



D20/74167

9 October 2020

Ms Sarah Redden
Acting Secretary
Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Redden

Budget estimates hearings – Department of the Senate

In accordance with the usual practice, I attach statistics (updated as of 30 September 2020) about the operations of committees supported by the Senate Committee Office. The statistics cover the same ground as those provided in the previous parliament, but also include information about the support provided to select and joint select committees. The department is currently supporting 12 such committees. If the committee would like additional information I would be happy to provide it.

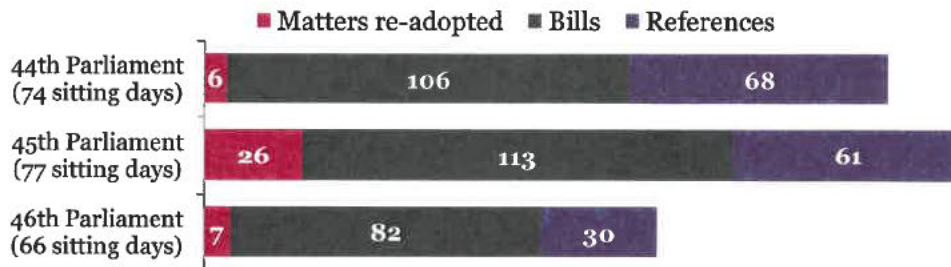
Yours sincerely

(Richard Pye)
Clerk

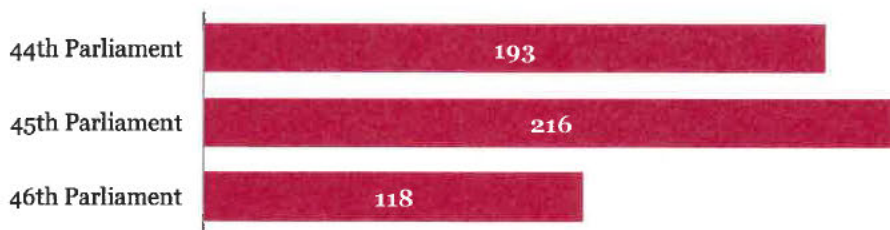
Senate standing committee activity

(Summary as at 30 September 2020)

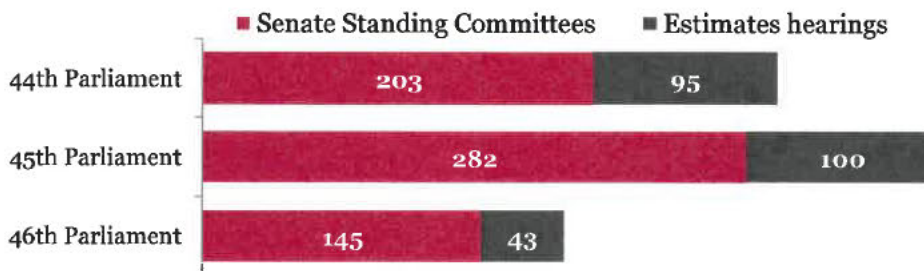
1. References—comparison at same point of last 3 Parliaments



2. Reports—comparison at same point of last 3 Parliaments



3. Hearings held—comparison at same point of last 3 Parliaments



Select committee activity

- Select committee (including joint select committee) activity has recently risen to levels not experienced before, requiring the Senate department to support 12 select committees concurrently.
- The table below compares the number of select and joint select committees supported by the Senate Committee Office across the last four parliaments.
- From the commencement of the 46th Parliament, the Committee Office is committed to providing a total of 204 months of secretariat support to select committees, which is more than the total support required for any previous parliament.

Parliament	Number of selects and (joint selects)	Average length in months	Total months requiring support
43 rd	5 (4)	10	90
44 th	12 (2)	11	154
45 th	15 (1)	10	160
46 th (from commencement)	10 (2)	17	204

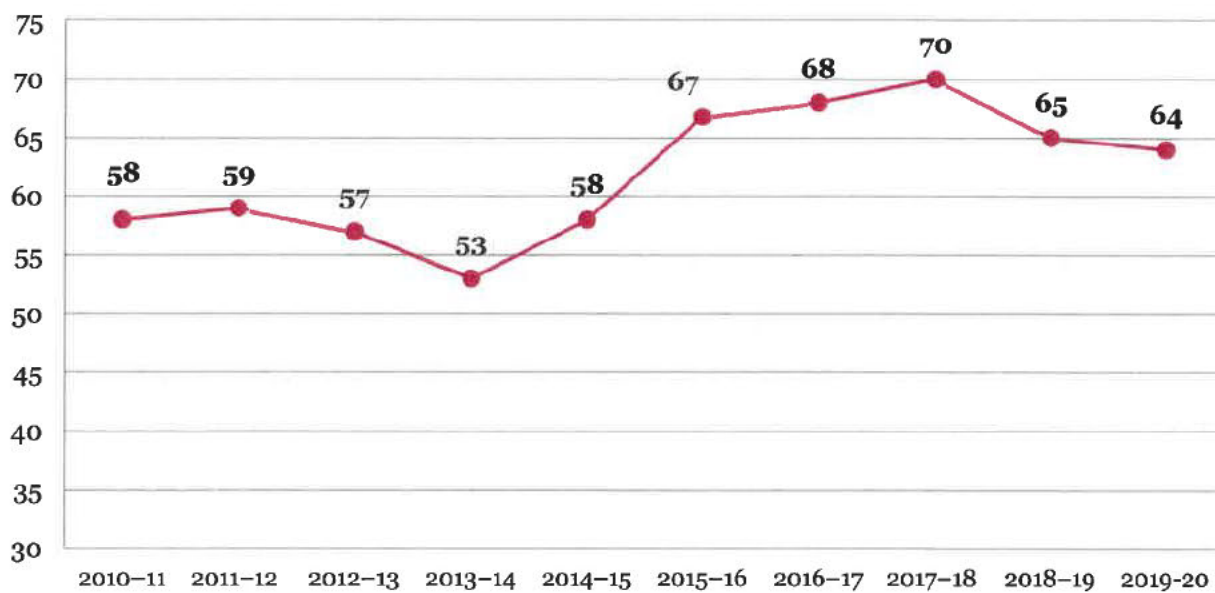
- In addition, the Committee Office also supports five joint standing committees.

Staffing

Staffing for 2020-21: At 16 September 2020, there were 73.2 Full Time Equivalent staff in the Committee Office, compared with an average FTE of 64 in 2019-20. Staffing levels reflect the brief downturn in committee activity as a result of the 2019 election and subsequent uptick of activity with the commencement of the 46th Parliament. The Committee Office is currently returning to higher staffing levels to reflect ongoing high levels of committee activity. The following chart shows changes in average staffing levels over time.

Committee Office

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



Administration

The current annual budget for the Committee Office is approximately \$10.2 million. This includes employee expenses of \$9.9 million and administrative expenses (including reduced budget for secretariat travel, accommodation and venues for hearings due to COVID-19) of \$0.3 million. So far in the 2020-21 financial year (as at 31 August 2020), the Committee Office actual expenditure was \$1.6 million.

Expenditure by completed financial year

