



AUSTRALIAN SENATE

CLERK OF THE SENATE

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

rc.let.17693

17 May 2011

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

Dear Ms McDonald

**ESTIMATES HEARING 23 MAY 2011 – 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.

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

Yours sincerely

(Rosemary Laing)

## SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

### REPORT TO THE FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION LEGISLATION COMMITTEE – ESTIMATES MAY 2011

#### RECENT TRENDS

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The following data shows trends and comparisons in the activities of Senate committees:

- The 42<sup>nd</sup> parliament experienced an increase in the total number of matters referred to committees, increasing from 234 in the 41<sup>st</sup> to 309 in the 42<sup>nd</sup>. So far in the 43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament (at 12 May 2011) there have been 83 matters referred to Senate standing committees. This compares to 68 matters referred after a similar period in the 42<sup>nd</sup> parliament and 56 in the 41<sup>st</sup> parliament
- The 42<sup>nd</sup> parliament also experienced an increase in the total number of committee reports tabled, rising from 396 in the 41<sup>st</sup> to 493 in the 42<sup>nd</sup>. Committee reports tabled thus far in the 43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament (at 12 May 2011) total 111. This compares to 101 reports tabled after a similar period in the 42<sup>nd</sup> parliament and 85 in the 41<sup>st</sup> parliament
- The busiest committees at any one time during the 42<sup>nd</sup> parliament were Economics (maximum of 14 references at one time) and Community Affairs (maximum of 14 references at one time). In the 43<sup>rd</sup> parliament, the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committees have dealt with a maximum of 12 references at one time (in November 2010 and currently).
- So far in 2011, the Economics Committees have tabled 12 reports, the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committees have tabled 10 reports and the Environment and Communications Committees have tabled 8 reports
- Currently, four select committees administered by the Senate are in operation (three Senate select committees and one joint select committee).

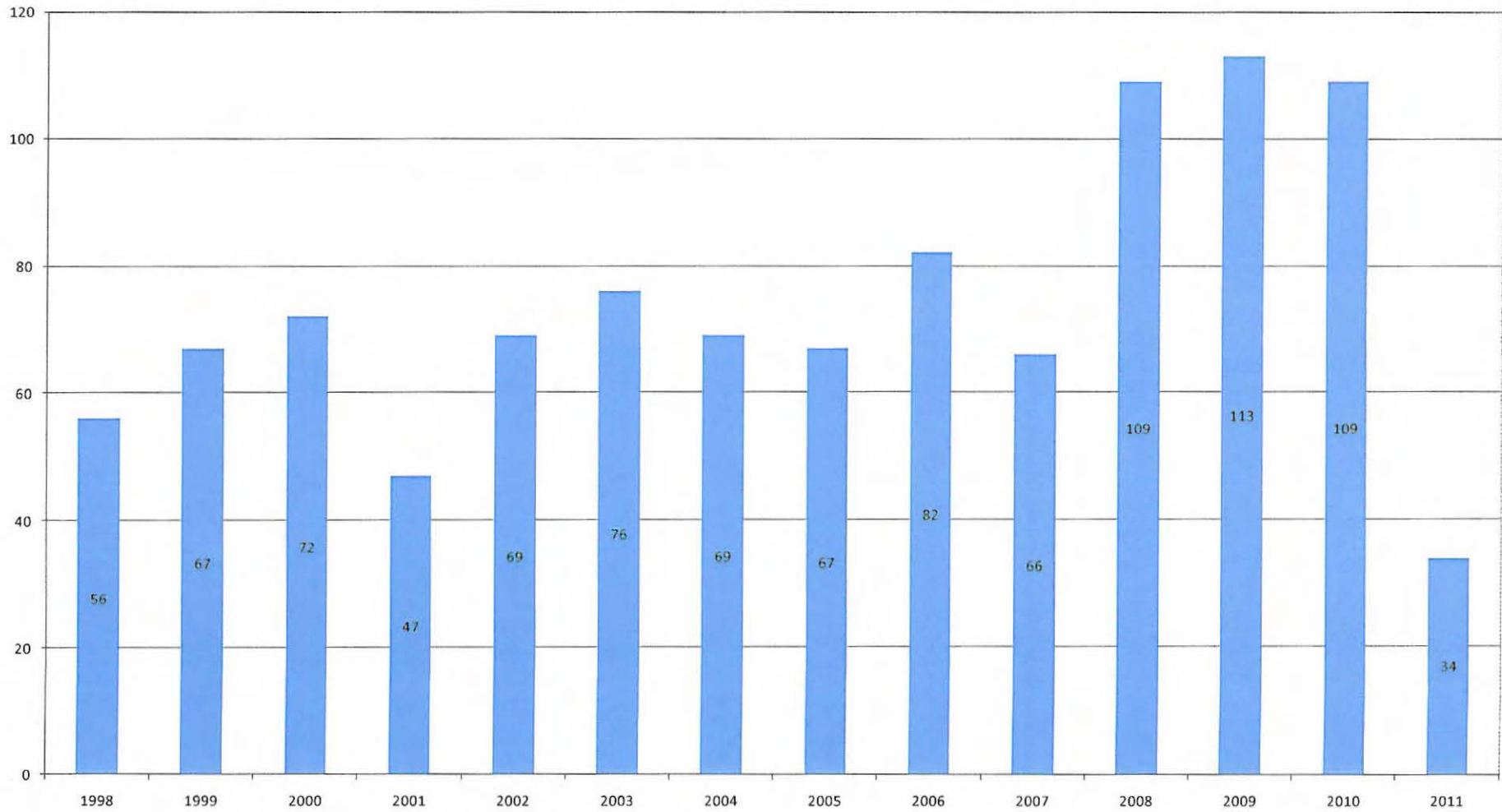
*Staffing:* the committee office FTE staffing level as at May 2011 is 57.

