

Sent: Monday, 16 March 2015 11:48 AM
To: IPART Mailbox
Subject: I support Ashfield Council's Special Rate Variation

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing regarding the special rate variation that Ashfield Municipal Council (AMC) has proposed and I understand is currently being considered by IPART. I wish to support the variation.

I live within the Municipality and currently enjoy low rates that Council charges. I am concerned however, that AMC is being hampered in its delivery of services that the community expect because it is unable to raise sufficient funds because of these low funds. I understand that the Special Rate Variation is proposed to be used to maintain and improve the pool. I have observed that the pool is becoming increasingly decrepit and requires maintenance.

I use the pool on a weekly basis. I am concerned that the pool will be closed if the special rate variation does not go ahead. The pool is an integral part of our community and provides a valuable service – many thousands of local children have learned to swim there, including my own daughter. It is open all year round and is an important local resource, especially in summer for a community that has lower car ownership than many other areas of NSW. The pool is within walking distance of my home but there are no other public pools close enough to walk or cycle to. If Ashfield pool were to close I, like so many other parents, would be forced to add to the choking traffic in the inner west to take our children for their swimming lessons or to go for a swim ourselves. This does not make sense from a community amenity or community health perspective.

AMC has consulted with the community about the special rate variation by both telephone and mail out and my family participated in both. It was discussed at a public Council meeting which I attended.

I also wish to draw IPART's attention to the fact that anonymous pamphlets were delivered to the local community against the special rate variation. There seemed to be an attempt made to get the community very angry about the Special Rate Variation and certainly the behaviour of many at the public Council meeting was aggressive and did not seem to reflect a community willing to listen to any reasoned arguments. I believe this was due to the rhetoric of the anonymous pamphlets.

AMC seems to be hampered in its ability to deliver the services that other local Councils can deliver. These include online viewing of Development Applications etc, maintenance of footpaths, construction of cycleways and maintenance of parks. We are an area where NSW government policies are encouraging more and more people to live but we need to maintain local government funded-community resources such as public pools, public parks and accessible footpaths to ensure that our community will maintain its amenity.

Kind Regards,

Sara Arthur