



Speech by

Mr P. PURCELL

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

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PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
Backflow Prevention Programs

Mr PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (10.24 a.m.): I rise to support the member for Nudgee's motion dealing with the Public Works Committee's report relating to backflow. The Minister referred the backflow issue to the committee following statements by Opposition members and reports in some media outlets. Almost all of those claims made in those reports were not supported by evidence presented to the committee. For that reason, I refer honourable members and others to the committee's concerns about the "emotive and reactionary reporting of this issue in the period prior to and during the inquiry".

Some of that reporting was based on claims by some members of this House, as well as a number of other individuals. I believe that, in matters such as the quality of water supply, which is an understandable concern to all of us, we all have responsibility to deal in facts and not exaggerate or make emotional claims. This is particularly so when we are dealing with Government buildings such as schools, hospitals, nursing homes or office blocks.

I believe that anyone who read the committee's report would conclude that it is very easy to make claims about health risks but much harder to substantiate them with hard facts. The committee threw open its doors and effectively asked anybody with facts to come forward. Nobody presented such evidence, and further research by the committee did not turn up any such information. We all must be careful in matters such as this to guard against elevating scuttlebutt or urban myths to the status of facts.

I believe that, as the report concludes, the Government is on the right track in its risk management approach to handling potential backflow problems. This is the approach taken since 1995. As the committee concludes, it is an appropriate way to go about it and it is working. I believe that it is important to recognise that the minority report does not disagree with the substantial findings of the majority report.
