



AUSTRALIAN SENATE

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29 April 2016

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

Dear Ms Beverley

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING 5 MAY 2016 – 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 2016

RECENT TRENDS

The following data shows trends and comparisons in the activities of Senate standing committees. Workload continues to increase.

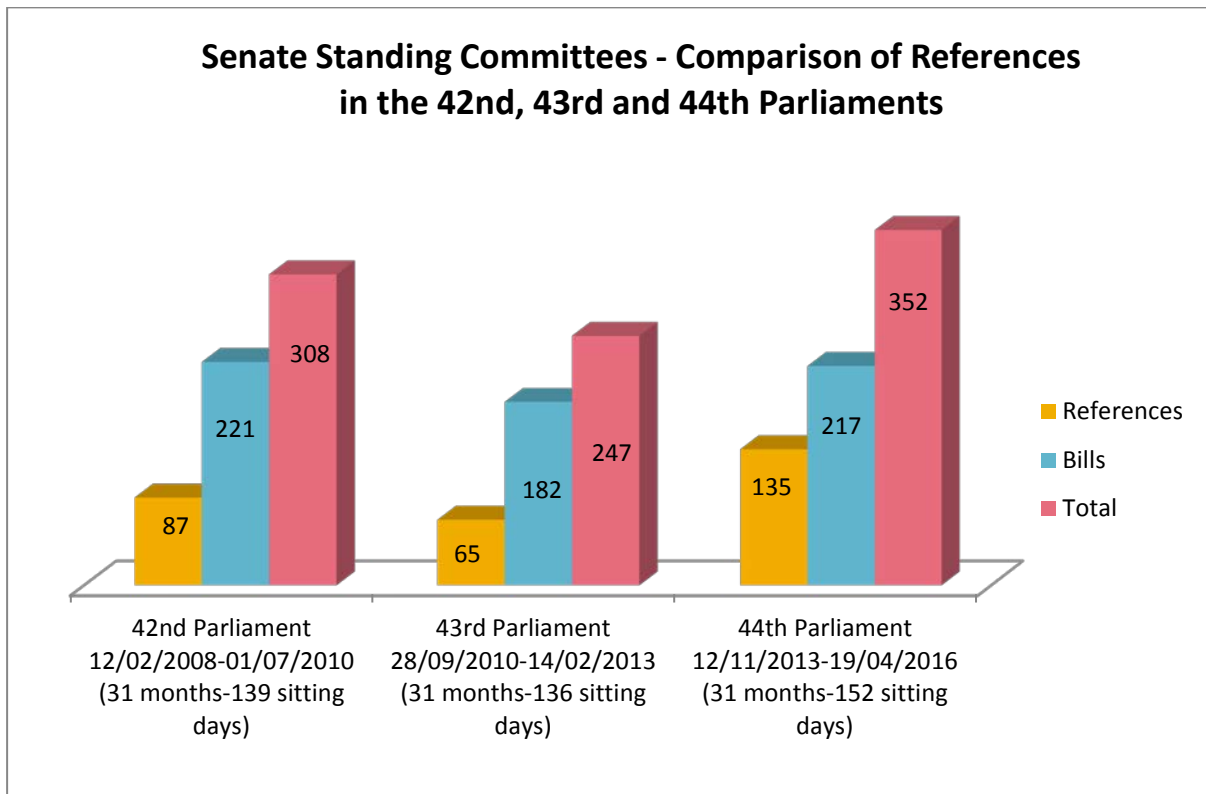
- At 19 April 2016 there have been a total of 352 references in the 44th Parliament. At a similar period in the 43rd parliament there were 247 references and in the 42nd parliament there were 308 references. This is shown in **graph 1**.
- At 19 April 2016 in the 44th parliament, a total of 438 reports have been tabled. In comparison, in the 43rd parliament there were 349 reports and in the 42nd parliament there were 406 reports tabled for the same period respectively. This is shown in **graph 3**.
- There has been a significant growth in the number of public hearings (excluding estimates hearings) with 202 hearings held in 2014-15 and 191 hearings held at mid-April in 2015-16 (see **graph 4**).
- The busiest committee during the 44th Parliament has been the Economics Committee, which has managed 20 inquiries in February 2016 and 18 in September and November 2015.
- At present, the Senate Department is also supporting 6 Select committees and 1 Joint Standing committee (NDIS).
- The busiest committees at any one time during the 43rd 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 2015-16: At the last pay in April 2016 there were 73.7 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.

