



AUSTRALIAN SENATE

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19 May 2010

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

Dear Ms McDonald

**ESTIMATES HEARING 24 MAY 2010 – DEPARTMENT OF THE SENATE**

It has been a practice in the past to provide the Committee with regular updates about the costs and volume of activity of Senate Committees. As long as these updates continue to be of use to the Committee, I will continue the practice.

Please see attached information, tables and statistics of Committee activity updated to May 2010, in the same format as previously provided for ease of comparison.

Yours sincerely

(Rosemary Laing)

## **SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

### **REPORT TO FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION LEGISLATION COMMITTEE – MAY ESTIMATES 2010**

#### **TRENDS DURING THE 41<sup>ST</sup> AND 42<sup>ND</sup> PARLIAMENTS**

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The attached statistics and tables show trends in the activities of Senate committees during the 41<sup>st</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> parliaments. The Department has met the recent substantial increase in Committee work referred by the Senate by;

- enlarging the budget allocation for Committee work; and
- using a variety of staffing strategies.

These matters are described and the trends can be summarised as follows:

#### **41<sup>st</sup> Parliament**

During the 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, there was a;

- Reduction in numbers of references to committees; and
- 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. Committee activities were able to be supported with fewer staff, with staff gradually being reduced during the 40<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> Parliaments from 62 FTE staff in 2003, to FTE 53 staff by the end of the 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament in July 2008.

#### **42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament**

During the 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, there was an:

- Increase in the 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 7 references at one time) and Community Affairs (maximum of 14 references at one time);
- This increase in activity is also reflected in the numbers of committee reports being tabled, with the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee tabling 44 reports, the Economics Committee tabling 37 reports and the Community Affairs Committee tabling 23 reports during 2009.

- In the first 5 months of 2010, the Economics Committee tabled 10 reports, the Community Affairs Committee tabled six reports and the Legal and Constitutional Committee also tabled six reports.
- Four select committees have continued to operate during the past 12 months (one of which, Agricultural and Related Industries, has two concurrent references).

The committee office FTE staffing level as at May 2010 is 59, slightly less than at the peak of activity during 2009 when it was 62, but still close to the levels of staffing and committee activity experienced in 2003–04.

A variety of workload management strategies have been used in the Senate committee office to meet the significant increase in workload since July 2008 as follows:

