

ASHFIELD COUNCIL

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

ORDINARY MEETING - 23 FEBRUARY 2016

ITEM

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STAFF REPORTS

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Subject	SECOND QUARTER REVIEW AGAINST THE COUNCIL PLAN - 2015-2019
File Ref	SC214
Prepared by	Emma Lannan - Executive Policy Officer
Reasons	To fulfil statutory requirements according to the Local Government Act 1993 and the Local Government Amendment (Planning and Reporting) Act 2009
Objective	To update Council on progress towards the delivery of actions in the 2015/19 Council Plan

Overview of Report

The report (attachment 1) reflects actions and achievements undertaken during the second quarter (October – December 2015) in relation to performance targets as determined in the Council Plan 2015-2019.

Background

This is the second quarterly report presented against the Council Plan 2015/2019. The Council Plans sets out the strategic actions that will be undertaken by Council over the four year period, to help achieve the community's vision as defined in the Community Plan, Ashfield 2023 – Our Place, Our Future. It also includes relevant performance indicators and service levels.

Detailed information on performance against each initiative listed in the Council Plan is provided for this quarter in the attachment to this report. The report indicated that, overall, significant progress has been made towards the delivery of the programs and initiatives that Council committed to for the 2015/206 financial year.

Financial Implications

The financial details have been outlined in the Second Quarter Budget Review, reported to Council in correlation with this report.

Other Staff Comments

All Program Managers and Directors have contributed to the review through the delivery of their operational plans.

Public Consultation

While not specifically required for this report, on-going community consultation is undertaken in order to meet the aims and objectives of the various individual actions as noted. The quarterly review is made available for viewing and download by the community on Council's website.

SECOND QUARTER REVIEW AGAINST THE COUNCIL PLAN - 2015-2019

Conclusion

The second quarter review provides detail regarding each of the actions associated with the first year in the delivery of the Council Plan. It reflects the performance against each initiative listed, as undertaken over the period.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 Review against Council Plan 2015-2019 DRAFT 44 Pages

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note Council's performance over the Second Quarter 2015/16 and the report be published on Council's website.

VANESSA CHAN
General Manager



COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

✓	Achieved or substantially achieved
↑	On track to be delivered
x	Not Delivered

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Creative and Inclusive Communities

Snapshot:



Left: Two free Car Seat Safety Check Days were well attended

Below: Metro Assist continue to work with Council to support community, including hosting a stall at Council's 'Ashfield Values Mental Health'



Below: Street University with Ashfield Police, Council's White Ribbon Day event



Highlights for this quarter include:

- 34 projects supported by 2015-16 Arts, Community and Environment Grants Scheme
- Public Art Policy and Public Art in Private Developments – Guidelines approved by Council for exhibition
- Hosted 'Homelessness and Mental Health' Forum
- Launched 'Appetites of Ashfield' Cook Book
- New agreement signed with Chinese Australian Services Society to deliver English Helpdesk in 2016
- Engaged with week-long festival of ComicCon events, across six libraries
- Hosted Multicultural movie events and seminars
- Adopted the Ashfield Civic Centre User Policy
- Developed a draft Homelessness Protocol
- Delivered a diverse Frolic in the Forecourt program
- Facilitated a program of parenting workshops
- Held two Car Seat Safety Check days
- AYT successful in receiving a \$15,000 'Fundability' grant for new production in 2016

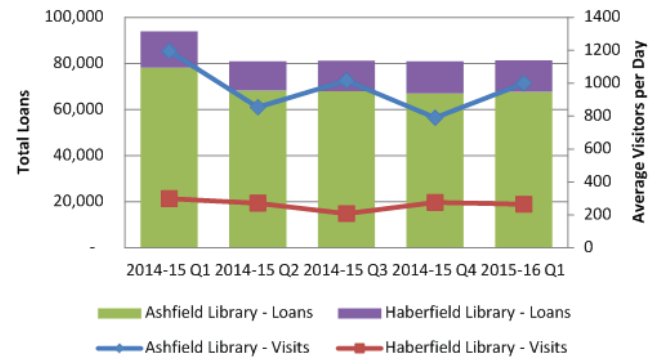
Deliverables in the next quarter include:

- Carnival of Cultures, Lunar New Year and Seniors Week event
- Partnership with Ted Noffs – Street University Program to be secured
- AYT partnership in Inner West Short Play Festival
- Establish Reconciliation Action Plan working party to support delivery and review of RAP
- Finalise Public Art Policy, after public exhibition
- Homelessness Assistance Card
- Australia Day celebrations planned at Ashfield Aquatic Centre
- Report on SSROC 'Liveability Benchmarks for Urban Renewal'
- Undertake EOI for social enterprise opportunity to operate from the Civic Centre
- GLBTQI evening of readings held

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

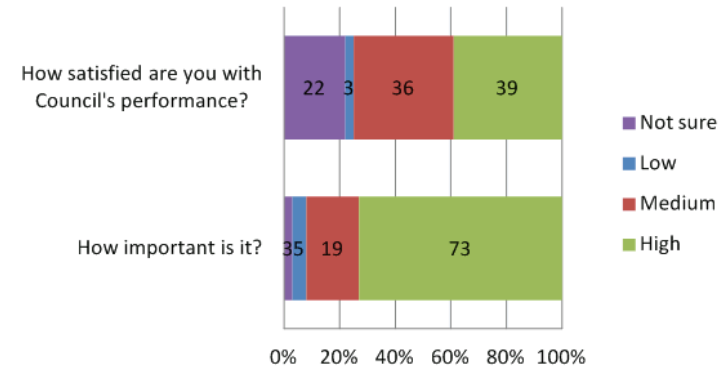
Visitors and loans to Libraries

(Source: Library Services Quarterly Reports)



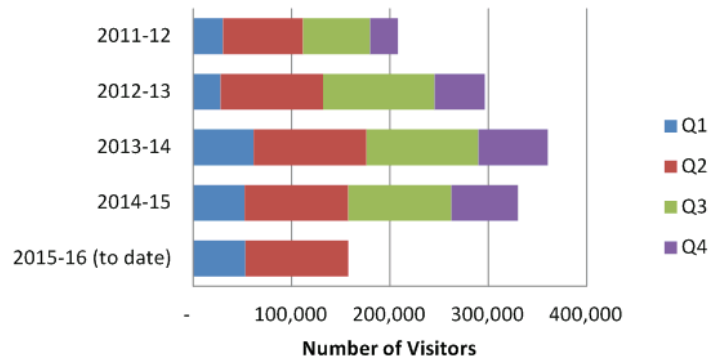
Community perception of Council's programs that promote harmony between cultures

(Source: 2015 Community Satisfaction Survey)



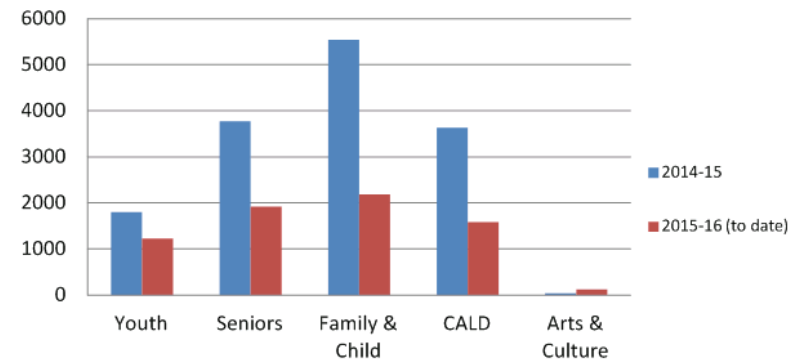
Aquatic Centre Visitation, by Quarter

(Source: Aquatic Centre Quarterly Reports)



Engagement in Community Programs

(Source: Arts, Culture & Community Attendance Records)



COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Foster reconciliation and implement the Reconciliation Action Plan	↑	<p>This quarter, the Aboriginal Consultative Committee expanded with a local Aboriginal woman's membership. Council's first graduate of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy has completed her traineeship. The school-based trainee has completed 800 hours, over two years, working with Council's Community Programs & Services area. The arts continue to be an important opportunity to progress the Reconciliation Action Plan with Council's first Aboriginal Artist in Residence selected for a residency from August 2016. Engineering drawings have been finalized for the installation of the second 'Gateway' sculptural public artwork.</p>
Provide and promote an annual program of community events	↑	<p>This quarter, progress was made in preparing for Council's signature community event, Carnival of Cultures, and the Lunar New Year Festival. Both will take place in early 2016.</p> <p>Frolic in the Forecourt Live musical and dance performances are held each week to activate the Ashfield Town Centre, celebrate our cultural diversity and promote important social and health initiatives, in partnership with other organisations, community groups and schools. This quarter, Frolic's highlights include celebrating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diwali Festival with a classical Indian performance and creative dance workshop • International Day of People with a Disability, with a West African drumming performance and workshop • Mental Health Month included performance by the Exodus Foundation Band, information stalls and coincided with a 'Homelessness and Mental Health' Consortium • Children's and Grandparents' Day featuring intergenerational dance workshop <p>Frolic also provides an important performance opportunity for young people and local schools' bands.</p> <p>Comic Con-versation 2015 This year, the week-long comics festival was held from September 28 to October 3, with exhibitions, talks and other events across Ashfield, Canada Bay, Canterbury, Liverpool, Marrickville and Sutherland Libraries. Ashfield held Comics Labs on September 30 and October 2, and hosted the Closing Event on October 3, with over 200 people attending these events. The Closing Event was an evening of workshops, live sketching, gaming, artists' alley and live musical performance.</p> <p>Authors at Ashfield This quarter, six talks were hosted with a total attendance of 305 people. Lectures covered topics including Jane Austen, Yeats and his poetry and sustainable farming and the modern food industry. Feedback from participants remains consistently positive.</p> <p>Multicultural film nights have been fully booked out, with the last event for 2015 featuring Chinese film 'Flying</p>

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
		Swords of Dragon Gate'. Film nights have received positive feedback from the community and a 2016 calendar is in development.
Provide services and programs at the Ashfield Aquatic Centre	↑	The Ashfield Swim School has had 1650 enrolments this quarter and class occupancy is at 92.4%. The swim school is nearing full capacity for what can be accommodated by the current single, indoor pool. The Ashfield Aquatic Centre Child-minding Service had 15 new families enroll this quarter. In partnership with Metro Assist, planning for a child-minding open day for multicultural social support groups is under way. The day will provide group members an opportunity to tour the Aquatic Centre, learn about and use the child-minding service and have a swim.
Support community capacity building activities through financial grants and provision of facilities	↑	Arts, Community & Environment Grants Scheme received 36 applications which were assessed by the Selection Committee in October 2015. Council adopted 34 individual projects and programs to receive funding. This represents a total of \$56, 030 worth of grants. A successful Grants Presentation Day was held on 26 November for successful applicants with 45 people attending. The event supported networking and discussion between community groups and guest speakers from previous grant rounds. In addition, opportunities to support grant recipients and strategically link their projects to broader Council programs and initiatives are underway, including supporting the delivery of school holiday programs and dance events during Seniors Week in 2016. The Club GRANTS Committee was in recess this quarter and will reconvene in February 2016.
Deliver a diverse range of community development programs, services and resources	↑	In partnership with Catholic Care , Council delivered two parenting sessions for families with children aged 0 – 5 years, from a range of cultural backgrounds. 20 parents attended the ' Introduction to Circle of Security ' workshop in November which included sleeping and settling babies and children's behaviour and development. 27 parents and 21 children attended the December ' Children's Oral Health Workshop ' and learnt about teething, thumb sucking and tooth decay. Participant feedback has been positive with most reporting an increase in confidence and knowledge in parenting skills. Council also ran two Free Child Car Seat Safety Check Days during NSW Children's Week, with NSW Roads & Maritime Service . A total of 40 child care seats and booster seats were checked, refitted and installed correctly. Only 45% checked were found to be fitted correctly. Both days were fully booked and received excellent feedback from parents. The Recreation for Seniors program offers a range of opportunities that are free or at low cost, for seniors to meet other people, promote ethnic and cultural harmony and support older people to lead balanced lifestyles. The program currently includes weekly Tai Chi in the Park , Exercise at Exodus , two Yoga classes and Fitter and Stronger classes, with nearly 70 people regularly attend these sessions.

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
		Council is supporting the development of the Resourceful Indian Australian Network . The group meets fortnightly, with 16 people regularly participating in talks on meditation, arts and crafts and yoga. Members of this group have joined the Seniors Committee and are supporting the Seniors Week and Carnival of Cultures 2016 events. The group is preparing to deliver 'RAIN Green', a sustainability education program in 2016, supported by an Ashfield Council Environment Grant.
Partner with local agencies to support delivery of community activities and services	↑	<p>Council partnered with Wesley Mission to run a <i>Financial Literacy Workshop – Christmas Planning and Budgeting</i> in November for young people. The workshop covered topics such as skills to manage money and protect from scams, saving for Christmas, and knowing where to go for help.</p> <p>Street University Ashfield started its first term this quarter, offering after school-hours music and hip-hop dance programs on two afternoons, over 11 weeks. An average of 12 young people participate each week. A partnership with Wests Leagues Club and Ted Noffs Foundation is in discussion to continue operations in 2016.</p> <p>A strong working relationship continues with headspace. In October, Council partnered with headspace to deliver 'Ashfield Values Mental Health' event, a celebration of Mental Health Month. Council's launch of the Summer Hill Skate Park at Darrell Jackson Gardens on 11 October was also supported by headspace. The headspace Community Engagement Coordinator regularly attends Council's Youth Committee meetings and the headspace Centre is being utilised to run youth workshops and meetings, including Youth Committee and the 'L Driver' workshops.</p> <p>Council partnered with five other libraries to deliver a very successful week long Comi-Con program of events. Council has also undertaken external stakeholder engagement with Missionbeat, Exodus, Ashfield Police, Youth Off The Streets, FACS, NSW Health, Partners in Recovery, and other LGA's including City of Sydney, Marrickville and Leichhardt Councils to support work in the area of homelessness.</p>
Review key State and Commonwealth human services and social welfare policies	↑	<p>The NSW Government Disability Inclusion Action Plan Guidelines were released in November. Council will commence work on developing its Disability Action Plan over the next two quarters.</p> <p>A draft Homelessness Protocol has been prepared, following consultation with Missionbeat, Exodus Foundation, Youth Off The Streets, Partners in Recovery, Ashfield Police, City of Sydney's Homelessness team and internal stakeholders. It has been informed by the NSW Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places (2014) and aims to provide practical guidance and support to address the complex issues of homelessness in Ashfield.</p>

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Promote the provision of affordable housing	↑	Council has participated in the preparation of SSROC 'Liveability Benchmarks for Urban Renewal' which includes housing affordability as one of several key measures of liveability. The report recommends a benchmark of 30% of renewal of stock to be affordable rental housing and was endorsed by SSROC Mayors and their delegates in November 2015. The report is currently with NSW Planning & Environment for comment. An information report will be prepared for Council next quarter.
Support a Council Volunteer Program	↑	This quarter, Council continued to support volunteer opportunities through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruitment of Lead Tutor to oversee the English Conversation Program's volunteer tutors and manage the daily coordination of the program - Continued partnership with CASS to provide the Chinese Language Help Desk and Form Filing Service, staff by volunteers - Engaged Macquarie University student to translate documents for the community and business programs and events - Recruitment of a Mandarin-speaking volunteer to provide translation assistance to Youth Off The Streets - Continued to provide free access to Justice of Peace services at both libraries.
Support Community Gardens	↑	New community garden at Tarringa Street continues to be supported, to help it establish. Negotiations are underway to lease the Haberfield Community Garden beds for an initial six month trial to NSW Health and a third community compost bin and additional educational signage have been installed at Eora Community Garden in Summer Hill.
Promote Ashfield as an arts and culture hub	↑	The 2015-16 Independent Artist Grant Program were awarded this quarter. Outcomes of the 2014-15 program delivered in Quarter 2 included grant recipient, Chinese Federation of Australia, providing free entertainment at the Ashfield Feast of Flavours, as part of their project. A folk festival in Summer Hill, presented by another recipient, is in planning for delivery next quarter. Public Art Policy and Public Art in Developments – Developer Guidelines have been endorsed by Council are on public exhibition until early February 2016. Ashfield Civic Centre Venues Usage Policy has also been approved. These policies will guide installation of public art, particularly in the Ashfield Town Centre, support private investment in public art and continue to promote the Civic Centre as a safe, professional and reliable space for the delivery of event and programs.
Deliver workshops and exhibitions through the Artist	↑	Artist in Residence , Kate Cotching from Mildura, completed her 10 weeks residency at the end of October. During her stay, Kate curated <i>Out of the Cube</i> exhibition at Thirning Villa, ran two soft sculpture workshops at

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COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
in Residence program		the Villa and at a Frolic in the Forecourt event. Council's 41 st Artist in Residence, Hannah Furmage, began her residency in November and is working on a video performance piece with asylum seekers and refugees, in collaboration with Settlement Service International and Metro Assist that will be exhibited early in 2016.
Continue Ashfield Youth Theatre program of workshops and productions	↑	<p>The success of the Artist Xchange Program has continued this quarter, with 'Wednesday Weekly Workshop' series. Up to 12 young people have been regularly participating in workshops on Shakespearean Theatre, lead by the Artistic Director of the Sydney Shakespeare Company, Steven Hopely.</p> <p>In Quarter 2, the Ashfield Youth Theatre (AYT) has attracted new members through the success of its most recent major production "Punk Rock". The group is currently in rehearsals for 'The Shakespeare Experiment' which will be performed outside, in Darrell Jackson Garden, Summer Hill in early 2016. A 'Bring a Friend to AYT' day in January 2016 and a large recruitment drive is planned to support the upcoming Inner West Short Play Festival.</p> <p>Planning is underway for a Short Play Festival to be performed during Youth Week 2016, in partnership with Burwood, Canada Bay, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils. The project will build on the success of 2014's short play festival, attract many new people to AYT's programs and provide opportunity for AYT to tour the Inner West and showcase our local talent.</p> <p>AYT was also successful in receiving a \$15,000 grant from FundABILITY that will include an exciting partnership opportunity between the New South Wales Schizophrenia Fellowship, Headspace Ashfield and Rivendell Hospital in Concord to create a series of solo theatre pieces based off the varying experiences young people have with mental health</p>
Operate and deliver the new Ashfield Youth Space	↑	<p>Council continues to work in partnership with headspace to support youth programs, initiatives and activities. This quarter, headspace and the Street University supported the re-launch of the Summer Hill Skate Park, as well as continuing to plan and provide recreation, leadership and skill development opportunities for young people. This work is informed by, and promoted through, consultation with the Principals and Deputy Principals of local schools.</p> <p>The Ashfield Youth Space is utilised bi-monthly for Youth Committee meetings. In Quarter 2, the Committee accepted one new member, supported the planning and delivery of the Summer Hill Skate Park Re-Launch and volunteered at Council's White Ribbon Day celebrations.</p>

