

SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

REPORT TO THE FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES FEBRUARY 2011

Recent trends

The attached statistics and tables show trends and comparisons in the activities of Senate committees during the 42nd and the first months of the 43rd parliaments:

The 42nd parliament experienced an increase in the total number of references to committees, increasing from 234 in the 41st to 309 in the 42nd. So far in the 43rd Parliament (at November 2010) there have been 42 matters referred to Senate Standing Committees: 30 bills and 12 other references

The 42nd parliament also experienced an increase in the total number of committee reports tabled, rising from 396 in the 41st to 493 in the 42nd. Committee reports tabled thus far in the 43rd Parliament (to the end of December 2010) total 42

The busiest committees at any one time during the 42nd parliament were Economics (maximum of 14 references at one time) and Community Affairs (maximum of 14 references at one time). In the 43rd parliament, the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee have dealt with a maximum of 12 references at one time (in November 2010)

In 2010, the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committees tabled 35 reports, the Community Affairs Committees tabled 29 reports, the Economics Committees tabled 28 reports and the Environment and Communications Committees tabled 27 reports

Currently, three select committees administered by the Senate are in operation.

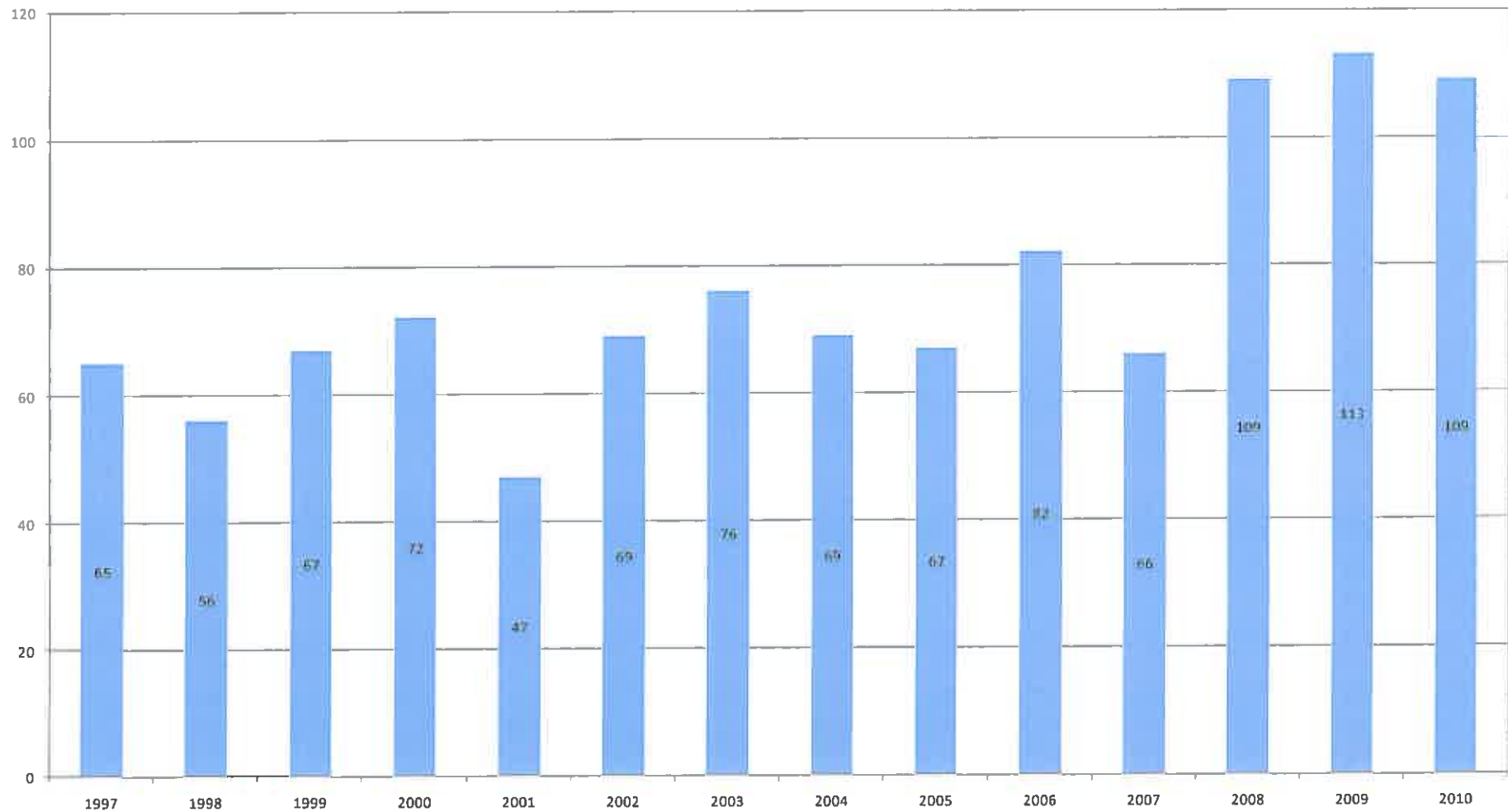
Staffing: the committee office FTE staffing level as at February 2011 is 57, slightly less than at the peak of activity during 2009 when it was 62, but still close to the levels of staffing and committee activity experienced in 2003–04.