*Recruitment:* recruitment for all levels continues as required in the Committee Office to account for internal promotion, discretionary leave and related non-ongoing recruitment, retirement and resignation.

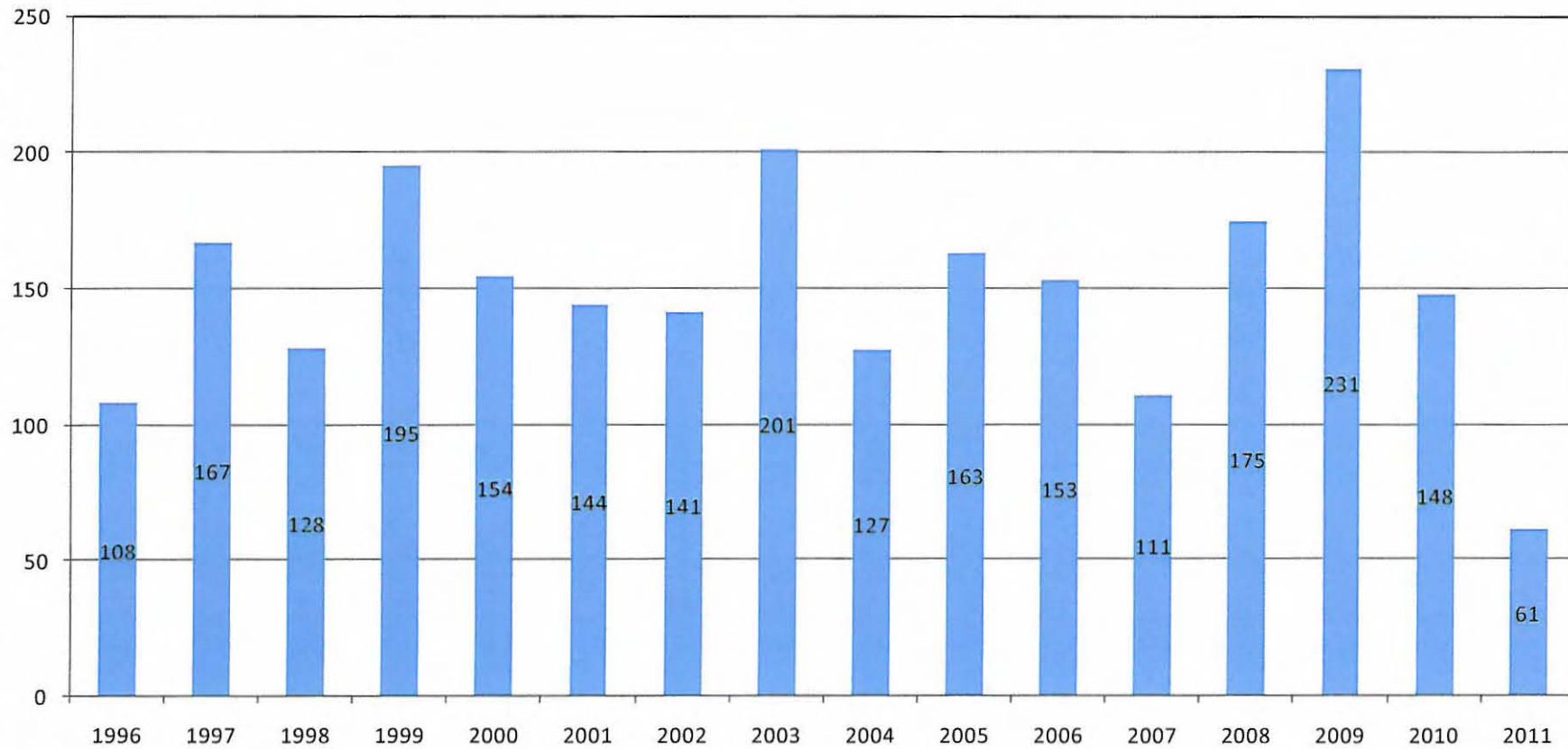
*Budget 2010-11:* operational costs for the Committee Office are not expected to exceed its allocation of \$6.5m.

