



AUSTRALIAN SENATE

CLERK OF THE SENATE

hl.let.16398

27 February 2009

Ms Christine McDonald
Secretary
Finance and Public Administration Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms McDonald

ESTIMATES HEARING, 27 FEBRUARY 2009 – DEPARTMENT OF THE SENATE

During the consideration of the Department's estimates on Monday, 23 February 2009, Senators Ferguson and Moore asked questions about the increase in costs and volume of activity of Senate committees.

The attached information illustrates in statistical and tabular forms the recent costs and levels of activity of Senate committees and a comparison between the levels of committee activity in the 41st and 42nd Parliaments.

Yours sincerely

(Harry Evans)

PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CANBERRA A.C.T. 2600
TEL: (02) 6277 3350
FAX: (02) 6277 3199
E-mail: clerk.sen@aph.gov.au

SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES
TRENDS DURING THE 41ST AND 42ND PARLIAMENTS

The attached statistics and tables show trends in the activities of Senate committees during the 41st and 42nd parliaments. The trends can be summarised as follows:

41st Parliament

- Reduction in numbers of references to committees
- No select committees appointed after 1 July 2005

As a consequence, with committees being less active, staff vacancies arising out of normal turnover were not filled. At the end of the parliament there were 7 staff vacancies.

42nd Parliament

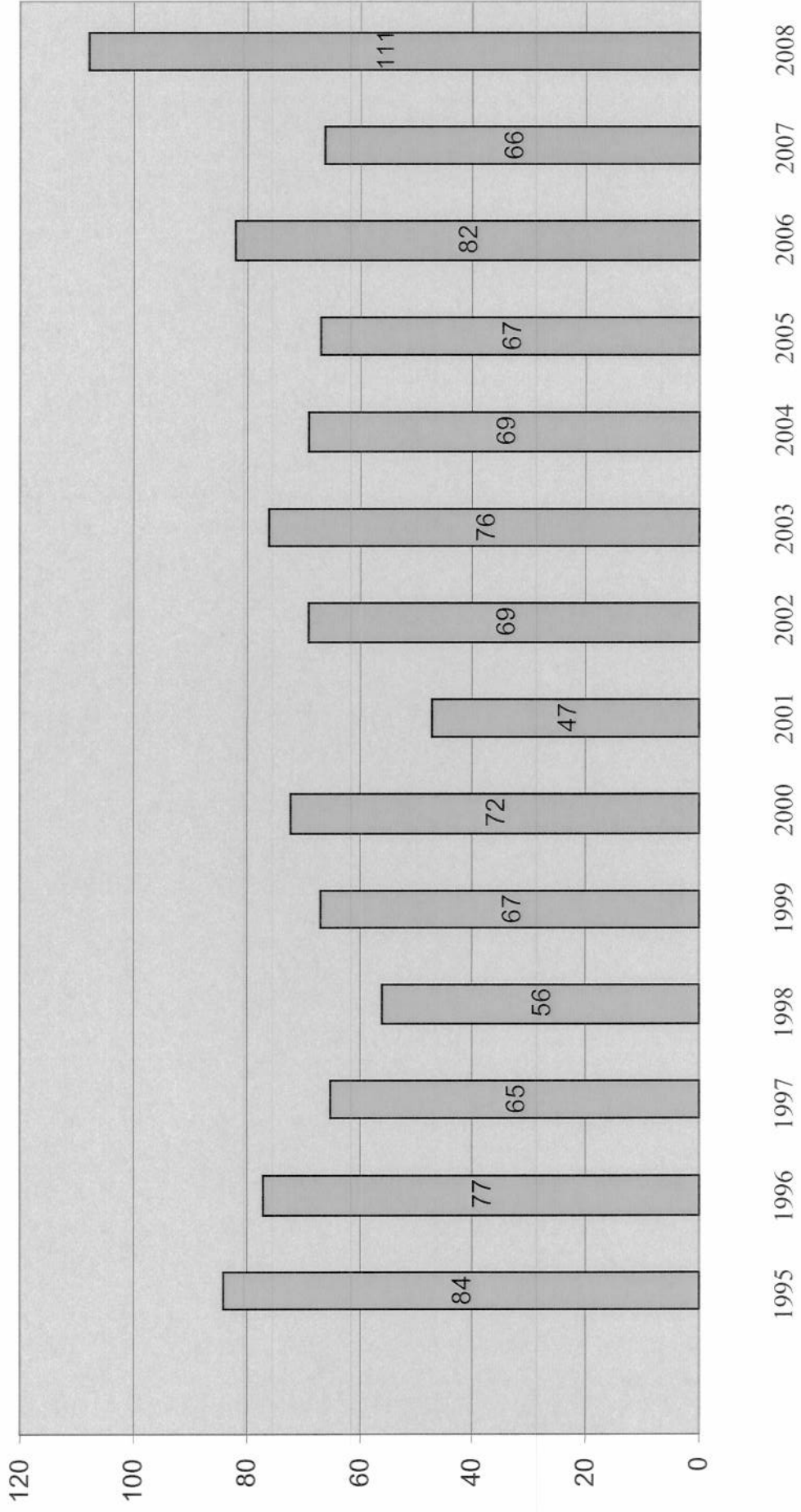
- Increase in numbers of references to committees (the busiest committees with the most number of references have been Economics (maximum of 14 references at one time), Legal and Constitutional Affairs (maximum of 5 references at one time) and Community Affairs (maximum of 12 references at one time))
- This increase in activity is also reflected by the numbers of committee reports being tabled, with Economics tabling 30 reports and Community Affairs tabling 18 reports during 2008.
- Increase in the number of very short-term references (ie less than 2 weeks)
- Appointment of 6 select committees within a 12 month period

