

City of Greater Geraldton

St Georges Close Plebiscite Report

January 2018



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Background

Acting on a complaint from a St Georges Close resident regarding community safety on their street, in early February 2017, City officers sealed a concealed access way to St Georges Close located at the east end of the cul-de-sac in the Bluff Point Estate. The resident reasoned anti-social behaviour and criminal activity would be reduced if access to St Georges Close via the fence opening were prevented.

The fence closure resulted in requests from other members of the Bluff Point Estate to re-open the access way. In May 2017, the City notified Bluff Point Estate residents the fence would be reopened due to the land on the east side of the fence being classified as Recreation Reserve #45519 and Town Planning requiring access provisions for recreation reserves be maintained at all times.

On 31 July 2017, a petition with 76 Bluff Point Estate resident signatures was submitted to the Mayor regarding the St Georges Close concealed access way and requested the City close off the fence in the interest of the security and safety of all residents living in the area. It also requested swift action be taken to return the fence line to a completely closed status. The petition cited issues of crime, suspicious night time activities, and an increase in foot traffic, scooters and motorbikes as the reasons for the requested permanent closure.

On 17 October 2017, the St Georges Close petition was presented to Council. An agenda item prepared by City staff regarding the issue included the following information:

- a) The St Georges Close access point provides an important linkage to and from, not only the Bluff Point Estate but also the wider residential area. It provides a convenient pedestrian connection to a number of local facilities including churches, primary schools, the Bluff Point shopping centre, bus stops and the beach.
- b) Access to the Bluff Point Primary School is only 50m from the end of St Georges Close. Alternative routes would involve distances between 750-800m.
- c) Closure of the access point could result in pedestrians using Settlers Close/Lands Edge Close to travel through to Bluff Point Primary School, other local facilities and the beach.
- d) 'Liveable Neighbourhoods', a WA Planning Commission Policy principles state pedestrians and cyclists should have through access in cul-de-sacs and not impede the overall interconnectivity of the pedestrian and vehicle movement system.
- e) The City's Public Open Space Strategy seeks to manage the open space network in an efficient and equitable manner so that all residents may enjoy the benefits of public open spaces.
- f) Crime and anti-social behaviour are issues dealt with via 'crime prevention through environmental design' objectives which encourage surveillance of spaces from surrounding buildings, fencing design that maximises natural surveillance from buildings, maximising surveillance of entry and exit points for cul-de-sacs and using clear sight lines to enhance opportunities for surveillance which increase the risk of offenders being seen.

Council resolved the following:

COUNCIL DECISION

MOVED CR DOUGLAS, SECONDED CR CRITCH - CARRIED 7/3

That Council by Simple Majority pursuant to Section 5.20 of the Local Government Act 1995 RESOLVES to:

- 1. NOT APPROVE the closure of the cul-de-sac end of St Georges Close, Bluff Point;***
- 2. ADVISE the petitioners of Council's decision and that it may be willing to consider other options including the installation of a visibly permeable fence and pedestrian access gate(s); and***
- 3. MONITOR and report back to Council the outcomes of what is in place in six months' time.***

Engaging with the Community

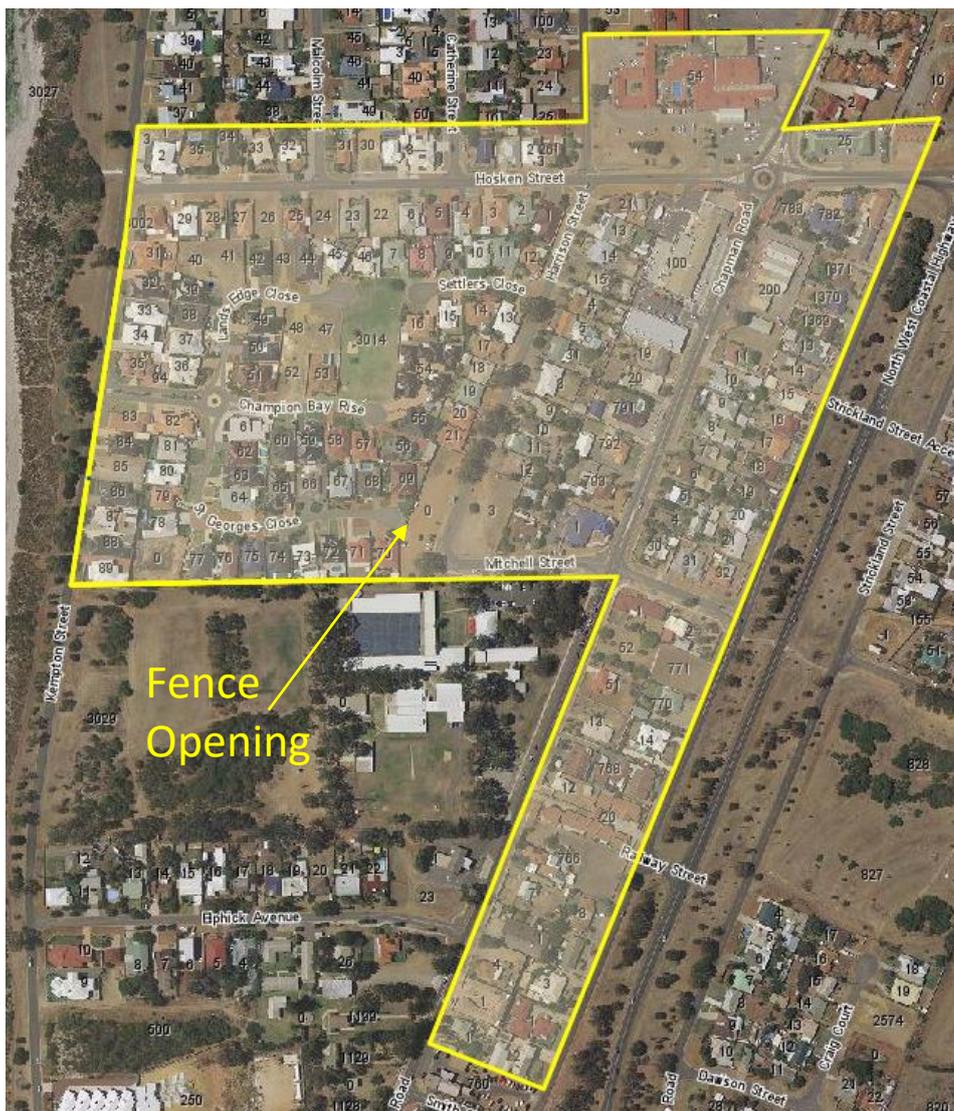
In December 2017, the City held a plebiscite for Bluff Point residents, businesses and absentee property owners regarding Council's decision to leave the St Georges Close public access way open. The plebiscite was held to ensure all community members from the surrounding streets and catchment area could have their say on the issue.

