



AUSTRALIAN SENATE

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CLERK OF THE SENATE

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20 May 2014

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

Dear Ms Beverley

**ESTIMATES HEARING 26 MAY 2014 – 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

BUDGET ESTIMATES – MAY 2014

### RECENT TRENDS

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

- Based on a 6 monthly comparison of activity for standing committees which covers the beginning of the last three parliaments, at 1<sup>st</sup> May there have been a total of 80 references in the 44<sup>th</sup> parliament. At a similar period in the 43<sup>rd</sup> parliament there were 61 references and in the 42<sup>nd</sup> parliament there were 54 references. This is shown in **graph 1**.
- At 1<sup>st</sup> May in the 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament, a total of 66 reports have been tabled. In comparison, in the 43<sup>rd</sup> parliament there were 51 reports and in the 42<sup>nd</sup> parliament there were 57 reports tabled for the same period respectively. This is shown in **graph 3**.

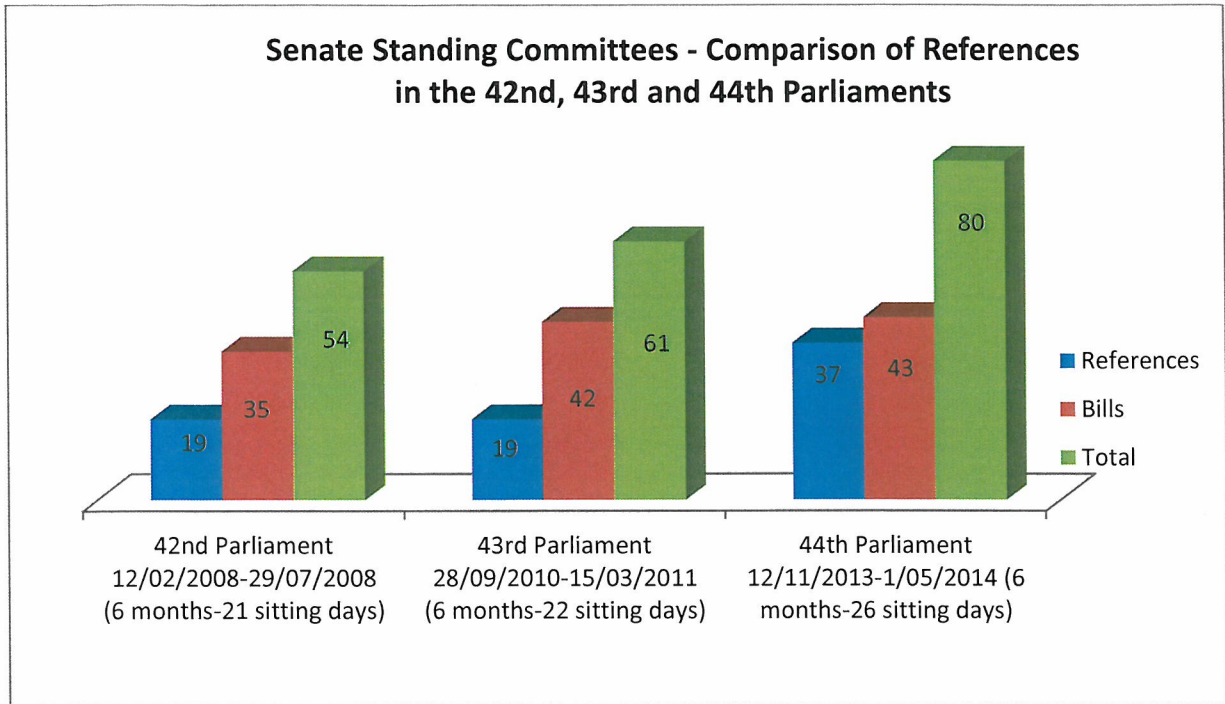
#### Background

- The 43<sup>rd</sup> 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 43<sup>rd</sup> parliament compared to 300 references in the 42<sup>nd</sup> and 234 in the 41<sup>st</sup> respectively.
- During the 43<sup>rd</sup> 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 42<sup>nd</sup> parliament and 388 in the 41<sup>st</sup> 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 (**see graph 4**).
- The busiest committees at any one time during the 43rd parliament have been the Legal and Constitutional Affairs committees, which have 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.
- At present, the Senate Department is also supporting 3 Select committees, 1 Joint Select committee and 1 new Joint Standing committee (NDIS).

