

Visual Impact Assessment

Digital Advertising Signage Hume Highway, Ashfield



Prepared for JCDecaux on behalf of Sydney Trains Submitted to the Department of Planning and Environment

Revised May 2023





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1 Introduction

This revised Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) has been prepared by *Keylan Consulting Pty Ltd* (Keylan) on behalf of JCDecaux on behalf of Sydney Trains (the Applicant) to accompany a Development Application (DA) and Request for Information (RFI) for a new freestanding digital advertising on Hume Highway, Ashfield within the Inner West Local Government Area.

The proposed design has been revised in response to DPEs request for information dated 23 February 2023. The design amendments have reduced the overall height and depth of the sign, minimising impacts on views along the Hume Highway and the surrounding area.

The proposed development comprises:

- one sign with an advertising display area of 14.93m²
- the display of illuminated advertisements
- a maximum luminance of 200 cd/m² during the night time period
- a minimum dwell time of 15 seconds
- removal of two existing static signs on the Hume Highway overpass with an overall area of 8.4m² per sign
- · structural supports to existing retaining wall
- additional trees and landscaping to be planted within the immediate surrounds of the structure
- removal of existing chain wire fencing and replacement with upgraded fencing along Grosvenor Crescent

The VIA describes, analyses and assesses the potential visual impacts associated with the proposal. The relevant legislation and planning instruments are addressed in detail within the *Statement of Environmental Effects* (SEE) prepared to accompany the development application and have been informed by the findings of this VIA.

1.1 Report Structure

The VIA has been prepared in accordance with the following document structure:

Section		Overview
Executive Summary		An overarching summary of the findings and conclusions of the assessment contained within this VIA.
1	Introduction	Introduction to the VIA and the proposed development.
2	Site and Locality	A description of the site, the context and an assessment of the opportunities and constraints presented by the site.
3	The Proposal	A detailed description of the proposed development application
4	Methodology	A description of the methodology undertaken including any limitations encountered during the assessment.
5	Assessment	An in-depth visual impact assessment of the existing environment, proposal and potential impacts on the surrounding area.
6	Conclusion	A concluding statement taking into account the assessment of the proposal.

Table 1: Report Structure



2 The site and locality

2.1 Site description

Hume Highway is a classified road spanning 840 kilometres that travels in a general north-south alignment from Sydney to Melbourne. The Highway's most north-easterly point is where it ends in the suburb of Haberfield, adjoining the north-eastern border of Ashfield.

The proposed sign location is located on the south-eastern side of the Hume Highway overpass above the T2 Inner West & Leppington line. There are several existing static advertising signs attached to the bridge where it adjoins the footpath.

The site in context to the surrounding area is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Site context (Base source: Nearmaps)

2.2 Surrounding locality

The advertising sign will be located within an established Sydney Trains corridor and visible from an established TfNSW Road Corridor. Development surrounding the site and in proximity to the road corridor includes:

- shop top housing development 30 metres (m) east
- residential dwellings to the east, the nearest dwelling is approximately 60m from the site
- public open space located 50m to the north
- Wests Ashfield Leagues Club located 120m to the west
- bus stop located 75m east of the proposed sign location
- school zone 160m west and entrance to school 330m west of the sign's location



2.3 Existing Signage Environment

The surrounding locality comprises a variety of signage typologies and includes:

- business identification signage
- transport signage
- wall advertisements

The business advertising signage is associated with the existing hotel/motel premises located north of the sign. Further west is business identification signage throughout the road corridor. Transport and traffic related signage are scattered throughout the road environment.

The wall advertisement signage exists along the Hume Highway overpass. The proposal involves the removal of the existing signs, removing 8.4m² of advertising display area per sign.

The locality is characterised as an urbanised environment.



3 The Proposal

The proposal involves the installation of a freestanding monopole digital advertising sign on the southern eastern side of the Hume Highway overpass, above the railway corridor.

The proposed design has been revised in response to DPEs request for information dated 23 February 2023. The design amendments have reduced the overall height and depth of the sign, minimising impacts on views along the Hume Highway.

Architectural drawings for the proposed sign and signage removal are provided within the Architectural package at Attachment D.

The development is summarised in Table 2 below.