An information sheet containing background information on the issue, Council's resolution to keep the access way open and a two-question survey (see APPENDIX 2 & 3 pages 16 & 17) were letterbox dropped to 215 Bluff Point stakeholders, which included residents and businesses, and mailed to absentee property owners. The deadline to return completed surveys to the City was 22 December 2017 for Bluff Point residents and business owners and 31 December 2017 for absentee property owners.

Note: Whilst delivering the plebiscite on 5 December 2017, City officers observed persons unknown had closed the access way. The closure is believed to have occurred either late 4 December or early 5 December 2017 based on an email received by the City from a Bluff Point Estate resident.

Plebiscite Area Map

Houses and businesses located within the red outline in the image below were included in the St Georges Close plebiscite.



Overview of Plebiscite Results

The City received 80 responses, or 37%, from stakeholders to the St Georges Close Public Access Community Survey (a >20% response rate is considered statistically sound). The two-question survey first asked respondents to gauge how important convenient pedestrian access to the beach, schools, shops and other local facilities was to them. The majority of survey respondents, or 59%, said convenient pedestrian access to facilities was somewhat to very important to them.

The second question asked the extent to which the respondent could, or could not, live with the access way remaining open. The majority of respondents, or 53%, said they could not live with the fence remaining open.

The survey results show 79% of St Georges Close, Champion Bay Rise, Lands End Close and Kempton Street residents responded to the survey. Of the 79% who responded, 73% indicated their preference for the fence to be permanently closed. Residents of St Georges Close and Champion Bay Rise would potential experience the most foot traffic along their streets if the access way remained open.

Further results show 37% of the remaining Bluff Point residents/businesses and property owners responded to the survey. Of the 37% who responded, 53% indicated their preference for the fence to remain open. These residents would either potentially experience increased foot traffic along their streets if the access way was closed, or said they use the access way themselves.

Respondents were also invited to comment on the issue and asked to state the street where their home/business was located so individual concerns could be better understood (see pages 5 and 6 for a street per street survey analysis). Respondent comments for and against the access way remaining open begin on page eight.

Themed Plebiscite Responses

Reasons to leave the access way open:
Closing it won't make a difference. Undesirables will use Settlers Close.
Closing the access will not prevent *criminal activity.
Foot traffic will increase through the park potentially making other houses vulnerable.
Estate residents and other Bluff Point residents use the opening to access the shops and beach.
School students use the access way to go to local schools and to catch the bus.
Bluff Point Estate is not a gated community.
Neighbourhood watch is a more effective way to reduce crime.
Leaving it open spreads foot traffic between St Georges Close and Settlers Close.
Anti-social behaviour cannot be relocated; it is a whole of community issue to deal with.
Closing the access will mean some residents have exclusivity.
Reasons to close the access way:
Increased vandalism, anti-social behaviour and *criminal activity when fence is open.
Access way is being used as an escape route for criminals.
Increase in the number of undesirables walking in the Estate.
Closing the fence will improve community safety and wellbeing.
Low number of residents using the access way.
Pedestrians can use Settlers Close to access facilities and the beach.
Community safety is more important than the convenience of others.
Public access ways have been closed elsewhere in the City to improve community safety.
Properties were bought at a premium and residents pay premium rates therefore they deserve better treatment from the Council.