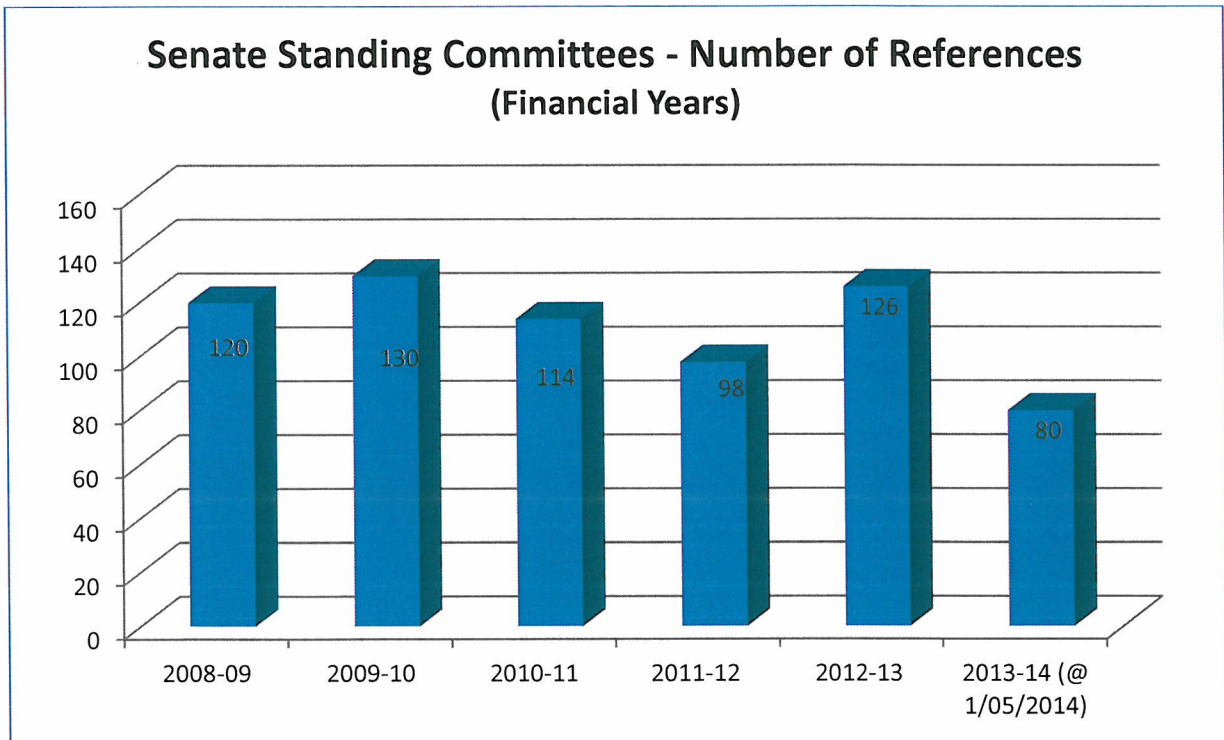
*Staffing:* at present, there are 53 Full Time Equivalent staff in the Committee Office (**see FTE graph**). Recruitment has been undertaken to ensure there is adequate support for Committees as the Committee Office workload has increased.

*Cost of running Senate committee (budget 2013-14):* operational costs for the Committee Office are expected to be \$5.7 million (adjusted from the original estimate of \$7.4 million due to the decrease in activity in the first half of the financial year). Additional funds were received to support the Joint Standing Committee on the Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The attached financial summary includes estimated costs incurred 'by category of committee' for the four years 2010-11 to 2013-14.

