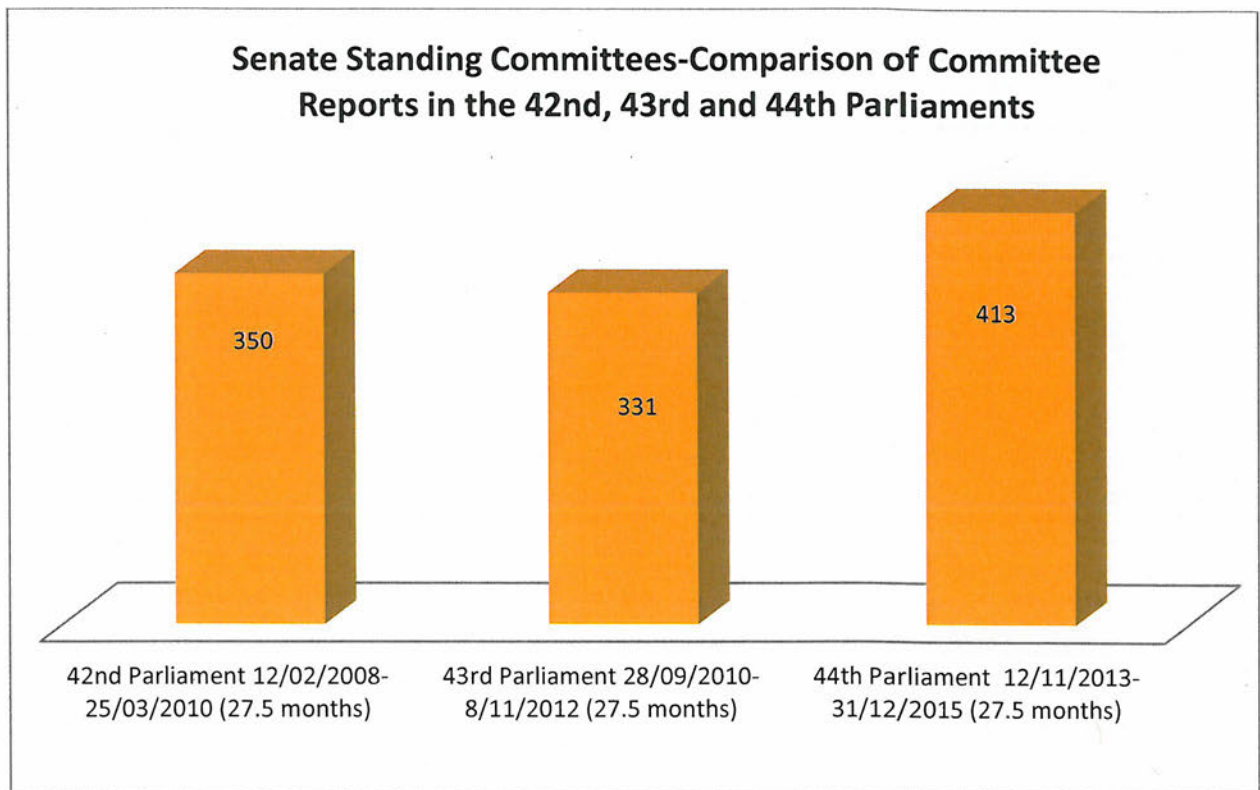
Graph 1



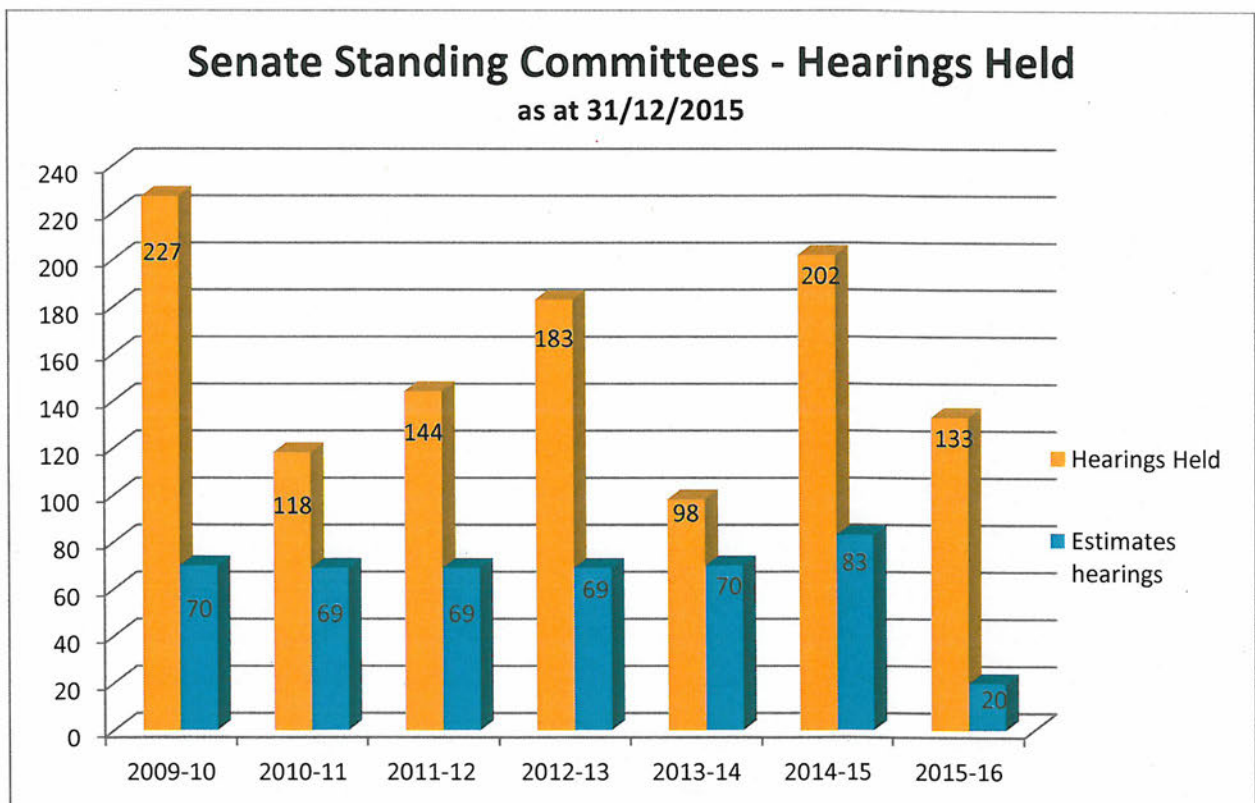
Graph 2



Graph 3



Graph 4



**SUMMARY COMPARISON OF COMMITTEE COSTS BY CATEGORY -
STANDING, SELECT AND JOINT COMMITTEES – 2012-13 TO 2015-16**

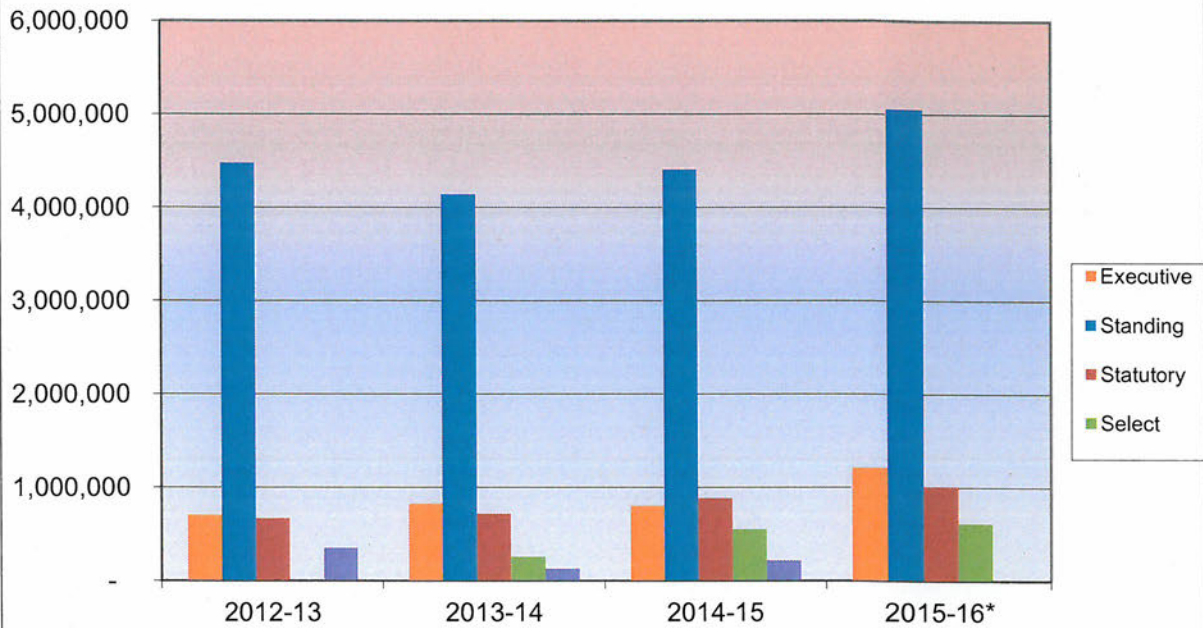
Expenses	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16*
Executive				
Staff Costs	699,960	822,952	800,436	1,208,952
Administrative Costs	21,876	41,541	24,360	46,057
Total Expenses	<u>721,836</u>	<u>864,493</u>	<u>824,796</u>	<u>1,255,009</u>
Standing				