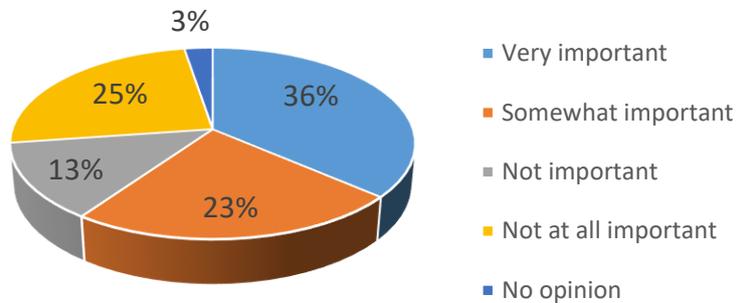
**See APPENDIX 1 page 15 Bluff Point Estate Crime Statistics Timeline*

Survey Results

Question 1

How important is it for pedestrians to have convenient access to the beach, schools, shops and other local facilities?

Very important	28
Somewhat important	18
Not important	10
Not at all important	19
No opinion	2



Overview of Street Results

Street Name	*Response Rate	Pedestrian convenience is very or somewhat important	Pedestrian convenience is not or not at all important	No opinion
St Georges Close	86% (19 of 22)	32% (6 of 19)	58% (11 of 19)	10% (2 of 19)
Champion Bay Rise	73% (11 of 15)	36% (4 of 11)	46% (5 of 11)	18% (2 of 11)
Lands Edge Close	78% (10 of 13)	40% (4 of 10)	60% (6 of 10)	-
Settlers Close	70% (7 of 10)	86% (6 of 7)	14% (1 of 7)	-
Harrison Street	44% (7 of 16)	72% (5 of 7)	14% (1 of 7)	14% (1 of 7)
Kempton Street	73% (8 of 11)	87% (7 of 8)	13% (1 of 8)	-
Hosken Street	27% (8 of 30)	75% (6 of 8)	25% (2 of 8)	-
Chapman Road	8% (4 of 53)	50% (2 of 4)	50% (2 of 4)	-
Mitchell/Railway Streets	11% (5 of 45)	100% (5 of 5)	-	-

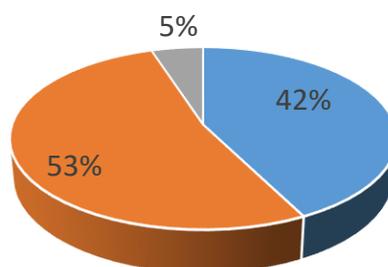
*The response rate indicates the number of responses received from the total number of houses, businesses or absentee property owners on a particular street.

Bolded red numbers indicate a majority response.

Question 2

To what extent can you live with the public access point at the end of St Georges Close remaining open?

I can live with the fence remaining open	34
I cannot live with an opening in the fence	42
I have no opinion	4



- I can live with the fence remaining open
- I cannot live with an opening in the fence
- I have no opinion

Overview of Street Results

Street Name	*Response Rate	Can live with the fence remaining open	Cannot live with an opening in the fence	No opinion
St Georges Close	86% (19 of 22)	5% (1 of 19)	95% (18 of 19)	-
Champion Bay Rise	73% (11 of 15)	27% (3 of 11)	64% (7 of 11)	9% (1 of 10)
Lands Edge Close	78% (10 of 13)	40% (4 of 10)	50% (5 of 10)	10% (1 of 10)
Settlers Close	70% (7 of 10)	86% (6 of 7)	14% (1 of 7)	-
Harrison Street	44% (7 of 16)	86% (6 of 7)	14% (1 of 7)	-
Kempton Street	73% (8 of 11)	25% (2 of 8)	62% (5 of 8)	13% (1 of 8)
Hosken Street	27% (8 of 30)	75% (6 of 8)	25% (2 of 8)	-
Chapman Road	8% (4 of 53)	50% (2 of 4)	50% (2 of 4)	-
Mitchell/Railway Streets	11% (5 of 45)	80% (4 of 5)	20% (1 of 5)	-

*The response rate indicates the number of responses received from the total number of houses, businesses or absentee property owners on a particular street.

Bolded red numbers indicate a majority response.

Map of Plebiscite Results

The map below indicates the plebiscite results on a street per street basis.

The area shaded in purple indicates the streets in which the majority of residents/business owners who responded to the survey said they could live with the access way remaining open.

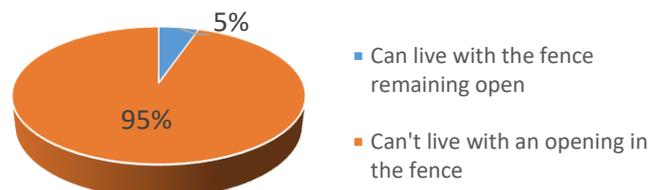
The area shaded in blue indicates the streets in which the majority of residents/business owners who responded to the survey said they could not live with the access way remaining open.



Individual Street Survey Analysis and Comments

1. Georges Close

Can live with the fence remaining open	1
Can't live with an opening in the fence	18



*86% stakeholder response rate (19 of 22 properties)

Respondent comments regarding leaving the access way open:

I don't think it will make a great difference if access is closed. The anti-social crowd will just come via Bluff Point Primary School or jump fences as they often do now. Need more than a fence opening closed to stop them.

At the end of the day, closing access will not stop burglaries/antisocial behaviour.

