



AUSTRALIAN SENATE

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CLERK OF THE SENATE

D15/5964

16 February 2015

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

Dear Ms Beverley

**ESTIMATES HEARING 23 FEBRUARY 2015 – 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

### ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – FEBRUARY 2015

#### RECENT TRENDS

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

- At 13 February 2015 there have been a total of 186 references in the 44<sup>th</sup> parliament. At a similar period in the 43<sup>rd</sup> parliament there were 144 references and in the 42<sup>nd</sup> parliament there were 135 references. This is shown in **graph 1**.
- At 13 February 2015 in the 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament, a total of 193 reports have been tabled. In comparison, in the 43<sup>rd</sup> parliament there were 209 reports and in the 42<sup>nd</sup> parliament there were 196 reports tabled for the same period respectively. This is shown in **graph 3**.
- The busiest committees at any one time during the 44<sup>th</sup> parliament have been the Legal and Constitutional Affairs committees, which have so far dealt with a maximum of 15 references at one time, in July 2014. Between December 2014 and February 2015, the Economics committees managed 14 references at one time.
- At present, the Senate Department is also supporting 5 Select committees, 2 Joint Select committees and 1 new Joint Standing committee (NDIS).

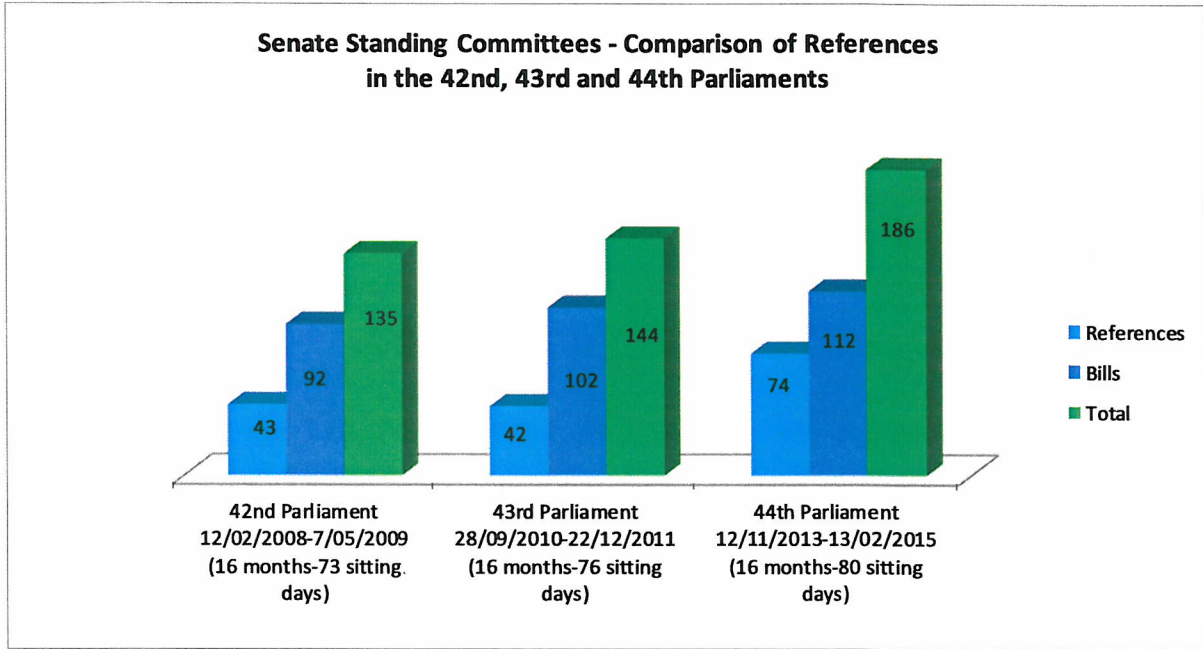
#### Background

- 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 43<sup>rd</sup> parliament were the Legal and Constitutional Affairs committees, which 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.