Staff Costs	4,478,539	4,143,561	4,406,759	5,057,454
Administrative Costs	395,213	263,927	444,773	531,700
Total Expenses	<u>4,873,753</u>	<u>4,407,487</u>	<u>4,851,532</u>	<u>5,589,154</u>
Statutory				
Staff Costs	667,934	715,560	882,953	1,010,353
Administrative Costs	79,239	60,946	92,300	97,928
Total Expenses	<u>747,173</u>	<u>776,506</u>	<u>975,253</u>	<u>1,108,281</u>
Select				
Staff Costs	-	253,201	549,334	610,520
Administrative Costs	12,833	23,391	72,953	65,786
Total Expenses	<u>12,833</u>	<u>276,592</u>	<u>622,287</u>	<u>676,306</u>
Joint Select				
Staff Costs	350,391	125,875	217,860	719
Administrative Costs	29,045	20,201	50,209	3,007
Total Expenses	<u>379,436</u>	<u>146,075</u>	<u>268,069</u>	<u>3,726</u>
Total Program Expense	<u><u>6,735,030</u></u>	<u><u>6,471,154</u></u>	<u><u>7,541,937</u></u>	<u><u>8,632,476</u></u>

* Estimated actual

Staff costs - the salaries of Senate staff working within the secretariat.

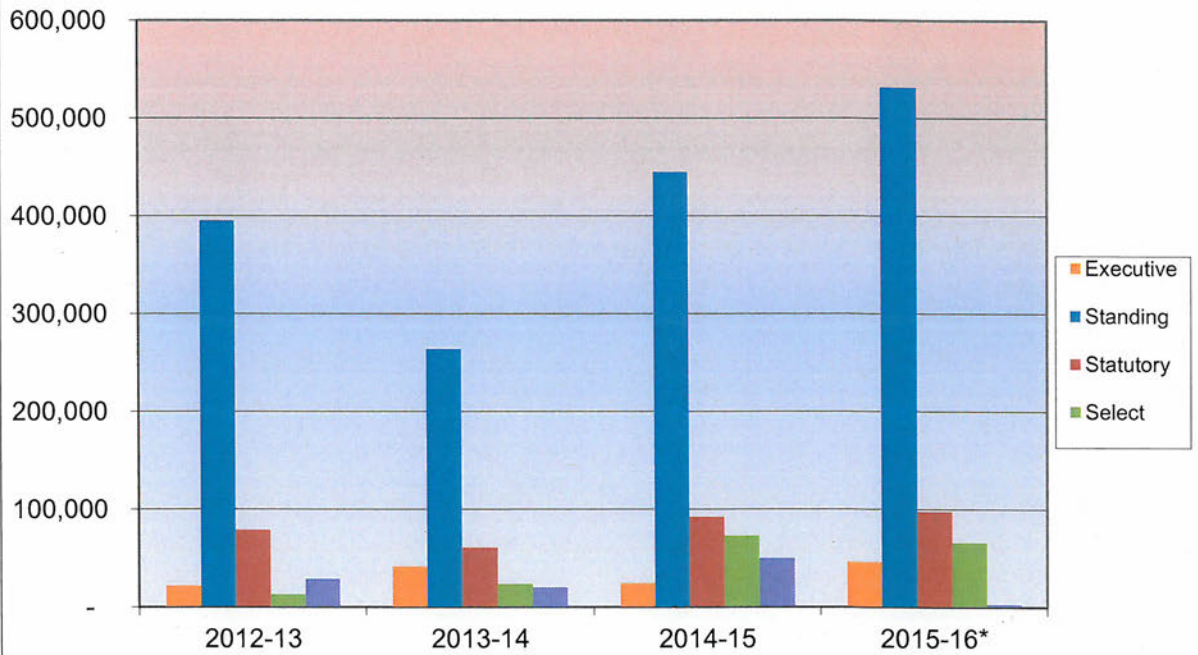
Administrative costs – includes advertising inquiries, refreshments at hearings, hire of hearing venues, flights and aircraft charters to attend hearings, printing etc.