*Accessibility of on-line material to the vision impaired:* the Environment and Communications References Committee has commenced a trial to convert to HTML a selection of submissions received by the committee for its inquiry into the *status, health and sustainability of Australia's Koala population* (report due 1 June 2011). The first batch of five submissions was sent and converted to HTML by Vision Australia in February. Four more have since been converted as well. The nine PDF submissions (or 31 pages) cost approx \$1000 to convert, at a rate of \$32.87 per page. Web traffic for these pages has been minimal. Feedback from interested groups has been sought. A final report on the trial will be provided to the Clerk at the conclusion of the 'koalas' inquiry.

Senate Standing Committees - Number of References 1998 to 2011  
(as at 24/03/11)



**Senate Standing Committees - Hearings Held - 1996 to 2011**  
(as at 29/4/11)



**SUMMARY COMPARISON OF COMMITTEE COSTS BY CATEGORY -  
STANDING, SELECT AND JOINT COMMITTEES – 2007-08 TO 2010-11**

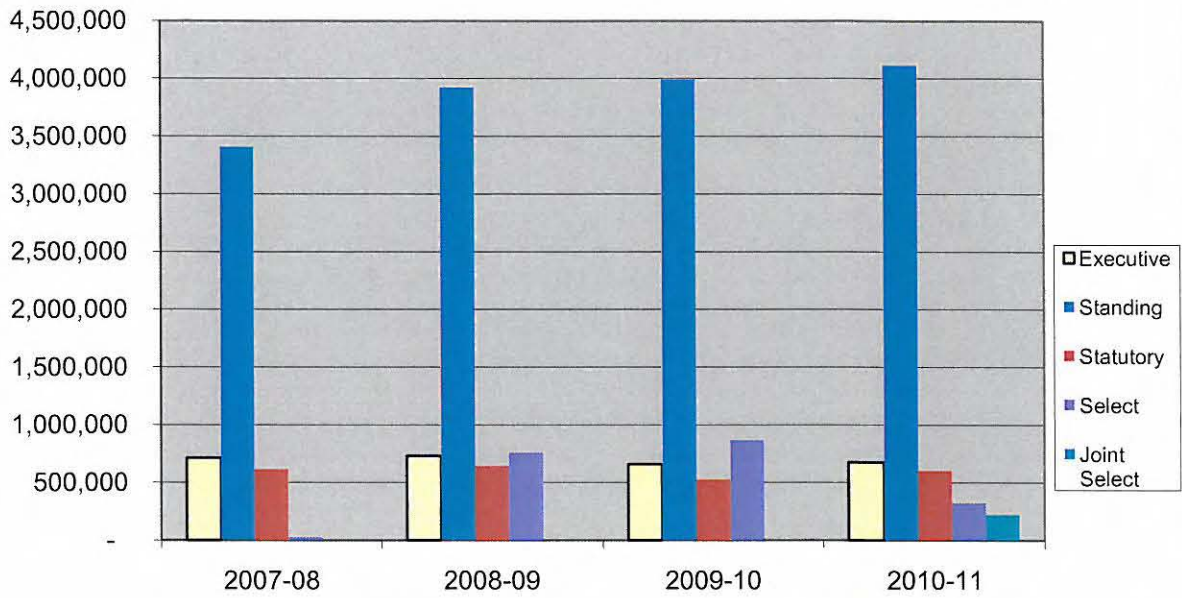
<i>Expenses</i>	<i>2007-08</i>	<i>2008-09</i>	<i>2009-10</i>	<i>2010-11*</i>
<b><i>Executive</i></b>				
Staff Costs	714,464	730,947	659,811	676,390
Administrative Costs	17,157	31,330	26,418	21,479
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>	<b>731,621</b>	<b>762,277</b>	<b>686,228</b>	<b>697,869</b>
<b><i>Standing</i></b>				
Staff Costs	3,407,126	3,923,416	3,992,496	4,115,347
Administrative Costs	447,673	668,702	669,917	303,551
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>	<b>3,854,799</b>	<b>4,592,119</b>	<b>4,662,413</b>	<b>4,418,898</b>
<b><i>Statutory</i></b>				
Staff Costs	615,606	644,454	525,235	603,721
Administrative Costs	65,186	99,420	100,171	65,731
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>	<b>680,792</b>	<b>743,874</b>	<b>625,407</b>	<b>669,453</b>
<b><i>Select</i></b>				
Staff Costs	25,532	758,461	867,248	323,357
Administrative Costs	38,237	269,857	167,829	52,387
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>	<b>63,770</b>	<b>1,028,318</b>	<b>1,035,077</b>	<b>375,745</b>
<b><i>Joint Select</i></b>				
Staff Costs	-	-	-	220,807
Administrative Costs	-	-	-	26,083
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>246,890</b>
<b><i>Total Program Expense</i></b>	<b>5,330,982</b>	<b>7,126,588</b>	<b>7,009,125</b>	<b>6,408,855</b>