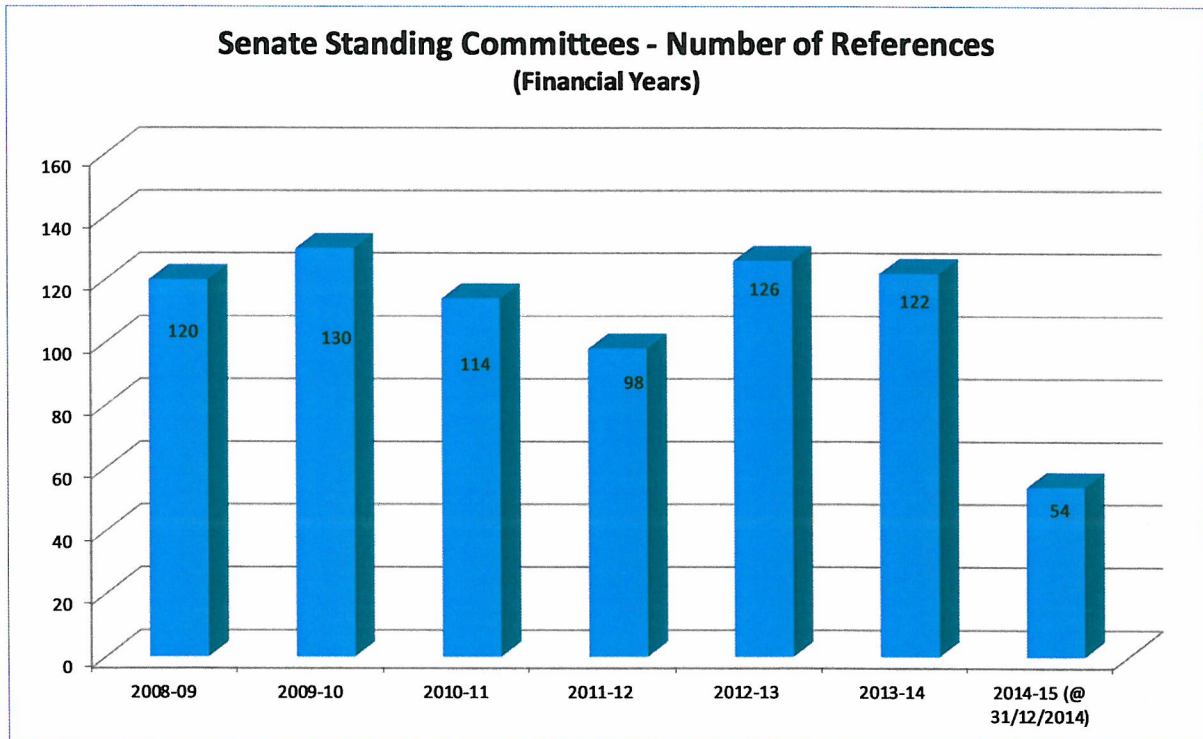
*Average staffing for 2014-15:* At 11 February 2015 there were 57 Full Time Equivalent staff in the Committee Office (**see FTE graph**). Recruitment has been undertaken to ensure there is adequate support for Committees as the Committee Office workload has increased.

*Cost of running Senate committees:* The current budget for the Committee Office is \$7.2 million. Operational costs for the Committee Office in 2013-14 were \$6.5 million. The attached financial summary includes estimated costs incurred 'by category of committee' for the four years 2011-12 to 2014-15. These staffing costs are based on an estimate of time allocated by departmental staff and are a guide only.