As a consequence, all staff vacancies were filled, with 12 new staff appointed within 8 months, a net increase of 7 staff.

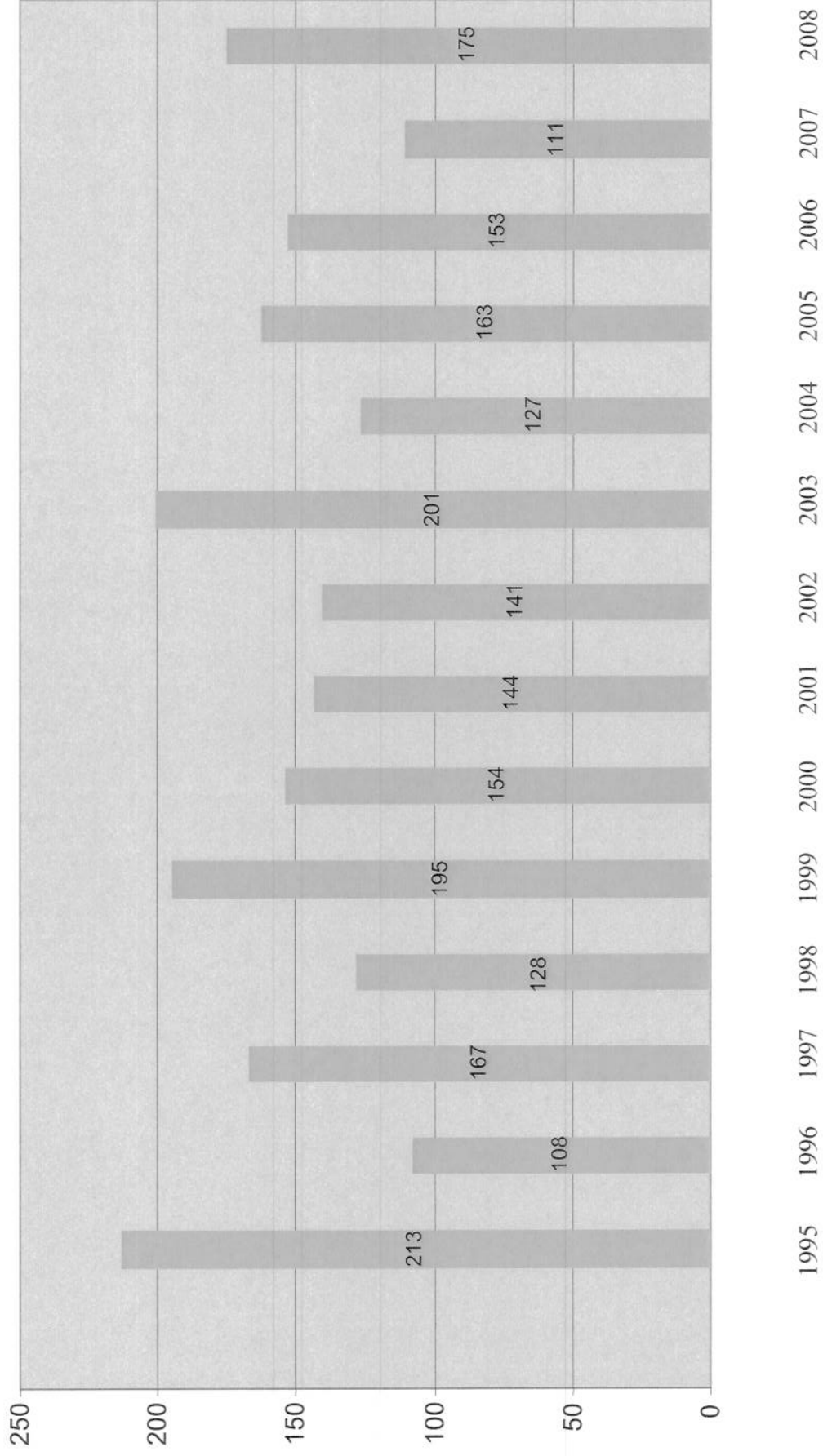
As a workload management strategy, secretariats which are less busy frequently provide research, analysis and administrative assistance to committee secretariats with large numbers of references and those with very short reporting deadlines.