Respondent comments regarding closing the access way:

The opening was used as an escape route following the recent theft of my iPhone through a smashed window in our house. Have installed \$2500 of security cameras due to the prevalence of unwanted people in this area. The opening is in a direct line with Mitchell Street where the phone was tracked to, but not got back - say no more.

We have had a smashed car window. They seem to stop and have a look at our cars out front (have neighbours footage). I sleep with two alarms next to my bed and a marine hand held horn. My phone is always set on my neighbour's phone number and when I wake, it's like having survived another night. My husband works away. Please for the safety of this street and the estate, close the access point.

When gate is open - more break ins- robberies. Open gate is easy escape route for criminals. While open have noticed suspicious persons casing. We are elderly people. We feel we do not want to be worried in our later years. I have not seen any school kids or walkers going through the gate - only down. I feel this may be political because one person knows a relative in the Shire. Apparently, they want to walk exercise.

St Georges Close should remain a cul-de-sac. The opening needs to be closed to stop house break ins and pilfering. Any person requiring access to shops, beach, etc... can conveniently go through Settlers Edge. The only people this reduces distance is for those living in St Georges Close not anywhere else.

The number of break ins escalates when public access is open.

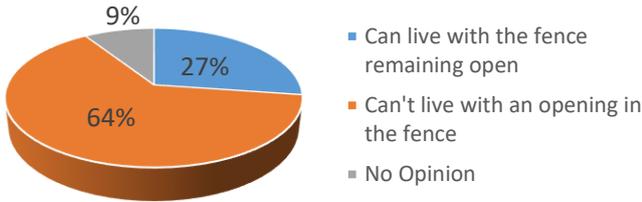
I have just moved to the area and agree with the rest of the neighbours to have that opening closed permanently. My kids worry about it being open all the time.

Nearly every house in the street has been burgled and they are still active. It is a no brainer to close it off as it is important to keep burglars at bay than for two or so people to have access to and from. I am retired and am home a lot. At 3pm most days, 1 or 2 kids at most use the access way after school. They live at the bottom of street and can't be much more effort to walk around the block and cut through the grassed area at the top of Champion Bay Rise. Very rarely do we notice anyone on weekends using access, only people casing area out for obvious reasons. As far as shifting the problem to another street I'm sure the other streets have their problems as well so if you can at least slow down problems in any of the streets, surely that's a win of some description. I've witnessed numerous times, late at night, vehicles traveling up St Georges Close to access way stopping, I presume not doing the right thing and driving back down the street very slowly. This happens most nights after midnight. There's no teenagers living here much now so can only wonder why it's a popular cul-de-sac at that hour. At the end of the day, closing access will not stop burglaries/anti-social behaviour but the majority of street can see it just might help what is becoming a big problem in what was a nice neighbourhood once upon a time. Don't

make it any easier than it already is to let undesirables into our neighbourhood and homes. Eventually it could escalate to something even worse than what's been and is still going on. Get it right Council.
We feel the gate must be closed for security of local residents and their property.
As a resident directly affected by the noticeable increase in anti-social behaviour in the street and constant break ins in the vicinity since reopening of the access way, I no longer feel safe in my own home.
In recent months whilst the opening in the fence has been permitted my house has been broken into twice a concern/issue I have previously not experienced. In my opinion, the closing of the fence does not inhibit convenient access.
My house is two doors away from the fence opening. We have no end of trouble of people in our backyard trying to break into our house. When the fence was closed we had no trouble at all.
Pedestrians can already walk through the estate via Settlers Close and public open space. The minor inconvenience of making a little further is met by improving resident security and safety.
I and my family have only recently moved into the street having moved in three weeks ago and have been broken into on two occasions already. We see this as a threat to our three young children and a safety concern to their wellbeing.
With the closure of the access way the cul-de-sac is quiet by day and night. I have had many incidents requiring police call outs with Bucky (once). There is an alternative exit on the northern side of the estate for people wanting a short cut through the estate. I'm sorry this causes inconvenience but people's safety and property should be seriously taken into account.
I strongly suggest this access way is closed. I live in this street with four young children under five whom attend local schools and use this access way but would prefer it closed. I believe the safety of residence in the street is more important than convenience of others. It is not a big inconvenience to simply take an alternative route. I am a stay at home mum and see most of the pedestrians accessing the access way and street and I can tell you that 90% of them are not using it to access the facilities mentioned in the question like schools and shops. My husband leaves for work at 1am in the morning and has been approached numerous times by these pedestrians asking for money, cigarettes, car rides, etc... I'm quite sure they are not using these facilities. My children and I do not feel safe at night in this street while the access way is open, it seems like there is a break in or home invasion or car window smashed every week and I feel like it would be negligent for the Council to ignore such alarming behaviour which could be reduced by a single act of closing the fence.
The problem is easily solved if the fence is shut off.
I can live with the fence closed. If the fence is closed, an additional bus stop will need to be provided at the north end of Harrison Street and along Kempton Street to service the Bluff Point Estate. In view of the increasingly out of control law and order the best option is to have the access closed. CGG should conduct further consultation of this type prior to any other changes or modifications. In any case Council should plan to upgrade the neglected no-man's land.

2. Champion Bay Rise

Can live with the fence remaining open	3
Can't live with an opening in the fence	7
No Opinion	1



*73% stakeholder response rate (11 of 15 properties)

Respondent comments regarding leaving the access way open:

Removing the fence entirely would remove the choke point and traffic bollards or boulders would look nicer.