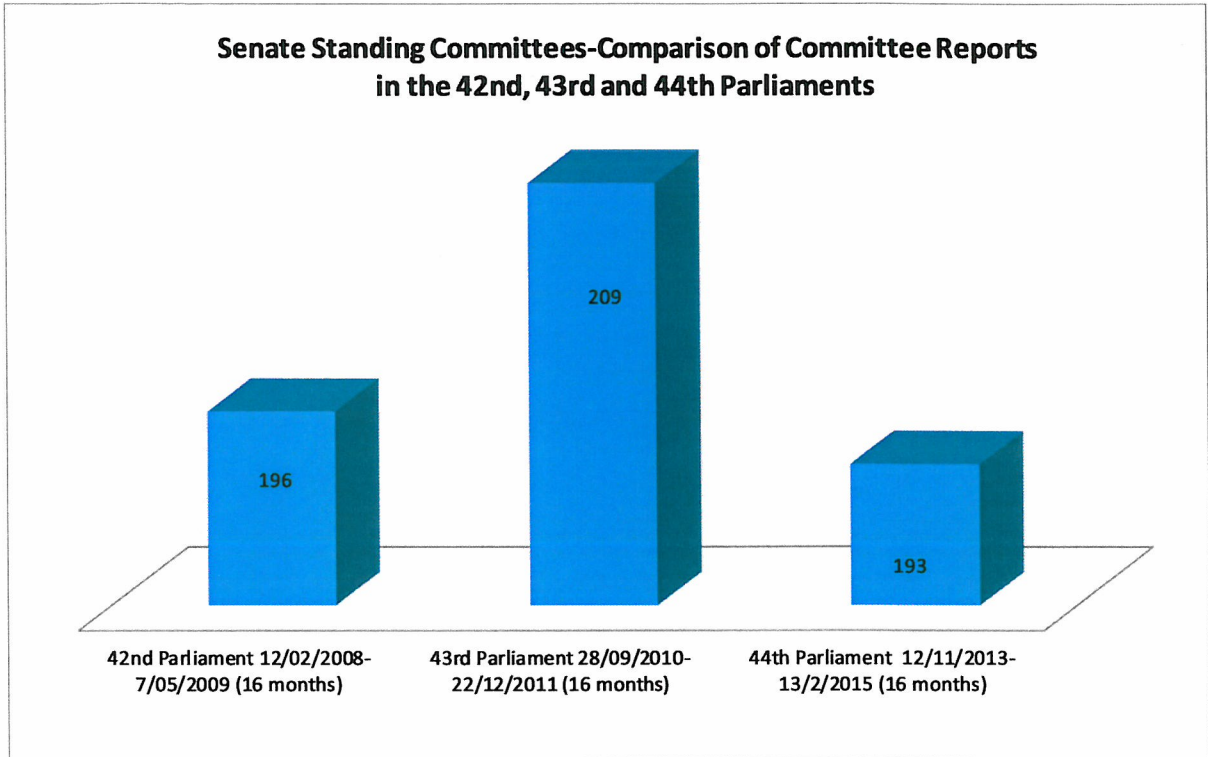
Graph 1



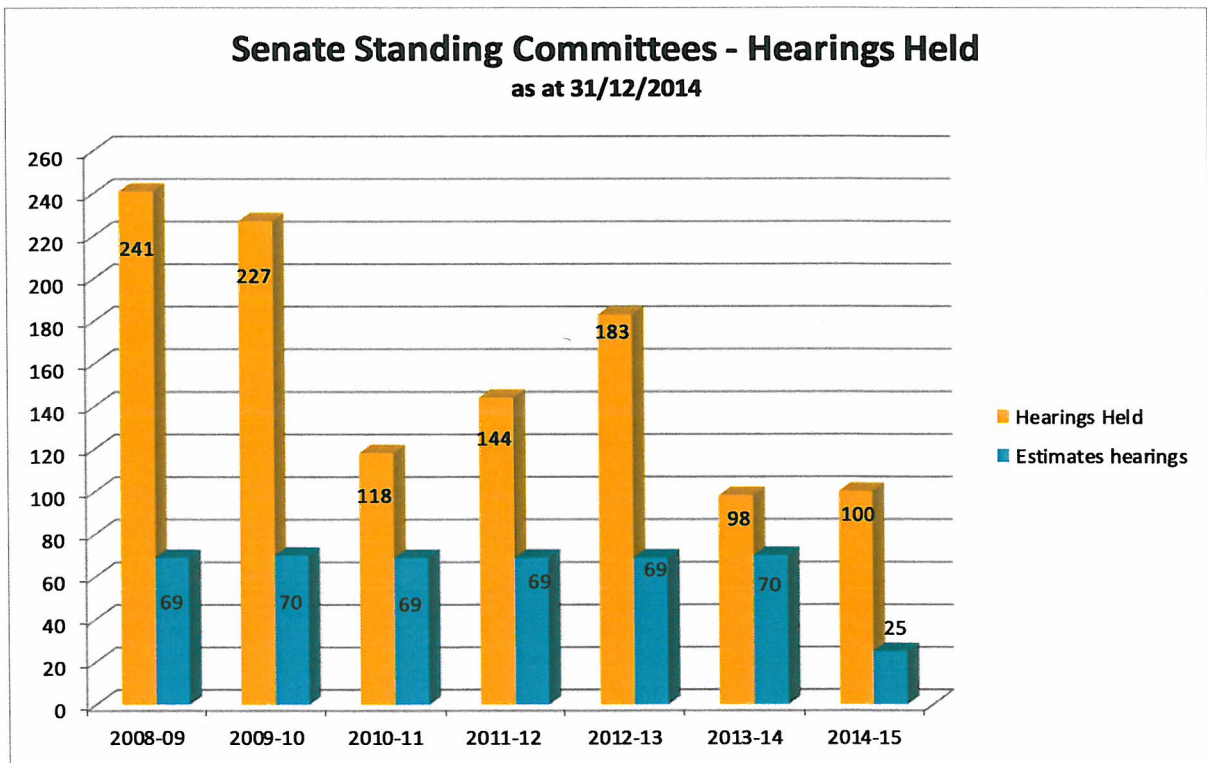
Graph 2



Graph 3



Graph 4



**SUMMARY COMPARISON OF COMMITTEE COSTS BY CATEGORY -  
STANDING, SELECT AND JOINT COMMITTEES – 2011-12 TO 2014-15**

<i>Expenses</i>	<i>2011-12</i>	<i>2012-13</i>	<i>2013-14</i>	<i>2014-15*</i>
<b><i>Executive</i></b>				
Staff Costs	662,744	699,960	822,952	955,904
Administrative Costs	18,944	21,876	41,541	22,829
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>	<b>681,688</b>	<b>721,836</b>	<b>864,493</b>	<b>978,733</b>
<b><i>Standing</i></b>				
Staff Costs	4,528,798	4,478,539	4,143,561	4,190,115
Administrative Costs	501,025	395,213	263,927	312,564
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>	<b>5,029,823</b>	<b>4,873,753</b>	<b>4,407,487</b>	<b>4,502,679</b>
<b><i>Statutory</i></b>				
Staff Costs	627,266	667,934	715,560	852,256
