

Submission Re Petition 129

To Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

Araluen Residential Estate Resident Safety

The Araluen Country Club Estate was developed in the early 1990's following approval of the **Rezoning Subdivision and Development Deed, Araluen Country Club Estate** entered into by The City of Armadale and Sangora Holdings Pty Ltd, which was dated the 24th April 1992.

Maps and advertising material associated with the development always indicated two primary roads accessing this residential development. The deed also indicates the responsibilities of the parties in the development of the access road via Old Albany Lanes and Thompson Road.

Residents of the estate have always believed a second access route was an integral part of the development, required to meet safety concerns apparent to planning authorities. Being classified a high-risk fire zone following the development of BAL zonings for the state, post the Kelmscott Roleystone disaster in 2011, reinforces this belief and the reasons for the second road in the development deed. The Keelty Report reinforced the need to maximise opportunity for free movement of residents and emergency vehicles in emergency events to prevent disasters.

Necessity for the second access roads has been apparent on many occasions where the main access via Heritage Drive and Croydon Roads has become inaccessible because of emergency events. These events have included fires, several motor vehicle accidents and weather-related events resulting in obstruction of access by trees falling across the only available road.

Currently there are two established roads, Wymond and Armenti Roads, which adjoin the Residential estate which could be used in such events, but they are both obstructed by locked gates which prevent free movement without authorised intervention. The City of Armadale has jurisdiction over these roads and controls the access arrangements. Damage both deliberate and accidental have resulted in the gate on Wymond Road being impossible to open without heavy cutting equipment on occasions. In 2018 it was discovered that the lock had been changed by City employees without emergency services or approved key holders being notified and provided with the appropriate keys, certainly an opportunity for disaster if an emergency event had unfolded. I was the person who discovered this after being given assurances by the Mayor that there were keys available to open the gate, following an event involving a neighbour with a heart related incident. Re-routing of the ambulance on this occasion took approximately 20 minutes and could have been the difference between life and death. The supposed emergency keys failed to open the gates and were proved incorrect when they were tested

Emergency services i.e. the St Johns Ambulance, have inadvertently arrived at the locked gate on Wymond road on several occasions when attempting to attend emergencies because the most direct / shortest GPS route took them via Wymond road. I am still being informed of similar occurrences and hope this doesn't lead to an avoidable fatality or aggravation of an outcome due to delays in treatment.

Both roads with locked gates are gazetted as public roads and until recently were indicated as through roads on mapping services data used by both public and private GPS data suppliers for automated direction guidance used for GPS device route determination. My personal intervention confirmed that the City of Armadale had incorrectly stated they had notified and gazetted these

road closures. Under duty of care responsibilities TOPO management at Landgate amended their data.

City of Armadale administration claims that the opening of the gates on Wymond and Armenti roads creates unsafe conditions for those potentially using the roads. Their position is based on the geometric alignment of the existing road not meeting current standards for a residential access road. Both roads are fully bitumen sealed roads of dual carriage width at their narrowest points. Residents living on these roads are obviously exposed to these perceived risks daily. These supposedly unsafe roads are regularly opened for public access, whenever an event occurs at the Araluen Botanical Park, without any risk management intervention by the City of Armadale. If the roads are too unsafe to be left available for emergencies, then their opening by the City for Araluen events constitutes a gross breach of their duty of care responsibilities or contradicts their claims about unsafe conditions preventing gate removal and use. Safety should override financial priorities and if necessary, roads should be upgraded and redeveloped to a safe standard.

Various individuals and residents' groups have attempted to address their safety concerns with the City of Armadale for close to 20 years. Our concerns became apparent with a change in ownership of the golf course and associated residential land in 1998. At this time a community group The Araluen Progress Association raised their concern about the lack of access and the responsibilities of the owners. Unfortunately, their requests were ignored, and responsibilities denied by the City.

Residents Groups and individuals have attempted to have the City review its responsibilities on many occasions without success. I have written to the Council without success and made requests for intervention to both the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Emergency services. Both Ministers have respected my position and encouraged my endeavour but chosen to refer me back to the City of Armadale as the controlling authority.

Our petition is a last attempt to have the matter properly investigated and enforceable recommendations made with the objective of minimising an acknowledged risk for vulnerable residents and visitors in the Araluen Residential Estate and more widely the Hills region of Perth in Western Australia. It should be noted that during events at the Golf Resort there can be in excess of 200 visitors and staff in addition to the 600+ residents potentially at risk.

I am happy to participate in any deliberations or enquiries in person, by phone or by providing further written evidence to support our request.

Barry Porter

On behalf of Residents

Araluen Residential Estate.