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Submission: I am a ratepayer in the Ashfield local government area and have been for the past 10 years. I support Ashfield Council's application for a Special Rate Variation in order to allow it to continue to provide the standard and variety of services it currently does to its ratepayers. As costs increase, and other levels of Government continue to transfer their service delivery responsibilities to councils, the ability of councils to meet their service responsibilities will decrease unless there are increases in rates greater than those indexed. Last year's budget announcement that the indexation of Federal Government grants to Councils will cease will only increase pressure on councils meeting their service obligations. Local Government delivers important services to their communities that directly impact on ratepayers' quality of life. Maintaining the standards of those services is important and it is for this reason that I support the Special Rate Variation request from Ashfield Council.