

6. BACKFLOW PREVENTION CO-ORDINATION

Officer responsible City Water & Waste Manager	Author Gareth Phillips, DDI 371-1301
--	--

The purpose of this report is to make Council aware of current backflow prevention practices as they relate to implementation of existing Council policy and possible process changes at the building consent stage to effect a more streamlined and efficient response.

BACKGROUND

In February 1999 a report was presented to the City Services Committee on backflow prevention and the need to develop a policy. This information was received and the recommendations adopted.

Since that time, progress has been made with backflow improvements to Council infrastructure and to private industry with many high priority premises being visited and advised of the need for them to comply with relevant legislation.

Putting the policy into practice has promoted a close relationship between the Environmental Services and City Water and Waste Units and we have progressively improved the identification of premises requiring backflow prevention equipment. This is frequently contentious as it is the owner's responsibility to ensure their premises do not cause pollution of the City water supply and do not create a hazard potential within the premises. With affected properties there is an initial cost to the owner/operator of the premises for installing backflow prevention devices plus an annual cost for a 'warrant of fitness' inspection by a suitably qualified inspector.

One of the hurdles that needed to be overcome, was that when an application for a building consent was made, Environmental Services consider the application in respect to the Building Act governing new buildings or changes to existing premises. This meant that backflow prevention may have been requested but only for on-site (within private premises) isolation of potential hazards e.g. an industrial site may possess a water supply feeding a chemical storage building as well as staff tea room. One of the guiding standards from a City Water and Waste perspective is the 'Water Supply Protection Regulations (1961)' which requires the whole of the site to be assessed for the risk of backflow, and if necessary to be isolated, (in a backflow sense) from the supply of water at the boundary of those premises.

There has been some criticism by industry that the Council issues a Building Consent and then returns at a later date to ensure compliance relating to matters not specific to the Building Consent. Significant liaison between the two Units has minimised this grey area and we continue to make further progress. Where a Project Information Memorandum (PIM) is prepared for a change of use, there is now a section that highlights the need for the applicant to consider their backflow prevention requirements. Also, should a City Water and Waste site inspection of industrial premises highlight a potentially hazardous situation, there then exists an avenue for Environmental services to investigate and if necessary, enforce the Building Act.

SUMMARY

In response to that concern from industry it is the intention of the City Water and Waste Unit to further investigate ways of addressing backflow requirements to the satisfaction of all legislative guidelines enforced by both City Water and Waste and Environmental Services Units. Further development of these services will provide more efficient and cost effective notification of backflow prevention requirements.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received.