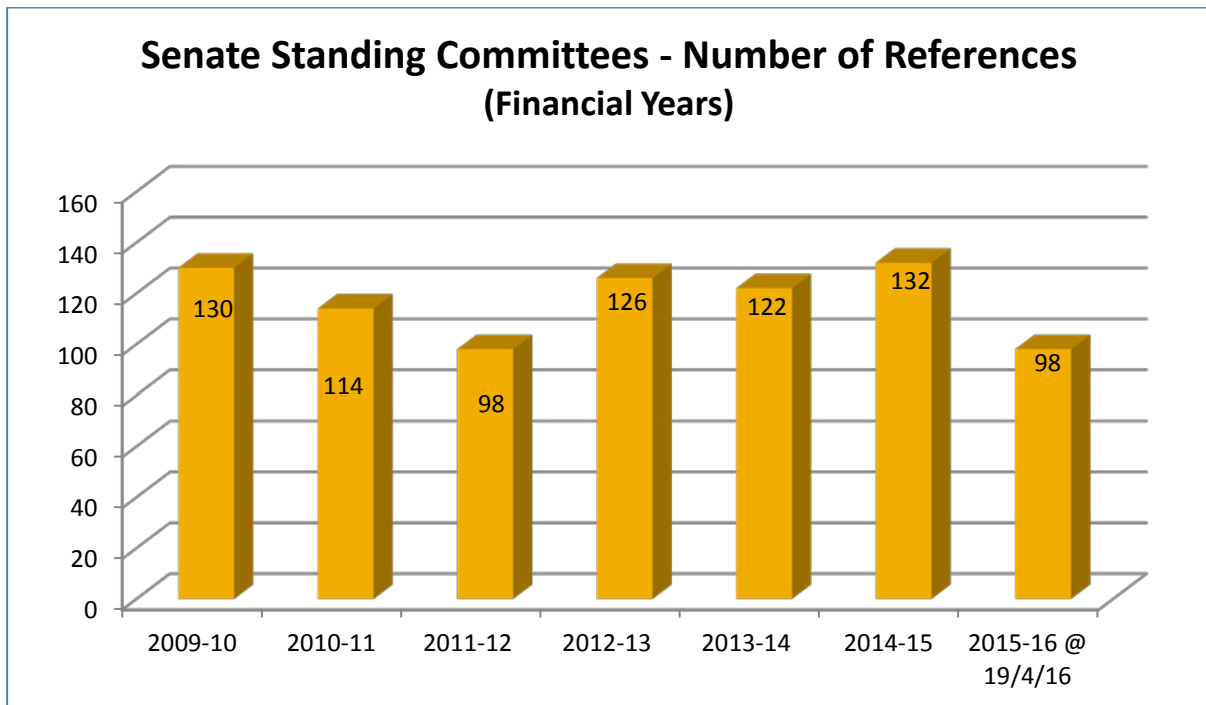
Cost of running Senate committees: The current budget for the Committee Office is \$8.5 million (cash). In 2014-15, operational costs for the Committee Office were \$8.9 million (note that this figure includes corporate overheads). The attached financial summary includes estimated costs incurred 'by category of committee' for the four years 2012-13 to 2015-16. These staffing costs are based on an estimate of time allocated by departmental staff and are a guide only.

In this summary, the total program expense of \$8.75 million reflects increased supplier costs (travel, printing venue hire) due to additional committee workload. A final program cost will be identified in the financial statements after 30 June.