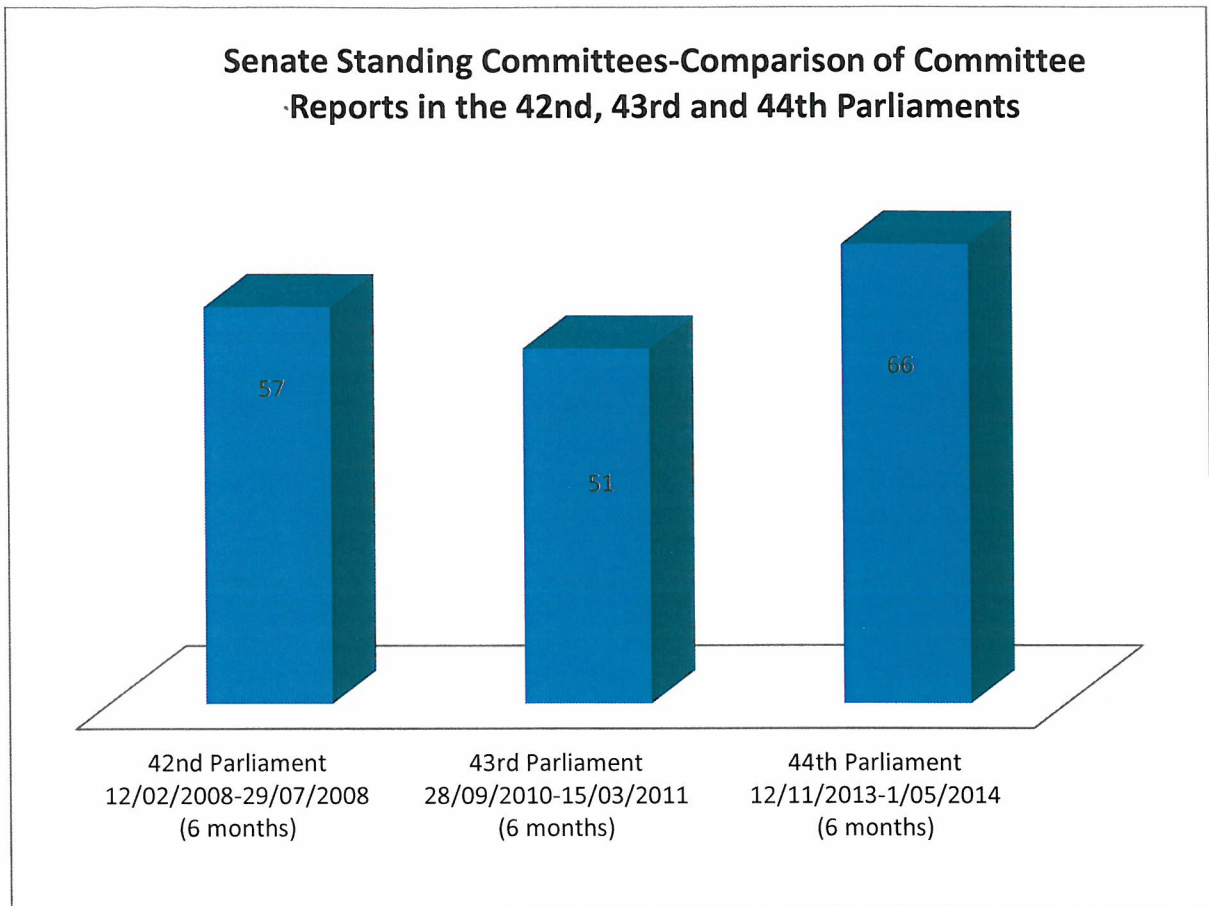
Graph 1



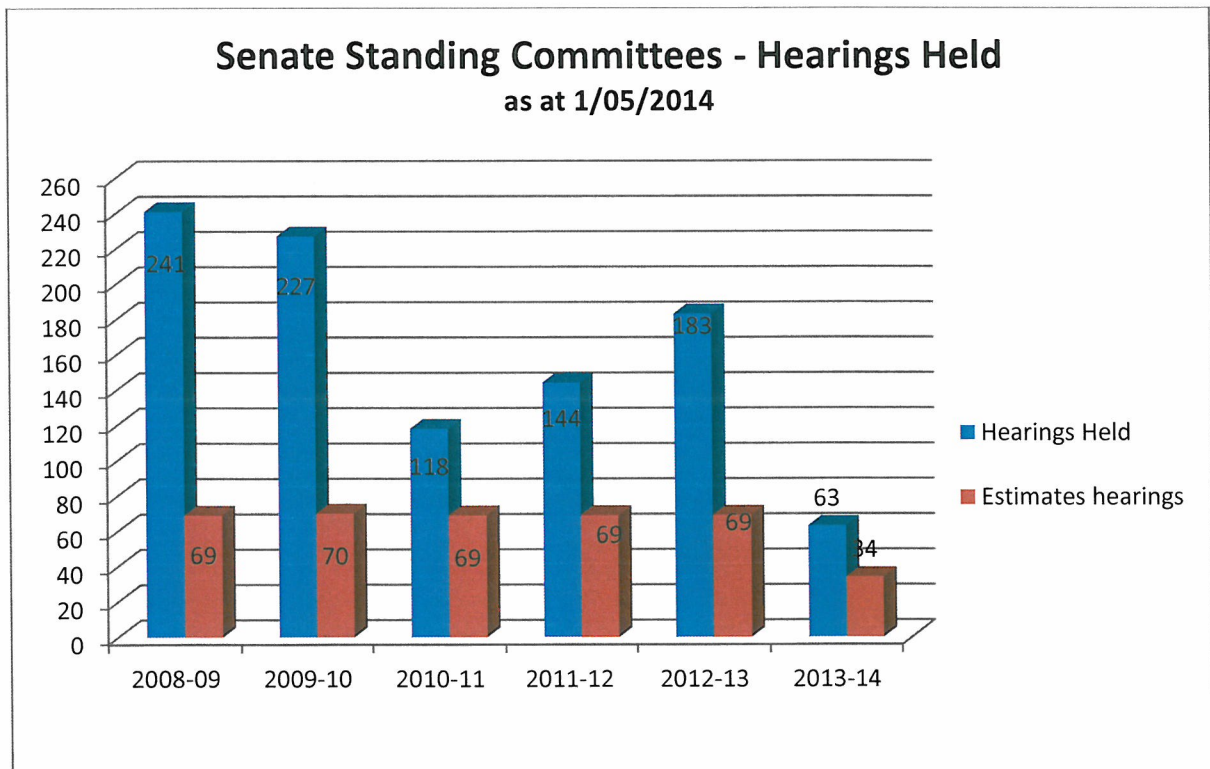
Graph 2



Graph 3



Graph 4



**SUMMARY COMPARISON OF COMMITTEE COSTS BY CATEGORY -  
STANDING, SELECT AND JOINT COMMITTEES – 2010-11 TO 2013-14**

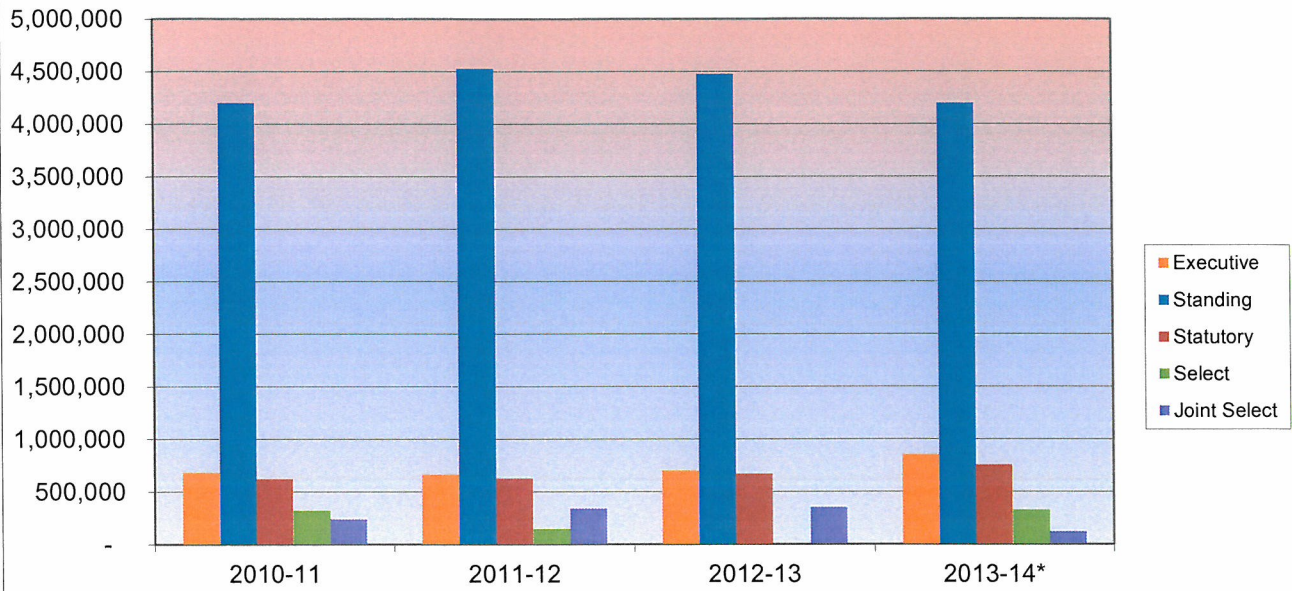
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14*</b>
<b>Executive</b>				
Staff Costs	680,982	662,744	699,960	851,386
Administrative Costs	22,767	18,944	21,876	49,948
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>703,749</b>	<b>681,688</b>	<b>721,836</b>	<b>901,334</b>
<b>Standing</b>				
Staff Costs	4,202,414	4,528,798	4,478,539	4,198,907
Administrative Costs	390,730	501,025	395,213	260,534
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>4,593,144</b>	<b>5,029,823</b>	<b>4,873,753</b>	<b>4,459,442</b>
<b>Statutory</b>				
Staff Costs	621,590	627,266	667,934	755,582
Administrative Costs	77,507	117,289	79,239	48,684
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>699,097</b>	<b>744,555</b>	<b>747,173</b>	<b>804,266</b>
<b>Select</b>				
Staff Costs	321,079	144,071	-	324,577
Administrative Costs	64,469	44,869	11,578	54,886
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>385,549</b>	<b>188,940</b>	<b>11,578</b>	<b>379,463</b>
<b>Joint Select</b>				
Staff Costs	238,050	339,533	350,391	120,550
Administrative Costs	49,769	110,244	30,300	106,844
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>287,818</b>	<b>449,777</b>	<b>380,691</b>	<b>227,394</b>
<b>Total Program Expense</b>	<b><u>6,669,357</u></b>	<b><u>7,094,783</u></b>	<b><u>6,735,030</u></b>	<b><u>6,771,899</u></b>