Administrative Costs	117,289	79,239	60,946	76,229
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>	<b>744,555</b>	<b>747,173</b>	<b>776,506</b>	<b>928,485</b>
<b><i>Select</i></b>				
Staff Costs	144,071	-	253,201	495,239
Administrative Costs	44,869	12,833	23,391	32,452
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>	<b>188,940</b>	<b>12,833</b>	<b>276,592</b>	<b>527,691</b>
<b><i>Joint Select</i></b>				
Staff Costs	339,533	350,391	125,875	178,423
Administrative Costs	110,244	29,045	20,201	44,760
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>	<b>449,777</b>	<b>379,436</b>	<b>146,075</b>	<b>223,183</b>
<b><i>Total Program Expense</i></b>	<b><u>7,094,783</u></b>	<b><u>6,735,030</u></b>	<b><u>6,471,154</u></b>	<b><u>7,161,771</u></b>

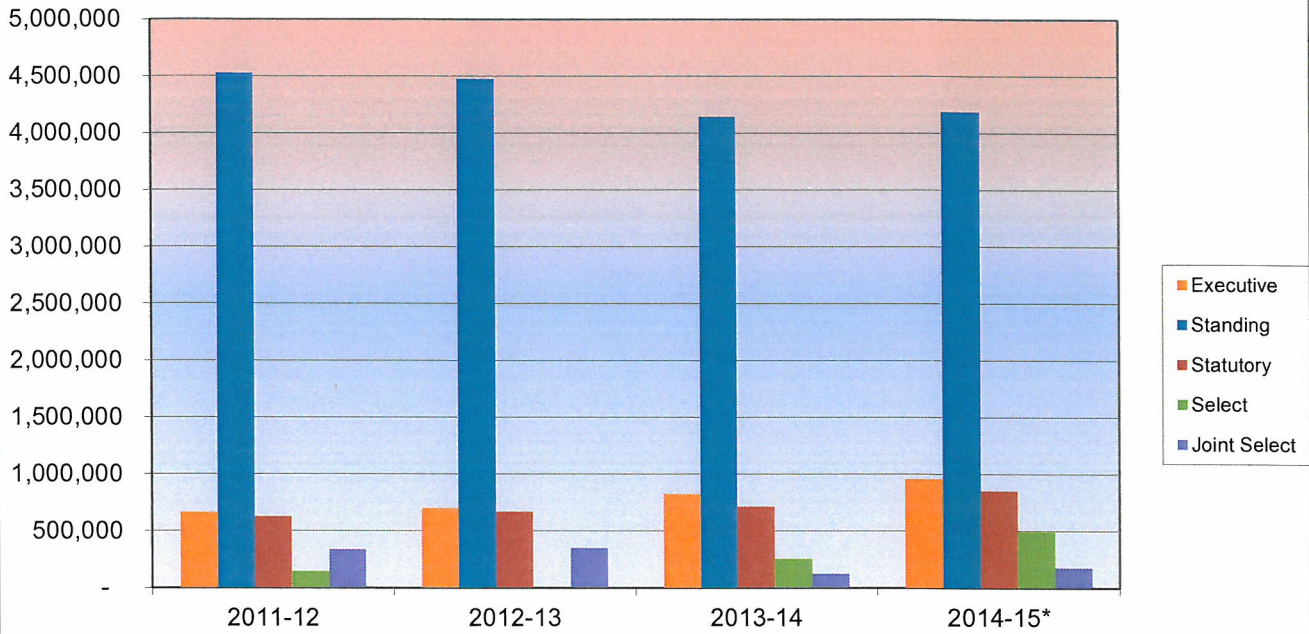
\* Estimated actual - includes 5 months of forecast expenditure