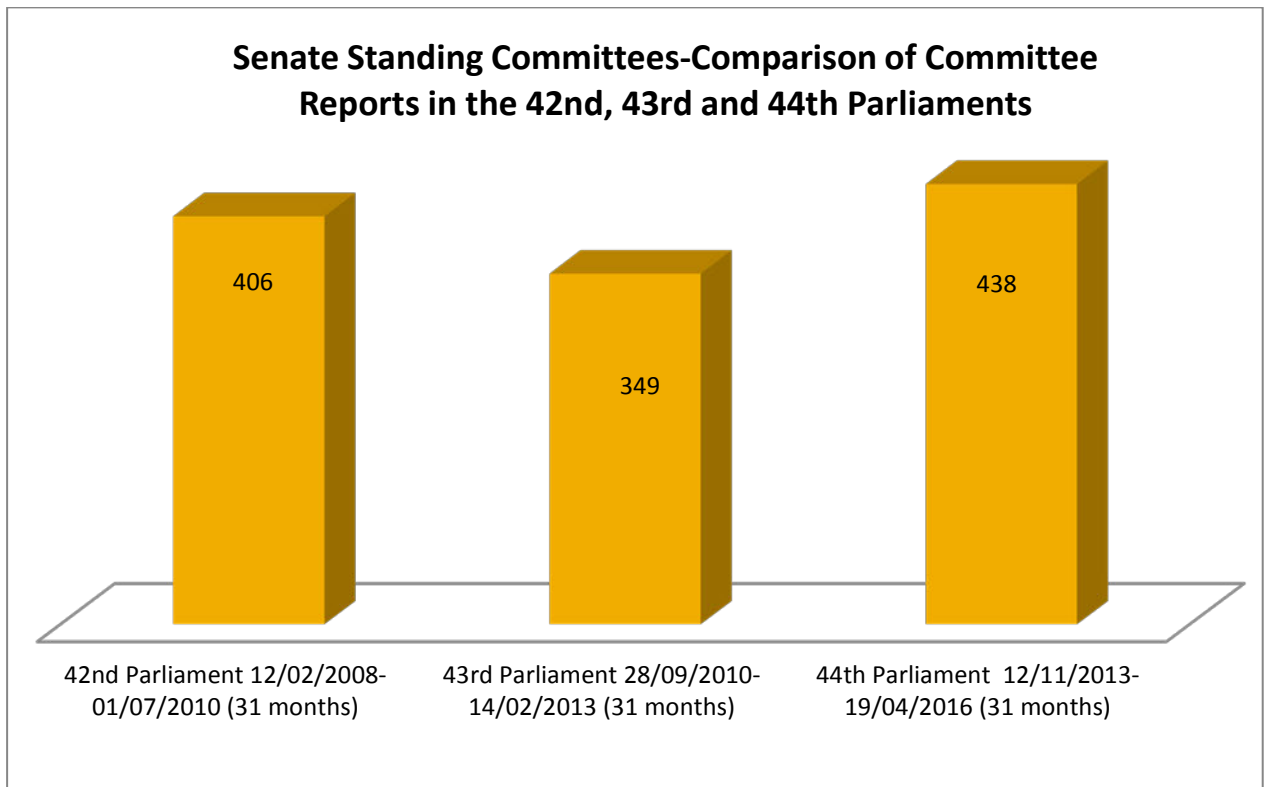
Graph 1



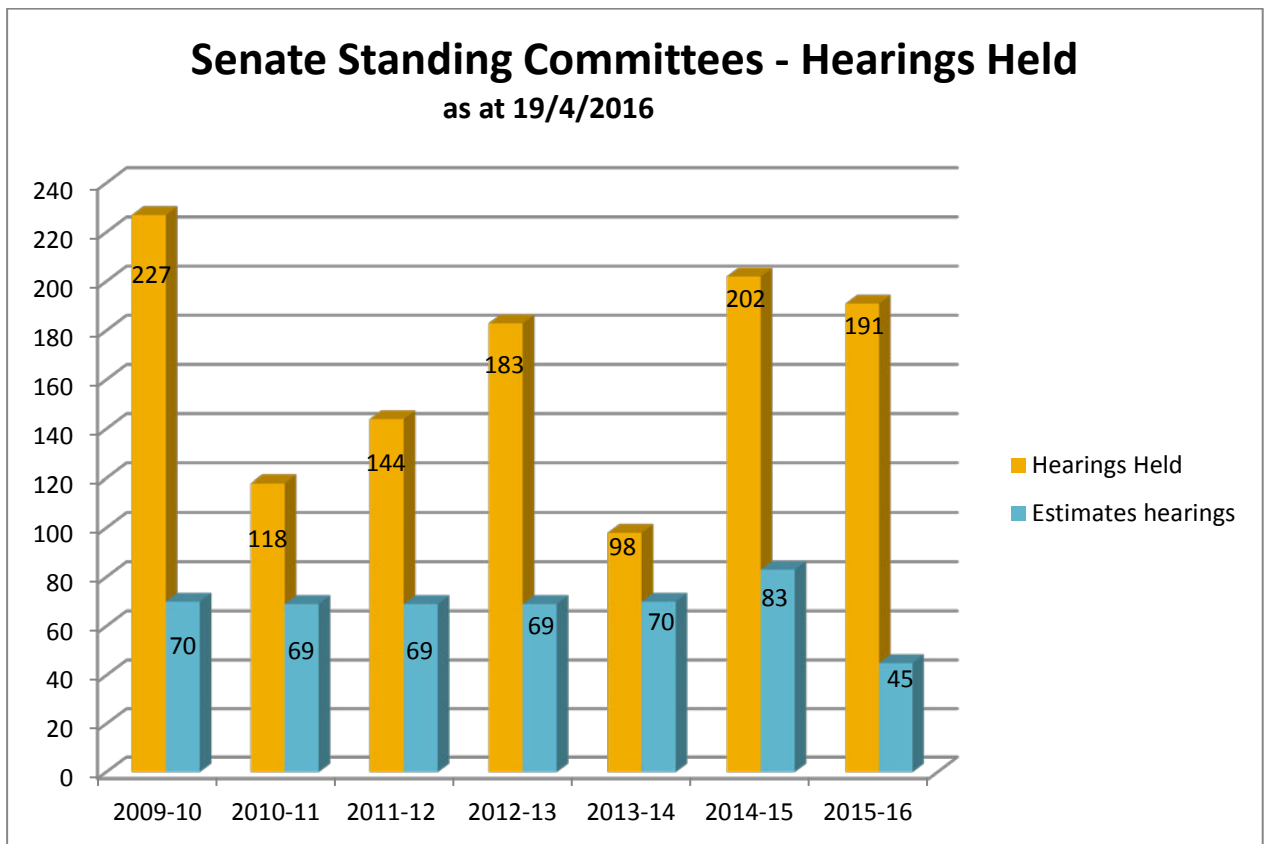
Graph 2



Graph 3



Graph 4