\* Estimated actual - based actuals as at 30 April 2014 and remaining forecast expenditure

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

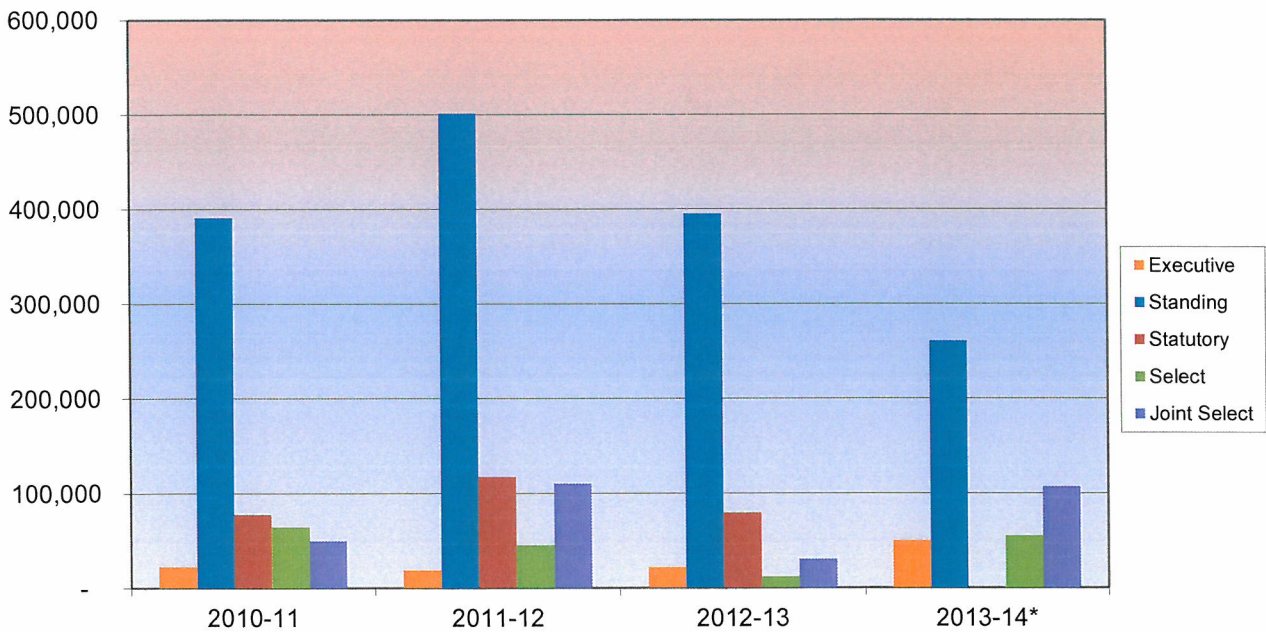
Administrative costs – includes advertising inquiries, refreshments at hearings, hire of hearing venues, flights and aircraft charters to attend hearings, printing etc.