Development Aspect	Description
Development summary	Installation of a new digital advertising sign
Signage location	 Sign is proposed on the south-eastern side of the Hume Highway overpass (visible to traffic on the south-west approach)
Advertising display area	 Dimensions: 4.708m x 3.172m Area: 14.93m²
Visual screen size	 Dimensions: 4.608m x 3.072m Area: 14.15m²
Dwell time	• 15 seconds
Signage exposure	 Visibility and readability is from a distance of 110m on the south-west approach
Illumination	 The digital signage is illuminated using LEDs installed within the front face
Consent time period	• 15 years
Existing signage	 Existing static signs attached to the inside of the overpass The proposal seeks to remove and rationalise existing signage in the area

Table 2: Development summary



4 Methodology

This VIA has been informed by a site visit undertaken on 22 March 2022 and 13 April 2023 and utilises photographs taken on these dates. This VIA has been informed by the relevant *NSW Land & Environment Court* Planning Principles relating to visual impacts.

The VIA identifies the visual catchment of the proposed sign and identifies the existing, emerging, and desired future character of the area to understand any sensitive receivers and likely visual impacts.

Several viewpoints have then been selected for detailed analysis based on their visibility to the proposal, the identification of key existing viewpoints and the sensitivity of each viewpoint. Each viewpoint has been assessed in accordance with the following points which are summarised in Section 5.3.

- 1. Existing visual character and likely extent of change to locality and surrounds.
- 2. Visual sensitivity, based on existing visual character, key views and other significant visual features.
- 3. Visual exposure of site under current situation and following development of the site.
- 4. Likely visibility of proposed development including location, type and number of viewers and duration of impact.
- 5. Level of visual impact (low, moderate or high).

The following limitations have been encountered while preparing this VIA:

- the photographs taken cannot replicate the experience of viewing the proposal with the human eye
- photographs have only been able to be taken from public areas and therefore viewpoints cannot provide an exact analysis of impacts to private property.

Additionally, as the DA is accompanied by a specialist Heritage Impact Statement, visual impacts on surrounding heritage items has not been considered as part of this VIA.

Additionally, as the DA is accompanied by a specialist Lighting Impact Assessment, visual impacts associated with the illumination of the proposed sign has not been considered as part of this VIA.



5 Assessment

The assessment within this Section has been undertaken in accordance with the methodology outlined at Section 4.

5.1 Visual Catchment

The proposed sign includes a free-standing digital advertisement structure which is oriented to the south-west. The sign has a limited visual catchment and will be visible from certain streets, including:

- Hume Highway travelling northeast
- Elizabeth Street traveling east
- Grosvenor Crescent, traveling west (only the back of the sign will be visible)
- Carlton Crescent, traveling northeast onto Hume Highway

The approximate visual catchment of the sign is depicted at Figure 2. Note, this is limited to identifying visibility within the public domain as part of the site visit.



Figure 2: Visual catchment summary (Base Source: Nearmap)

The viewpoints identified below within the visual catchment have been identified to assess visual impacts.

The character of the visual catchment can be described as:

- a transport corridor that's transitioning into a town centre located west of the sign
- mixed use developments that will support future shop top housing development above ground floor retail tenancies
- public open space
- transitioning urban scale located west with low and medium density residential properties to the northwest, northeast and southeast of the sign



The proposal is consistent with the visual character of the area as its located at the entrance of the Ashfield East Town Centre Precinct. The surrounding context is transitioning with higher density-built forms on Hume Highway.

The existing character is defined through an engaging road environment which is enhanced through a variety of signage typologies on the Hume Highway overpass. The existing character is enhanced with canopy trees throughout the road environment that screens vision from surrounding low density housing.

The proposal provides a compatible built element that remains below canopy trees ensuring consistency with the streetscape, whilst providing visual interest in the urban environment. The immediate locality includes speed limit, parking and road safety signs associated with the road corridor. The surrounding locality provides for business and advertising signage; however, no other digital advertising signage is within the immediate vicinity.

As the sign is located within a transitioning urban precinct and a transport corridor the visual impact on the surrounding visual catchment is low.



5.2 Assessment of Viewpoints

View 1: View from corner of Grosvenor Crescent and Hume Highway

View 1 was selected as it represents the closest residential property on Grosvenor Crescent has medium density residential and mixed-use development that interfaces with the rear of the sign.

View 1 is located at the north-eastern corner of the intersection of Hume Highway and Grosvenor Crescent. This view was selected as it identifies the relationship of the proposed sign with the neighbouring, recently constructed mixed use building at 88 Liverpool Road.

Despite the signs proximity to the development, the view and sightlines of the proposed sign from this point are considered minimal. The sign is oriented towards the south-west and thereby the advertising material will not be visible from this location. Only the rear of the signage structure will be visible from this property.

As part of the revised signage design, additional landscaping will be planted around the signage structure. The planting will assist in softening the structure and screening viewpoints.