*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.*

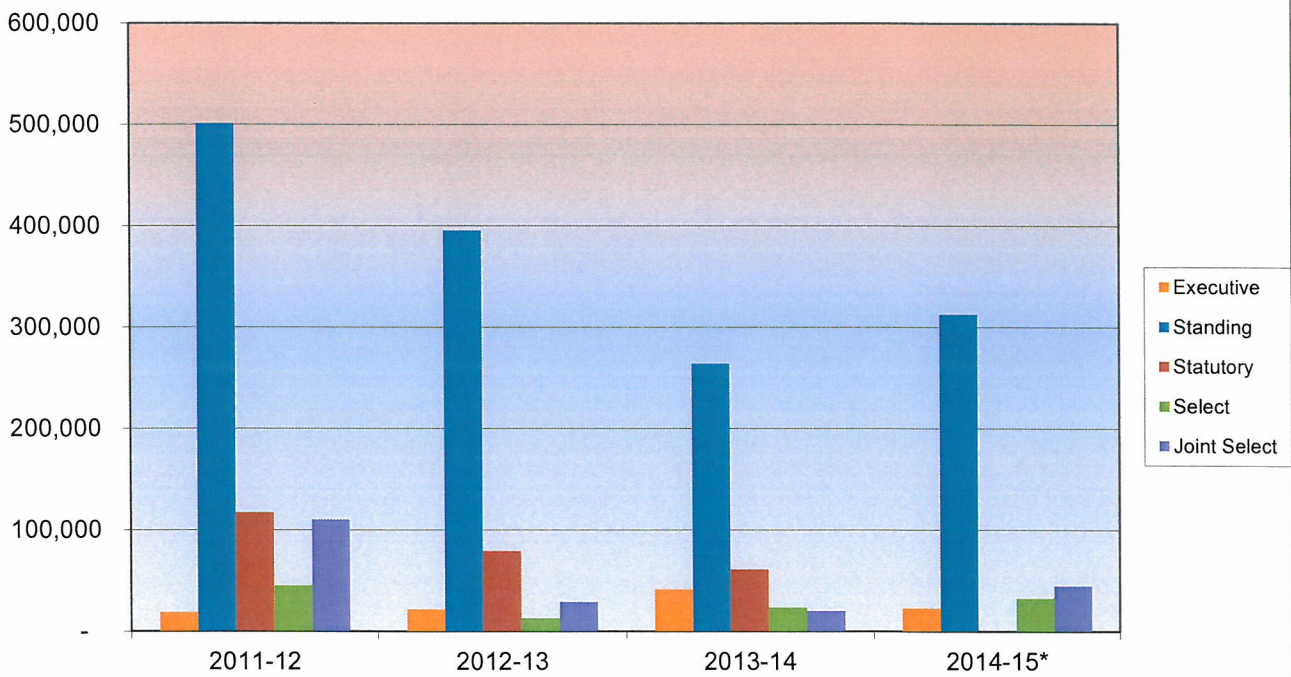
*These staffing costs are based on an estimate of time allocated by departmental staff and are a guide only.*