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment																								
Promote opportunities for lifelong learning and wellbeing through library services and programs	↑	<p>In Quarter 2, a pilot project to encourage uptake of the e-book catalogue by seniors was delivered. iPad lessons were offered through Probus Ashfield to introduce and familiarise the use of iPads.</p> <p>The Homework Help program supported 624 students this quarter and Story Time sessions for over 160 Kindergarten and Stage 1 students from local schools. Council library staff are engaging with school librarians to organise special visit and local studies talks for class groups in 2016.</p> <p>The Home Library Service has expanded with eight new members. Deliveries to local nursing homes continue, twice a week. Haberfield Library have introduced an outdoor reading space, in the community garden beside the Library, to encourage and inspire lifelong learning in any environment.</p>																								
Develop and expand a local studies collection and programs	↑	<p>In Quarter 2, there were 25 research enquiries and six visitors to the local studies collection room. The local studies collection room also become a dedicated HSC study space from October to mid-November. Digital assets continue to be uploaded on Portfolio and historical images shared via social media and on the promotional screen in the library. A range of presentations and talks have been held this quarter to encourage use of the local studies collection, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Resources available for family and local history research, and how to access them- History of Ashfield, showcasing memorabilia from the archives, for the local National Seniors Australia group- Famous Sydney women and their connections to Ashfield <p>Council supported the Ashfield & Districts Historical Society to launch their latest journal, “Ashfield Answers the Call” and contributed two articles this quarter. On 10 November 2015, Coo-ee March Re-enactment arrived in Ashfield and a service was held at Ashfield Park. The Re-enactment and its historical significance were promoted via Library’s social media platforms.</p>																								
Maintain a range of community facilities and buildings	↑	<p>Expressions of Interest for 2016 for regular users of Council’s halls and facilities has been completed with 70 expressions of interest received, assessed and have been booked for the 2016 calendar year. The expression of interest for the regular use of Council’s community bus was undertaken in conjunction with the hall hire process. Council’s community facilities continued to be well utilised this quarter with the following bookings:</p> <table><tr><th>Facility</th><th>No. of bookings</th><th>Facility</th><th>No. of bookings</th></tr><tr><td>Town Hall</td><td>394</td><td>Bastable St Hall</td><td>375</td></tr><tr><td>Activity Room 1</td><td>206</td><td>Cadigal Room</td><td>512</td></tr><tr><td>Activity Room 2</td><td>229</td><td>Mervyn Fletcher</td><td>323</td></tr><tr><td>Activity Room 3</td><td>275</td><td>Michael Maher</td><td>281</td></tr><tr><td>Activity Room 4</td><td>322</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>In the period October 2015-December 2015 the Bus was booked out on 33 occasions.</p>	Facility	No. of bookings	Facility	No. of bookings	Town Hall	394	Bastable St Hall	375	Activity Room 1	206	Cadigal Room	512	Activity Room 2	229	Mervyn Fletcher	323	Activity Room 3	275	Michael Maher	281	Activity Room 4	322		
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COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Special Rates Variation funded works	↑	<p>Ashfield Aquatic Centre This quarter, a Project Manager and Design Team has been appointed following the completion of a tender process.</p> <p>Community halls Investigations and scope of work have been planned for Bastable Hall with works expected to commence in Quarter 3.</p> <p>New sporting facility at Centenary Park Design Plans have been completed in consultation with relevant sporting clubs and organisations. The Development Application for scope of works has been approved.</p>

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Unique and Distinctive Neighbourhoods

Snapshot:



Above: Hedge trimming in Allman Park

Below: Trenching for new flood lights at Ashfield



Highlights for this quarter include:

- Street Tree Strategy finalised and adopted by Council.
- Completed 152 graffiti removal jobs across the local government area.
- During the months of July, August and September, Council pruned 1,005 trees across the local government area.
- Gross average processing time for DAs was 52 days in Quarter 2.
- Consultants appointed for new Heritage DCP and Comprehensive Ashfield DCP.
- Lighting upgrade for Hammond, Ashfield, Centenary and Algie Park sporting fields commenced.
- Successful Feast of Flavours program of events held in three neighbourhoods of Ashfield, Haberfield and Summer Hill with 37,000 people attending

Deliverables in the next quarter include:

- New bubblers at Ashfield Park.
- Finalise submission on Urban Design and Visual Impact.
- Report to Council on State Government Parramatta Road Urban Transformation Strategy.
- Finalise village precinct guidelines.

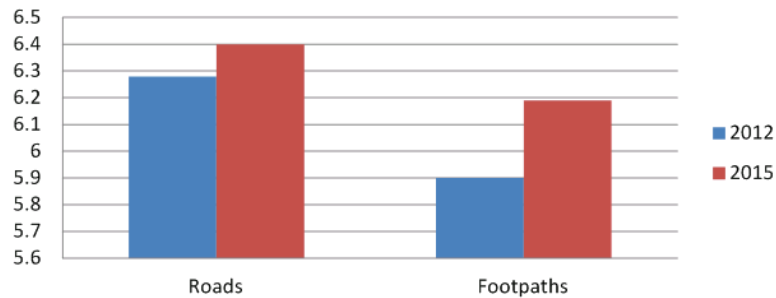


Above: Interactive musical performance at Summer Hill's Neighbourhood Feast, 11 October 2015

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

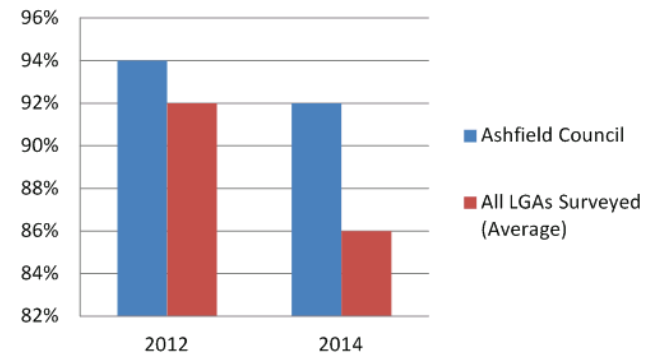
Community satisfaction with condition of local roads and footpaths

(Source: 2015 Community Satisfaction Survey)



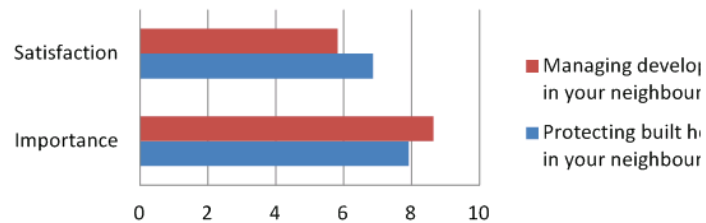
User Satisfaction with Parks

(Source: 2015 Yardstick Park Survey)



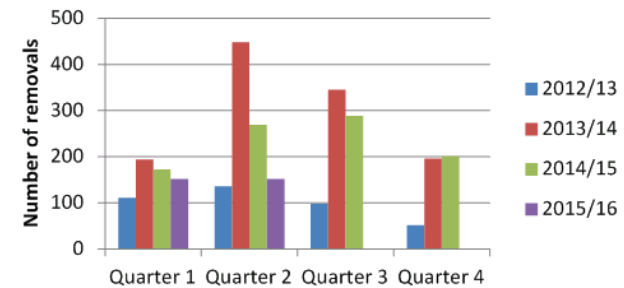
Community satisfaction with managing development & protecting heritage

(Source: 2015 Community Satisfaction Survey)



Graffiti removal across our LGA

(Source: Parks, Trees & Graffiti Quarterly Reports)



COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Unique and Distinctive Neighbourhoods

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Finalise consolidated Ashfield Development Control Plans (DCP)	↑	Work on Consolidated Development Control Plans (DCP) commenced this quarter, following engagement of suitably experienced consultant. With 70% of DCP complete, final draft is expected in Quarter 3.
Finalise new DCP for areas of heritage significance	↑	Property rankings for new Heritage Conservation Areas were compiled this quarter and planning controls for inclusion in Consolidated DCP are scheduled for completion in Quarter 3.
Finalise new DCP for management of stormwater	↑	The preparation of a stormwater management new code has been included as a task in the Flood Risk Management Study and Plan process. Council has been to tender for the Study. The first tender process resulted in the rejection of all tenders and the tender was advertised for a second time. The second tender evaluation will be undertaken in the third quarter. The new DCP is a fourth quarter task.
Undertake development assessments	↑	Development assessment is continuing to be carried out. This quarter, the average DA turn around time was 52 days, two days above Council's target of 50 days. This is attributed to the large number of DAs received and determined and also the increasing complexity of applications. Due to the change in zonings as a result of the Ashfield LEP 2013 and buoyant residential property market, Council is continuing to receive more complex, large scale applications. NSW Planning released 2014-15 Development Performance data this quarter. Ashfield has the second fastest DA turnaround time, compared to similar, metro councils and the fifth fastest time across Sydney.
Promote active and heritage sensitive use of Yasmar	↑	WestConnex EIS did not propose any changes to Yasmar, as a result of WestConnex project. Council's submission to NSW Department of Planning & Environment (October 2015) made reference to Yasmar, recommending that the State Government dedicate the property to Council, for community use and provide \$4.5million towards restoration of Yasmar House.
Maintain Council's parks, reserves, sporting grounds and facilities	↑	Council's ongoing, regular maintenance program included marking of sportsfields and maintenance on verge, street planting and gardens this quarter. New BBQs and tables have been installed in Ashfield and Yeo Parks and Richard Murden Reserve. New paths were installed in Robson Park. From October to December, Council pruned 694 trees, removed 24 trees, planted 6 trees and mulched 92 trees. Approximately 26 cubic metres of mulch was re-used in parks and reserves. As a result of storms or garbage

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Neighbourhood activities incorporated in the annual program of events	↑	<p>truck damage, 126 branches were collected and removed.</p> <p>Maintenance of Council facilities included internal and external painting and new flooring throughout Basatable Hall (Croydon) and internal painting at Haberfield Library.</p> <p>Feast of Flavours events were successfully held with 37,000 people attending and a total of \$15,000 of external sponsorship secured to support the events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ashfield's Tastes of Asia Friday 9 October 6pm – 9pm - Summer Hill's Neighbourhood Feast Sunday 11 October 10am-4pm - The Haberfield Festa Sunday 22 November 10am-4pm <p>A Roaming Santa encouraged people to shop in Summer Hill and Haberfield Villages in December. This initiative was well received by local businesses. Christmas decorations were installed in the Ashfield CBD by mid-November 2015, meeting local business expectations as outline in a Quarter 1 survey.</p> <p>Frolic in the Forecourt offers people an opportunity to access free entertainment at lunchtime on Tuesdays throughout the year. This popular event promotes the town centre as an attractive and lively pleasant place to be.</p>
Provide waste services in neighbourhoods, centres and parks	↑	<p>Cleanaway has been collecting residential waste bins, commercial waste bins and transporting to Veolia tipping facilities. Quarter 2 has included:</p> <p>General Waste Collected = 2755 tonnes</p> <p>Recyclable Waste Collected = 900 tonnes</p> <p>Green Waste Collected = 476 tonnes</p> <p>Mattresses collected = 255 tonnes</p> <p>73 new bins have been delivered via rates requests and 188 bins have been repaired via Customer Request Management requests.</p> <p>November bi-annual clean up collection initially delayed by the contractor. Rigorous contract management ensured collection back on track and all zones were completed.</p>
Implement graffiti management strategies	↑	<p>Council liaises with the Department of Juvenile Justice to remove graffiti. This quarter, number of sites included in this program increased from three to nine. The Department of Juvenile Justice attend designated sites giving young offenders an opportunity to recognise the effects of their crimes and provide restitution. Graffiti operations have continued with the main priorities given to CBD areas then to private property. Of the 152 graffiti removals that occurred across the LGA this quarter, 15 were reported by customers.</p>

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Review policy and procedures for parks, trees and reserves	↑	The Street Tree Strategy was adopted by Council on 10 November 2015. A consultant has been engaged to review Plans of Management for various parks, including Pratten Park and Ashfield Park.
Implement village precinct public domain guidelines	↑	Draft Public Domain Guidelines were received this quarter and are currently under review. Finalisation of the Guidelines is expected in Quarter 3.
Special Rates Variation funded works <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Garden Infrastructure renewal program - Playground equipment renewal and upgrade - Algie Park and Hammond Park sport field light upgrade 	↑	Garden Infrastructure renewal program Concept designs are underway for landscaping work along the Bay Run. This work will be combined with footpath renewal which will be tendered next quarter. Playground equipment renewal and upgrade Procurement process commenced for playground and gym equipment at Richard Murden Reserve Sporting ground upgrade irrigation and drainage Tender currently begin advertised. Evaluation and recommendation to award anticipated to be completed by Quarter 3, with work scheduled to commence in Quarter 4, 2015/16. Algie Park and Hammond Park sport field light upgrade Contract awarded by and works commenced at Ashfield Park. Algie, Hammond and Centenary Parks to follow.

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Safe, Connected and Accessible Places

Snapshot:



Above: Bay Run-Iron Cove Pedestrian Bridge, completed and launched

Below: New footpath and grassed verge, Liverpool Road, Croydon



Highlights for this quarter include:

- Response to Westconnex EIS submitted to Department of Planning and Environment.
- Bay Run – Iron Cove Pedestrian Bridge completed and launched
- Continuation of accelerated footpath program
- 25 pedestrian access ramps reconstructed to meet current standards
- Actively participated on the Police Local Area Safety Committee

Below: Pedestrian access ramp, Elizabeth St, Ashfield



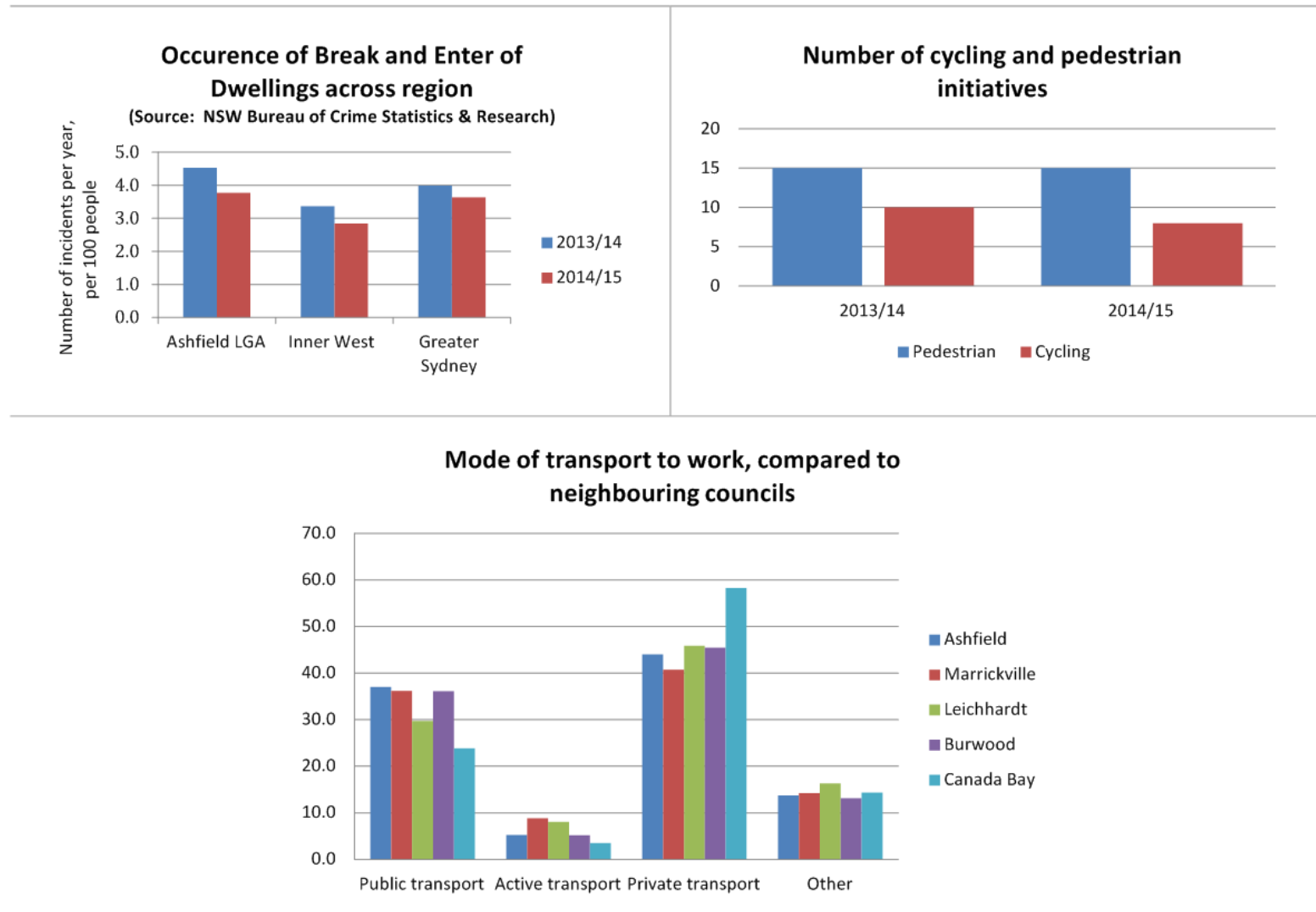
Deliverables in the next quarter include:

- Final designs for Sloane and Arthur Street Reconstructions
- Construction of Orpington St/Parramatta Rd/Ormond St cycleway upgrade
- Finalisation of Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan
- Implementation of Summer Hill Residential Parking Scheme
- NSW Attorney-General's Department adoption of Crime Prevention Plan 2015-2017

Below: Upgraded bus stop, Elizabeth St, Ashfield



COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015



COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Undertake LGA wide traffic study	↑	Draft Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (PAMP) was exhibited this quarter. The PAMP examines the need for improved pedestrian facilities throughout the LGA, such as additional footpaths, new crossings and pedestrian access hot spots. It is expected to be finalised in Quarter 3. A consultant has been engaged to update the Traffic Management Strategy and community consultation is scheduled for March 2016.
Advocate for the community in relation to the proposed West Connex and Parramatta Road Revitalisation Plan	↑	Council's response to the WestConnex Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was submitted to the NSW Department of Planning & Environment (DPE) on 28 October 2015. All aspects of the EIS were addressed in the submission. The applicant's response to all submissions was published on DPE's website in early December 2015 and a supplementary submission on the applicant's response to Council's submission was forwarded to DPE on 17 December 2015. The project is currently under assessment by DPE. The Draft Parramatta Road Urban Transformation Strategy was placed on exhibition on 1 October 2015 is currently being analysed. Urban Growth presented to the Planning and Environment Committee in mid-November 2015. A comprehensive report on the draft strategy was submitted to Urban Growth, following adoption by Council on 15 December 2015.
Construct a new pedestrian bridge over Dobroyd Canal at Iron Cove Bay run	↑	The bridge was completed with an official opening on 26 October 2015. Preliminary work has begun to widen and upgrade sections of the Bay Run, with funding from NSW Roads and Maritime Services.
Complete accelerated footpath program	↑	Program is near to completion with the following streets completed this quarter: Summer Hill <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prospect Road - Carlton Crescent - Old Canterbury Road Croydon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liverpool Road - Edwin St South Ashfield <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bland Street Haberfield Town Centre paving upgrade is also nearing completion.