CJC Elliott
Clerk Assistant (Committees)
26 February 2009

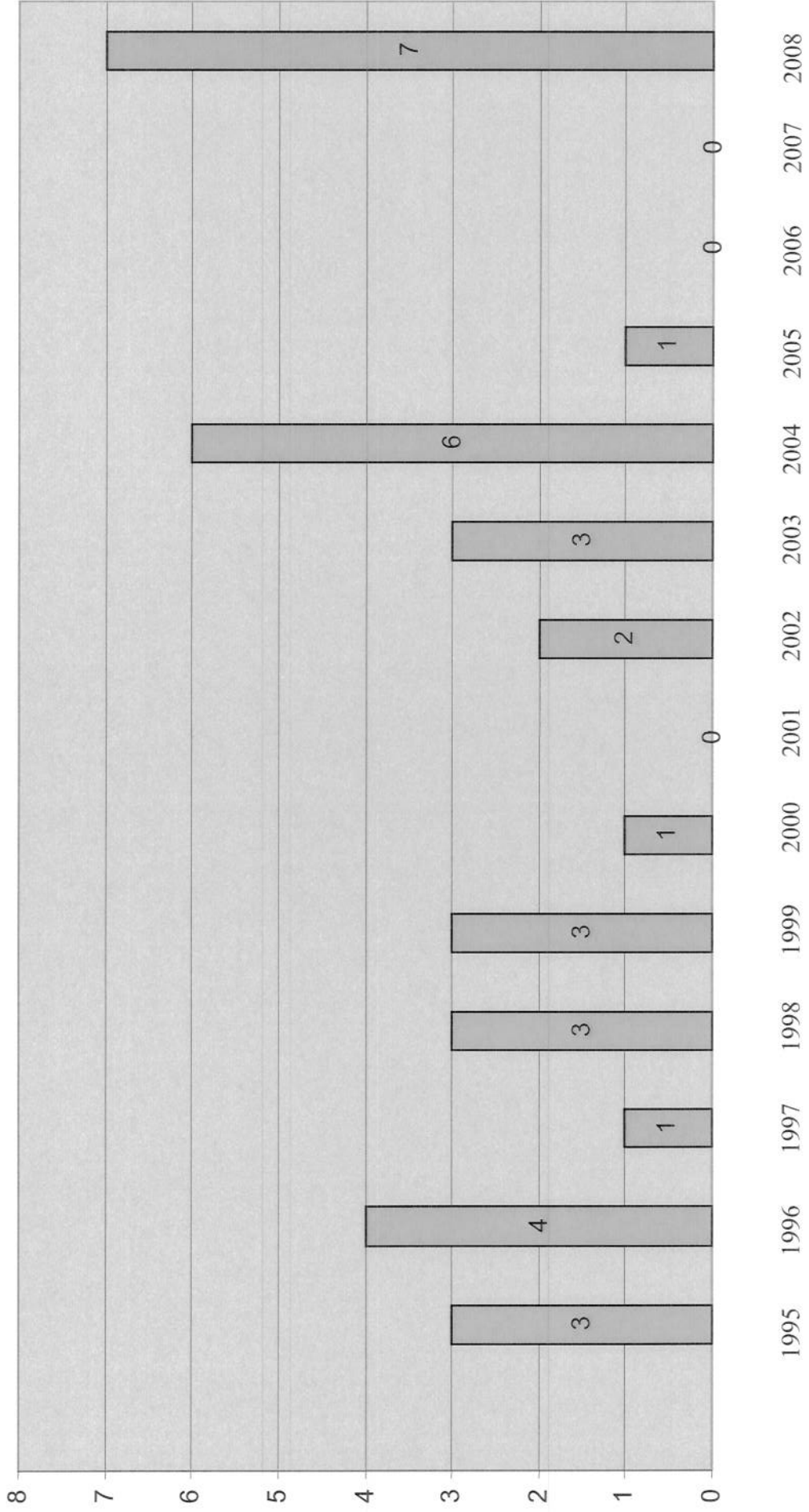
Senate Committees - Number of References 1995 to 2008