I am between the two choices regarding the fence. I wish it was closed but as I live near the park in Champion Bay Rise I also worry what its closure would do to the through traffic to the park, making me a higher risk of break ins. Of course it is important for pedestrians to have access to facilities however the way this question is framed it makes it appear that the opening is the only access and there are many alternative access points - as there were when the fence was closed. Home break ins in the Bluff Point Estate are on the rise. Do I feel less safe? Yes I do. Does this have any relation to the opened fence? I don't know. I can't support this with research as I don't have the facts/figures for incidents since the fence is open. But maybe Council could research this?

Respondent comments regarding closing the access way:

Homes in Bluff Point Estate are continually being broken into so if closing the access helps to solve this problem, then let's close it. Something has to be done to stop the crime. Pedestrians have access through Settlers Close via the park where they are in view of residents.

As a long-term (16 years) resident of Bluff Point Estate, we are appalled at the ongoing saga of the hole in the fence and extremely disappointed in the City's attitude of basically ignoring the wellbeing and wishes of the people who live within the estate. One would think, that a petition signed by the majority of residents requesting the closure of the access would have convinced the city that there is a dreadful problem of ongoing criminal (can be supported by the police) and anti-social activities/behaviour occurring on a more than regular basis within the estate especially St Georges Close which is in the direct line of fire from undesirables coming through that access. If my memory serves me correctly, in previous years access walkways in other suburbs that have experienced or contributed to anti-social or criminal behaviour were closed. If this is correct, then what makes this one any different? Nothing. Don't we as ratepayers deserve this right? Do you know what it feels like to wake each morning wondering whose house or car has been broken into? We are a close-knit community and I invite you to come down to the estate and talk to the residents, get a feel for the anguish we are experiencing. The benefits to all residents by closing off the access highly outweighs any inconvenience it may cause to a very small minority who might possible use in once in a while. Please let common sense prevail, act on the wishes and concerns of the majority and end this whole issue by closing off the access way and let residents feel safe again and enjoy living in this wonderful estate.

Yes, just close the bloody access please.

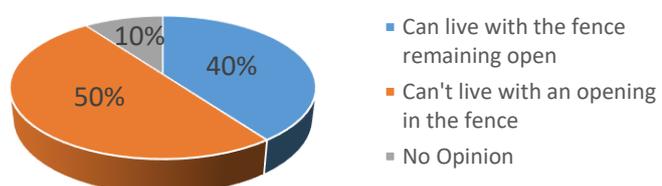
The history of the access point being used for undesirable purposes far outweighs it being used for convenient access. There are enough streets in Bluff Point for convenient access, we do not need an opening in the fence for pedestrians.

Crime is of great concern in the Bluff Point Estate (including parts of Kempton) where the major of homes have been broken into (assaults, houses trashed, cars damaged). I suggest the Councillors of this ward be aware of the resident's feelings.

We are constantly being burgled and mostly from people coming through this opening. We often see two or three youth coming down from there after 8.30pm at night.

3. Lands Edge Close

Can live with the fence remaining open	4
Can't live with an opening in the fence	5
No Opinion	1



*78% stakeholder response rate (10 of 13) properties

Respondent comments regarding leaving the access way open:

I have access though this area when I walk, we also used this access a lot when our children attended school - and feel this would be a real shame if this access was closed. There are other children in the area that use this access not only Bluff Point school but the Catholic school as well. We also have a lot of vandalism and burglary in Lands Edge Close like all areas but we have a large access area from Bluff Point Estate Park as does Champion Bay Rise area. We cannot and shouldn't close access to this park either, so a small door width opening in St Georges Close is insignificant compared to the other accesses. Please do not close off this access, we are not living in a gated community and it will increase traffic through the other open areas. May I suggest the resident who initiated this suggestion be more active in Neighbourhood Watch and encourage neighbours to work together to reduce crimes in the area. Most of our neighbours are very relaxed in their approach to reducing crimes and protecting their houses and properties.

I can live with the fence remaining open if alternative is pedestrians use Lands End Close.

Kids follow the pathways for safety and access the lollypop lady/man to cross the road.

Of course we can all continue to live with the fence open.

We have discussed with those of our neighbours who experience interference by persons entering then leaving through the gap - some for criminal acts. Because we live where Lands Edge Close joins Settlers Close via the park we expect extra traffic if St Georges Close access is closed off. However, legitimate swimmers/shoppers pass by in daylight hours.

An out of left field solution from previous times. To be serious about a serious matter... to be able to park a vehicle, quickly enter then leave St Georges Close with stolen goods undetected in the night must be relatively easy. Would a turn style rather than a climb over one work at all?

Respondent comments regarding closing the access way:

Blocks in Bluff Point Estate were sold with/at a premium, therefore estate integrity should be maintained. This means access diverted around not through the estate.

For me it has been very unsettling with all the break ins which have been happening lately. This opening doesn't need to be there as there is other options. It seems to be a good dark getaway for people doing the rounds at night. Please keep this opening closed.