Further, the existing fence will also be removed and upgraded to provide an improved visual appearance and outcome.

The LIA (Attachment F) confirms the lux levels of the sign is compliant with the relevant standards. In complying with these standards, the proposed signage should not result in unacceptable glare, nor should it adversely impact the safety of pedestrians, residents or vehicular traffic.

The visual impact on the mixed-use development fronting Grosvenor Crescent is <u>low</u> and will present acceptable visual impacts.





Figure 3: View 1 – existing view looking southwest from Grosvenor Crescent (Source: Keylan)



Figure 4: View 1 – proposed view looking southwest from Grosvenor Crescent (Source: JCDecaux)



View 2: View looking west from residential properties on Grosvenor Crescent

View 2 was selected as it represents the viewpoints towards the sign from several residential properties along Grosvenor Crescent.

This additional visual impact assessment also directly responds to Inner West Councils submission, which raised concerns regarding the impacts from residential properties on Grosvenor Crescent.

As noted above, the sign is oriented towards the south-west and thereby the advertising material will not be visible from this location. Only the signage structure will be visible from the residential properties along Grosvenor Crescent. Furthermore, the residential properties located on Grosvenor Crescent are oriented in a northwest-southeast alignment. Therefore, the properties are oriented away from the sign and direct viewpoints towards the sign are limited.

Additionally, the properties interface with the railway corridor that has been densely planted with canopy trees as shown in Figure 5. Further the canopy trees along the railway corridor, and proposed landscaping and planting, will assist in screening the rear of the sign from view.

The LIA (Attachment F) confirms the lux levels of the sign is compliant with the relevant standards and therefore its illumination will have minimal impact on these residential receivers.

The visual impact on the medium density residential fronting Grosvenor Crescent is <u>low</u>.





Figure 5: View 2 – existing view looking west from residential properties on Grosvenor Crescent



Figure 6: View 2 – proposed view looking west from residential properties on Grosvenor Crescent



View 3: View looking north from Carlton Crescent

View 3 was selected as it represents the viewpoints towards the sign from the low-density residential properties, shop-top housing and commercial premises located on Carlton Crescent, opposing the railway corridor.

This assessment and viewpoint directly responds to the public submission received during the exhibition period.

The existing dwellings and commercial premises' interface with the railway corridor. The view from these properties will be largely obscured due to the dense vegetation located along the south-western boundary of the railway corridor (Figure 8).

Dwellings on the southern side of Carlton Crescent are also provided with vegetative screening and fencing/walls within their front setbacks. This will effectively screen view lines towards the sign from these properties.

The low-density dwellings, whilst fronting Carlton Crescent, their primary living areas generally face south. This internal arrangement orientates highly sensitive areas away from both the railway corridor and sign location, minimising impacts.

The signage will have limited visual impact on the commercial premises' located at 121-123 Carlton Crescent. The shops are located at a substantial distance from the signage. In addition, the existing and proposed vegetation (as discussed above) will further assist in screening views towards the sign.

Lastly, the sign is oriented towards the south-west, along the Hume Highway and will not directly face towards the shops.

The LIA (Appendix 4) confirms the lux levels of the sign is compliant with the relevant standards and therefore its illumination will have minimal impact on these residential receivers.

The visual impact on the low density residential fronting Carlton Crescent is <u>low</u>.





Figure 7: View 3 – existing view (Source: Keylan)



Figure 8: View 3 – proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)



View 4: View looking north-east from Carlton Crescent and Hume Highway

View 4 was selected as it represents the view from the existing low-density housing located 100m south-west of the sign. These properties are located within the visual catchment of the sign. The low-density housing fronts Hume Highway as it transitions onto Liverpool Road.

It is noted the existing dwellings are identified for future higher density mixed use development. This higher density mixed use development is discussed in further detail under View 5.

The dwellings orientation is predominately facing towards the north whilst the sign is located to the north-east. The orientation of the dwellings and the sign provides appropriate visual relief. Impacts are further minimised as the dwellings are setback from Hume Highway, ensuring no direct view lines occur.

As the low-density housing transitions into high-density mixed-use development consistent with the Ashfield East Precinct, visual impacts will further reduce. The LIA (Attachment F) confirms the lux levels of the sign is compliant with the relevant standards and therefore its illumination will have minimal impact on these residential receivers.

The visual impact on the low density residential fronting Hume Highway is low.



