



AUSTRALIAN  
SENATE

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CLERK OF THE SENATE

D17/13614

23 February 2017

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

Dear Ms Beverley

**Estimates hearing 27 February 2017 – Department of the Senate**

In accordance with the usual practice, I attach statistics about the operations of committees supported by the Senate Committee Office, which demonstrate that the 45th Parliament has commenced with levels of committee activity above that seen in recent years.

Yours sincerely

(Richard Pye)  
Acting Clerk



# Senate committee activity

SUMMARY AS AT 16 FEBRUARY 2017

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## Activity

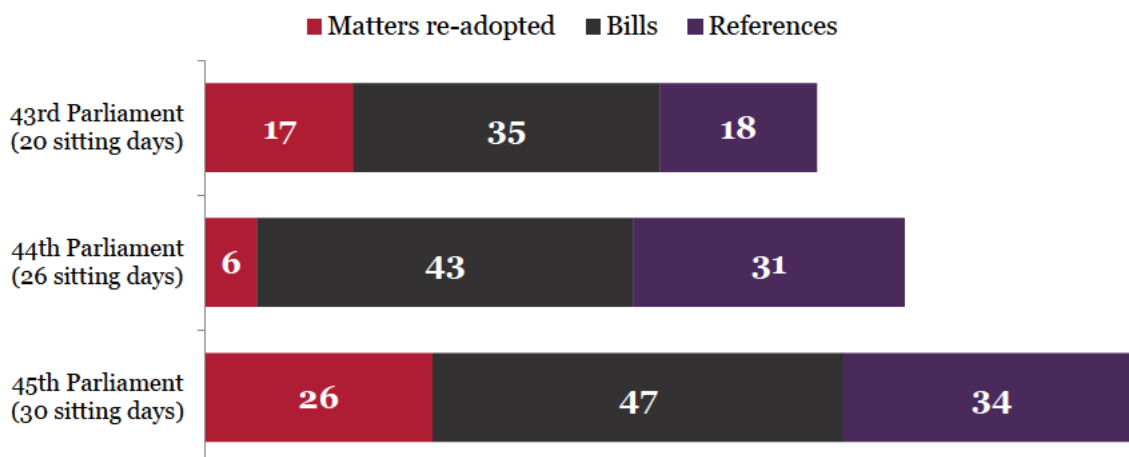
In the 45<sup>th</sup> Parliament, at 16 February 2017, there have been:

- 107 references (81 new references and 26 re-adopted from the 44th Parliament);
- 68 reports tabled;
- 90 hearings.

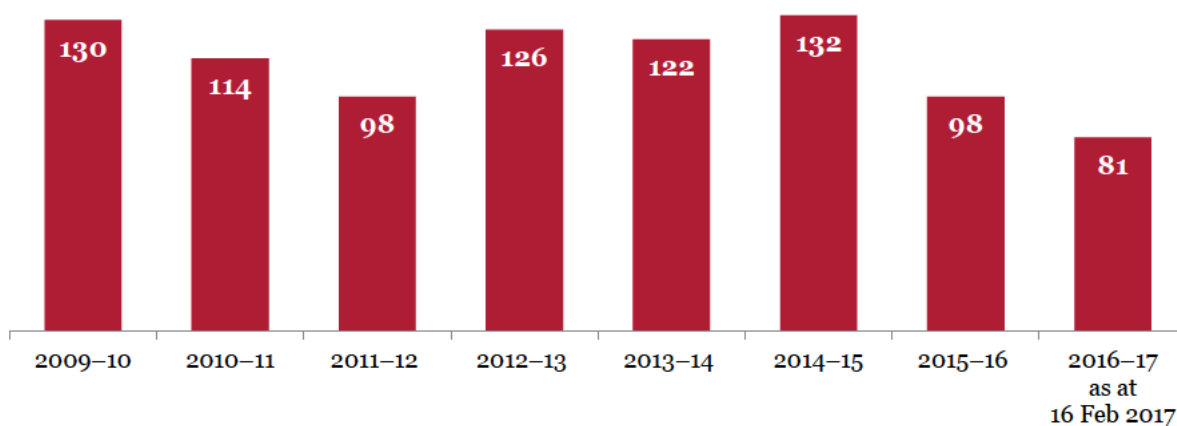
The following tables compare references and report at same point in previous parliaments, as well as a tally by financial year of references and hearings held.

