



Speech by

**Mr N. ROBERTS**

**MEMBER FOR NUDGE**

---

Hansard 30 November 1999

**PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE**

**Report**

**Mr ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (10.04 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the Public Works Committee's report No. 61 on public sector backflow prevention programs. The Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing requested the committee to consider inquiring into the issue of public sector backflow prevention programs following a period of intense media and parliamentary debate. The committee was unable to produce a unanimous report on this issue. The majority report has focused solely on matters relevant to the inquiry's terms of reference. Several other issues were raised by witnesses, which were considered by those supporting the majority report to be peripheral and, in some cases, unrelated to the terms of reference.

In summary, the committee found that, whereas high-risk sites do exist, overall backflow presents a minimal risk to public health, it is easily prevented, and current public sector programs are an appropriate and proper management response. The committee found that public sector agencies were efficiently managing their programs and that they were effective in minimising the risk of backflow incidents occurring in public sector buildings. During the inquiry, a number of witnesses and submissions alleged that serious health consequences had arisen from backflow incidents within Queensland public sector facilities. The committee conducted its own research into these incidents and determined that they were unfounded.

The committee hopes that the publication of this report will provide some balance to the debate on backflow and help allay some of the unnecessary fear that was generated during the public debate on this issue. I commend the report to the House, and I give notice that, on Thursday next, I will move that the House take note of the committee's report.

---