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Submission: I support the proposal by Ashfield Council to remain as a stand-alone entity.

Ashfield Council is one of the oldest councils in NSW. It was formed after several petitions were lodged with the NSW government from the residents of the area.

Ashfield does not have the cachet of neighbouring suburbs. Real estate advertisements make a point of referring to the proximity of Ashfield properties to neighbouring suburbs. Looking through the lens of wealth accumulation, Ashfield doesn't rate. Some of the people who will support the amalgamation of Ashfield with another council have been known to refer to the area as "Trashfield". For a councillor to refer to their own municipality in this way speaks very loudly as to their capacity to deal with the local residents.

And yet they continue to participate. A local Liberal councillor was one of the instigators of the Ashfield Carnival of Cultures, and a prime mover behind the erection of the statue in Ashfield Park honouring the local connection to P.L. Travers, author of "Mary Poppins".

Ashfield has many more historical connections. It is the launch site of the first hot-air balloon in Australia, and the termination point for some of our earliest cycling races. "Model Park" was initially located in Ashfield.

The local sense of the area is important. It echoes through to today, and drives the decisions made by council to improve the lives of people.

Two examples.

1) The suburb is divided by a substantial train line. Bridges and tunnels connect the people on either side. One of the tunnels close to the railway station was particularly ugly and frightening for small children. A petition was created by the students in the local Catholic primary school to make the tunnel less frightening. The Council responded by engaging an artist-in-residence, with participation from local primary schools, child-care centres, other children's groups, and the Ashfield and District Historical Society and other community groups to turn the tunnel into an underground art gallery.

2) A new leash-free area was created in Croydon. The area was small and fenced. There were however gaps under the fence through which small dogs could escape to an adjacent carpark. A recipe for disaster. When this was brought to the attention of the Council, they responded within a day or so to close the gaps, and the park is now a favourite haunt for many of the smaller dogs in the area.

Ashfield is a modest, quiet and harmonious community. This is something which our Council understands and supports. And for these reasons I support our Council, which continues to providing the services our community needs.