\* Estimated actual to 30 June 2011 calculated at 30 April 2011

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

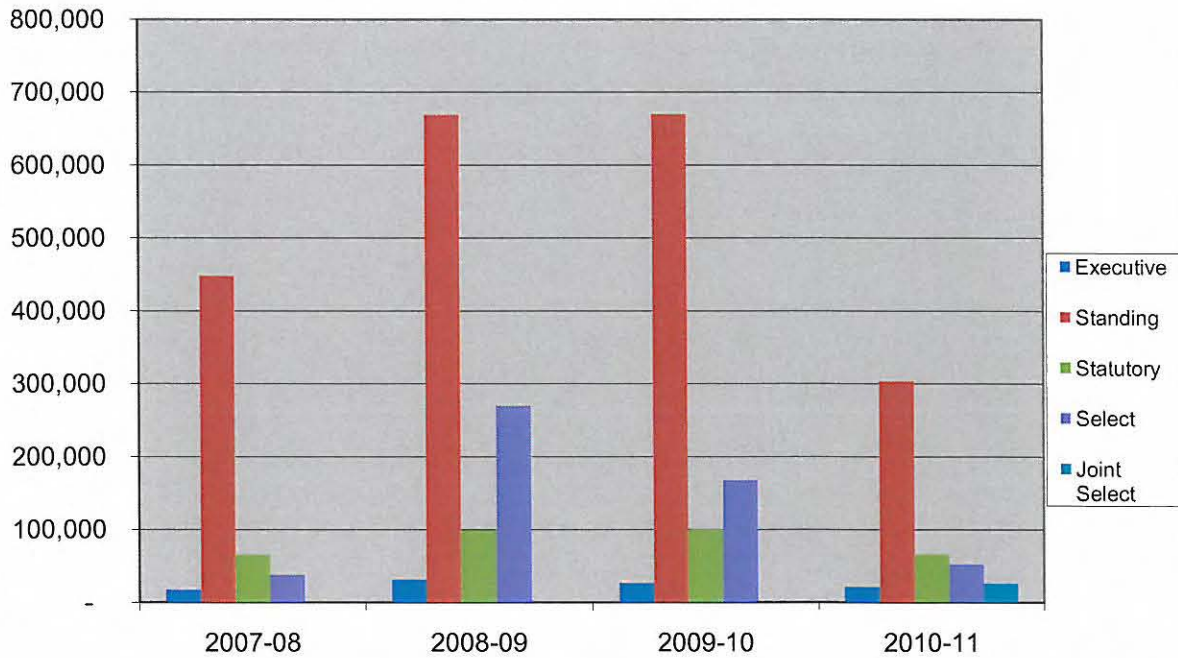
Administrative costs – includes advertising inquiries, refreshments at hearings, hire of hearing venues, flights and aircraft charters to attend hearings, printing etc.