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Implement Council's road re-sheeting program	↑	This quarter, ancillary works commenced, with new stormwater pits in Palace and Hughes Lanes, Ashfield. Procurement for a contractor to deliver re-sheeting program has been completed, with works scheduled to commence in Quarter 3.
Maintain Council's community bus	↑	The 2016 Expression of Interest process was completed this quarter and bookings for 2016 finalised. There were eight expressions of interest received for regular users of the community bus for the 2016 calendar year.
Grow partnership strategies for enhancement of public domain	↑	<p>Ashfield East Planning Proposal</p> <p>Following further studies undertaken at the request of Transport NSW in August 2015, a final report was presented to Council in December 2015. The proposal was adopted, subject to amendments to building height and density for some properties near Prospect Rd/Carlton Crescent, in response to public submissions. The amended proposal was forwarded to NSW Department of Planning & Environment in December 2015.</p> <p>Lewis Herman Reserve</p> <p>To transfer land from RMS to Council, a Plan of Management is required to be prepared. A consultant was engaged this quarter to prepare and redevelop Plans of Management for a number of parks, including Lewis Herman Reserve. Community consultation is scheduled to be undertaken in the first half of 2016.</p>
Implement the bus shelters/stop upgrade program	↑	Ongoing works are taking place to complete this program. This quarter, seven new shelters were installed and three bus stops were reconstructed to comply with disability standards. The remaining shelters (ten) will be installed during Quarter 3.
Develop and implement a Disability Action Plan	↑	NSW Government released Disability Inclusion Act Plan (DIAP) Guidelines in late 2016. The position of Community Development Worker – Seniors & Disability has been created to support both the disability and seniors portfolio, including the drafting and implementation of Ashfield's DIAP. Recruitment is anticipated to be completed in the next quarter.
Implement strategies to improve community safety	↑	The Crime Prevention Plan 2015-2017 was submitted to the NSW Attorney-General's Department last quarter to seek endorsement. It has not yet been approved and the Justice Department advised in November 2015 that the Plan is with the FACS and Police Ministers, for their consideration. Once endorsed, Council may be eligible to apply for funding to the Attorney-General's Office. The Plan reflects and builds on Councils continuing commitment to work in partnership with a range of stakeholders to make Ashfield a safer place to live.
Local Emergency Management		Council's General Manager is the current Chair of the Inner West Local Emergency Management Committee and is coordinating work with Burwood, Canada Bay and Strathfield Councils and other emergency services agencies,

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
	↑	through the Committee. This quarter, the updated Risk Assessment Report was finalised and work commenced on a series of Consequence Management Guides by all agencies involved in the Local Emergency Management Committee, to address top tier hazards.
Regulate high risk public health and safety activities	↑	The Swimming Pools Act implementation date has been extended by the State Government till 29 April 2016 due to the very high staff and resource demands throughout NSW that resulted from the new requirements. Of the 645 total pools registered, 8 pools have been inspected and 2 were issued with compliance certificates this quarter. All boarding houses are inspected yearly and appropriate action taken to remedy any non-compliances. Four boarding house inspections were undertaken this quarter.
Upgrade bike infrastructure plans and way finding signage	↑	This quarter, way finding signage was installed and the Hanks Street cycleway upgrade completed. Community consultation and designs were completed for the Orpington St/Parramatta Rd/Ormond St cycleway upgrade in October 2015 and RMS approval received in December 2015. The works include a new disabled access/bicycle ramp to Ashfield Park, at the Parramatta Road entrance to the Park. The project have been modified to accommodate potential impacts of WestConnex and construction is scheduled to being in Quarter 3.
Manage local traffic control facilities and parking measures	↑	All outcomes of the Traffic Committee meetings in October and December have been actioned. Council endorsed the Summer Hill resident parking scheme in November 2015 and the issuing of permits for relevant residents is in progress. The scheme is scheduled to become operational in March 2016.
Special Rates Variation funded works	↑	Sloane Street reconstruction Design work initiated this quarter, with community consultation scheduled to commence in early Quarter 3.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sloane Street reconstruction - Accelerated road, kerb and gutter, patching program 	↑	Accelerated road, kerb and gutter, patching program Designs have been completed for Rectory Avenue and Wood Street. Design work on Edwin Street is expected to be completed by January 2016. Construction works scheduled to begin next quarter.

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Living Sustainably

Snapshot:



Above: Ashfield Park Community Garden continues to thrive.

Below: Sourdough breadmaking workshop, part of the Treading Lightly series



Highlights for this quarter include:

- Commenced evaluation of Waste Collection Services Tender
- Supported GreenWay Art Exhibition
- Testing complete for new waste app for smart phones
- Held first workshop for Climate Adaptation Program – Bus shelters
- Promoted National Recycling Week and Compost Revolution through series of workshop held in local shopping centres.
- Implemented Operational Waste Audit recommendations.
- Finalised draft Waste Management Guidelines for inclusion in consolidated DCP

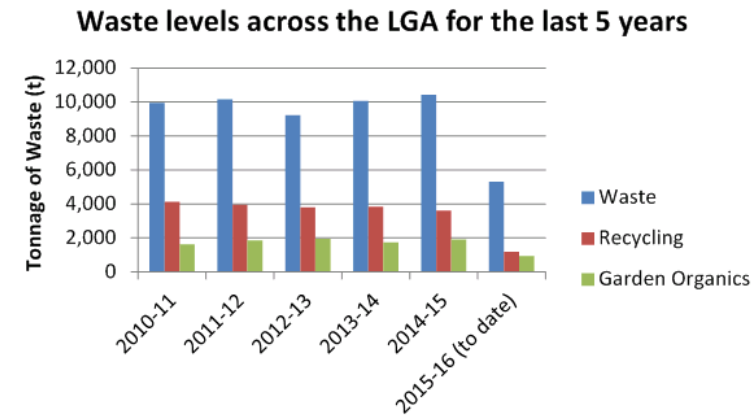
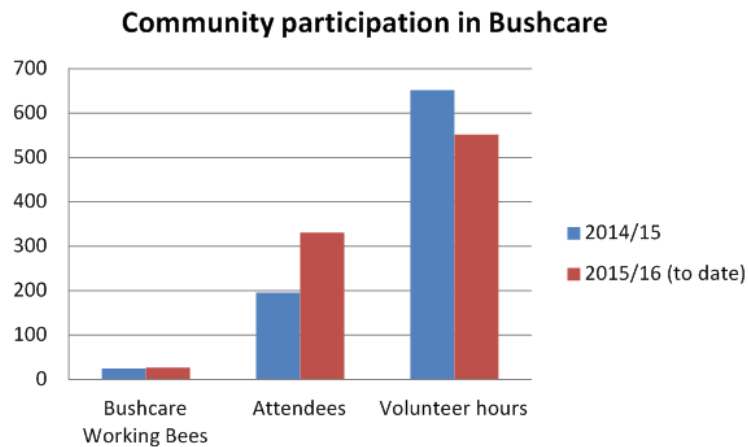
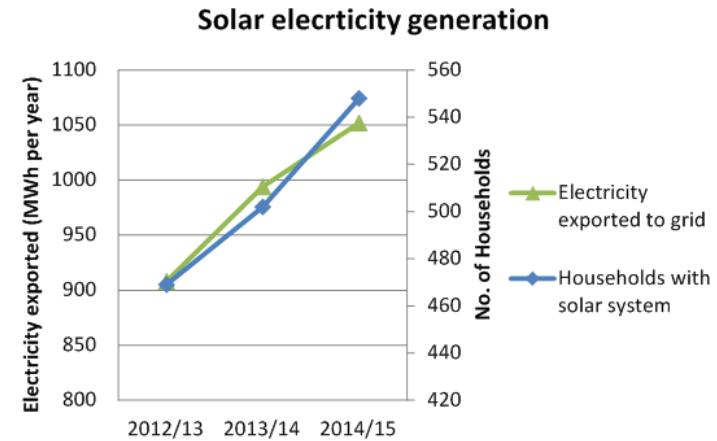
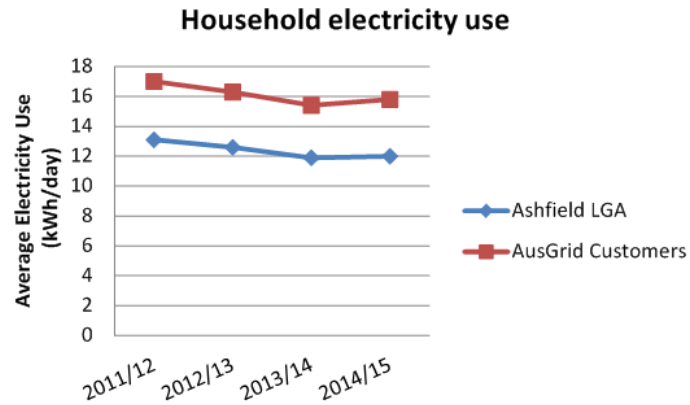
Deliverables in the next quarter include:

- Report to Council on tender evaluation recommendations for Waste Collection Services contract
- Launch of new smart phone waste app for community
- Installation of new waste management signage at multi-unit dwellings
- Finalise draft Climate Action and Mitigation Plan

Below: Council's Christmas Tree recycling campaign to reduce trees going to landfill



COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015



COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Educate the community on environmental issues to improve sustainability outcomes	↑	<p>Community Sustainability and Education Programs delivered in this quarter include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of 'Inspector Bin' recycling messages at Ashfield Train Station, a Liverpool Road bus shelter, local paper and community language advertisements, social media messaging and posters in participating apartment blocks. - Workshop series delivered in local shopping centers during November for National Recycling Week and to promote Compost Revolution, in partnership with Burwood, Canada Bay and Leichhardt Councils. - Three Treading Lightly workshops were delivered: De-cluttering, Backyard Bee-Keeping and Making Cheese and Yoghurt at Home. Attendance exceeded 90%, with positive feedback and participant satisfaction above 85%. <p>During Quarter 2, Council promoted the following national sustainability events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Garage Sale Trail, with 65 garage sales in Ashfield LGA, representing 9,564 items list for sale/reuse at an approximate value of \$47,852 and 3,850 new community connections made via the day. - National Recycling Week in November
Ensure Council facilities are energy and water efficient	↑	<p>An action plan has been developed to implement recommendations from the HVAC and BMS optimization report, to improve the energy efficiency of the Ashfield Civic Centre. This will include long term data monitoring and retrofitting equipment to enhance energy efficiency.</p> <p>Installation of a solar PV system at the Depot is in progress, with installation expected for next quarter. This project will reduce Council's emissions by 19.5 tonnes CO₂.</p>
Regulate noise, air, land, water pollution control, feral animals, noxious weeds and exotic flora and fauna	↑	<p>Council has investigated complaints with appropriate action taken. There have been 75 general environmental health inspections completed this quarter along with 3 pollution investigations undertaken.</p>
Undertake climate adaptation projects	↑	<p>The development of the Climate Change Adaption Plan has continued this quarter. It will be informed by a heat mapping project expected to be undertaken in early 2016.</p>
Partner with SSROC Councils to deliver "Our Energy Future" Plan	↑	<p>Council has continued to support the Our Energy Future Master Plan implementation, through the ongoing promotion of the Our Solar Program and plans for a solar installation at Council's Depot.</p>

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Implementation of the Integrated Water Management Plan for Ashfield	↑	<p>Actions being undertaken as part of the Integrated Water Management Plan on an ongoing basis include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CCTV survey program - High water pressure cleaning to stormwater pipes where blockages are found. - Liaising with Sydney Water and RMS regarding stormwater issues that are under their control. - Observing performance of inlets under large storm events.
Manage Council's stormwater assets	↑	CCTV survey being progressively undertaken and work orders being raised to carry out repair and replacement of pipes as they are identified. 14 pipes were surveyed in Quarter 2. Drainage improvement works undertaken include the replacement of a stormwater pipe in Wetherill Street, Croydon.
Continue with Floodplain Management process across the Local Government Area	↑	<p>Tendering for a consultant to completed a floodplain risk management study was undertaken in Quarter 2. One submission was received and subsequently Council resolved to retender. The retender closed on 8 December 2015 and the outcome will be reported to Council in the next quarter.</p> <p>The development of flood development controls has also been included in the Flood Risk Management Study and Plan process.</p>
Encourage high standards of environmental performance for new building work and promote adaptive re-use of existing buildings	↑	During pre-lodgement meetings and Provisional Development Application lodgement process, applicants are informed to consider and incorporate high standards of environmental performance. Applicants are provided with information to assist in the adaptive reuse of existing buildings particularly in town centres and heritage listed items.
Encourage water sensitive urban design in new developments	↑	WSUD (Water Sensitive Urban Design) initiatives are discussed as part of the provisional application and development application assessment processes. With large scale developments water harvesting techniques are required and with small scale developments stormwater reuse is encouraged. This is an ongoing dialogue with applicants involving key senior staff across the organisation.
Ongoing implementation of the GreenWay environmental and active transport corridor	↑	Council continues to be active in the GreenWay Steering committee. This quarter, the sixth annual GreenWay Art Exhibition was supported, which attracted the highest number of entries ever and included the inaugural Cooks River Small Sculpture Prize. The GreenWay Schools Sustainability Program continues, with 130 students from Summer Hills Public School participating. All four Greenway councils have now adopted the GreenWay Missing Links Report, outlining the priority transport connections for the corridor, over the next five years. The NSW Government Architect's Office have been engaged to prepare a concept design and detailed costings for links from Old Canterbury Road to Parramatta Road.

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Implement waste reduction, resource recovery and sustainability improvement initiatives	↑	<p>Council continue to deliver Councils waste management services. In Quarter 2 this has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Completion of the draft Design Guide for Waste Management in Development Applications, for inclusion in the consolidated DCP. - Development and testing of a new smart phone waste app, ready to launch in Quarter 3. - Commencement of a recycling improvement program using bin tag monitoring in areas within Summer Hill, Ashfield and Hurlstone Park. The project aims to reduce the use of plastic bags in recycling bins. - Completion of Council's Operational Waste Audit, with recommendation now being implemented.
Provide alternative waste disposal options for the community	↑	<p>Council continues to offer Alternate Waste Disposal options to its community through recycling programs at the library and Admin Building. This quarter, relevant staff have received training, following the launch of NSW EPA's illegal dumping data management system to support the monitoring of illegal dumping across the LGA.</p>
<p>Special Rates Variation funded works</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved pipe and pit renewal of stormwater drains 	↑	<p>Drainage improvement works undertaken in Quarter 1 include installation of access pit over stormwater culvert in Alt Street, Ashfield and upgrade stormwater pit in Alt Street adjacent to Elizabeth Street, Ashfield. Designs have been completed for storm water works in Edwin Street North, Wood Street and Rectory Avenue. Works will commence in the third quarter.</p>

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Thriving Local Economy

Snapshot:



Retail Reno helping to improve shop front presentation, before (left) and after (below).

Below: Crowds enjoying Haberfield Festa, November 2015, part of Feast of Flavours.

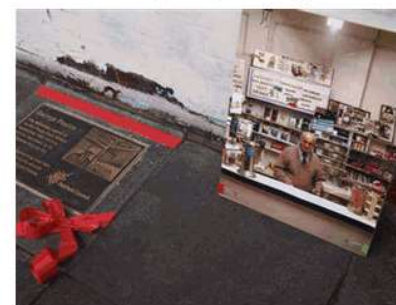


Highlights for this quarter include:

- Successfully held Feast of Flavours events during October and November 2015, with 37,000 people attending
- Piloted 'Retail Reno' project, with two shops in the Ashfield Town Centre
- Delivered well-attended networking event for business
- Held monthly business advisory service
- Initiated 'A word from our longest established businesses' oral history interview and recordings
- Installed a plaque at the old Summer Hill "Milk Bar" site to acknowledge one of the longest running businesses in the Ashfield area
- Continued active engagement in the Small Business Friendly Councils Program, an initiative of the Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner
- Engaged a Roaming Santa to encourage people to shop in Summer Hill and Haberfield Villages

Deliverables in the next quarter include:

- Broader implementation of 'Retail Reno' project to improve presentation of shop fronts
- Undertake EOI and tender process for a social enterprise in the Civic Centre.
- Celebration of Lunar New Year in Ashfield Town Centre
- Increase the participation rates at business training and networking events.
- Expand the A word from our longest established businesses' program
- Installing ten plaques in neighborhood precincts across the Local Government Area to acknowledge longstanding businesses.