Senate Committee Hearings Held – 1995 to 2008

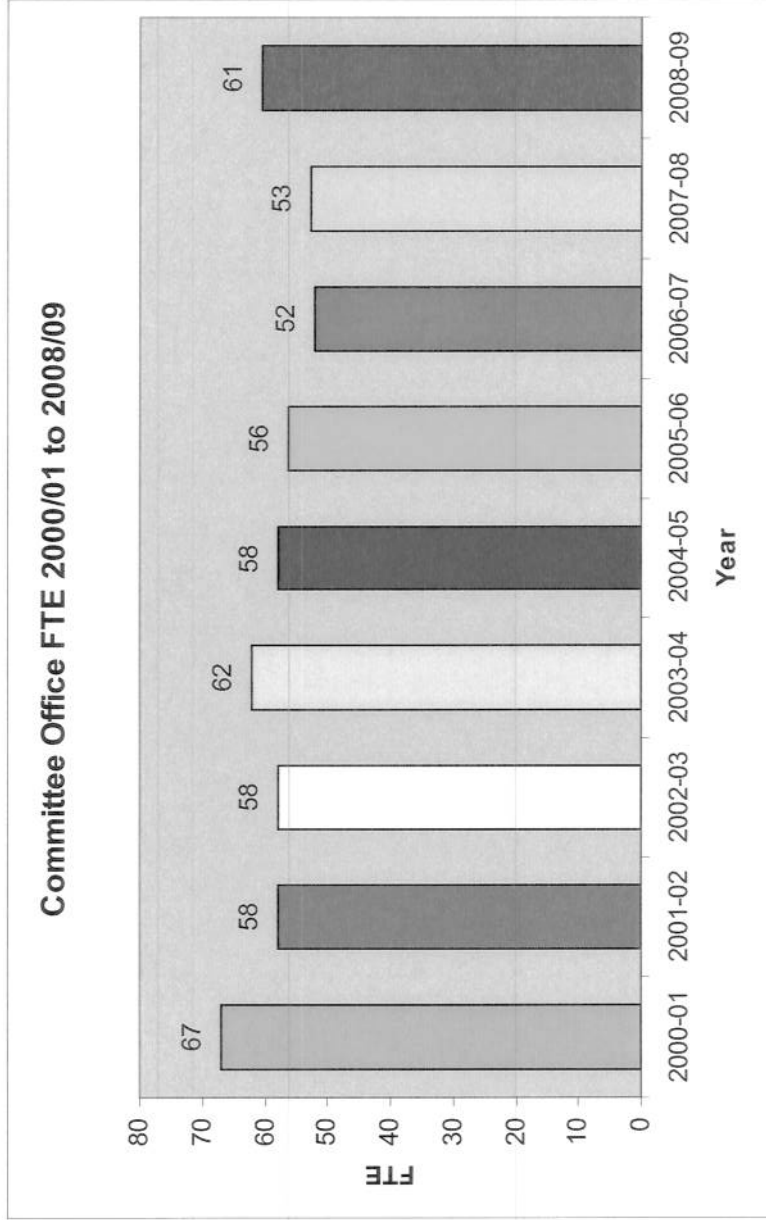


Senate Select Committees