### Committee Office - Staff Costs



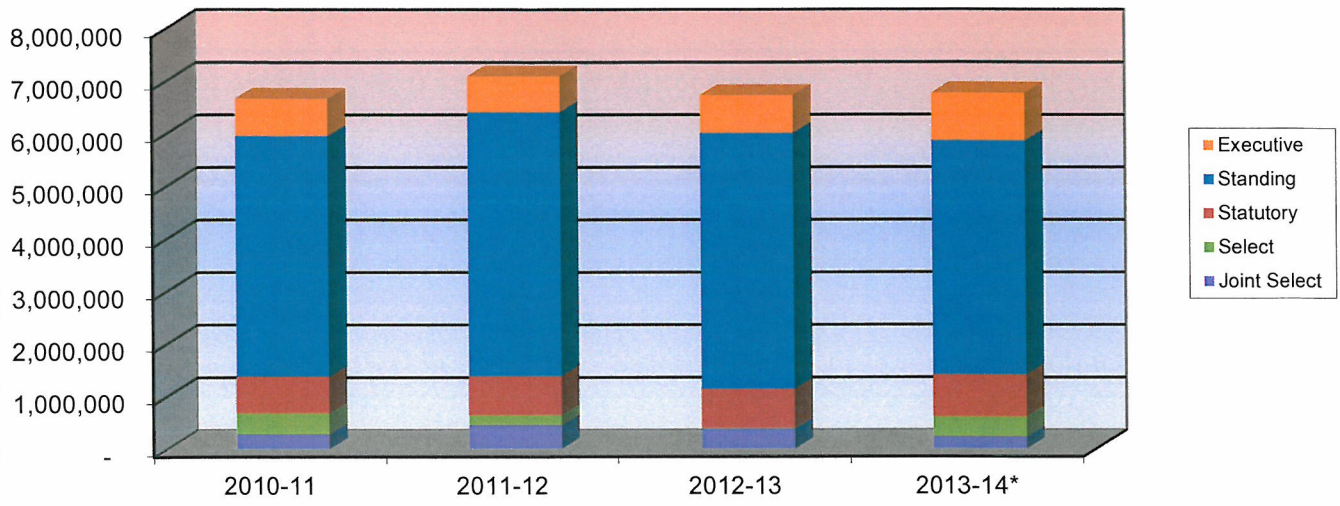
\* Estimated actual based on data as at 30 April 2014

### Committee Office - Administrative Costs



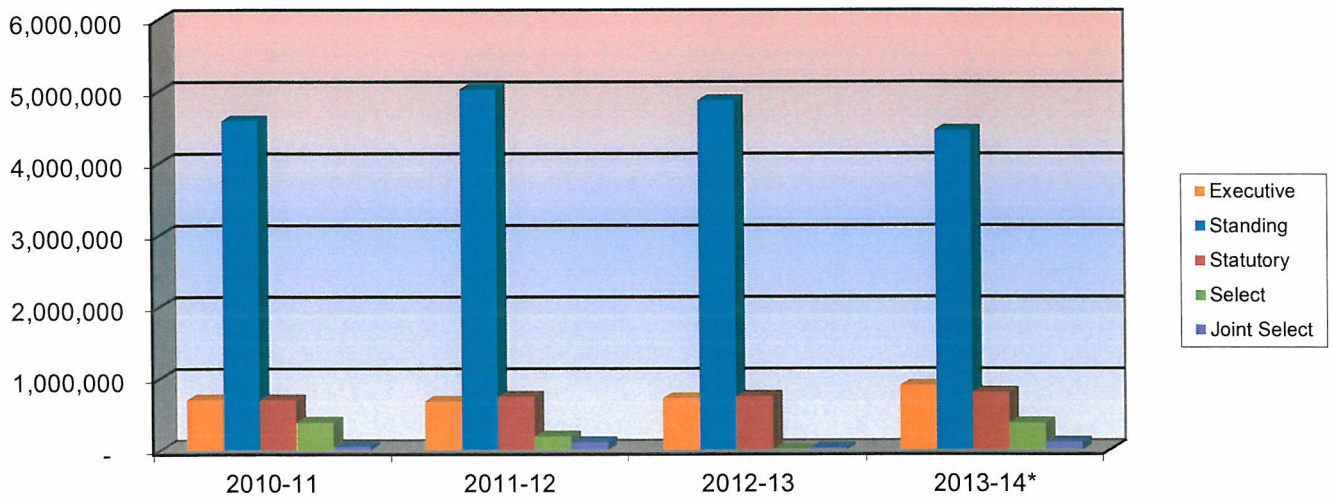
\* Estimated actual based on data as at 30 April 2014