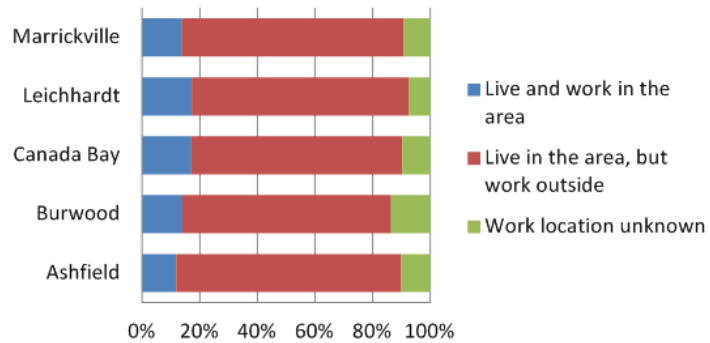


Above: Plaque installed acknowledging Summer Hill Milk Bar as one of the area's longest running businesses and the passing of the owner and operator, George Poulos.

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

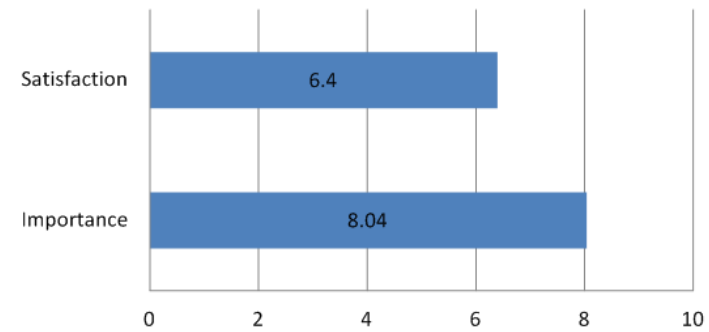
Residents' working within their LGA

(Source: ABS 2011)



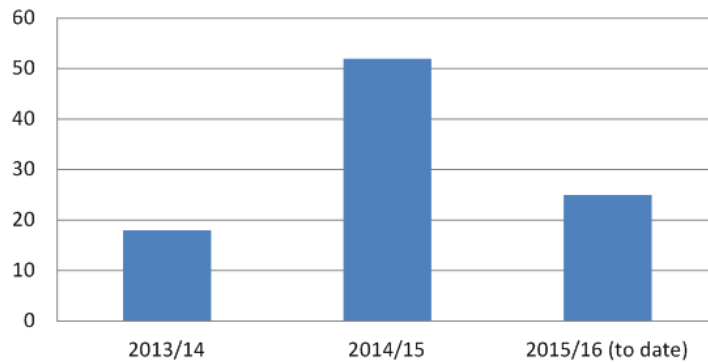
Community perception of Council's support for local businesses

(Source: 2015 Community Satisfaction Report)



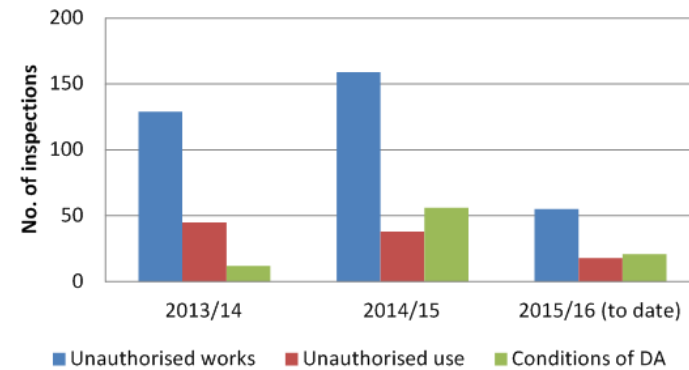
Local businesses attendance at events

(Source: Business Relations Quarterly Reports)



Regulatory inspections across LGA

(Source: Regulatory Quarterly Reports)



COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Provide and support sustainability initiatives with local businesses	↑	This quarter, work continued on the recommendations of the Commercial Waste Audit Report.
Communicate information and increase understanding of government standards and policy	↑	<p>Business newsletters are being produced every 3 months and include a range of topics to encourage business growth. The November issue featured Ashfield Town Centre upgrades, WestConnex, Feast of Flavours, Business Tip and Community Bank.</p> <p>Business advisory service for local small businesses is supported by a partnership between Council and the Clearly Business Enterprise Centre. The service is available from Council on the 3rd Monday of every month.</p> <p>A Before 9am Business Briefing was held on 18 November to provide local businesses with an opportunity to learn how to host an event to promote their business. 12 businesses attended the event, with two new business owners joining.</p>
Effectively manage outdoor dining and footpath trading and other domain policy	↑	All current footpath trading and dining users are aware of requirements and have necessary approval in place. Regular and random inspections are undertaken by Council Rangers to ensure compliance. Applicants for footpath uses are provided with advice as needed. There has also been ongoing assistance with issuing outdoor dining and footpath trading licenses.
Develop and deliver regional partnerships and projects with neighbour councils, agencies and business for mutual economic benefit	↑	<p>Council has continued to develop relationships with key stakeholders including ASHBiz; Croydon Park Chamber, Haberfield Chamber, local business owners, BEC and neighbouring Councils. This quarter, Council's Business Relations Coordinator attended the ASHBiz meeting on 7 December 2015.</p> <p>Ashfield Council has established a partnership with Marrickville Council and the Business Enterprise Centre are delivering two key business training workshops for 25 February and 24 March 2016 to support local business grow their enterprises.</p> <p>A word from our longest established businesses is a new project that seeks to recognise the businesses, across the LGA, that have been operating for fifty years or more. The project will collect stories about these businesses to add to Council's Local Studies collection and provide the community with information about the changes that have occurred. The first plaque was installed on 11 December 2015 to commemorate the passing of George Poulos, who ran the Rio Milk Bar in Summer Hill, continuously, since 1952. An interview with fifth generation, family-owned business, HD Trinder Plumbers, has also been conducted.</p>

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Undertake regular monitoring of environmental and health responsibilities within the Town Centre	↑	There has been a significant improvement in reduction of abandoned trolleys across the Ashfield Town Centre. Council is actively engaging in the immediate removal of dumped rubbish and posters in the Town Centre.
Participate in the Sydney International Food Festival program	↑	<p>Feast of Flavours events were successfully held with 37,000 people attending and a total of \$15,000 of external sponsorship secured to support the events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ashfield's Tastes of Asia Friday 9 October 6pm – 9pm - Summer Hill's Neighbourhood Feast Sunday 11 October 10am-4pm - The Haberfield Festa Sunday 22 November 10am-4pm <p>A Roaming Santa encouraged people to shop in Summer Hill and Haberfield Villages in December. This initiative was well received by local businesses. Christmas decorations were installed in the Ashfield CBD by mid-November 2015, meeting local business expectations as outlined in a survey conducted in Quarter 1.</p>
Encourage regional partnerships	↑	<p>Council is part of the Small Business Friendly Councils Program (SBFC), an initiative of the Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner. The Program sets out a number of areas that Council agrees to develop and report on which aim to support small businesses in our LGA. To date Council has implemented the following initiatives under SBFC Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reviewed of our procurement policy - Enhanced on-line payment options - Developed a Business Support Strategy
Continue regular inspections of businesses and implement regular food safety and regulatory education programs	↑	This quarter, 152 foods shops and beauty salons were inspected to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. Council staff are also available at Customer Service for advice and on site enquiries and distribute free resources in languages other than English.
Investigate use of empty shops in Ashfield LGA by 'pop up' businesses	↑	Research has been undertaken into the viability of the "Pop Up" business concept for Ashfield LGA. This included investigating what other Councils have done to gain information on best practice for Pop Up business concepts in local government. Meetings were also held with ASHBiz, Haberfield Chamber and a number of businesses to gauge their support. One of the challenges with respect to instigating the Pop Up Concept is securing commitment from private property owners. At this stage there appears limited options for a Pop Up model in the Ashfield LGA.

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Special Rates Variation funded works <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Paving upgrade in Ashfield Town Centre	✓	This project has been completed for this financial year, with 1,400 square metres of new concrete paving installed. Additional footpath works will be undertaken as part of restorations and pedestrian access improvements, supported by a RMS grant.

This line is reported in the ATC theme too – delete here?

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Attractive and Lively Town Centre

Snapshot:



Above: Ted Noffs Street University dancers at White Ribbon Day event in Town Centre, November 2015

Below: Diwali performance at Frolic in the Forecourt, November 2015



Highlights for this quarter include:

- Ashfield Taste of Asia Food Festival – October 2015
- Ashfield Civic Centre Usage Policy endorsed by Council.
- Prioritisation of works, commencement of detailed design and implementation as part of the Town Centre Renewal Project.
- Continue providing clean and tidy areas within the Ashfield CDB precinct.
- Ongoing rollout of cultural and community events within the Civic Centre Forecourt.
- Council awarded a Commendation for Excellence in Public Engagement and Community Planning for work on Ashfield Town Centre Public Domain Strategy, from NSW Planning Institute of Australia



Deliverables in the next quarter include:

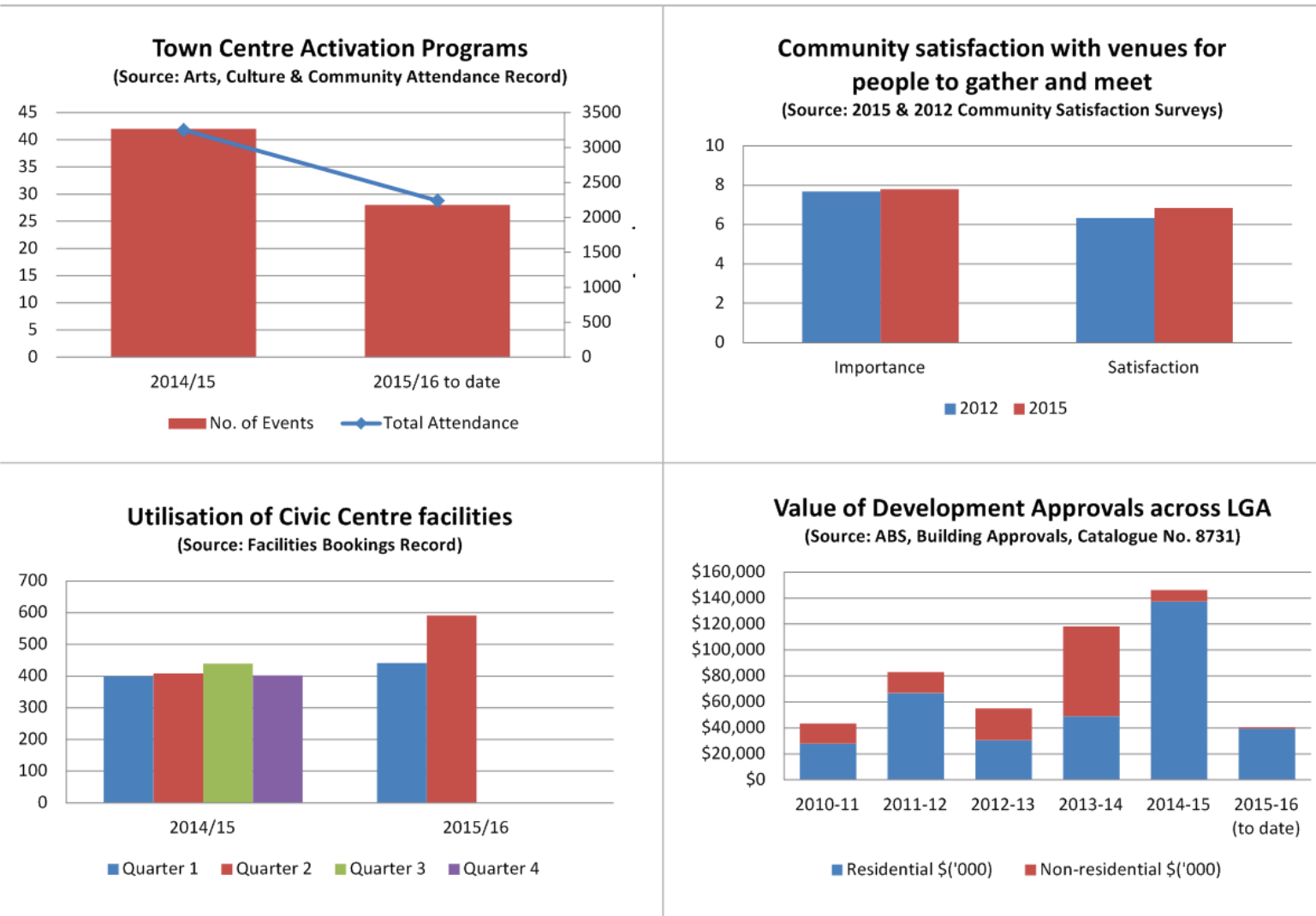
- Lunar New Year celebrations
- Finalisation of the detailed design for the Town Centre renewal project.
- Continuation of paving works within the Ashfield Town Centre



Crowd gathering for entertainment (**above**) at Taste of Asia, including Lion dancers (**below**)



COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015



COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Implement the Town Centre Public Domain Strategy	↑	<p>The Ashfield Town Centre capital works program is progressing and the achievements for this quarter include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Completion of the tender process and appointment of consultancy team to prepare detailed design documentation for the town centre core area of Hercules Street, The Esplanade, Foxes Lane and sections of Brown Street around the Station - Initial engagement with Transport for NSW about leveraging the proposed commuter car park for greater opportunities for the community and Town Centre, such as additional town centre parking outside of commuter hours, public art, crime prevention through environmental design and potential non-parking uses outside of commuter hours - Awarded a commendation by the NSW Planning Institute of Australia for Public Engagement and Planning, for community engagement through Renew Ashfield, to develop the Public Domain Strategy, that now guides the Town Centre capital works program <p>A two year Public Art Strategy has been developed, with a focus on implementation in the Town Centre, to compliment the capital works program. This quarter, the Harmony Wall project has been finalised, with the installed wall artwork anticipated to be launched in 2016.</p>
Promote and activate the use of the new Civic Centre facilities	↑	<p>The Ashfield Civic Centre is rapidly emerging as a safe, accessible and enjoyable space for the delivery of events and programs. The regular 'Frolic in the Forecourt' program continues to receive glowing reception from the community, with audience numbers averaging around 60 people each week. Concert programming this quarter has included a diverse group of artists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ashfield Boys High School Stage Bane - Chinese Folk Song and Dance Sydney Troupe - Local Nepali cultural dance community (Usha and Santoki) - Aruna Gandhi - Ted Noffs Street University - Burwood Girls Stage Band - Pape Mbaye <p>Preparations for a pilot 'Parklet' project are underway. The Parklet (a small, temporary park space) will include elements such as a synthetic 'garden', interactive games, chalk drawing space and temporary seating to further activate the Civic Centre space. It is expected to launch in Quarter 3.</p>

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Work with the business community to improve shop front presentation	↑	Council has introduced 'Retail Reno,' a shop front Initiative to support improvement of shop front presentation. Participating businesses are supported by designers who work with them to enhance their shop front presentation, with the aim to increase patronage into their shop. This quarter the initiative was successfully piloted with two businesses from Ashfield Town Centre. The program will be rolled out more broadly in 2016.
Implement the Town Centre safety audits	↑	As part of the Town Centre design and upgrade, an Access Consultant will be engaged. The Access Consultant will undertake a safety audit as part of the works.
Regulate parking patrols and enhance public car parking	↑	Council's Parking Officers regularly patrol the Brown Street Public Car park. It is currently underutilised and information has been sent to adjoining businesses to encouraging them and their customers to make use of the car park.
Promote pedestrian safety and awareness in the town centre	↑	Council staff continue to promote pedestrian safety and awareness in the Town Centre through such bodies as the Traffic Committee. A Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP), which includes the Town Centre, has been exhibited and is being finalised. The PAMP will include recommendations to address pedestrian and pram access.
In conjunction with local business undertake activities to celebrate community diversity	↑	Lunar New Year Planning for Lunar New Year 2016 has been finalised, with two events to be held next quarter, spanning the 'Frolic in the Forecourt' program and another Friday evening event featuring Korean drumming and Lion Dance performances. Following the ceremony, the Lion Dancers will visit local businesses in Liverpool Road, engaging with them in the celebration. Feast of Flavours events were successfully held this quarter with 37,000 people attending and a total of \$15,000 of external sponsorship secured to support the three events, including Ashfield's Tastes of Asia held on Friday 9 October.
Lobby for commuter car parking	↑	The NSW Government has confirmed a 180 space commuter car park will be built at Ashfield Station. Following preliminary discussions with Transport for NSW, this quarter Council has begun proactively engaging with TfNSW to leverage opportunities presented by the car park proposal for potential community and Town Centre uses outside of commuter hours.

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Special Rates Variation funded works - CBD public domain/ masterplan repaving	✓	This project has been completed for this financial year, with 1,400 square metres of new concrete paving installed. Additional footpath works will be undertaken as part of restorations and pedestrian access improvements, supported by a RMS grant.

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Engaging and Innovative Local Democracy

Snapshot:



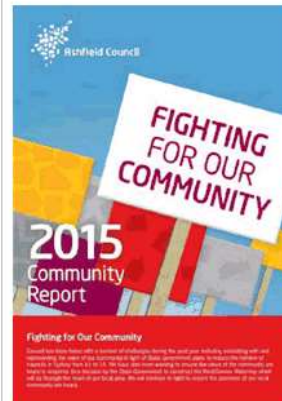
Above: Council continues to advocate for the best interests of the community against the proposed WestConnex M4 East Extension.