## Number of references

### Standing Committee references in the first 5.5 months of each Parliament

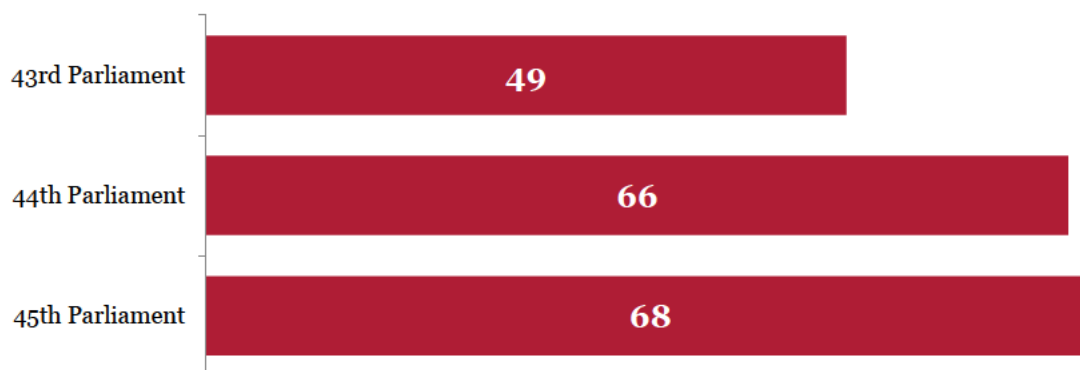


### Standing Committee references by financial year



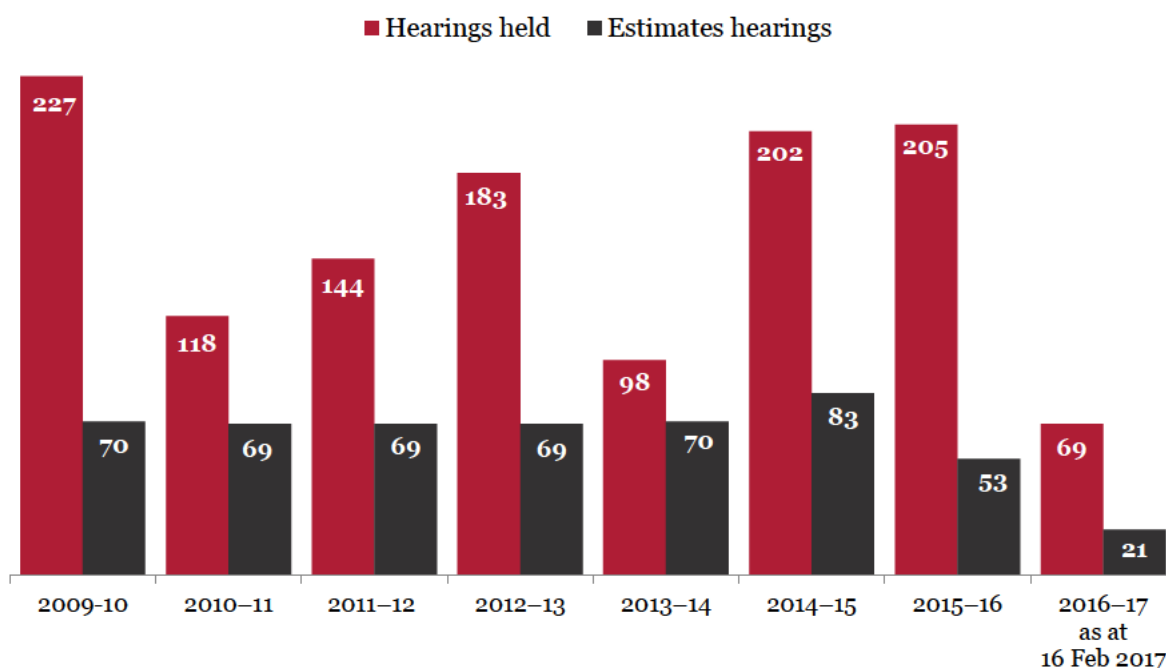
## Reports

### Standing Committee reports in the first 5.5 months of each Parliament



## Hearings held

### Standing Committee hearings held, by financial year



### Additional indicators of activity:

- The department is currently supporting five select committees, with another pending. During the 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament, the department supported 12 select committees (including one committee later re-established).
- At present, the department also supports six joint committees.
- The busiest committee during the 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament was the Economics Committee, which managed 20 inquiries in February 2016, and 18 in September and in November 2015.