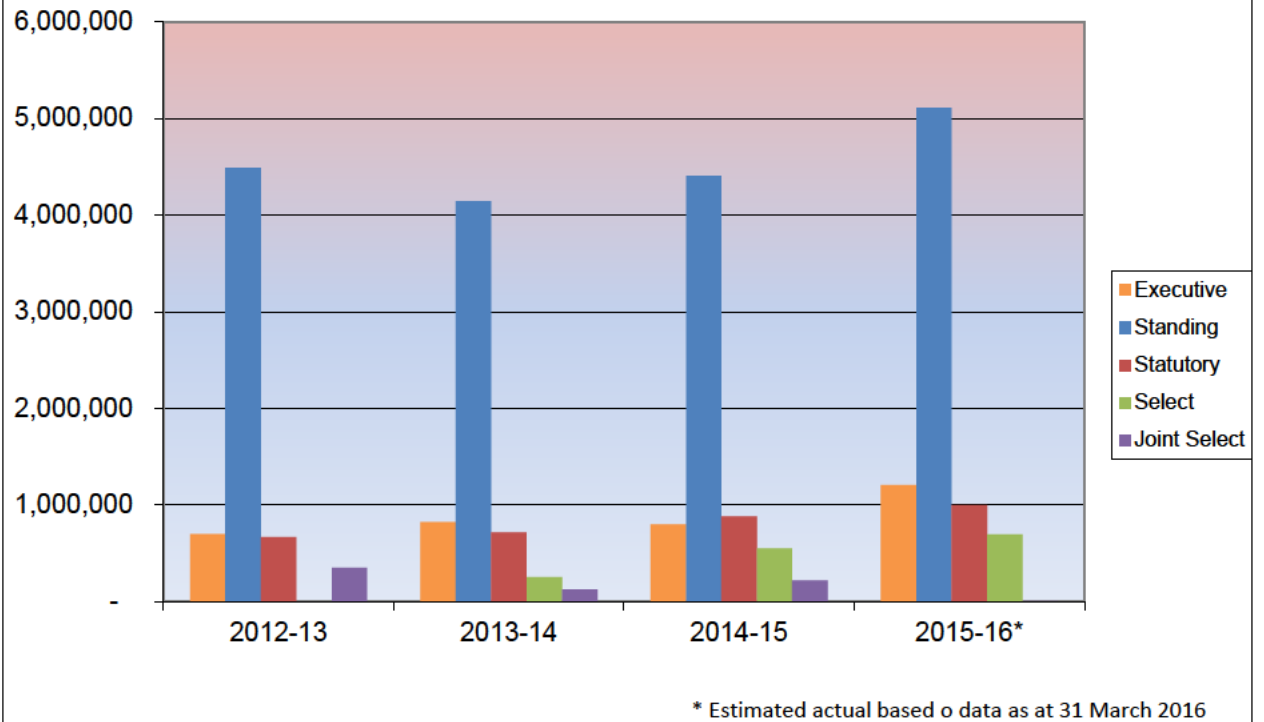
**SUMMARY COMPARISON OF COMMITTEE COSTS BY CATEGORY -
STANDING, SELECT AND JOINT COMMITTEES – 2012-13 TO 2015-16**