Below: Council's first Aboriginal Employment Strategy graduate, with Customer Service staff



Highlights for this quarter include:

- Council's first Aboriginal Employment Strategy trainee has graduated
- Response to WestConnex Environmental Impact Statement submitted to NSW Department of Planning.
- Completed 2015 Community Satisfaction Survey and reported to Council
- Annual Report 2014-15 completed
- Business Continuity Plan progressed
- Held Health and Safety Fair to promote health and wellbeing to staff
- Due diligence planning for a possible merger



Left: 2014-15 Annual Report completed and distributed to residents and ratepayers

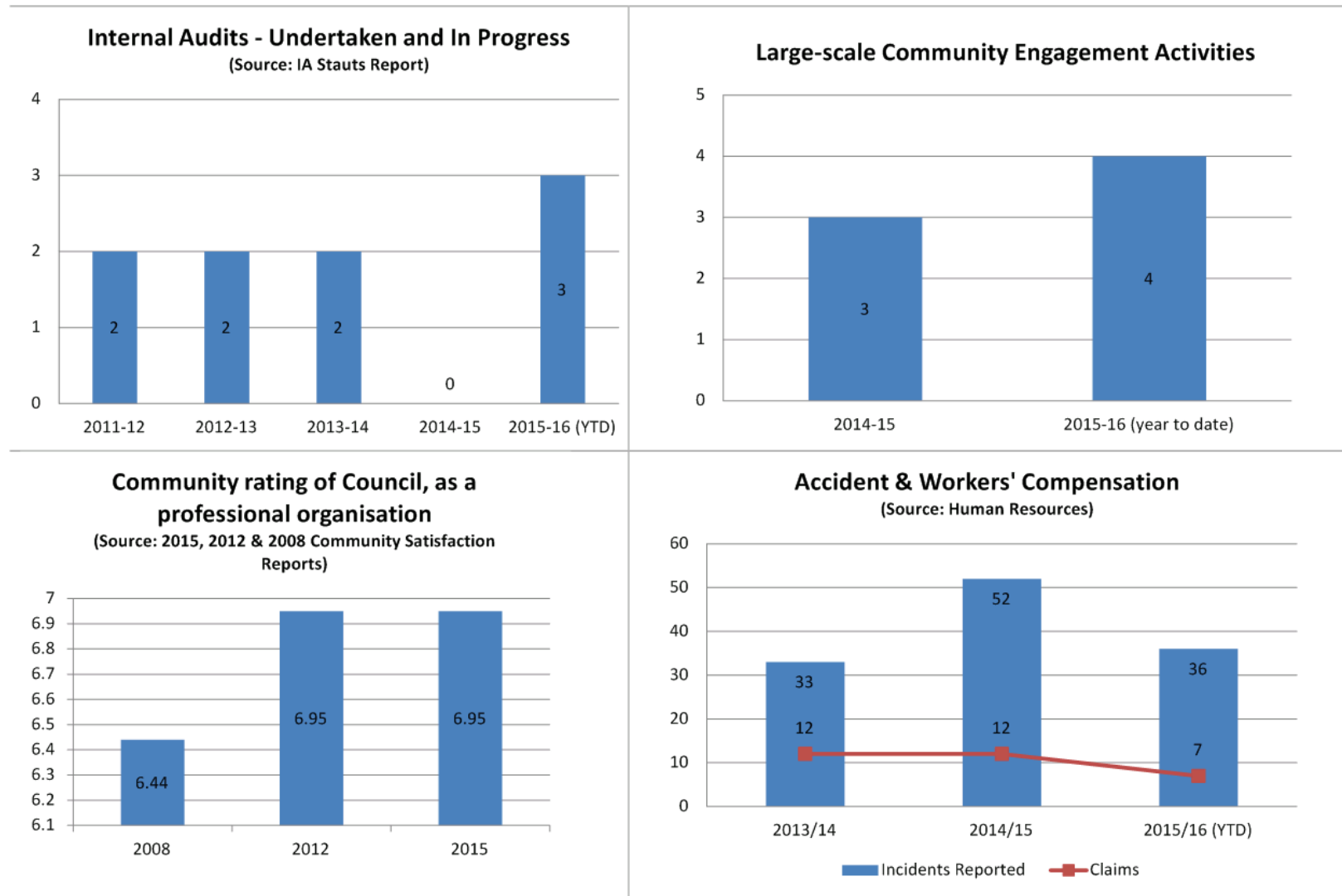
Deliverables in the next quarter include:

- Provision of community information regarding Ashfield, Marrickville and Leichhardt merger proposal
- Preparation of Council's submission on merger proposal
- Continued due diligence and contingency transitions planning for a potential merger
- Updated documentation on Council's Service Profiles
- Deliver internal audit program
- Continue programmed policy reviews
- Review of implications of proposed changes to the Local Government Act
- Development of the 2016/17 Budget, Corporate Plans and review of Long Term Financial Plan
- Finalise review of the Work Force Plan

Right: Staff received general health checks at the Health & Safety Fair



COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015



COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Provide staff with the required skills to deliver Council services	↑	<p>This quarter, 55 training session days were delivered to staff across the organisation on topics including traffic management, first aid, emergency evacuation, workplace investigations, customer service, resilience and career development and interview skills. Two master classes in Leave Management were coordinated for all managers and supervisors.</p> <p>The annual Training and Development Plan was reviewed to incorporate current priorities such as change management, education assistance, communication skills and customer service.</p>
Implement the Equal Employment Opportunity Plan	↑	<p>Following a workforce survey, diversity considerations have been integrated into the draft Work Force Plan. Council continues to work in partnership with the National Disability Recruitment Centre (NDRC) to support an increase in recruitment of candidates who identify as having a disability. This quarter, the NDRC has conducted a review of recruitment practices. The recommendations of the review aim to remove barriers for candidates with a disability.</p> <p>Council's first graduate from the Aboriginal Employee Strategy has completed her 800 hour traineeship, over two years. Council also increased resourcing for our Aboriginal Cultural Officer role, doubling the weekly hours.</p>
Provide a workplace that is healthy and safe	↑	<p>Council's Work Health and Safety Committee held a highly successful 'Health and Safety Fair' in October 2015. Over 130 staff participated in the day, with 20 health and fitness providers holding information stalls and seminars delivered throughout the day. Staff participated in CPR training, quit smoking and healthy eating seminars, yoga and pilates classes. The day aimed to encourage staff to take a proactive approach to their health and wellbeing, as a healthy work force has lower absenteeism, is more productive and is less likely to have a workplace injury. The event was part funded through sponsorship from Council's Insurer and via some savings achieved in the careful management of the workers compensation premium.</p> <p>An internal audit has been completed this quarter on the Workplace Health and Safety Framework across Council. The audit will report to the Internal Audit Committee in Quarter 3, with progressive implementation of any actions arising.</p>
Inform and communicate with residents on Council and community issues using a variety of communication mediums	↑	<p>In Quarter 2, the annual 2015 Community Report was completed and distributed to residents and ratepayers. The 2015 Community Report included updates on amalgamations, WestConnex, Special Rate Variation infrastructure works, environmental updates, Library news and general updates on council works and programs. 11 Weekly Columns and 13 media releases have been produced this quarter highlighting stories including updates on WestConnex EIS, Council's submission for merger preferences, Draft Parramatta Road Urban Transformation Strategy.</p> <p>Council has also promoted the following programs, events and community announcements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Haberfield Village footpath renewal project - Feast of Flavours' events

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - White Ribbon Day - Health impacts of asbestos during renovations - Council's commendation for planning excellence from the NSW Planning Institute of Australia - Exhibition of the Dragy Leasing Policy and Pedestrian Access Mobility Pla <p>Community consultation on the proposed lease for Ashfield Bowling Club was held in December 2015. A Communications Plan was developed, in preparation for the next stages of Fit for the Future and Merger Proposals.</p> <p>Regular Facebook and Twitter posts regarding events and activities continue to be uploaded. In particular, the Mayor's Facebook page continues to be an avenue to discuss community issues, as well as share news on events.</p>
Provide transparency through public access to council information	↑	<p>In Quarter 2, a total of 103 GIPA requests were responded to. This is an increase of 18 GIPAs in the previous quarter which was 85 into total. They can be broken down as follows:</p> <p>Formal = 2</p> <p>Informal = 101</p>
Implement resourcing strategies contained in the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long Term Financial Plan - Asset Management Plans - Work Force Plan 	↑	<p>Long Term Financial Plan</p> <p>Review of the Long Term Financial Plan commenced in November 2015 and is scheduled to be completed next quarter.</p> <p>Asset Management Plans</p> <p>Improvements are being undertaken as required to implement the updated asset management plans. Work has commenced and is progressing to implement an updated asset management system. The Capitalisation Policy has been completed.</p> <p>Work Force Plans</p> <p>An update to the Work Force Plan is in progress, following the completion of workforce analytics and mapping of a draft framework. The Plan is expected to be completed in Quarter 3.</p>
Ongoing implementation of the Risk Management Strategy	↑	<p>An update on the Business Continuity Plan and related activities including practical exercises involving the Crisis Management Team was provided to the Internal Audit Committee on 23 November 2015. An Action Plan is in development and prioritised for consideration at the next meeting of the Internal Audit Committee.</p> <p>An internal workshop was held to brainstorm risks associated with possible council mergers and drafting of a risk management plan in underway.</p>

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
Deliver an Internal Audit Program	↑	<p>The 2015 internal audit program continued to roll out this quarter. One meeting of the Internal Audit Committee was held on 23 November 2015 and considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fit for the Future update - Business Continuity Plan update - Timetable for Financial Statements 2015-16 - Potential amalgamations and due diligence requirements <p>The following audits were underway during the quarter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work Health and Safety - Information and Communication Technology - Program Evaluation
Continue to implement good governance and corruption prevention strategies	↑	<p>The Fraud Corruption and Prevention Policy has been completed and adopted by Council on 24 November 2015. A workshop was held in December 2015 to review work to date, identify risks and develop a plan to address fraud and corruption risks. Work has commenced on the development of a centralised conflicts of interest and gift register for annual reporting.</p>
Implement Council-wide best value service reviews	↑	<p>Service profiling project commenced this quarter and has included reviews of all operational areas' key services, service levels, governance and policy and key performance indicators. This project is expected to be completed next quarter.</p>
Undertake regular consultation and engagement with the community on matters that affect them	↑	<p>The 2015 Community Satisfaction Survey was reported to Council on 15 December 2015. Overall, Council continues to be rated highly by residents as a professional organisation. The result were generally positive across Council's services, programs and facilities. The survey also identified services that residents are least satisfied with, and community and social issues they are most concerned about. The key outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 84% of residents find it easy to speak to the right person at Council - Over half residents surveyed use the libraries and are very satisfied with the level of support they receive from library staff - Residents are most satisfied (with scores out of 10) with waste services (weekly garbage (8.7), fortnightly recycling (8.6), twice yearly clean up collection service (8.4)) and the condition of local parks, playgrounds and sports fields. - Residents were least satisfied (with scores out of 10) with work on improving the bicycle network (5.6), community education on water and energy use (5.8), managing development (5.8) and sufficient car parking in residential streets (6) - Service areas that experienced the greatest improvement in resident satisfaction since 2012 were: quality of local water ways (up 10%), organising community events, such as Carnival of Cultures (up

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
		8%), providing venues for people to gather and meet (7%) and removal of graffiti/posters (7%). As reported above, Council has continued to communicate with residents on matters that affect them including Westconnex and Fit for the Future/Council Mergers.
Resource committees and encourage community participation in Council activities	↑	There were 17 meetings held during the quarter which included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6 Council Meetings, - 1 Extraordinary Council Meeting, and - 10 Committee Meetings. During quarter 2, the Expression of Interest forms for Committees have been updated in response to several membership enquiries. The 2016 Advisory Committees schedule was developed and consultation with Committee facilitators is underway prior to finalization.
Show policy and advocacy leadership on issues impacting on and of concern to the community	↑	<p>WestConnex Council prepared an in-house review, with additional support from expert consultants, of the WestConnex Environmental Impact Statement. The submission was endorsed by Council and submitted to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) by 2 November 2015. Over 140 recommendations and criticisms of the EIS were made covering issues including air quality, business case, traffic management, impacts on residents and businesses. DPE subsequently published a EIS Submissions Report in December 2015, responding to issues raised. Council was invited to respond to the Report and had a week to review the document and submit a response, in late December 2015. The final assessment of the project is with NSW DPE and a determination is anticipated in Quarter 3.</p> <p>In December 2015, NSW Roads & Maritime Services formally gazette the compulsory acquisition of parts of Reg Coady Reserve and the Doboryd Parad road reserve. The acquisition is linked to the WestConnex project. A formal offer of compensation was also submitted to the Council for the land which will be reviewed by Council in Quarter 3. In the same period, Council also received a number of Draft Construction Management Plans also linked to the WestConnex project from the project builder, Leighton Samsung John Holland. These documents will be reviewed and reported to Council for consideration next quarter.</p> <p>Fit for the Future The NSW Minister for Local Government released IPART's assessment of all local councils on 10 November 2015 and announced a final round of consultation with local government. The NSW Government indicated its strong intention to proceed with council amalgamations. In response, Council resolved to reiterate its preferred</p>

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
		<p>position to 'stand alone' as a Council and rejected the State Government's recommended merger option of six Inner West Councils. Council also rejected a merger with Auburn, Burwood, Canada Bay and/or Strathfield. In light of the State Government's process, Council resolved to instruct the GM to submit a preferred merger option of Ashfield, Marrickville and Leichhardt Councils.</p> <p>On 18 December 2015, the State Government announced its proposal to merge Ashfield Council with Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils, along with 35 other merger proposals across NSW.</p> <p>Greater Sydney District Commission The State Government announced the appointment of Lucy Turnbull as the Chief Commissioner of the Greater Sydney Commission in December 2015. Three independent Commissioners were also announced for the social, environment and economic portfolios. Various councils, including Ashfield, have been involved in the interview process for the District Commissioner roles, which will be appointed by the Planning Minister. The Greater Sydney Commission CEO, Sarah Hill, has also been appointed and the organisation is expected to become operational in March 2016.</p>
Review and update Council's policies, plans and procedures	↑	<p>The following policies have been exhibited this quarter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leasing Policy - Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan - Public Art Policy - Public Art Developer Guidelines <p>The following policies have been adopted this quarter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy (27 October 2015) - Ashfield Civic Centre Venues Usage Policy (10 November 2015) - Street Tree Strategy (10 November 2015) - Fraud Corruption and Prevention Policy (24 November 2015) - Customer Complaints Policy (15 December 2015) - Supporting Car Share Policy (15 December 2015) <p>The review and update of the Statement of Business Ethics has been completed. A suite of communications and business process policies are currently under review and are scheduled for completion in Quarter 3.</p>
Develop an Information Technology Strategy	↑	<p>Council's IT strategy over the next two years is focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk management, business continuity and disaster management

COUNCIL PLAN 2015-2018 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

Council plan activity	Status	Comment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring Council staff have fit for purpose technology tools to ensure efficiency, safety and quality and reliability of data - Opportunities for value added services <p>Key projects this quarter included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of Disaster Recovery Strategy - Upgrade of core network - Completion of policies and guides including back up procedures
Work with Council staff to improve corporate sustainability	↑	<p>An action plan has been developed to implement recommendations from the centralised air conditioning system and Building Management System optimization report, to improve the energy efficiency of the Ashfield Civic Centre. This will include long term data monitoring and retrofitting equipment to enhance energy efficiency.</p> <p>Installation of a solar-power system at the Depot is in progress, with installation expected for next quarter. This project will reduce Council's emissions by 19.5 tonnes CO₂..</p>

Subject	SUBMISSION TO COUNCIL BOUNDARY REVIEW PROCESS
File Ref	SC1065
Prepared by	Emma Lannan - Executive Policy Officer
Reasons	To respond to the merger proposal for Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils, under examination by a Delegate of the Office of Local Government.
Objective	To inform Council of the proposed response and receive Council's endorsement prior to submitting to the Council Boundary Review

Overview of Report

The Minister for Local Government has formally referred a merger proposal for Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils to the Chief Executive of the Office of Local Government for review. Examination of the proposal, and submissions responding to the proposal, has been delegated to Ms Cheryl Thomas.

The community and Council has opportunity to make a submission responding to a series of factors, outlined under the Local Government Act. Submissions close on 28 February 2016. This report presents a proposed submission for Council's consideration.

Background

On 6 January 2016, the Minister for Local Government formally referred the merger proposals to the Chief Executive of the Office of Local Government (OLG), for review under Division 2B of the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW). The Chief Executive of OLG has delegated the examination of the proposals to 18 Delegates. The Delegate responsible for examining our Merger Proposal is Ms. Cheryl Thomas. More information about the Delegates is available at:

www.councilboundaryreview.nsw.gov.au/#delegates

The role of the Delegate is to examine the proposals and any evidence or information presented through a Public Inquiry and submissions process. It is important to note that the Delegate is only required to consider the ten factors identified under section 263 of the Act. Once the Delegate has completed their report, it is referred to the Minister and the Boundaries Commission for comment.

Public Inquiry and community consultation

The community consultation process opened on 7 January 2016 and closes on 28 February 2016.

The process has involved the delegate:

- Meeting with the individual Councils:
 - Ashfield Council met with the delegate on 27 January 2016
- Conducting a Public Inquiry meeting on 2 February at West Ashfield Leagues Club:
 - Two sessions were held from 1pm to 5pm and 7pm to 10pm.
 - It has been reported that over 300 people attended and about 140 people registered to speak, across the two sessions.

SUBMISSION TO COUNCIL BOUNDARY REVIEW PROCESS

- Individuals were given up to 3 minutes to address the inquiry, with Councils up to 10 minutes and organisations up to 6 minutes.
- Written submissions may be made up to 28 February and can be submitted online or by mail

Councillor McKenna addressed the delegate, as Ashfield Council's representative, during the evening session. Other Councillors also addressed the delegate, including Councillors Lofts, Drury, Passas and Wangmann.

Submission to Council Boundary Review

The Delegate is required to review the Merger Proposal against the factors set out in s263 of the *Local Government Act 1993*. A submission has been prepared responding to these factors, expanding on the outline reported to Council on 27 January 2016. The full submission is attached and a summary is provided below.

Summary of Submission

Ashfield Council remains opposed to forced amalgamation and believes the community's best interests are served by small, connect and agile local government. Ashfield Council is financially sound and strongly positioned to provide the services, renew our assets and advocate for our community.

There are no financial advantages to the proposed merger in the short term – only costs to be borne by the communities concerned. Any financial benefits in the medium to long term are significantly overstated and subject to the decisions of a future council. Assuming the underlying assumptions for the proposal's modeling are correct, the purported benefit is \$23.60 per resident per year, at most. We do not believe that this forecasted benefit is worth the costs to the community.

The community of Ashfield is more culturally and linguistically diverse than that of Leichhardt and Marrickville councils. Ashfield also has a higher level of socioeconomic disadvantage. There is a very real risk that, in a larger council, the needs of non-English speaking, less affluent or marginalised communities would be diluted and services may be channeled away from those that need it most.

Ashfield Council has a long history of grassroots, local democracy. This active participation by the community in decision-making has influenced land-use planning, the conservation of Ashfield built heritage, Council's position and effective advocacy for transport, strategic planning and urban renewal that is aligned to the values and needs of our community, for example the GreenWay and Inner West Light Rail, and saving of Ashfield Park from the WestConnex M4 East extension.