### Committee Office - Staff Costs



\* Estimated actual based on data as at 30 April 2011

### Committee Office - Administrative Costs



\* Estimated actual based on data as at 30 April 2011

**SUMMARY COMPARISON OF COMMITTEE COSTS  
BY INDIVIDUAL COMMITTEE – 2007-08 TO 2010-11**

	<i>2007-08</i>	<i>2008-09</i>	<i>2009-10</i>	<i>2010-11*</i>
<b>Standing Committees</b>				
<b>Community Affairs</b>				
Staff costs	489,755	525,651	536,769	573,804
Administrative costs	97,406	111,546	115,247	46,120
<b>Economics</b>				
Staff costs	410,767	555,361	565,300	658,814
Administrative costs	60,158	111,257	110,497	51,600
<b>Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</b>				
Staff costs	408,032	482,181	439,807	405,456
Administrative costs	54,709	86,450	64,630	24,638
<b>Environment and Communications</b>				
Staff costs	394,281	356,511	529,487	520,675
Administrative costs	52,004	82,848	61,272	41,818
<b>Finance and Public Administration</b>				
Staff costs	372,210	453,016	420,888	395,243
Administrative costs	47,858	71,230	60,047	17,988
<b>Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade</b>				
Staff costs	458,756	478,792	493,891	444,214
Administrative costs	39,994	47,669	52,654	29,326
<b>Legal and Constitutional Affairs</b>				
Staff costs	449,170	604,366	600,090	665,519
Administrative costs	50,624	66,976	98,322	44,054
<b>Rural Affairs and Transport</b>				
Staff costs	424,154	467,538	406,264	451,622
Administrative costs	44,921	90,726	107,246	48,007
<b>Statutory Committees</b>				
<b>Joint Comm on Corporations and Financial Services</b>				
Staff costs	266,934	313,276	240,863	260,473
Administrative costs	29,641	31,358	46,502	26,892
<b>Law Enforcement/Aust Comm for Law Enforcement Integrity</b>				
Staff costs	348,672	331,178	284,372	343,248
Administrative costs	35,545	68,062	53,670	38,840

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11*
<b>Select Committees</b>				
<b>Agricultural and Related Industries</b>				
Staff costs	346	63,754	146,829	40,910
Administrative costs	12,815	21,061	29,732	10,893
<b>State Government Financial Management</b>				
Staff costs	578	348	-	-
Administrative costs	10,627	7,376	-	-
<b>Scrutiny of New Taxes</b>				
Staff costs	-	-	-	57,219
Administrative costs	-	-	-	11,488
<b>Housing Affordability in Australia</b>				
Staff costs	23,042	1,959	-	-
Administrative costs	13,597	4,027	-	-
<b>Regional &amp; Remote Indigenous Communities Select Committee</b>				
Staff costs	1,567	220,945	284,081	98,384
Administrative costs	1,198	79,925	59,819	4,094
<b>Reform of the Australian Federation</b>				
Staff costs	-	-	3,746	43,430
Administrative costs	-	-	53	9,568
<b>Fuel &amp; Energy</b>				
Staff costs	-	255,246	296,814	83,416
Administrative costs	-	79,652	30,468	16,328
<b>National Broadband Network</b>				
Staff costs	-	172,174	137,092	-
Administrative costs	-	41,340	38,158	17
<b>Select Committee on Men's Health</b>				
Staff costs	-	29,268	-395	-
Administrative costs	-	11,258	461	-
<b>Select Committee on Climate Policy</b>				
Staff costs	-	14,767	-919	-
Administrative costs	-	25,218	9,138	-
<b>Joint Select Committees</b>				
<b>Gambling Reform</b>				
Staff costs	-	-	-	220,807
Administrative costs	-	-	-	26,083



	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11*
<b>Christmas Island Tragedy</b>				
Staff costs	-	-	-	-
Administrative costs	-	-	-	-
<b>Committees Executive</b>	731,621	762,277	686,228	697,869
<b>Total Committees</b>	<b>5,330,982</b>	<b>7,126,588</b>	<b>7,009,125</b>	<b>6,408,855</b>

\* Estimated actual to 30 June 2011 calculated at 30 April 2011

*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 FTE 1991/92 to 2010/11