<i>Expenses</i>	<i>2012-13</i>	<i>2013-14</i>	<i>2014-15</i>	<i>2015-16*</i>
<i>Executive</i>				
Staff Costs	699,960	822,952	800,436	1,207,838
Administrative Costs	21,876	41,541	24,360	56,922
<i>Total Expenses</i>	721,836	864,493	824,796	1,264,760
<i>Standing</i>				
Staff Costs	4,478,539	4,143,561	4,406,759	5,112,054
Administrative Costs	395,213	263,927	444,773	503,884
<i>Total Expenses</i>	4,873,753	4,407,487	4,851,532	5,615,938
<i>Statutory</i>				
Staff Costs	667,934	715,560	882,953	997,964
Administrative Costs	79,239	60,946	92,300	102,682
<i>Total Expenses</i>	747,173	776,506	975,253	1,100,646
<i>Select</i>				
Staff Costs	-	253,201	549,334	695,923
Administrative Costs	12,833	23,391	72,953	67,512
<i>Total Expenses</i>	12,833	276,592	622,287	763,435
<i>Joint Select</i>				
Staff Costs	350,391	125,875	217,860	719
Administrative Costs	29,045	20,201	50,209	3,007
<i>Total Expenses</i>	379,436	146,075	268,069	3,726
<i>Total Program Expense</i>	6,735,030	6,471,154	7,541,937	8,748,504.46

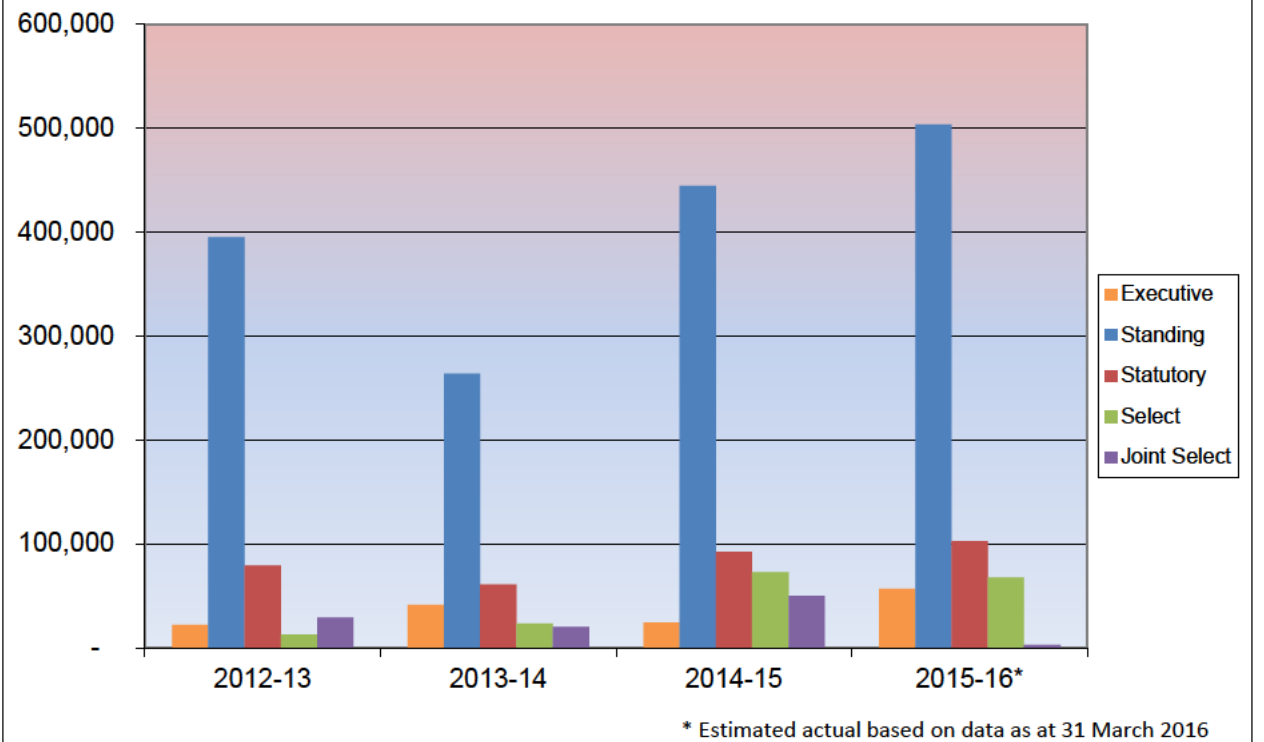
** Estimated actual - First 9 months of actual added to last 3 months forecast. The total program expense of \$8.75 million reflects increased supplier costs (travel, printing venue hire) due to additional committee workload. A final program cost will be identified in the financial statements after 30 June.*