Appointed – 1995 to 2008

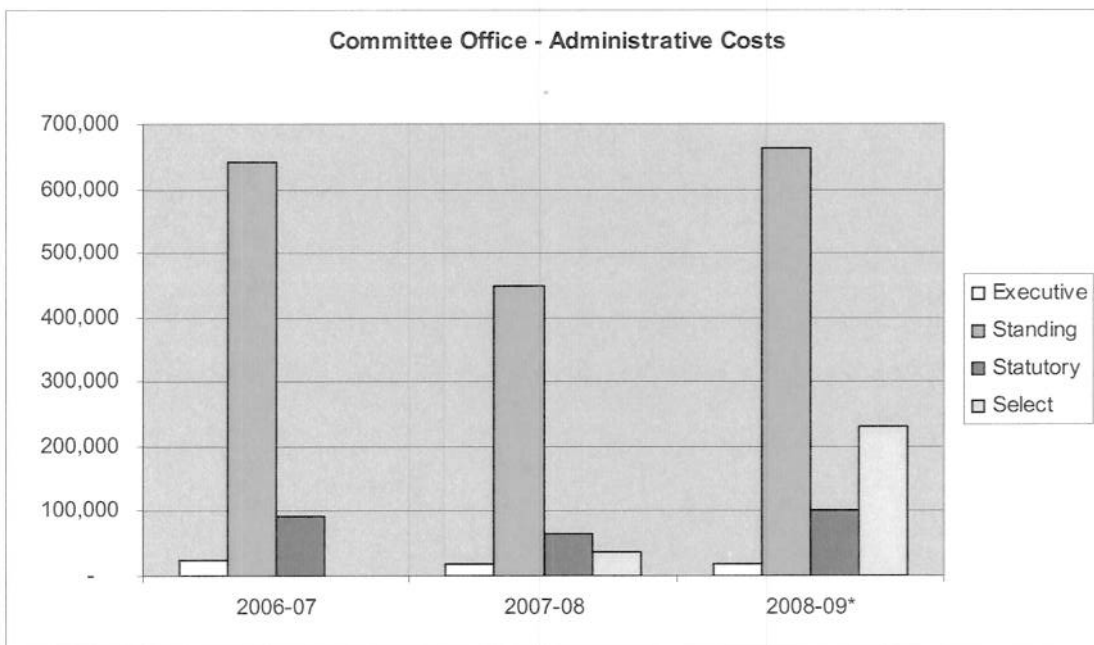
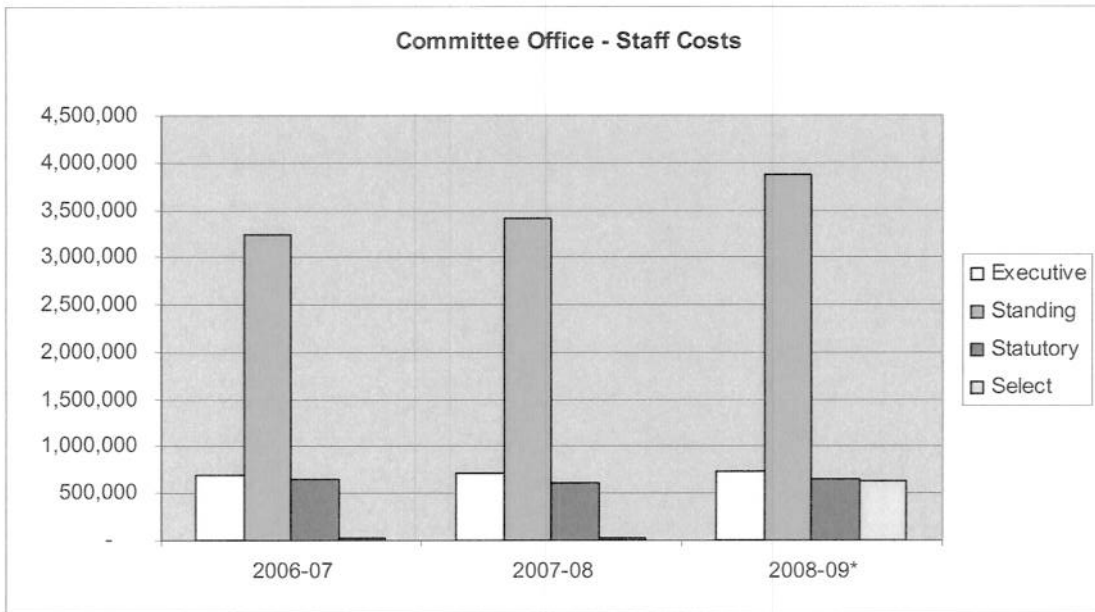