Ashfield's gender equity and cultural diversity among elected representatives is unique in local government. It is a reflection of a history of active participation of community in local politics and smaller population size. In a larger council area, the likelihood of gender equity among councillors is greatly diminished.

Community consultation was undertaken by Council in April 2015. It clearly demonstrates that the community's first and strongest preference for Ashfield Council to remain as it is, with 54% selecting Ashfield Council to stand alone as their first preference. A merger of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville was most frequently selected as the community's **second** preference (41%).

SUBMISSION TO COUNCIL BOUNDARY REVIEW PROCESS

The proposed merger threatens the vibrancy of local democracy and will have a significant negative effect on local representation. The ratio of residents to councillors will grow from 1:3,708 in Ashfield Council, to 1:15,499 in a larger, merged council. This is four times more residents per councilor and will drastically reduce the local community's access to their elected representation.

Ashfield Council is among the most efficient councils in metropolitan Sydney. The merger proposal purports that the forecasted financial savings will be redirected to improving community infrastructure and enhanced service delivery. No modeling has been undertaken to determine the new service offerings by an amalgamated council nor the potential cost to deliver these. The current three councils have key differences in their services offerings and delivery models, reflecting different needs and priorities of their communities.

In the most recent Community Satisfaction Survey (2015), Ashfield residents considered all of Council's services as important, with the lowest rating for a service being 6.1, on a scale from 1 to 10, and the average 'importance rating' being 8.05. This is a reflection that Council's service mix is both appropriate and highly valued by our community.

In the last three years, Ashfield Council has strategically planned and engaged with our community on long term infrastructure needs and service levels, culminating in a special rate variation and a ten year program of asset renewal. There is no certainty for residents and ratepayers that the resources of a new, larger council will be distributed in an equitable manner and in accordance with the priorities and needs of the Ashfield community.

The merger proposal purports, falsely, that a larger council will be able to attract better, more professional staff and elected representation to local government. Ashfield Council is recognised for excellence in strategic planning, environmental management, community engagement, arts and theatre, has one of the top turn-around times for Development Assessment in NSW and has been rated by TCorp as financially sound. These achievements are the result of our professional, multi-skilled and highly experienced workforce and leadership from our elected Council. All salaried staff are protected from forced redundancy for three years, under the State Award. There is a threat, during a merger process, to retain highly skilled staff and their collective corporate knowledge due to the immense upheaval that comes with mergers and the risk of a poorly managed, rushed organisational change process.

There are no financial, social or governance benefits to the proposed merger of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils. All three councils are financially sustainable, responsive to their community's needs and aspirations and have high quality political leadership. The purported financial savings are not worth the costs to the community in reducing their access to and diversity of elected representation. Local government is the level of government closest to the community. Amalgamating three effective and closely connected councils does not benefit the community's which we serve.

Financial Implications

The Merger Proposal has forecast a net financial benefit of \$113million over 20 years. There are some flaws with the underlying assumptions with this estimate, addressed in detail in our submission.

A flyer was prepared and distributed to the community, including translation into Chinese and Italian, at a cost of \$5,420.24.

SUBMISSION TO COUNCIL BOUNDARY REVIEW PROCESS

Public Consultation

The NSW Government promoted the consultation process via a website and a notification printed in the metropolitan newspapers.

To inform our community of the process, a flyer was developed and distributed as soon as possible in January to advise residents and non-resident ratepayers of the Public Inquiry meeting and the submission process. It was also translated into Chinese and Italian.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 Submission to CBR - FINAL

34 Pages

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the draft Submission to the Boundary Review, as amended if required.

VANESSA CHAN
General Manager



Submission to Boundary Council
Review
February 2016



Submission to Council Boundary Review – February 2016

1. Executive Summary

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Ashfield Council has a long history of grassroots, local democracy. This active participation by the community in decision-making has influenced land-use planning, the conservation of Ashfield built heritage, Council's position and effective advocacy for transport, strategic planning and urban renewal that is aligned to the values and needs of our community, for example the GreenWay and Inner West Light Rail, and saving of Ashfield Park from the WestConnex M4 East extension.

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Ashfield Council

Submission to Council Boundary Review – February 2016

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There are no financial, social or governance benefits to the proposed merger of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils. All three councils are financially sustainable, responsive to their community's needs and aspirations and have high quality political leadership. The purported financial savings are not worth the costs to the community in reducing their access to and diversity of elected representation. Local government is the level of government closest to the community. Amalgamating three effective and closely connected councils does not benefit the community's which we serve.



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Submission to Council Boundary Review – February 2016

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Ashfield Council

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2. Introduction to Ashfield – our Council and our Community

Ashfield Council is financially sound and, by any fair criteria, is already fit for the future. We have been recognised by the Office of Local Government for best practise in Integrated Planning and Reporting and are recognised across our industry for excellence in strategic planning, community engagement and development assessment.

In 2013, TCorp assess Ashfield's Financial Sustainability Rating (FSR) as sound, with a neutral outlook and our Infrastructure Management was assessed as strong, placing Ashfield in the top 15% of councils in NSW. Since these assessments, Ashfield Council has secured a fully funded and strategically aligned pathway for a \$27million infrastructure renewal program. In addition, we are well advanced in a program of over \$12million in S94 upgrades to Ashfield Town Centre and a \$14million Aquatic Centre redevelopment. Ashfield's community is already benefiting from our strength in infrastructure management and improved conditions of our parks, community buildings, footpaths, roads and stormwater. Continuing to provide service levels, maintaining and improving our assets to the meet the expectations and needs of our community, now and into the future, will continue to be Ashfield's greatest challenge – like all local governments, regardless of their scale. Ashfield Council is strongly positioned to meet these challenges.

Ashfield's community has a proud tradition of grass roots, local democracy and active citizen engagement in decision-making. This is a product of our ratios of community to elected representation and the nature of small and dynamic *local* government.

Ashfield Council remains opposed to force amalgamation and believes the community's best interests are served by small, connected and agile local government.

2.1 Ashfield Council

Ashfield Council has been proudly serving our community for 145 years. Council's services and functions have grown to reflect the changing demographics of the community that, today, is one of the most culturally diverse municipalities in Sydney. Ashfield Council's elected representation is a reflection of the cultural diversity of our community and the product of active community involvement in local democracy. We are unique in the gender and political equality on the elected Council , with half female Councillors and an equal split between the dominant political parties and independents. Our current elected Council has over 70 years combined experience in local government, as well as a wealth of experience working in private business, public sector and non-government agencies, and two Councillors have been recognised with a Public Service Medal and an Order of



Ashfield Council

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Australia Medal. Our Councillors are closely connected to their community and advocate strongly for their best interests.

Ashfield Council, as an organisation has a much lower staffing levels than other councils. We have 180 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff and about 270 employees, spread across a wide range of key service areas: libraries, aquatic centre, parks and trees, civil works, design, traffic and infrastructure engineers, land use planning and development assessment, environmental health, building assessment and regulatory services, environmental sustainability, arts, culture, community and social planning.

Ashfield Council's leadership is unique in local government with a female General Manager and 75% female Executive Team. Collectively, our Executive Leadership have over fifty years' combined experience. Ashfield has a highly skilled, diverse workforce. 46% of staff are female (8% higher than average NSW Councils). We have actively increased the number of women in traditionally 'male' orientated roles (horticulture, engineering, civil works) and in leadership roles in these areas. A NSW Department of Promoting Better Practice Review (2008) noted that Ashfield has "strong and clear leadership that is well positioned to strategically address the future needs of the LGA".

The Merger Proposal provides an outline of Ashfield Council's current position and performance, in terms of population size, annual operating budget and operating result. A more detailed view of Council would note that our robust revenue base (85% own-source revenue) has supported increased scope and new functions including:

- S94/94A Contribution Plans review (2011) resulted in growth to \$12.7million, to fund the Ashfield Town Centre Renewal Strategy
- Completed a \$20million Civic Centre Redevelopment (2010), a complex building project with some unexpected changes during construction requiring high quality political and managerial leadership to manage
- Discretionary resources available to retire the \$5million loan early which financed the Civic Centre (January 2015)
- Delivered \$4.5million Accelerated Footpath Renewal Program – ten years worth of capital renewals, delivered within 18 months, ahead of schedule and on budget (2013/14 – 2014/15)

2.2 The Community of Ashfield

Ashfield is made up of a series of distinct neighbourhoods including Ashfield, Summer Hill, Haberfield, Ashbury, Croydon and parts of Croydon Park and Hurlstone Park. Ashfield neighbourhoods reflect the high value placed on the sensitive conservation of our built heritage and quality urban design in new development and public works.



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We have a population of 44,498 and this is predicted to increase to around 43,600 by 2031. The median age of the population is 37 years. Ashfield has 17.9% of the population aged (0-17 years) with the percentage of the population aged over 60 years increasing in Ashfield from 15% in 2001 to 19% in 2011.

Ashfield is a culturally diverse area. Over 44% of the population was born overseas, and 38% are from a non- English speaking background. The dominant non-English speaking country of birth is China, where 10% of the population were born, followed by 4% from Italy and 3.4% from India.

The Ashfield local government area has a population density of 49.74 persons per hectare and just over 17,000 occupied dwellings. Around 37% of all dwellings are separate households, whilst 30% of the population resides in high density dwellings. Ashfield has a high proportion of lone person households at over 25% and a further 22% of households consisting of couples without children. of the population. The average occupancy rate for all dwellings is 2.47 persons per dwelling.

Ashfield's economy is driven by the depth and diversity of its cultural mix. Haberfield, famous for its rich Italian heritage, reflects this in its many cafes, restaurants, delicatessens, bakeries and patisseries. The suburb of Ashfield brings the taste of Asia to the area with numerous eateries and grocery stores specialising in Chinese, Indian, Thai and Korean cuisine and products. The Village of Summer Hill with its Town Square and Village Green exemplifies the old world charm of Ashfield as do parts of Croydon and Croydon Park.



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3. Response to the S263 Factors

3.1 Financial advantages or disadvantages (including economies or diseconomies of scale) of any relevant proposal to the residents and ratepayers of the areas concerned

- Council's submission is that there are no financial advantages to the proposed merger in the short term. There are only financial costs that will be borne by the communities concerned.
- There may be some financial advantages to the proposed merger in the longer term, but these are significantly overstated in the merger proposal, and subject to the decisions of a future council that is yet to be elected.
- The merger proposal is based on possibilities, rather than on probable or evidence based outcomes, and the assumptions underpinning the merger case are in some cases unknown to enable proper analysis, and in other cases they are over simplified or erroneous.

1. NSW Government Merger Proposal for Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils

- The financial benefits of the proposed merger as outlined in the Merger Proposal document are overstated and they are not supported by credible available evidence as demonstrated in the following points.
- The underlying assumptions, which have been formulated to support the NSW Government's assertion that Council mergers are necessary in order to improve local infrastructure and services and to put downward pressure on rates, are in some cases erroneous and over simplified, including:
 - Redundancy payments and entitlements are not based on the NSW Local Government State award (the instrument under which they will be paid) and as a consequence they are underestimated. This leads to an overestimation of the savings/benefits from the merger.
 - ICT costs are limited to "immediate ICT requirements"ⁱ based on a "veneer solution"ⁱⁱ, resulting in a significant underestimation of the full ICT costs associated with the merger, which in turn leads to a significant overstatement of the financial benefits. This oversimplification leaves the merged Council with ICT infrastructure that is not fit for purpose and is not in keeping with contemporary governance, business and customer requirements for a large public sector organisation.



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- The merger proposal states that the proposed merger “*will provide to communities a total financial benefit of \$113 million over a 20 year period*”ⁱⁱⁱ. Assuming the underlying assumptions are suitable and correct (several are not) and the new merged council as a matter of policy passed these savings back to residents (as an alternative to investing in improved services or infrastructure), this purported financial benefit would, at the household level, equate to a small saving of \$30 per year per resident.
- Further to this, the proposal is misleading in its statement that the proposed merger “*will provide to communities a total financial benefit of \$113 million over a 20 year period*”^{iv}. It is a fact that \$25 million of this ‘benefit’ is not derived from the merger itself, but from a NSW State Government ‘incentive’ payment to the councils if they agree to merge. Thus, the actual benefit attributable to the merger itself according to KPMG is in fact \$88 million^v. This equates to \$23.60 per resident per year at most. This small benefit needs to be carefully weighed up against other non financial costs and benefits of the proposed merger such as impacts on community and representation.
- The merits of the merger proposal are not based on any current deficit in financial performance or questions of long term financial sustainability for the three councils concerned. In this regard, the merger proposal clearly states that “*IPART determined that Ashfield, Leichhardt Municipal and Marrickville councils each satisfy key financial performance benchmarks.*”^{vi} There is accordingly, no reasonable **financial** basis to support a merger of the three councils.
- The merger proposal states that the anticipated “*savings from the merger may enable the new Council to reduce its reliance on rate increases*”^{vii}. In reality, any downward pressure on rates as a result of savings from the proposed merger is likely to be insignificant. To illustrate, a 1.8% increase (which is equivalent to the most recent permissible rate increase) in the average residential rate for Ashfield is \$21.07. Thus, an annual saving of \$23.60 per person from the merger is unlikely to enable the merged council to reduce its reliance on rate increases in the medium or long term. The three councils of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville are already financially ‘fit’ and efficient, and **the only way to put downward pressure on rates is to reduce service levels.**
- One financial benefit predicated by the merger proposal is that the proposed merger “*could assist in reducing the existing \$65 million infrastructure backlog across the Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville area*”^{viii}. At 30 June 2015, the infrastructure backlog for the three councils was \$38.2 million^{ix}. This is significantly lower than the incorrect and significantly overstated \$65 million figure used in the merger



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proposal. All three councils currently have financial strategies in place within their long term planning frameworks to continue to reduce infrastructure backlogs. None of these strategies require a merger to be achieved. There is no financial **evidence** to support the assertion in the merger proposal that a merged council would have “*greater capacity to effectively manage and reduce the infrastructure backlog across the three councils*”^x. In any merged Council, whether infrastructure backlogs increase, remain unchanged or decrease would depend entirely on the policies and strategic priorities of any yet to be elected future entity.

- The merger proposal states that “*The savings, combined with the NSW Government’s policy to freeze existing rate paths for four years, will ensure that ratepayers get a better deal*”.^{xi} A rates freeze does not automatically equate to a ‘better deal’ for residents. These three councils, through their long term financial planning instruments, have already determined their rate paths for the next 10 years, and Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville councils **have no plans to change their current rate paths**. As such, the rates freeze will have no impact. Notwithstanding this, the three councils are already proven to be financially disciplined and efficient by both IPART and TCorp. Any rates freeze that is applied to local government will only starve councils of funds and this will result in a combination of service reductions and/or reduced investment in community infrastructure, thereby undermining the supposed benefits of the merger (such as reducing infrastructure backlogs). Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville ratepayers will not “*get a better deal*” if their rates are frozen and their services are cut. It should also be noted that the State Government commissioned Independent Local Government Independent Review Panel (LGIRP) report (2013) outlined the problems associated with the NSW State Government’s policy of ‘rate pegging’ and for the need to consider other financial strategies. It must be said that a rates freeze is a **more aggressive form of rate pegging** and is inconsistent with improving the financial sustainability of councils as recommended by the LGIRP.
- The merger proposal projects a “*61% improvement in annual operating costs*”^{xii}. This forecast is largely attributable to job losses, overly ambitious savings targets, the omission of new accommodation and relocation costs, an underestimation of redundancy payments and an underestimation of other transition costs (e.g. ICT costs, re-branding etc.) associated with the merger.
- Of significance, the Merger Proposal itself contains a disclaimer which states: “*While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the facts contained within this document are correct at time of printing, the state of NSW, its agents and employees, disclaim any and all liability to any person in respect of anything or the consequences of anything done or omitted to be done in reliance or upon the whole or any part of this document.*”



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2. Ashfield Council's Financial Performance

- It is a fact that Ashfield Council is well managed and financially sustainable without a merger, as are both Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils.
- The NSW Treasury Corporation's 2013 Financial Assessment, Sustainability and Benchmarking Report rated Ashfield Council's Financial Sustainability Rating as Sound with a Neutral outlook, placing Council in the top 22% of councils in NSW^{xiii}.
- The Merger Proposal also notes (page 3) that *"IPART determined that Ashfield, Leichhardt Municipal and Marrickville councils each satisfy key financial performance benchmarks."*^{xiv} Ashfield Council has fully funded strategic asset management plans in place to address its infrastructure backlog and will spend an additional \$27 million on infrastructure renewal in the 10 years to 2025. Council's long term financial plan also shows that Council will deliver consistent operating surpluses from 2017/18 onwards.^{xv}

3. Morrison Low modelling

- Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils have commissioned Morrison Low to undertake a range of modelling on behalf of the Councils in order to properly understand the benefits and costs of a merger.
- The most recent modelling undertaken by Morrison Low in November 2015^{xvi}, indicates:
 - The overall NPV of the merger is in the order of \$75 million;
 - There are negative impacts on the financial position of the merged council in the short term due to the transition costs of merging;
 - There are a number of financial risks arising from the merger, including:
 - Transitional costs may be more significant than set out in the business cases
 - The efficiencies projected in the business case may not be delivered
 - The implementation costs may be higher and the anticipated savings might not be achieved
 - Decisions subsequent to the merger about the rationalisation of facilities and services may not reduce the cost base of the merged council as originally planned
 - Service levels rise (as evidenced in other jurisdictions) across the merged council, standardising on the highest level of services at the integration, resulting in cost increases



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- New services are introduced that are not currently delivered in one or more of the former council areas, increasing service costs
 - The financial performance of the merged council is less than that modelled, resulting in the need to either reduce services, find further efficiency gains and/or to increase rates to address the operating deficit
- Morrison Low noted that Ashfield Council currently has the lowest operational cost per capita and if current service and service levels were retained in a merger there is the risk that per capita costs for the Ashfield community would increase without targeted intervention.^{xvii}
- Further, Morrison Low noted that *“Ashfield and Marrickville Council's recently conducted extensive consultation exercises on and received approval for a special rate variation from their communities and IPART. The Leichhardt community has resisted increasing rates in favour of reviewing services and service levels to balance budgets. This suggests two community's value service provision and have a willingness to pay while the other sees cost containment as a priority. As a result controlling and apportioning costs and services may present a challenge for the incoming council to manage.”*^{xviii}
- Morrison Low also noted that perhaps the largest financial risk arises from the decisions of a future entity that is yet to be elected.