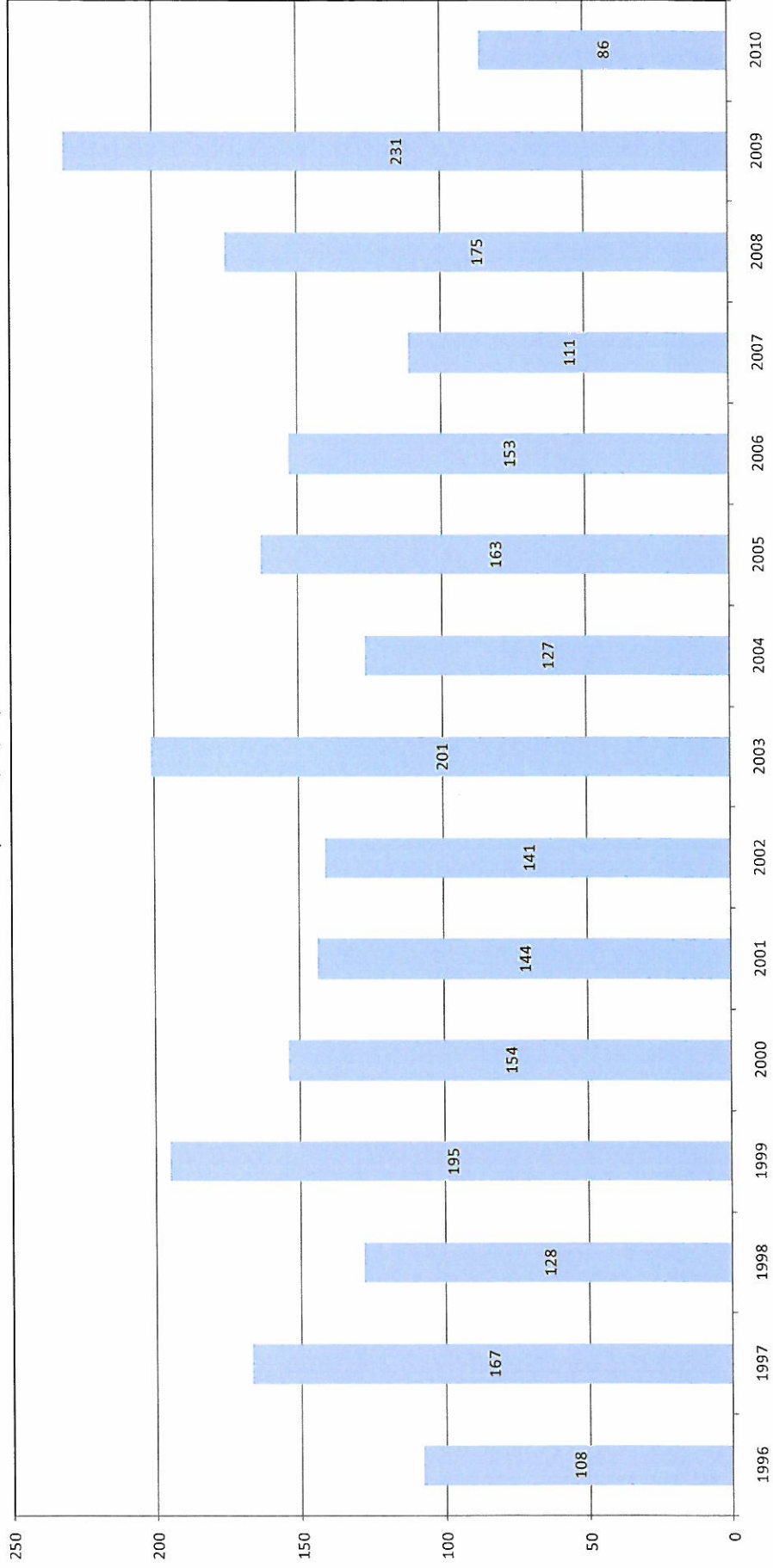
- Committee secretariats which are less busy frequently provide research, analysis and administrative assistance to committee secretariats with large numbers of references and those with very short reporting deadlines;
- Officers from other areas of the Department have undertaken additional duties to assist committee secretariats;
- Committee staff have been asked to work (in some cases, significant amounts of) additional hours;

**Senate Committees - Number of References 1995 to 2010**  
(as at 13/05/10)



Does not include reference of time-critical bills as agreed by the Senate 13.05.10