Committee Office - Staff Costs



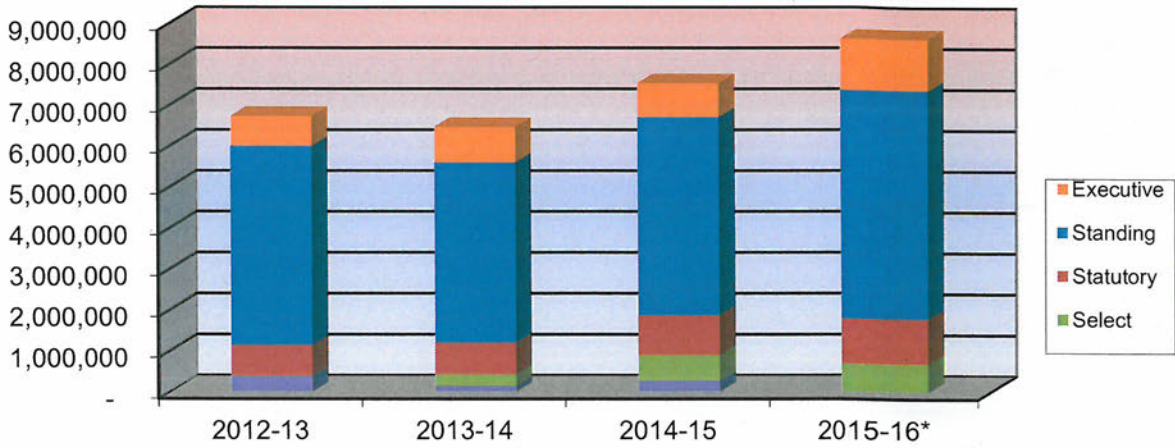
* Estimated actual based on data as at 31 Dec 2015

Committee Office - Administrative Costs



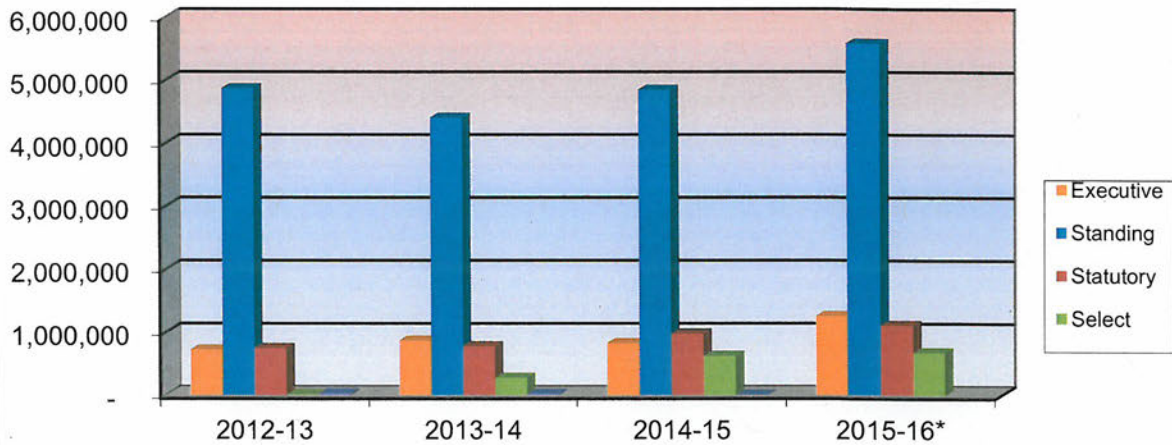
* Estimated actual based on data as at 31 Dec 2015

Committee Office - Total Expenditure



* Estimated actual based on data as at 31 Dec 2015

Committee Office - Total Expenditure



* Estimated actual based on data as at 31 Dec 2015

Committee Office FTE 2001/02 to 2015/16