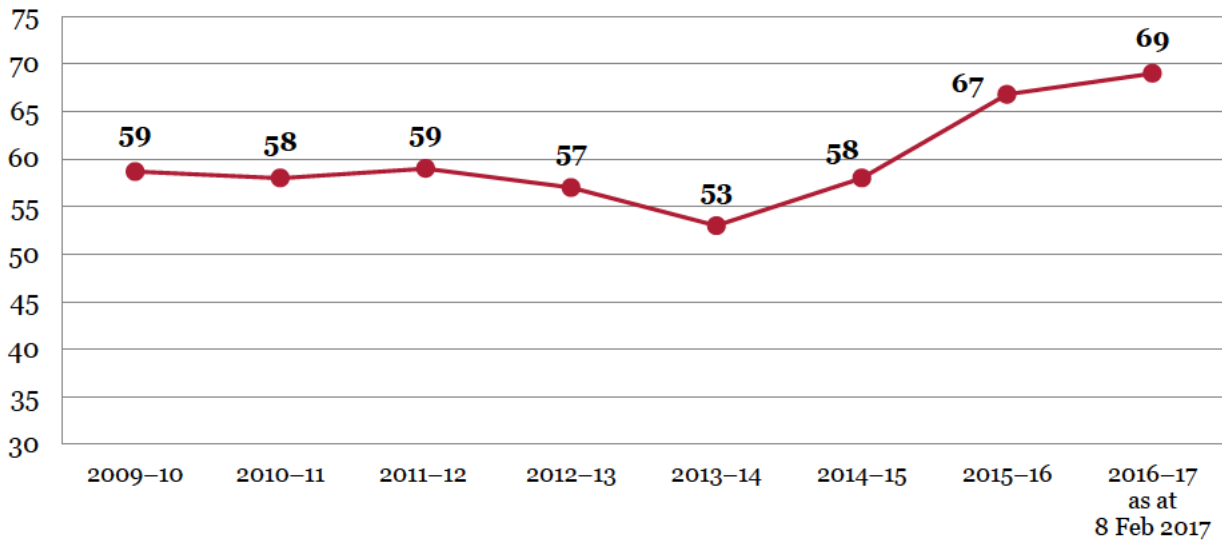
# Staffing

*Average staffing for 2016–17:* At 8 February 2017 there were 68.6 Full Time Equivalent staff in the Committee Office, compared with an average FTE of 66.8 for 2015-16.

The following chart shows changes in average staffing levels over time.

## Committee Office FTE

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



## Administration

*Cost of running Senate committees:* The current annual budget for the Committee Office is approximately \$8.8 million. At 31 January 2017, the 2016–17 year-to-date operational costs for the office were \$4.7 million.

In 2015–16, operational costs for the Committee Office were \$10.7 million (including corporate overheads). Additional resources were sought and used in the last financial year.

### Summary comparison of committee costs by category

(as at 31 December 2016)

| <b>Standing, select and joint committees, 2013–14 to 2016–17*</b> |                  |                  |                  |                  |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Expenses</b>   | <b>2013–14</b>   | <b>2014–15</b>   | <b>2015–16</b>   | <b>2016–17*</b>  |
| <b>Executive†</b>   |                  |                  |                  |                  |
| Staff costs   | 822,952          | 800,436          | 1,219,392        | 1,669,389        |
| Administrative costs  | 41,541           | 24,360           | 57,059           | 112,454          |
| <i>Total expenses</i>   | <i>864,493</i>   | <i>824,796</i>   | <i>1,276,451</i> | <i>1,781,843</i> |
| <b>Standing</b>   |                  |                  |                  |                  |
| Staff costs   | 4,143,561        | 4,406,759        | 5,199,215        | 5,286,128        |
| Administrative costs  | 263,927          | 444,773          | 484,019          | 287,408          |
| <i>Total expenses</i>   | <i>4,407,487</i> | <i>4,851,532</i> | <i>5,683,234</i> | <i>5,548,638</i> |
| <b>Joint Statutory</b>  |                  |                  |                  |                  |
| Staff costs   | 715,560          | 882,953          | 1,019,048        | 763,709          |
| Administrative costs  | 60,946           | 92,300           | 112,212          | 24,305           |
| <i>Total expenses</i>   | <i>776,506</i>   | <i>975,253</i>   | <i>1,131,260</i> | <i>788,014</i>   |
| <b>Select</b>   |                  |                  |                  |                  |
| Staff costs   | 253,201          | 549,334          | 744,230          | 75,931           |
| Administrative costs  | 23,391           | 72,953           | 96,803           | 465              |
| <i>Total expenses</i>   | <i>276,592</i>   | <i>622,287</i>   | <i>841,033</i>   | <i>76,396</i>    |
| <b>Joint Standing/Select</b>                                      |                  |                  |                  |                  |
| Staff costs   | 125,875          | 217,860          | 719              | 358,071          |
| Administrative costs  | 20,201           | 50,209           | 3,007            | 1,938            |
| <i>Total expenses</i>   | <i>146,075</i>   | <i>268,069</i>   | <i>3,726</i>     | <i>360,009</i>   |
| <b>Total program expense</b>                                      | <b>6,471,154</b> | <b>7,541,937</b> | <b>8,935,704</b> | <b>8,554,900</b> |

†Executive comprises Clerk Assistant and Senior Clerk's offices and additional staff engaged to provide 'surge capacity' to meet peaks in demand.

\*Estimated actual – based on average monthly expenditure.

Staff costs – the salaries of Senate staff working within the secretariat. These staffing costs are based on estimates of time allocated by departmental staff and are a guide only.

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

# Total expenditure

## Committee Office