### Committee Office - Total Expenditure



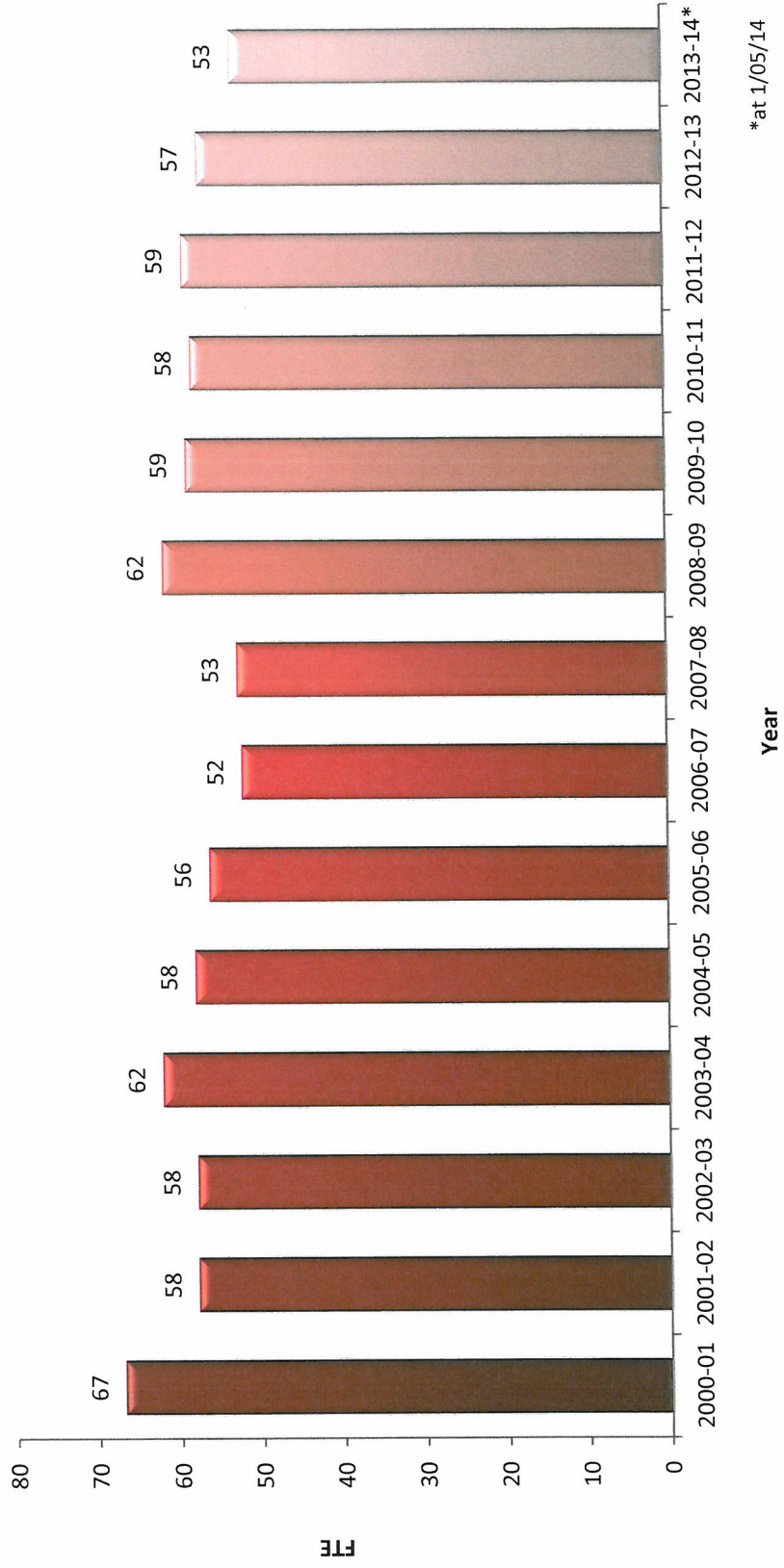
\* Estimated actual based on data as at 30 April 2014

### Committee Office - Total Expenditure



\* Estimated actual based on data as at 30 April 2014

# Committee Office FTE 2000/01 to 2013/14



\*at 1/05/14