**Senate Committee Hearings Held - 1996 to 2010**  
(as at 14/05/10)



Does not include Select Committees, Joint Committee or estimates hearings

**SUMMARY COMPARISON OF COMMITTEE COSTS BY CATEGORY -  
STANDING, SELECT AND JOINT COMMITTEES – 2007-08 TO 2009-10**

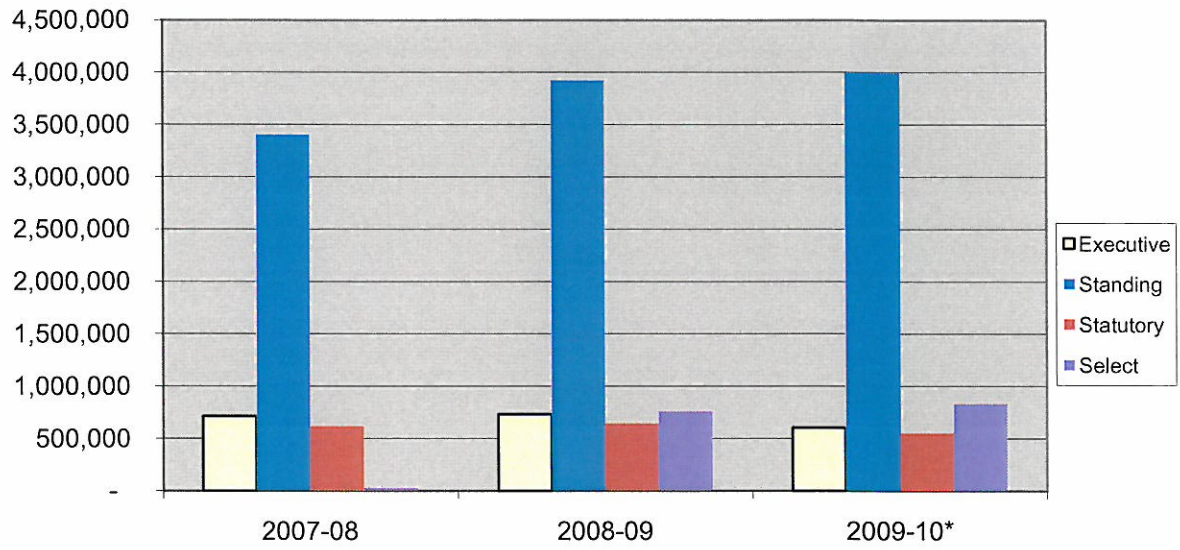
<i>Expenses</i>	<i>2006-07</i>	<i>2007-08</i>	<i>2008-09</i>	<i>2009-10*</i>
<b><i>Executive</i></b>				
Staff Costs	693,880	714,464	730,947	602,742
Administrative Costs	23,784	17,157	31,330	25,794
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>	<b>717,664</b>	<b>731,621</b>	<b>762,277</b>	<b>628,536</b>
<b><i>Standing</i></b>				
Staff Costs	3,239,223	3,407,126	3,923,416	3,995,712
Administrative Costs	641,611	447,673	668,702	614,506
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>	<b>3,880,834</b>	<b>3,854,799</b>	<b>4,592,119</b>	<b>4,610,218</b>
<b><i>Statutory</i></b>				
Staff Costs	655,654	615,606	644,454	552,402
Administrative Costs	90,866	65,186	99,420	94,460
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>	<b>746,520</b>	<b>680,792</b>	<b>743,874</b>	<b>646,862</b>
<b><i>Select</i></b>				
Staff Costs	16,152	25,532	758,461	833,834
Administrative Costs	235	38,237	269,857	146,850
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>	<b>16,386</b>	<b>63,770</b>	<b>1,028,318</b>	<b>980,684</b>
<b><i>Total Program Expense</i></b>	<b>5,361,404</b>	<b>5,330,982</b>	<b>7,126,588</b>	<b>6,866,299</b>

*\* Estimated actual to 30 June 2010 calculated at 30 April 2010*

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

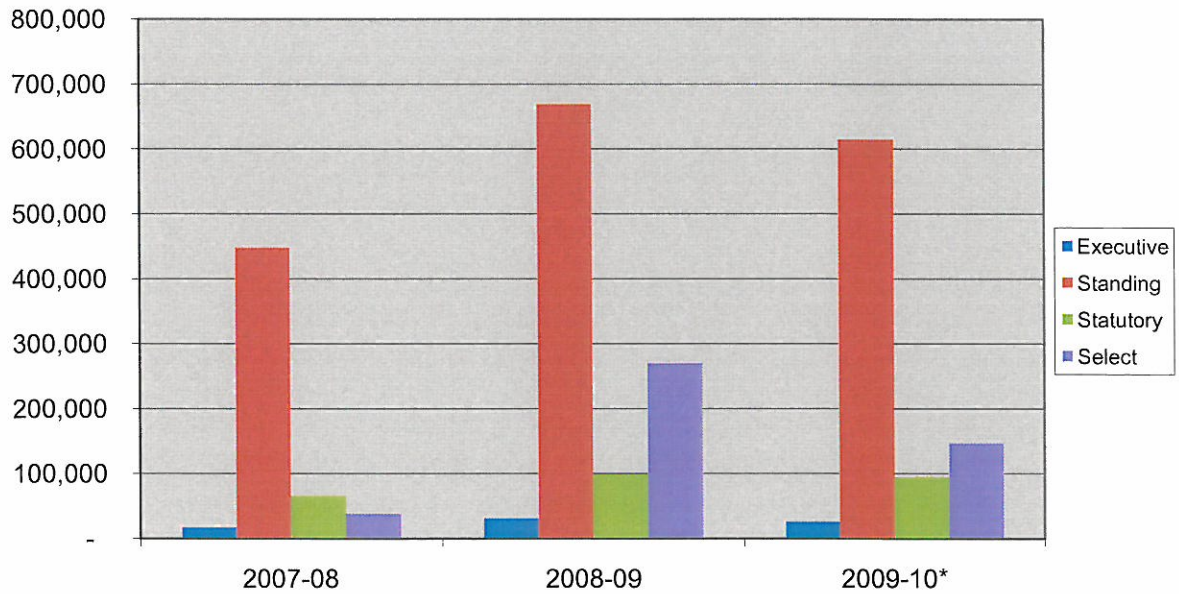
*Administrative costs – includes advertising inquiries, refreshments at hearings, hire of hearing venues, flights and aircraft charters to attend hearings, printing etc.*