*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.*

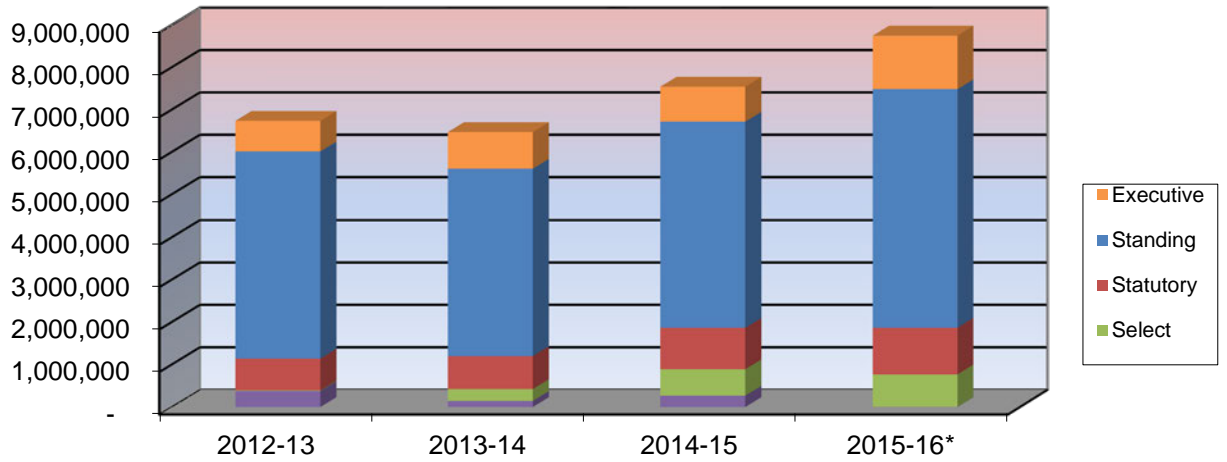
Committee Office - Staff Costs



Committee Office - Administrative Costs

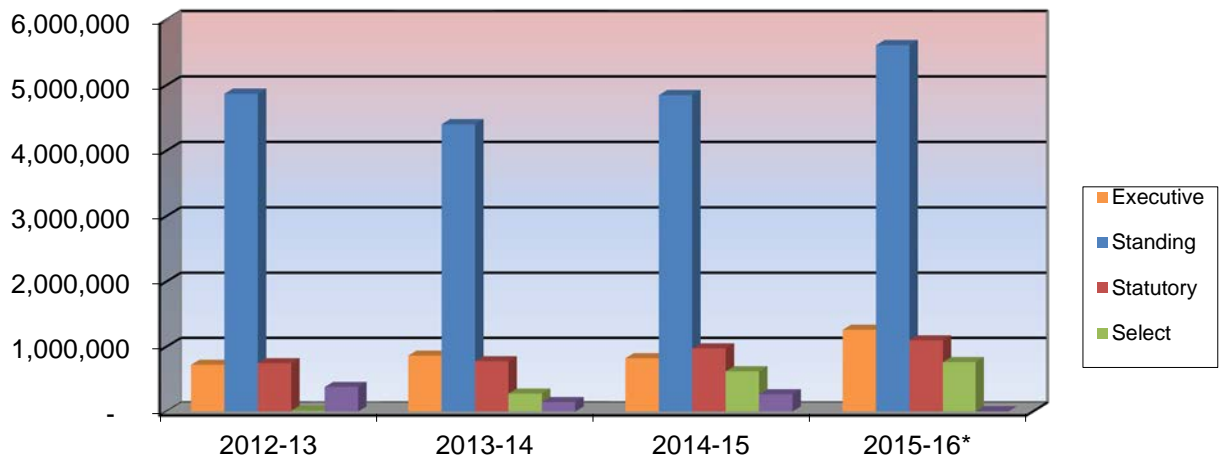


Committee Office - Total Expenditure



* Estimated actual based on data as at 31 March 2016

Committee Office - Total Expenditure



* Estimated actual based on data as at 31 March 2016

Committee Office FTE 2001/02 to 2015/16

