

Appendix 3

In considering whether there was a need for procedural change in relation to the formal business procedure, the committee noted several trends in its use:

- a trend toward longer notices: the recent average word count has been above 180 words; the equivalent average in 2000 was half that, 92 words
- a trend toward more numerous statements by leave: such statements were rare before 2009, were made to 1/6th of motions in 2011 and to 2/3 of motions in 2018
- the average time spent on formal business has increased from 22 minutes per day in 2012 to 46 minutes per day in 2018; on some days formal business has taken as long as two hours, with flow-on effects for other business.

The graphs, below, show further trends in the use of the procedure.

The committee considered a range of procedural options, including:

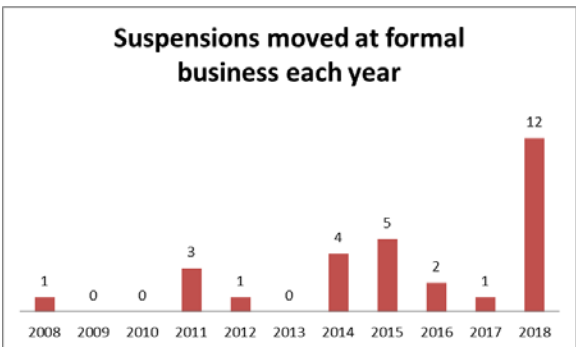
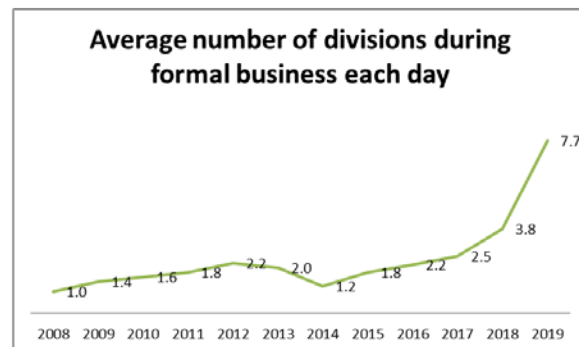
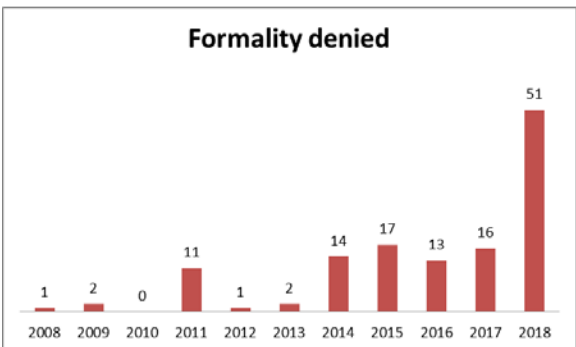
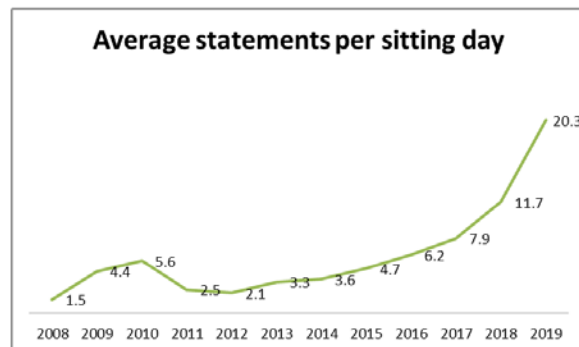
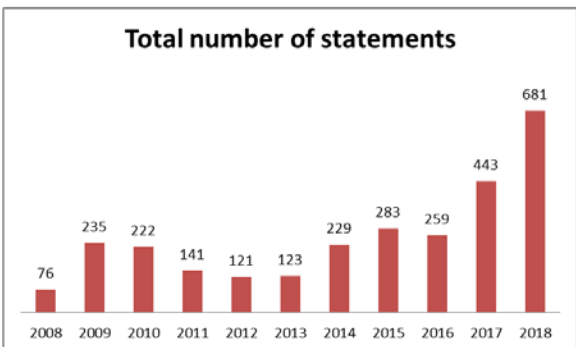
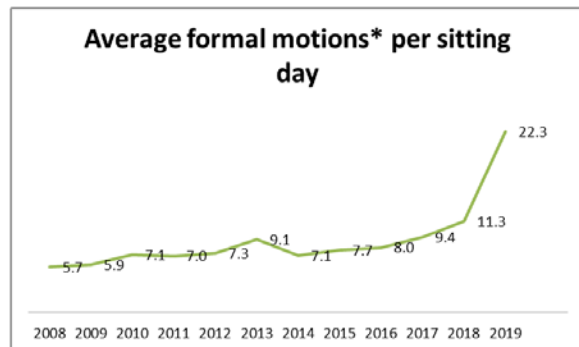
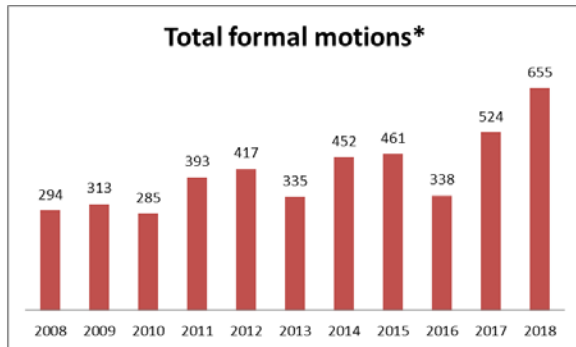
- regulating the length of notices, by imposing a word limit
- regulating the number of motions a senator may propose as formal on any day
- more rigorously enforcing the requirements in standing order 76(7) that prohibit extraneous material in notices
- requiring a longer period of notice for formal motions to provide additional time to negotiate and finalise their content
- 'streamlining' divisions, by deferring them to the end of formal business, or another time
- imposing a time limit on formal business, with motions deferred if not reached
- limiting the number of notices which may be dealt with as formal on any given day.

The committee considered recommending two changes – strict word limits on non-technical notices and limits on the number of requests for formality that may be entertained from each senator in a given week – but decided not to proceed after consulting senators.

The committee also considered whether it was desirable to change the process for seeking to suspend standing orders during formal business time, or to remove the

ability to suspend standing orders at all during this period, and agreed to recommend that the temporary order adopted on 28 November 2018 be made permanent.

Graphs relating to formal business



* routine motions for Senate committee extensions and meetings have been excluded, noting that the requirement to move those motions was removed in 2015