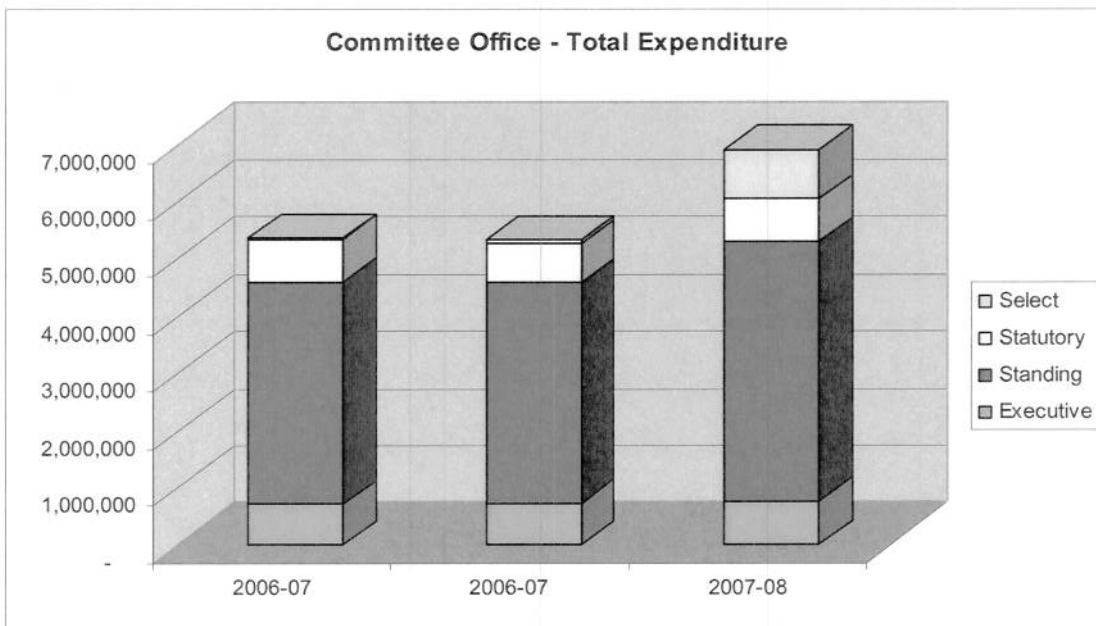
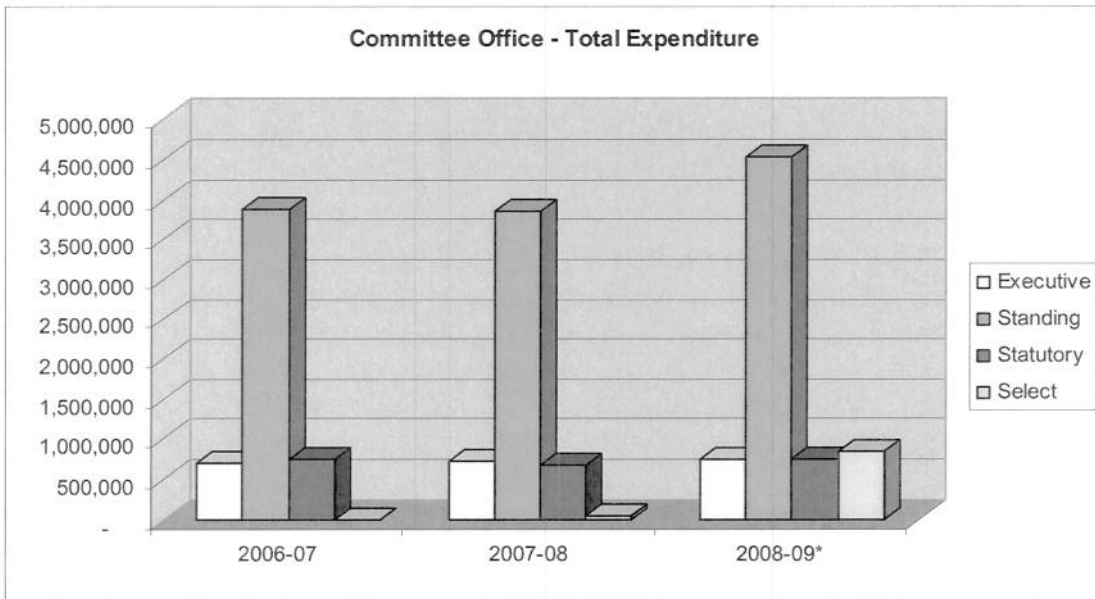
COMMITTEE OFFICE STAFFING LEVELS