I am a local insurance broker and the volume of burglaries, break and entering is unbelievably high compared to other suburbs in Geraldton. The recent bashing of two residents (husband and wife) was the last straw. Even last night 6/12/2017 there were three people trying to enter houses in Lands Edge Close. *(Note: On 5 December 2017, City officers observed persons unknown had closed the access way.)*

We live with constant concern for the safety of our homes and our personal safety. People bought property here for that village feel. The estate is a target area now for regular intrusions. There has been a very good argument posted to our Estate Facebook Group as to why the fence should be closed. It would pay for this to be considered in the decision to close the fence. Convenient access is not important from St Georges Close. The main shops are Sunset IGA, Wonthella IGA and in the CBD Woolies. Only facility is the Chemist. You drive to do your shopping.

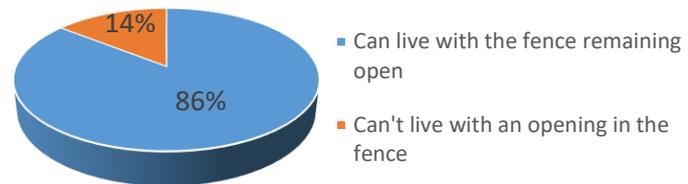
I would rather the fence is closed. We do not use this opening. I think this is a band-aid option and it would be preferable the criminals be caught so we can feel safe in our homes.

We have lived here for the past 14 years and have never seen any schools use this access. Why anybody would use this access to go to the shops is beyond us as you would use Hosken Street or Settlers Close. Why is it taking so long to make a decision (April 2018) is laughable. If any Councillors lived in this estate and had been broken into a number of times (as we have) there would have been a decision made before this time.

Residents in the Bluff Point Estate are sick of living like prisoners in their own homes due to the high crime rate in the area of which Council rates are charged at a premium. What is the City or when is the City going to address this issue?

4. Settlers Close

Can live with the fence remaining open	6
Can't live with an opening in the fence	1



*70% stakeholder response rate (7 of 10) properties

Respondent comments regarding leaving the access way open:

Public open space must remain open. It is illegal to close this space and sets a precedent across town if it is. Why should some residents have exclusivity? I have CCTV footage of people in my backyard so if St Georges is closed can we close off Settlers Cove as well? People should have access to Bluff Point School and also the beach. It's not only the locals who use the access way, people from other areas use it too. We use it for walks.

Its public open space and illegal to close this off. If you do you are setting a precedent to close off all access points in the town. I also hope that the scope of this survey was wider than just local residents as people from Railway Street and other areas of Bluff Point use the access on their walking routes.

Common sense says that the fence remains open as it was in the first place.

I definitely do not want this access closed as it then directs undesirables through Settlers Close.

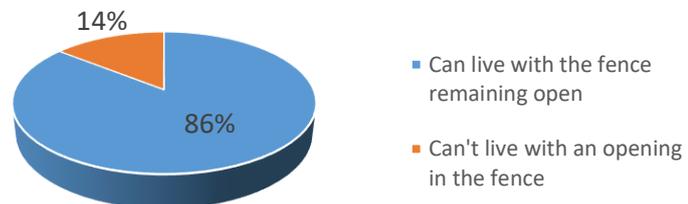
I like the route being open.

Respondent comments regarding closing the access way:

Unfortunately, the security of our community due to undesirables breaking into our homes I feel it best to have the fence close.

5. Harrison Street

Can live with the fence remaining open	6
Can't live with an opening in the fence	1



*44% stakeholder response rate (7 of 16) properties

Respondent comments regarding leaving the access way open:

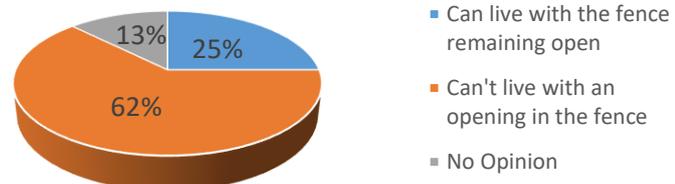
I personally use this pedestrian access with my children and would very much hope to see it remain open.

Respondent comments regarding closing the access way:

Close the fence to keep all the undesirables from Spalding from using this for access to beach stop the thieves druggies and scooters from taking the short cut.

6. Kempton Street

Can live with the fence remaining open	2
Can't live with an opening in the fence	5
No Opinion	1



*73% stakeholder response rate (8 of 11) properties

Respondent comments regarding leaving the access way open:

Although I use the Settlers Close opening an opening close to the school would be convenient for parents but there has been anti-social behaviour in this Bluff Point area.

Respondent comments regarding closing the access way:

Got broken into again last night need to limit access to the houses as much as possible.

I was the developer who created the plans and developed Bluff Point Estate. It was always my intension to have St Georges Close sealed as we wanted the park to be the main thoroughfare. Whilst the thoroughfare is convenient for some, we no longer live in convenient times. Please close the access point.

Given alternative access points and the very small number of residents that the fence opening actually immediately services. I feel a closure is going to have minimal impact compared to the risks of antisocial behaviour/break ins, etc... that occur.