Recruitment: recruitment for all levels continues as required in the Committee Office to account for internal promotion, discretionary leave and related non on-going recruitment, retirement and resignation.

Accessibility of on-line material to the vision impaired: the Environment and Communications References Committee has commenced a trial to convert to HTML a selection of submissions received by the committee for its inquiry into the status, health and sustainability of Australia's Koala population. The first batch of five submissions was sent to Vision Australia on 11 February 2011. A further report on the progress of this trial will be provided to the committee in May 2011.

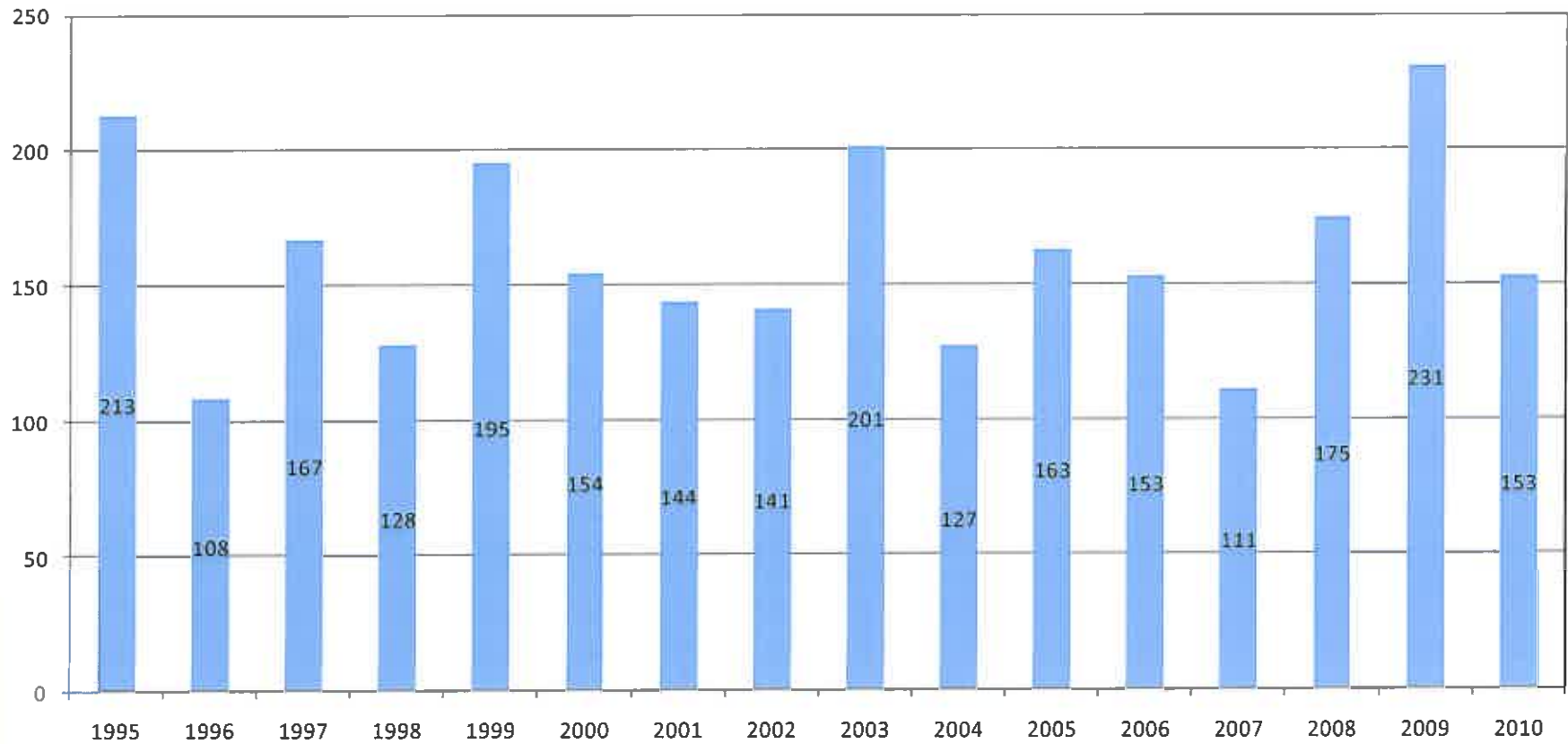
Cost of running Senate committees: the break-down of costs incurred 'by committee' for the three years 2007-08 to 2009-10 was included in the October 2010 report to the Committee. This report will be updated in May 2011 when the costs incurred by each committee for the financial year 2010-2011 can be accurately projected.

Senate Standing Committees - Number of References 1997 to 2010
(as at 26/11/10)



NB: figures for 2010 do not include 13 bills and 17 references re-referred at the beginning of the 43rd parliament

Senate Standing Committees - Hearings Held - 1995 to 2010
(as at 31/12/10)



Committee Office FTE 1991/92 to 2010/11