from 2000 to 2009



FTE = full time equivalent staff





**SUMMARY COMPARISON OF COMMITTEE COSTS BY CATEGORY -
STANDING, SELECT AND JOINT COMMITTEES – 2006-07 TO 2008-09**

February 2009

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09*
Executive			
Staff costs	693,880	714,464	741,472
Administrative costs	23,784	17,157	19,523
Total Expenses	717,664	731,621	760,996
Standing			
Staff costs	3,239,223	3,407,126	3,875,921
Administrative costs	641,611	447,673	662,552
Total Expenses	3,880,834	3,854,799	4,538,473
Statutory			
Staff costs	655,654	615,606	648,142
Administrative costs	90,866	65,186	99,993
Total Expenses	746,520	680,792	748,135
Select			
Staff costs	16,152	25,532	634,100
Administrative costs	235	38,237	229,255
Total Expenses	16,386	63,770	863,355
Total Program Expense	<u>5,361,404</u>	<u>5,330,982</u>	<u>6,910,959</u>

* Estimated actual - based on average monthly expenditure

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.

**SUMMARY COMPARISON OF COMMITTEE COSTS BY INDIVIDUAL
COMMITTEE – 2007- 08 TO 2008-09**

February 2009

Program: Committee Office

Expenses	2007-08	2008-09
Standing Committees		
<i>Community Affairs</i>		
Staff costs	292,388	307,793
Administrative costs	39,617	76,428
<i>Economics</i>		
Staff costs	236,850	323,303
Administrative costs	26,685	69,025
<i>Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</i>		
Staff costs	208,088	275,339
Administrative costs	31,912	37,092
<i>Environment, Communications and the Arts</i>		
Staff costs	241,040	195,961
Administrative costs	26,351	51,883
<i>Finance and Public Administration</i>		
Staff costs	158,738	266,141
Administrative costs	24,813	26,179
<i>Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade</i>		
Staff costs	268,933	275,959
Administrative costs	24,246	31,187
<i>Legal and Constitutional Affairs</i>		
Staff costs	243,033	342,232
Administrative costs	25,659	38,431

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.

Expenses	2007-08	2008-09
<i>Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport</i>		
Staff costs	204,863	274,224
Administrative costs	19,479	56,265
Joint Statutory Committees		
<i>Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI) <u>and</u></i>		
<i>Australian Crime Commission (ACC)</i>		
Staff costs (ACLEI/ACC)	208,547	191,499
Administrative costs (ACLEI/ACC)	21,184	39,794
<i>Corporations and Financial Services</i>		
Staff costs	151,351	186,584
Administrative costs	18,912	18,535
Select Committees		
<i>Agricultural and Related Industries</i>		
Staff costs		33,377
Administrative costs		5,362
<i>Fuel and Energy</i>		
Staff costs		131,403
Administrative costs		26,678
<i>Housing Affordability in Australia</i>		
Staff costs		1,959
Administrative costs		3,931
<i>Men's Health</i>		
Staff costs		—
Administrative costs		—

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.

Expenses	2007-08	2008-09
<i>National Broadband Network</i>		
Staff costs		77,955
Administrative costs		22,270
 <i>Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities</i>		
Staff costs		125,199
Administrative costs		57,160
 <i>State Government Financial Management</i>		
Staff costs		-
Administrative costs		18,331

NOTE: As a workload management strategy, secretariats which are less busy frequently provide research, analysis and administrative assistance to committee secretariats with large numbers of references and those with very short reporting deadlines. This explains why secretariat costs do not necessarily match workload levels. For example, the legally qualified staff on the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee often help other secretariats with legal issues and questions.

*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.*