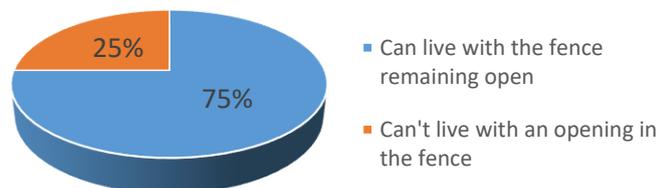
The opening is giving access to the area for the wrong type of person. With the current state of lawlessness and pathetic sentencing laws it is impossible to feel relaxed about living in the area. The street in question is in effect a blind spot and the opening is an invitation for the dregs of society to infiltrate and commit consistent offences.

Do have opportunistic people walking in this area. My house is alarmed and doors are locked all the time even when home.

Even though the opening in the fence is convenient (I use it occasionally) it should be closed to prevent crime. It's not much further in distance to use Settlers Close/Lands Edge Close which creates a thoroughfare through the park. These are both public streets which should be used by pedestrians.

7. Hosken Street

Can live with the fence remaining open	6
Can't live with an opening in the fence	2



*27% stakeholder response rate (8 of 30) properties

Respondent comments regarding leaving the access way open:

It needs to be open for my, and other children to walk home from the bus.

When walking this morning we could not get through as the gate is nailed shut 6/12/17.

We should be encouraging people to walk short distances closing footpaths doesn't do this. If the access has always been on the plans residents have no right to try and change this. Leaving open shares foot traffic through St Georges Close and Settlers Close which spreads it out. Will the Park get fenced off if local residents request that? Anti-social behaviour cannot just be relocated so a few residents don't have to deal with it. It is a whole community issue to deal with.

Preference is for pedestrians to use properly constructed footpaths. A short cut through a boundary fence line is not part of what should be acceptable planning process of LGAs. Either block it off or incorporate access into a plan for people traffic through the area via paths and not the road.

Respondent comments regarding closing the access way:

If keeping this access closed means less break ins etc... 100% for keeping it closed.

This access does not give you a good route to the beach. How many students in Bluff Point Estate attend Bluff Point School? This access creates unwanted behaviour and crime within a lovely residential area.

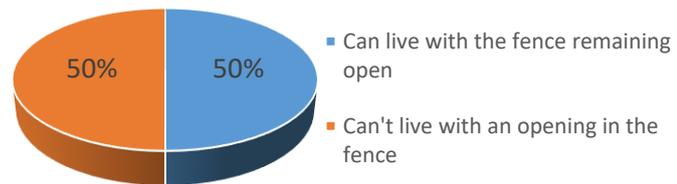
Possibilities to be explored: a lockable gateway similar to public toilets. If you are fit for the beach an extra 800m no problem. The risk that repairs may be undone by vigilantes who fear that common usage right of way has been denied. Perhaps a CCTV camera be useful?

We were victims of a burglary - break and enter at 3am on 8/12/17.

(Note: On 5 December 2017, City officers observed persons unknown had closed the access way.)

8. Chapman Road

Can live with the fence remaining open	2
Can't live with an opening in the fence	2



*8% stakeholder response rate (4 of 53) properties

Respondent comments regarding leaving the access way open:

Improve community policing to catch anti-social perpetrators and retain the access through the fence for the majority of the public. Install a lockable gate and have it locked by 7pm to 6am.

We use this access point all the time to the beach from our property on Chapman Road. It should be open to all and not closed just to please the residents of that street.

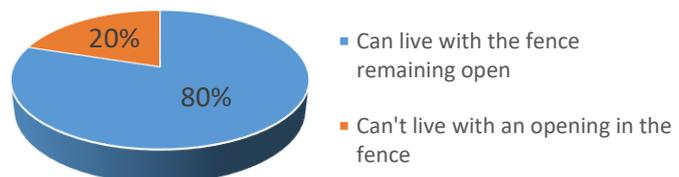
If it does stay open, please install CCTV cameras to discourage anti-social behaviour.

Respondent comments regarding closing the access way:

I am voting against this access due to the increase in crime for our friends once it reopened.

9. Mitchell and Railway Streets

Can live with the fence remaining open	4
Can't live with an opening in the fence	1



*11% stakeholder response rate (5 of 45) properties

Respondent comments regarding leaving the access way open:

I always thought the access point was right of way from way back, before the area was developed for housing.

Great access to the beach walk way and visiting friends.

Respondent comments regarding closing the access way:

No comments submitted by respondents.

General Respondent Comments:

When this matter was raised before I understood one resident of St Georges Close wanted the access. In this case, padlock a gate here and supply keys to those who want them. Problem solved. <i>(Champion Bay Rise respondent)</i>
We wish to thank Council for the careful attention which has been given to this matter. <i>(Lands Edge Close respondent)</i>
Thank you for giving all residents the opportunity to give input into this as it does affect all three streets equally. <i>(Lands Edge Close respondent)</i>
Thanks for the survey. CGG is doing an amazing job at consulting with the community about lots of issues. <i>(Hosken Street respondent)</i>
What a disgusting and biased set of questions. Whoever came up with the above should be ashamed of themselves. <i>(St Georges Close respondent)</i>
This is a very biased circular and survey form to keep the gate open. <i>(Champion Bay Rise respondent)</i>
Thank you for your help. <i>(Kempton Street respondent)</i>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 Timeline of Reported Bluff Point Estate Criminal Activities