3.2 The community of interest and geographic cohesion in the existing areas and in any proposed new area

The Merger Proposal states that the communities of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville “are bound by their sense of place as part of the Sydney's Inner West” (p14). While the communities of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville are part of the larger Sydney's Inner West community with many similarities there are differences that make these communities distinct and unique.

Ashfield prides itself its rich and diverse cultural heritage. We are by far the most culturally and linguistically diverse of our proposed merger partners. (see Table 1)



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Table 1 Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

	Ashfield	Leichhardt	Marrickville
Born Overseas	44%	28.8%	34.2%
Born in non-English speaking counties	38.1%	13.9%	25.1%
New Arrivals	26.5%	20.8%	18.5%

Source: Community Profile, Profile.id <http://profile.id.com.au/ashfield>, <http://profile.id.com.au/leichhardt/>, <http://profile.id.com.au/marrickville>.

The cultural diversity of a community creates needs within that community that are distinct to less diverse communities. Services for people from non-English speaking backgrounds and newly arrived migrants and refugees are in high demand. In the new proposed area this cultural diversity will be diluted and services will be channeled away from the Ashfield community. This will have a negative impact on the people in our community who most need this support.

There are some socio-economic similarities between the three councils, as identified in NIEIR 2013:

- average household income and wealth,
- dwelling types,
- household structure and
- religion.

Ashfield however, has a lower SEIFA score than our proposed merger partners and amalgamation would artificially raise the SEIFA score, due to Leichhardt's more advantaged socio-economic profile. This may lead to a homogenised approach to community services in the Inner West and failure to meet the needs of the Ashfield community and jeopardise the funding of services that are based on SEIFA scores.

Communities of interests are defined as groups of people who share an identity and are likely to have similar needs and expectations of service delivery that satisfy those needs. Ashfield maintains that the strongest community of interest is in the community of Ashfield itself this is strongly demonstrated on the value we place on interactions and engagement with our community. Our council building is a community hub where community members visit daily, they sit in our inviting spaces read local and community languages newspapers, meet in our community rooms.

The Ashfield community has a strong tradition in protecting its unique built environment and its planning laws reflect Ashfield's commitment to the historical mix of form of buildings, subdivisions parks and streetscapes. There is a noticeable



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difference between the Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils' approach to planning and development as prescribed in their Local Environment Plans (LEPs). (see Table 2)

Table 2 Local Environmental Plans (LEP) Provisions

	Ashfield	Leichhardt	Marrickville
Max Building Heights	29 m	32m	32m
Max Floor Space Ratios	3:1	2.15:1	3.7:1
Heritage Items	668	811	308
Heritage Conversation Areas	50	19	36

Source: Morrison Low 2015, *Inner West Councils, Fit for the Future – Shared Modelling*, February, available at <http://www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au/Community-Issues/Council-Amalgamation/Council-Amalgamation>

The Merger Proposal claims (p 15) that the three Councils form a community of interest because they share regional services and facilities. These are not examples of community of interest however they demonstrate the ability to form strategic alignment for the best interest of their community.

The Merger Proposal notes that the new merged council will be a more effective advocate for the area's interests (p16). The proposed council area will require the new council to advocate for their community's best interests on several large State Government infrastructure projects along key transport routes: Parramatta Rd and Bays Precinct projects, WesConnex-M4 extension, WestConnex St Peters-M5 extension, Bankstown-Sydenham train line upgrade. Due to their geography, these projects affect different communities to varying degrees. It may be difficult for a new, larger council to partner effectively with the State Government for best outcomes of the community when these projects are underway concurrently, owing to competing resources and interests within the new council area.

3.3 The existing historical and traditional values in the existing areas and the impact of change on them

Merger Proposal's assumptions

- The proposal suggests that the three council areas share many similar residential, workforce and industrial characteristics (p3).



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- Many of the similar residential, workforce and industrial characteristics shared among the three council areas are common to *any* metropolitan local government area. It is the *differences* between communities which defines them.
- Ashfield Council has a long history of grassroots, local democracy. The residents of Ashfield petitioned the State Government to establish the council in 1871 and it has had consistent boundaries ever since. If there was sufficient similarity or strongly shared communities of interest with a broader area or neighbouring regions, then the community would have petitioned for a larger council area in the past. The residents and ratepayers of Ashfield Council have not petitioned the State Government for amalgamation in the past or now.
- The proposed amalgamation is asserted to assist in the delivery of urban priorities such as transport links across the area.
- The Inner West Light Rail is the most recent example of a key transport link, connecting various suburbs across the three council areas. This important piece of infrastructure is the result of a long, grass-roots campaign by the local community, with advocacy and financial support from all three councils. Lobbying from Ashfield Council, with Leichardt and Marrickville Councils, with our community action groups, made the Light Rail an urban priority for the then Labor State Government. Following the 2011 election, further lobbying by the three councils and community ensured the project remained a priority for the new Liberal State Government, albeit a scaled-back infrastructure project. Amalgamation was not needed in the past to secure transport links or deliver urban redevelopment, where the benefits of the project outweigh any potential costs to the community, economy or local environment.
- A benefit of the amalgamation will be simplified regulations across the three council areas, including development approval, traffic management, building maintenance, health and safety and waste management.
- These proposal fails to explain how simplified regulations are achieved through amalgamation and does not provide an estimate of the value this benefit. Federal and state legislation and Local Environment Plans are the key drivers for the regulatory functions of local government.
- Legislation such as the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, *Companion Animals Act 1998*, *Food Act 2003*, *Impounding Act 1993*, *Noxious Weeds Act 1993*, *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*, *Swimming Pool Act 1992*, enshrine Council's obligations to regulate various aspects of



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industry, economy, building and everyday life. As state legislation applies to all councils, properties and individuals uniformly already, it is difficult to ascertain how an amalgamation would 'improve' this.

- Similarly, Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) have been streamlined and made more consistent and uniform across NSW in recent years. Where they differ (for example, height, floor space ratios, setbacks) between local government areas, this is largely a reflection of the priorities, values and expectations of the community, character of the existing urban form and the limitations of in-fill development.
- Where existing infrastructure and services, or planned upgrades to infrastructure (such as rail and bus links), can accommodate balanced, higher density development, the LEPs of Ashfield, Marrickville and Leichhardt have already made allowances for this. An amalgamation of these three planning documents is unlikely to change the limitations placed on balanced, sustainable development in their town centres and residential neighbourhoods.
- The financial and resourcing costs of developing, consulting and finalising a LEP is substantial and it is grossly unfair to impose on the community when the current LEPs were developed quite recently. Further, any changes in the controls that allow greater intensity of development would reflect a change in the politics of the local council, due to its increased size (**see Section on elected representation**), rather than a change in community desire or vision.

Ashfield's historic and traditional values

Tradition of grass-roots, local democracy influencing land use planning

- There is a history and tradition of active participation by the community in decision-making in Ashfield. This is in part due to the ratios of resident to elected representative and accessibility to the elected Council and a reflection of the community's tradition of activism and advocacy.
- For example, since the 1990's, the community, with Council, has lobbied, advocated and influenced State-led infrastructure projects, where the social and environmental costs outweighed broader, regional benefits. A community-led campaign, supported by Ashfield Council, led to the shelving of the then M4 East Extension in 2004. This campaign saw thousands of residents mobilised. Similarly, in 2013, Council supported a successful community campaign to save Ashfield Park from the rebranded M4 East Extension (WestConnex). Council's position on the M4 East project, then and now, has been informed by our community, supported by



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expert analysis of the proposed plans and represented the best interests of the community.

- Preservation of locally significant, cultural and built heritage, through our strategic planning and prudent selection of areas for gentrification and redevelopment
- Heritage and local history are highly valued by the community. This is demonstrated by the importance of the Haberfield Conservation Area and the push from the community, through Ashfield Council, to protect arguably Australia's best example of a Garden Suburb.
- Ashfield Council has the highest number of Heritage Conservation Areas and second highest number of heritage items as shown in Table 2 above.
- The ongoing preservation of our built heritage through our planning instruments is a reflection of both the traditional values and current priorities of our community. Whilst there is some similarity to Leichhardt and Marrickville, for Ashfield's geographic size, there is a predominantly stronger focus on heritage conservation.
- Furthermore, in engaging with Urban Growth in the early stages of the Parramatta Road Revitalisation Strategy, Ashfield Council successfully advocated for the existing, LEP controls along the corridor to be preserved. This is a reflection of Council's high capacity for and strength in strategic planning, which prioritises balancing redevelopment with heritage conservation.
- Council's land use planning is a clear demonstration of our understanding of the community's historic values of heritage conservation and balanced, sustainable gentrification.

Diversity in elected representation

- Ashfield Council's gender equity among elected representatives is unique in local government and a reflection of a history of active participation of community in local politics.
- As shown in Table 3 below, Ashfield is one of very few Councils in metropolitan Sydney to have a female Mayor. It is also the only Council to have an equal gender split *and* diversity across the two major political parties and minority or independent councilors.



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Table 3 Diversity in Elected Representation

Council	Population (2011)	Labor Party Representation	Liberal Party Representation (%)	Minor Party Representation (%)	Women on Council	Gender of Mayor
Ashfield	43,538	33%	33%	33%	50%	Female
Fairfield	193,380	54%	0%	46%	15%	Male
Liverpool	180,143	36%	55%	9%	45%	Male
Blacktown	301,099	47%	47%	6%	13%	Male
Sutherland	210,863	20%	67%	13%	20%	Male
City of Sydney	169,505	10%	20%	70%	70%	Female
Marrickville	76,500	34%	17%	50%	33%	Male
Leichhardt	52,198	33%	25%	42%	33%	Male
Burwood	32,423	57%	29%	14%	29%	Male
North Sydney	62,289	0%	0%	100%	62%	Female
Parramatta	174,783	33%	47%	20%	13%	Male

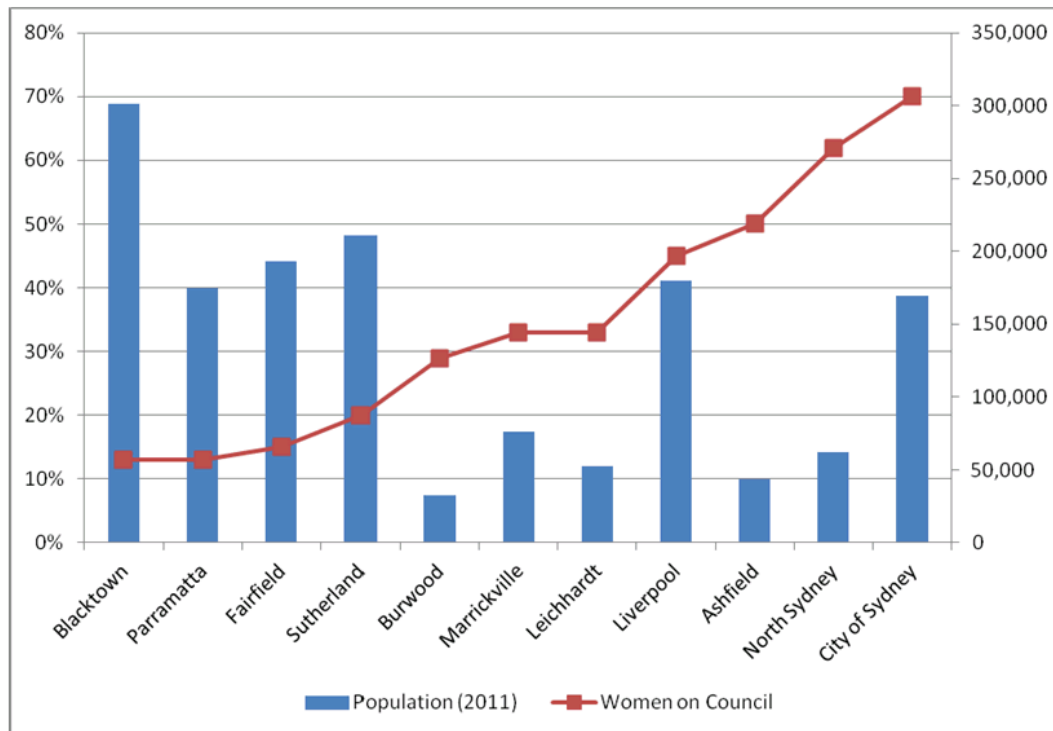
- This rare situation is arguably a product of *both* Ashfield's history of community participation in decision-making and it's smaller population. Council's with similar population sizes (Burwood, North Sydney and Liechhardt) either fail to have the same level of political or gender diversity elected to Council.
- As shown in Figure 1 below, as population increases female representation on elected Council decreases



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Figure 1 Correlation between size and female representation on Council



3.4 The attitude of the residents and ratepayers of the areas concerned

- Community consultation clearly demonstrates that residents and ratepayers strong preference is for Ashfield Council to remain as is. This preference is closely aligned to Council's long held position that the current scale is the most appropriate, connected and efficient for our community.
- This section outlines the activities undertaken by Council to gauge the attitude of residents and ratepayers, reports the preferences of the community and the key concerns identified through council and state government-run processes.

Community consultation – activities undertaken by Council

- Ashfield Council conducted community consultation in March to April 2015 and it included:



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- Media release, Mayoral Column and inclusion in Council column in the local newspaper, promoting the details and key dates of the consultation process
- Over 22,000 information packs about Fit for the Future distributed to residents and non-resident ratepayers
- Information packs included a brochure outlining the background to Fit for the Future, the current situation of the six Inner West Councils, three options and the process for participating in the consultation
- Brochure was translated into Italian and Chinese, and available at Council's service points and on the web
- Dedicated web portal provided background material, reports commissioned by Council (Morrison Low 2015) and answers to common questions. The website was viewed nearly 200 times during the consultation period (April 2015)
- Five 'open house' sessions held across the local government area to provide an opportunity for local residents to speak to Councillors and Council staff, view displays explaining the options being put forward and submit their feedback
- An online survey was also made available for the community to submit additional comments and draw out reasons for respondents preferences
- Written submissions were also received

Preferences of Residents and Ratepayers

- The information pack distributed to residents and non-resident ratepayers included a feedback form that required the community to indicate their preference for three options:
 1. Ashfield Council, stand alone
 2. Amalgamation of Ashfield, Marrickville and Leichhardt Councils
 3. The then preferred State Government option of a six-council amalgamation
- In total 1727 feedback forms were received – this represents 8% of all households and non-resident ratepayers.
- The outcomes of the feedback forms are shown in Table 4 below and in Figure 3



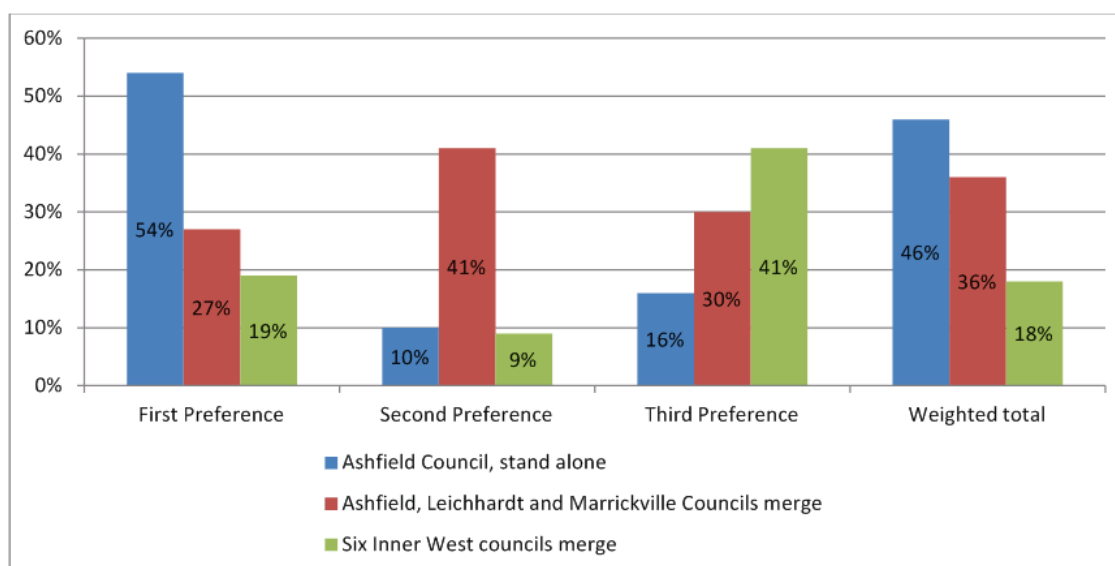
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Table 4. Outcomes of Community Feedback (April 2015)

Option	Ashfield Council, stand alone	Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils amalgamate	Six Inner West Councils (Ashfield, Burwood, Canada Bay, Leichhardt, Marrickville and Strathfield Councils)
Based on first preference only	54%	27%	19%
Weighted preferences	46%	36%	18%

Figure 3 Community preferences for options presented in April 2015



- The Ashfield community's first and strongest preference is for Council to remain as it is.
- A large-scale amalgamation of six Inner West Councils was clearly our community's least desired outcome (with only 19% selecting it as their first preference and 41% rating it as their last choice).
- The proposed merger of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils was most frequently the community's **second** preference (41%).



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- Ashfield Council's long held position that we are already fit for the future, by any fair criteria, a top-performing council and the most appropriate scale of local government is aligned with the attitude of our community.

Key concerns

- In addition to assessing community attitude towards amalgamation options, the community consultation identified a number of key concerns related to a merger of any scale.

→ *Impact on local representation*

- Nearly 8% of all responses received via the feedback form raised the loss of, access to and a change in local representation through amalgamation. This was echoed in the online survey responses. Although a smaller sample size (20), 95% of responses identified local input into decision making and a strong community voice in council planning as very or somewhat important.
- As outlined already, the Ashfield community have a strong tradition of grass-roots, local decision-making and highly value their access to and diversity of local representation. During the Public Inquiry sessions, on Tuesday 2 February 2016, this value was repeated by many residents addressing the delegate, from all three councils.

