



Speech by

**Mr N. ROBERTS**

**MEMBER FOR NUDGE**

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Hansard 8 June 1999

#### **DENTAL THERAPISTS**

**Mr ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (10.29 a.m.): The union representing dentists, the Australian Dental Association of Queensland, has been quite vocal in claiming the potential of threats to public health from what it describes as underqualified pseudo dentists performing dental work. The people to whom the ADAQ is referring are dental therapists who perform thousands of safe and hygienic tooth extractions, fillings and cleanings every year on our school children.

As my wife is a dental therapist, I probably have a greater insight into the work of these professionals and the high esteem with which they are held within our schools and the community generally. Given the hysterical contributions by the dentists union, I thought it appropriate to put some balance back into this debate.

Dental therapists currently perform dental work on children aged from four years to Year 10 in both Government and non-Government schools. However, they can only be employed by Queensland Health and not by the private sector. There is no logical argument why this artificial barrier should not be removed as a first step towards consideration of additional changes to the restrictions currently imposed on the work of dental therapists. Proper consideration should also be given to allowing dental therapists to provide the same level of care to adults as they currently provide to children.

Time expired.

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