Dates	Activities
July - December 2016	No reported criminal activity in Bluff Point Estate.
January 2017	1 report of a dwelling burglary on Lands Edge Close.
Early February 2017	Fence closed following a request from local resident stating anti-social behaviour would be reduced if access to St Georges Close were prevented.
February 2017	No reported criminal activity in Bluff Point Estate.
March 2017	Two reports of dwelling burglaries in St Georges Close. 1 report of a dwelling burglary in Settlers Close.
April 2017	No reported criminal activity in Bluff Point Estate.
18 May 2017	Fence reopened following multiple requests.
May - July 2017	No reported criminal activity in Bluff Point Estate.
August 2017	1 report of a dwelling Burglary in Lands Edge Close. 1 report of theft in Settlers Close.
September 2017	1 report of property damage in St Georges Close.
October 2017	No reported criminal activity in Bluff Point Estate.
November 2017	1 report of a dwelling burglary in St Georges Close.
5 December 2017	City officers observed persons unknown had closed the access way.
December 2017	1 report of a dwelling burglary Champion Bay Rise. 1 report of a dwelling burglary in St Georges Close.

APPENDIX 2 Criminal Activity Statistics for the City Region

The information contained in the table below was sourced from the Western Australia Police Force website Crime Statistics database and the monthly crime reports provided to the City by the Western Australia Local Government Association.

The table below compares the number of reported criminal activities in the City of Greater Geraldton on a monthly basis between July 2016 and December 2017. The table includes the number of reported activities in the Greater City region, the number reported in the locality of Bluff Point and the number reported within Bluff Point Estate.

The numbers in red highlight the three highest recorded criminal activities during the 18-month period within the three areas.

The rows shaded in blue are the months the access way was closed to the public.

Month	Greater City Region	Bluff Point	Bluff Point Estate
July 2016	207	10	0
Aug 2016	265	23	0
Sept 2016	259	10	0
Oct 2016	308	17	0
Nov 2016	318	17	0
Dec 2016	295	11	0
Jan 2017	349	22	1
Feb 2017	311	13	0
March 2017	347	30	3
April 2017	261	13	0
May 2017	286	10	0
June 2017	277	12	0
July 2017	252	12	0
Aug 2017	363	20	2
Sept 2017	326	16	1
Oct 2017	309	14	0
Nov 2017	344	13	1
Dec 2017	292	13	*2

* Note: Whilst delivering the plebiscite on 5 December 2017, City officers observed persons unknown had closed the access way. Based on an email the City received from a St Georges Close resident stating a dwelling burglary took place in the afternoon of 4 December 2017, the fence closure is believed to have occurred either late 4 December or early 5 December 2017. Therefore, one of the two reported crimes that took place in Bluff Point Estate occurred before the access way was closed by persons unknown.

ATTENTION RESIDENTS



Last chance to have your say...

CONTENTIOUS FENCE OPENING AT ST GEORGES CLOSE UNDER REVIEW

Over the past months, a concealed opening in the 28m long Bluff Point Estate boundary fence, located at St Georges Close cul-de-sac (see photo right) has become a contentious issue for local residents.



COMPLAINTS, REQUESTS AND PETITIONS...

Acting on a complaint from a St Georges Close resident regarding antisocial behaviour on the street and a request to close the concealed fence opening City officers sealed the access point. This closure resulted in multiple requests to re-open the fence, which occurred in May this year. Since then, local residents submitted a petition to Council requesting the fence be closed. The petition cited issues of crime and anti-social behaviour as the reasons for the requested closure.



COUNCIL'S DECISION ON THE MATTER...

On 17 October 2017, Council resolved the fence is to remain open whilst community feedback on their decision is gathered. Before making their decision, Council took the following information into consideration.

- a) The St Georges Close access point provides an important linkage to and from, not only the Bluff Point Estate but also the wider residential area. It provides a convenient pedestrian connection to a number of local facilities including churches, primary schools, the Bluff Point shopping centre, bus stops and the beach.
- b) Access to the Bluff Point Primary School is only 50m from the end of St Georges Close. Alternative routes would involve distances between 750-800m.
- c) Closure of the access point could result in pedestrians using Settlers Close/Lands Edge Close to travel through to Bluff Point Primary School, other local facilities and the beach.

Potential pedestrian route



HAVE YOUR SAY...

This is your opportunity to tell the City if you think the concealed fence opening should remain open. The results of the enclosed survey will inform Council's final decision on the matter in April 2018.

APPENDIX 4 Plebiscite Survey



St Georges Close Public Access Community Survey

1. How important is it for pedestrians have convenient access to the beach, schools, shops and other local facilities? (Please tick one box only)

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- Not at all important
- No opinion

2. To what extent can you live with the public access point at the end of St Georges Close remaining open? (Please tick one box only)

- I can live with the fence remaining open
- I cannot live with an opening in the fence
- I have no opinion

3. Do you have any comments or concerns?

4. To ensure residents throughout the area have provided feedback, please state which street you live or work on. _____

Please return your completed survey to the City of Greater Geraldton using the self-addressed stamped envelope provided. Alternatively, you can drop off your survey at the City Civic Centre located on Cathedral Avenue.

Deadline to mail or submit your survey is 5pm on Friday 22 December 2017.