→ *Economies of scale*

- A benefit of amalgamation, identified by 9.4% of all feedback forms received by Council, was economies of scale. Much of the financial savings associated with economies of scale are assumed to be achieved through contracts and procurement. All three councils already participate in regional and NSW-wide procurement programs, through the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils and Local Government Procurement. For example, Ashfield Council already benefits from savings of \$3million over ten years through a regional recycling contract. Our Library is part of an interstate consortium of libraries, which has resulted in improved purchasing power and an expanded collection available to our community.
- As already stated above, the financial benefits associated with economies of scale, modeled by both KPMG and Morrison Low, are estimates only and contingent on the financial policies, strategies and decisions of a future council. The above



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analysis **insert section reference** has already identified the limitations of this modeling.

→ *Competition for resources and changes to community facilities*

- Nearly 6% of all community feedback cited concern about competition for resources in a larger council. Included in this category of feedback is the community concern about increased distances to community facilities, such as libraries, aquatic centers, community buildings/meeting places and Council service points.
- The Merger Proposal suggests that amalgamation will result in the ability to address the infrastructure backlogs of all three councils. Ashfield Council has a sustainable pathway, aligned to our Community Plan, to renew infrastructure, including a \$14million redevelopment of the Ashfield Aquatic Centre. In an amalgamated entity, there is no certainty that the infrastructure priorities for current Ashfield residents will be addressed within the same time frame or to the standard already committed to by Ashfield Council.
- Further, the KPMG and Morrison Low modeling both factored in a level of asset rationalization and, as already discussed, an amalgamated entity may be under pressure to realize the financial savings. It is likely that this may mean increased distances to local libraries, aquatic centres and council service points.
- More than 6% of Ashfield's population require assistance due to a severe or profound disability, which is more than the communities of Leichhardt (3.2%) or Marrickville (4.3%). Changing the location or reducing the accessibility of community services and facilities in a larger entity will have real and inequitable impact on the community of Ashfield.

→ *Local input into planning and development*

- The merger proposal purports that a larger council will be better placed to partner with the NSW Government to implement a number of large-scale infrastructure and urban redevelopment projects, including WestConnex, the Bays Precinct, Parramatta Road Revitalisation and urban renewal along the Inner West Light Rail extension.
- Over 4% of respondents, via feedback forms, identified concern over the risk of poor planning and development decisions and preservation of heritage poses by amalgamation.



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- Currently, the small, local, dynamic and connected nature of Ashfield Council, at its current size, allows for a detailed understanding of the complexities, impacts and aspirations of our community, particularly with regards to large infrastructure projects and planning.
- As outlined in Sections 3.2 and 3.3, the conservation of heritage and a balanced approach to urban renewal is an important community value and has been expressed through high levels of community participation in the strategic planning process.
- In the near future, the Inner West will be impacted by multiple, large-scale infrastructure projects, concurrently. A new, merged council will be required to represent the interests of multiple interests and form positions on multiple, emerging issues quickly.
- There is a risk of competing resources and conflicts of interest in terms of *which* communities' interests are prioritised, when advocating, negotiating or partnering with the State Government.
- This community concern was expressed repeatedly by speakers addressing the Delegate at the Public Inquiry on 2 February 2016.

3.5 The requirements of the area concerned in relation to elected representation for residents and ratepayers at the local level, the desirable and appropriate relationship between elected representatives and ratepayers and residents and such other matters as it considers relevant in relation to the past and future patterns of elected representation for that area

The Merger Proposal threatens the vibrancy of local democracy and the loss of political governance and will have a significant and negative impact on local representation. The number of people represented by each councillor will increase materially under the Merger Proposal. The ratio of residents to councillors will grow from 1 councillor per 3,708 in Ashfield to 1 per 15,499 in the merged council.

Smaller councils have a better capacity to represent their community's interests than larger councils. The new proposed council will be a much larger entity and this will impact on the residents familiarity with and direct access to local Councillors. Ashfield Councillors are often known to residents through their personal presence and connections to their neighbourhood. Increasing the size of the area and number of residents per councillor will result in reduced likelihood of residents receiving personal and direct attention and feedback from Councillors in response to correspondence on specific issues.



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Ashfield's Councillors through their long and strong connections to the area have very direct and detailed knowledge of the history of the area, Council organisation, development history and unique circumstances of the area.

The Merger Proposal states that the new council is to be comprised of 12 councillors – the same numbers in each of the individual council. The Merge Proposal also states that:

"Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville communities will have an opportunity to shape how a new merger council will be structured, including the appropriate number of elected councillors" (p 11)

Ashfield Council recommends to the Delegate that if the merger proposal is to proceed then the new council should consist of 15 councillors which is the maximum number currently permitted under the *Local Government Act 1993*. The reasons for this proposal are:

- The significant increase in the number of residents represented by each Councillor and the corresponding workload.
- To compensate for the loss of local representation outlined in the Merger Proposal. The increase in representation to 15 councillors would improve the ratio of residents to councillor significantly – from 1 councillor to 15,499 (current proposal) to 1 councillor to 12,399 residents.
- To ensure consistency across metropolitan Sydney on the ratio of Councillors to residents.
- To reflect the increase in the complexity and geographic reach of the issues before council.
- To account for the increase in the size and complexity of the new bureaucracy – the new Council will have an operating revenue of \$264 million and an asset base of over \$1.3 billion.
- To maintain the breadth of interests and views in Council decision making.
- The current proposal of 12 councillors is contrary to the policy direction of the NSW Government i.e. to have an uneven number of councillors. 15 councillors would satisfy this policy requirement as well as allowing the option of wards to proceed.

3.6 The impact of any relevant proposal on the ability of the councils of the areas concerned to provide adequate, equitable and appropriate services and facilities

Merger Proposal's assumptions



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- The Proposal claims that financial savings from a merger, primarily achieved through reduction in staff, could be redirected to improving community infrastructure, lowering residential rates and enhancing service delivery (p 6).
- By OLG's own measure of efficiency (Real Operational Expenditure per Capita), Ashfield Council has been in the top ten for metropolitan Sydney, nearly every year, for the past ten years, as shown in Table xx below.

Table 4 Ashfield's Efficiency and FTE ranking (Source: OLG Comparative Data)

Year	Ranking	Opex per Capita	Ranking	FTE Staff
2005-06	4 th	\$564	3 rd	165
2006-07	7 th	\$594	3 rd	167
2007-08	7 th	\$613	3 rd	167
2008-09	8 th	\$678	4 th	172
2009-10	10 th	\$692	5 th	177
2010-11	14 th	\$783	5 th	176
2011-12	10 th	\$780	4 th	174
2012-13	6 th	\$778	5 th	172
2013-14	10 th	\$812	5 th	180

- Further, Ashfield also has one of the lowest FTEs of all metropolitan councils. Financial savings attributed to reduced staffing through the proposed merger will not have a beneficial impact on the community of Ashfield.
- Further, no modelling has been undertaken to determine the new service offerings by an amalgamated council nor the potential cost to deliver these. The three council areas currently have key differences in their offerings and service delivery models – reflecting the different priorities of their communities and capacities to pay. Examples include the provision of verge mowing by Leichhardt and Marrickville, free public car parking by Ashfield Council and the provision of child care by Marrickville Council.
- A new merged council will be required to undertake a process of service harmonisation. There are three possible scenarios as a result of this process. Firstly, services are standardised at the highest level at which those services are currently being delivered. This would ensure business continuity for some communities and ensure that no community is negatively affected. However, the cost of raising services levels will result in an increase in operational expenditure – which is not included in the financial benefits identified in the modelling. The options available to a new council to fund increased services levels may result in



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the imposition of financing mechanisms that are in equitable or inappropriate for less affluent communities, such as Ashfield.

- The second, and more likely scenario, is one where a newly merged council's service integration results in a reduction of service levels due to the need to deliver the forecasted financial benefits. A reduction or loss of key services, such as the child and family, CALD, youth and seniors support programs delivered by Ashfield Council, would negatively impact our community. In 2014-15, Ashfield's programs engaged 38,032 people in regular or topic-specific events and programs to increase community capacity, cohesion and reduce social isolation.
- The third scenario is service harmonisation that may result in a 'best fit' model for a majority of the population, where a service is delivered at a standard the meets the needs of most of the community. This would reduce the specialisation of services that cater for the requirements of those with the greatest need, including non-English speakers, CALD and less able or mobile residents. As identified in section 3.2, the Ashfield population has a higher proportion of these groups however their prevalence would be diminished in a larger council. Arguably, their needs for specialised and higher service levels are more acute in a larger population.
- The proposal recommends that duplicated back office roles and administration functions can be redirected to frontline serviced (p 9). This suggestion is not included in the modelling assumptions. The financial modelling assumes a cost saving by reducing staffing levels by removing these roles, not deployment for improved service delivery.
- It also suggests that the frontline services to be enhanced include waste management. Ashfield Council currently contracts out waste management and has realised \$2.1 million in disposal cost-savings over the life of the contract. The Ashfield community does not stand to benefit from the redirection of staff to waste management.

Ashfield's current services and facilities

Adequate, equitable and appropriate services and facilities that meet the needs of our community

- The suite of service offerings delivered by Ashfield Council meet the expectations and needs of our community. The most recent Community Satisfaction Survey (2015), a statistically representative sample of residents, identified that "to Ashfield residents, *everything* is important." That is, all service offerings were rated by



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residents, on a scale of 1 – 10. This is a reflection that Ashfield Council service mix is both appropriate for, and valued by, our community.

For example, the need for suitable places for young people to meet and gather, programs to connect youth and support services was identified as important for the community of Ashfield during 2007 community consultations. In response, Council included a multipurpose space within the \$10million redevelopment of the Civic Centre to be dedicated to youth programs and support services in 2010. In 2014, this space now hosts headspace Ashfield, a local outlet for the leading youth counseling, medical and support service provider nationally. The Civic Centre also provides space for the growing Ashfield Youth Theatre, which engages 400 young people annually. Ashfield Council has forged partnerships to deliver the Ted Noffs Street University, supporting alternate pathways for learning and connecting with other young people.

Ashfield Council has embarked on extensive capital works program addressing the physical accessibility and safety of our infrastructure. In 2015, Council completed a \$4million Accelerated Footpath Program, delivering 10 years' worth of footpath renewal in less than two years. Renewal of footpaths is an essential service for an aging, less mobile population. Further to this, Council is part-way through a program ensuring bus stops meet current disability standards. And finally, Council has secured a \$14million redevelopment of the Aquatic Centre through an approved SRV. The Aquatic Centre has over 350,000 visitors per year and demand for low-impact exercise for an aging population is forecasted to increase. The redevelopment will deliver a modern facility that will accommodate the needs of our community, in the next five years and well into the future.

The proposed merger creates a high level of uncertainty for ongoing service delivery and key, strategic projects. In the last three years, Ashfield Council has strategically planned and engaged with our community on long term infrastructure needs and service levels, culminating in special rate variation and ten year program of asset renewal. There is no certainty for residents and ratepayers that the resources of any new, larger entity will be distributed in an equitable manner and in accordance with the current priorities of the Ashfield community.

3.7 The impact of any relevant proposal on the employment of the staff by the councils of the areas concerned

Ability to attract and retain skilled professionals

The Merger Proposal suggests that a larger council will be able to attract better, more professional staff to local government. Ashfield Council is recognised for excellence in strategic planning, environmental management and community engagement, has one of the top turn-around times for Development Assessment in NSW and has been rated by



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TCorp has financially sound, with a neutral outlook and sound asset management. These achievements are the result of our professional, multi-skilled and talented workforce.

Ashfield Council's salaried staff, like all NSW Local Government employees, are protected from forced redundancy for three years, following proclamation of a new council. However, during the initial period of change for a potential new entity, there is a real threat for a negative impact on the collective corporate knowledge and the ability of the new entity to *retain* highly skilled professionals. Recruitment and retention strategies of local government will be thwarted by the immense upheaval that comes with mergers and the risk of poorly managed organisational change process. There is a real risk of the loss of key professional staff during this process.

Modeled rates of attrition

The Merger Proposal forecasts financial savings through the reduction of staff in duplicated corporate infrastructure roles. However, as previously identified, it also suggests that these roles can be redeployed to frontline services – but has not specified if the savings attributed to staff reductions of about 7.4% (KPMG 2016, p3) are net savings after redeployment.

The modeling commissioned by Council, with our Inner West neighbours, estimated a reduction of staffing levels of 4.5%, in the short term following a merger, through *natural attrition* and not replacing those positions (Morrison Low 2015, p78). This is half the estimated reduction by KPMG. (It was also assumed that, after four years, the workforce would begin growing, at 2% per year, once a new structure and service offerings had been determined, in order to expand frontline services.)

Using the above rates of natural attrition, this represents between 50 and 80 people leaving the newly merged council, per year, in the first three to four years. Merges proposals currently affect over half of Sydney councils. Part of the employment protections requires internal requirement in the first instance for a merged council, for the first three years. This effectively means that the majority of skilled, professional staff leaving a merged council will be lost to the local government sector for some time and this will have an impact on the quality of services delivered to the community.

Impacts of Gender Diversity

Ashfield Council currently has an Executive Team comprised of 75% women. This is almost unheard of in the local government sector, where women remain poorly represented in senior management. This is unlikely to be the case in a new, larger Council.



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3.8 The impact of any relevant proposal on rural communities in the areas concerned

This factor is not applicable to Ashfield, Lecihhardt or Marrickville Councils.

3.9 In the case of a proposal for the amalgamation of two or more areas, the desirability (or otherwise) of dividing the resulting area or areas into wards

3.10 In the case of a proposal for the amalgamation of two or more areas, the need to ensure that the opinions of each of the diverse communities of the resulting area or areas are effectively represented

The merger proposal states that every community will have an opportunity to help shape a new council for their area (p17). The public inquiry process has already excluded large part of our community in having a say, the advertising of the public hearings was only in English and while this is satisfactory for some communities our community is culturally and linguistically diverse thus the spirit of true public consultation has been lost.

In Ashfield we have a great diversity of representation (1/3 of Council's current Councillors are Independent, 50% are women and 50% are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds). The merger will significantly reduce the diversity and this will have an impact on representation of minority groups. Without adequate diversity the Council will loose inclusivity, legitimacy and relevance.

Representation will be drastically reduced for the Ashfield community, from 12 councillors to about three, assuming there are 15 councillors in a new council and wards are drawn based on population size. This reduction will impact the accessibility of the elected representatives and is likely to reduce the gender, cultural and age diversity that currently exists on Ashfield's Council. A third of Ashfield's elected representatives are Independents. The ability for minor parties and independents to be elected may be reduced with a larger population. This may lead to reduced diversity of representation among elected officials and reduced representation of community views that are not aligned to the positions of dominant political parties.

Ashfield is more linguistically diverse than our proposed merger partners, with almost half of the community speaking a language other than English. The table below compares Ashfield's community language capabilities with our proposed merger partners.

Table 5 Language Capabilities



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	Ashfield	Leichhardt	Marrickville
Speaks other language and English well	35.7%	13%	23.6%
Speaks other language and English not well or at all	8.8%	2.1%	7.1%

Source: Community Profile, Profile.id <http://profile.id.com.au/ashfield>, <http://profile.id.com.au/leichhardt/>, <http://profile.id.com.au/marrickville>.

A reduction in the total number of elected representatives for the Ashfield community and in the cultural and linguistic diversity of those elected may reduce the ability for our community to actively participate in decisions that affect them.

3.11 Such other factors as it considers relevant to the provision of efficient and effective local government in the existing and proposed new areas

Ashfield Council is recognised by the OLG for best practice in IP&R and has been recognised for excellence in strategic planning, community, economic development, development assessment and public arts. TCorp assessed Ashfield's FSR as sound, with a neutral outlook, and our Infrastructure Management has been assessed as strong, placing Ashfield in the top 15% of councils in NSW. In terms of efficiency, Ashfield Council has been in the top ten metropolitan councils for ten years. Ashfield Council has strategic capacity and is strongly positioned to deliver the commitments in our Community Plan, Ashfield 2023.

Community Interests

Significant resources were invested in 2010-2012 in the development of the Community Plan *Ashfield 2023*, and the resourcing strategies in order to achieve the community's priorities and aspirations. We are half way through the current plan cycle. A merger puts the continuity of the Ashfield community's priorities and Council's service offerings at risk and potentially wastes the work and investment undertaken to date.

Ashfield consulted our community on fit for the future options, 54% of our community has told us that they prefer Ashfield Council to remain stand alone.



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Heritage and Local Environmental Plan

Significant resources have been invested in the development of Ashfield's LEP. A merger may result in detrimental changes to the LEP, resulting in the risk of inappropriate development and loss of heritage that is highly valued by the community, and the time and resources in developing the current LEP will have been wasted.

Community Access

Due to the geography of the proposed new area, closing of services or moving of sites risks reduced access to essential services, such as libraries, community centres, aquatic centres and council administration buildings for our community. This is an impact that will be acutely felt by older and less able members of the community.

Service Offering

There are differences in service offerings and funding mechanisms between Ashfield and our proposed merger partners. For example, to deliver key community services, Ashfield leverages partnerships with many organisations, some of which may be placed at risk through a merger.

Ashfield's waste services are contracted out as an efficient service delivery model. Our potential merger partners have a mix of contracted and in-house waste service delivery models. A merger jeopardises the cost-savings and efficient service delivery enjoyed by our community currently.

Cost of merger

Harmonisation of IT and corporate infrastructure has been estimated at 2% of a newly merged council's budget by KPMG. This is for a short term 'veneer' solution that underestimates the true cost of the systems needed to run a larger organization effectively. The costs associated with rebranding a new organisation (signage in public places, documents, web platform, uniforms, etc) would not be an efficient use of our (or the Leichhardt and Marrickville) community's resources.

Notwithstanding the arguments above should the Government decide to proceed with the merger. We recommend the following interim governance arrangements.



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First, allow the existing Councillors and Senior staff to remain in place until the new council is formed. This options has been adopted in the transition from Concord and Drummoyne Councils to the Council of Canada Bay

Second, allow the constituent Council areas to remain in place and in working order until the election for the new area.

Last create the new council area on the election of the Councillors.

These strategies will provide the three Councils with the time to prepare well for the transition which in turn will lead to successful integration.



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CONCLUSION

There are no financial, social or governance benefits to the proposed merger of Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils. All three councils are financially sustainable, responsive to their community's needs and aspirations and have high quality political leadership. The purported financial savings are not worth the costs to the community in reducing their access to and diversity of elected representation. Local government is the level of government closest to the community. Amalgamating three effective and closely connected councils does not benefit the community's which we serve.

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