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Date of submission: Monday, 9 March 2015

Submission: Ashfield Council is asking for steep increases over the next four years. In the information circulated, the main emphasis seemed to be on upgrading the swimming pool. I believe that the increases should not be considered until after the matter of council amalgamations has been decided. Ashfield is a very small council. My view is that efficiencies could be achieved through amalgamation. Furthermore, the way that community consultation was undertaken has me puzzled. A postcard was sent to residents and we could express our views on various rate rise scenarios. But perhaps the results were not what the Council wanted, because they seem to be relying instead on a telephone survey of 400 or so people. We have not been advised in detail about the views expressed on the postcards. But regardless of shortcomings with the surveying method, perhaps consistent with general shortcomings in a small council, the main reason I believe consideration should be delayed is that amalgamation could make a big difference to financial viability going forward. Thank you