### Committee Office - Staff Costs



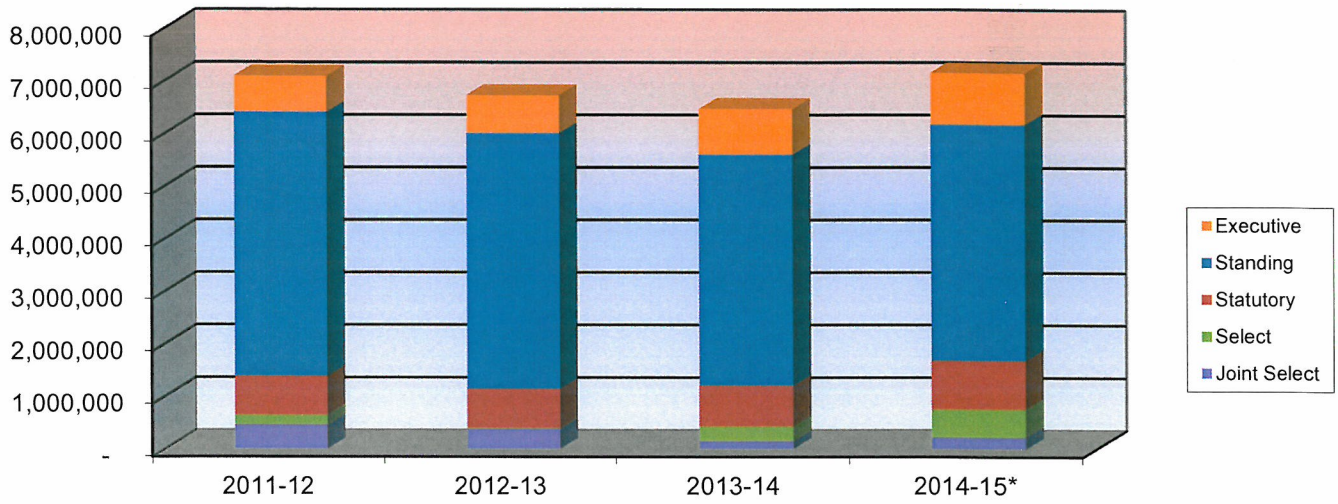
\* Estimated actual based on data as at 31 Jan 2015

### Committee Office - Administrative Costs



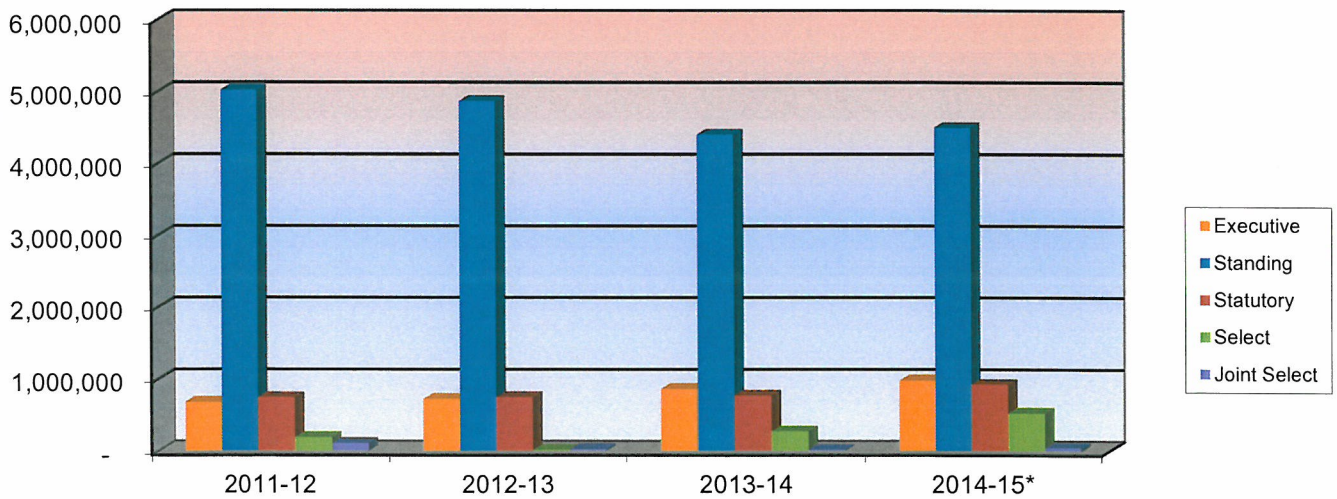
\* Estimated actual based on data as at 31 Jan 2015

### Committee Office - Total Expenditure



\* Estimated actual based on data as at 31 Jan 2015

### Committee Office - Total Expenditure



\* Estimated actual based on data as at 31 Jan 2015

# Committee Office FTE 2000/01 to 2014/15