### Committee Office - Staff Costs



\* Estimated actual to 30 June 2010 based on data as at 30 April 2010

### Committee Office - Administrative Costs



\* Estimated actual to 30 June 2010 based on data as at 30 April 2010

<b>SUMMARY COMPARISON OF COMMITTEE COSTS</b>			
<b>BY INDIVIDUAL COMMITTEE – 2007- 08 TO 2009-10</b>			
	<i>2007-08</i>	<i>2008-09</i>	<i>2009-10*</i>
<b>Standing Committees</b>			
<b>Community Affairs</b>			
Staff costs	489,755	525,651	549,733
Administrative costs	97,406	111,546	99,347
<b>Economics</b>			
Staff costs	410,767	555,361	551,637
Administrative costs	60,158	111,257	105,593
<b>Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</b>			
Staff costs	408,032	482,181	434,291
Administrative costs	54,709	86,450	59,693
<b>Environment, Communications and the Arts</b>			
Staff costs	394,281	356,511	510,372
Administrative costs	52,004	82,848	57,237
<b>Finance and Public Administration</b>			
Staff costs	372,210	453,016	416,452
Administrative costs	47,858	71,230	48,167
<b>Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade</b>			
Staff costs	458,756	478,792	515,350
Administrative costs	39,994	47,669	54,900
<b>Legal and Constitutional Affairs</b>			
Staff costs	449,170	604,366	606,065
Administrative costs	50,624	66,976	83,531
<b>Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport</b>			
Staff costs	424,154	467,538	411,813



Administrative costs	44,921	90,726	106,038
<b>Statutory Committees</b>			
<b>Joint Comm on Corporations and Securities</b>			
Staff costs	266,934	313,276	269,927
Administrative costs	29,641	31,358	46,868
<b>ACC/Aust Comm for Law Enforcmt Integrity</b>			
Staff costs	348,672	331,178	282,474
Administrative costs	35,545	68,062	47,591
<b>Select Committees</b>			
<b>Agricultural and Related Industries</b>			
Staff costs	346	63,754	136,683
Administrative costs	12,815	21,061	29,647
<b>State Government Financial Management</b>			
Staff costs	578	348	-
Administrative costs	10,627	7,376	-
<b>Housing Affordability in Australia</b>			
Staff costs	23,042	1,959	-
Administrative costs	13,597	4,027	-
<b>Regional &amp; Remote Indigenous Communities</b>			
Staff costs	1,567	220,945	282,908
Administrative costs	1,198	79,925	40,589
<b>Fuel &amp; Energy</b>			
Staff costs	-	255,246	293,164
Administrative costs	-	79,652	31,511
<b>National Broadband Network</b>			
Staff costs	-	172,174	122,655
Administrative costs	-	41,340	33,585

<b>Select Committee on Men's Health</b>				
Staff costs	-	29,268	-	473
Administrative costs	-	11,258		553
<b>Select Committee on Climate Policy</b>				
Staff costs	-	14,767	-	1,103
Administrative costs	-	25,218		10,965

### Committee Office FTE 1991/92 to 2009/10