Figure 9: View 4 - existing view (Source: Keylan)





Figure 10: View 4 – proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)



View 5: View looking north-east from Hume Highway

View 5 was selected as this viewpoint is located approximately 160m south-west of the sign at the entrance of a school zone, 330m from the entrance to the Ashfield Boys High West and the West Ashfield Leagues Club is within the visual catchment. Additionally, land on the eastern side of the road corridor is identified for future higher density-built forms as outlined in Chapter D Precinct Guidelines Part 2 Ashfield East of the *Inner West Comprehensive Development Control Plan 2016.*

The viewpoint identifies an urbanised road environment with the high-density built form of the West Ashfield Leagues Club on the western side of Hume Highway and existing low density on the eastern side. The low-density housing in future years will transition into mixed use development with a maximum height of 20m. (Figure 11).

Future Ashfield East Precinct

The visual impact associated with the future Ashfield East Precinct 100m west are minimal, as the intended, future built form controls as outlined in Chapter D part 2 would afford residential visual relief. This is established through a minimum 7m setback required from Liverpool Road, with the setback requiring a 4m minimum deep soil zone for canopy tree planting. (Figure 12) Additionally, the anticipated apartment layout/ orientation requires dwellings to be orientated away from Liverpool Road, minimising potential visual impacts.

The visual impact on the future Ashfield East Precinct is <u>low</u> given the future built form controls, providing compatibly with the urbanised road and transport corridor.

Ashfield Boys High

The Signage Safety Assessment (Appendix 3 of DA package) outlined that the signage content would not be legible from the school zone, given the school zone is 160m from the sign. Given the large distance between the sign and school the visual impact is low.



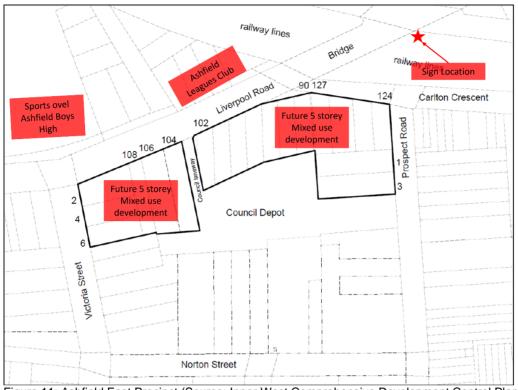


Figure 11: Ashfield East Precinct (Source: Inner West Comprehensive Development Control Plan 2016)

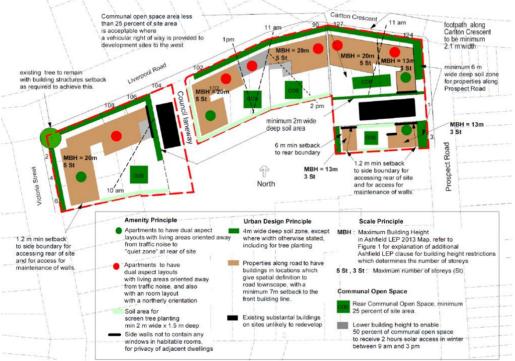


Figure 12: Built form arrangement Ashfield East Precinct (Source: Inner West Comprehensive Development Control Plan 2016)





Figure 13: View of the south-eastern façade of the West Ashfield Leagues Club (Source: Keylan)



Figure 14: View 5 – existing view (Source: Keylan)





Figure 15: View 5 – proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)



View 6: West Ashfield Leagues Club

The West Ashfield Leagues Club is a triangular shaped building with the façade facing Hume Highway within the visual catchment of the sign. The south-eastern façade of the building is elevated from street level, with the second level internal areas on the south-eastern aspect being exposed to sign. As the entrance to the West Ashfield Leagues Club faces Grimmond Avenue, minimal visual impacts occur to patrons entering the club. The ground level façade of the Club is enclosed with no exposure to the street, as such no visual impacts occur on the ground floor.

The second level is elevated above ground level, by more than 4m whilst the sign extends above the gate. The topographical levels and distance (120m) between the sign and league clubs, ensure the second level of the leagues club is elevated above the top of the proposed sign. The height difference, minimises visual impact and ensure patrons, will only see the sign when standing at the south-eastern window (Figure 13). Visual impacts from inside the registered club's floor area are anticipated to be minimal.

The visual impact on the West Ashfield Leagues Club is low.



Figure 16: View 6 – existing View (Source: Keylan)





Figure 17: View 6 – proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)



View 7: View looking east from Elizabeth Street

View 7 was selected as it represents the viewpoint from low-density housing located approximately 100m west from this viewpoint. Elizabeth Street is a common route used by pedestrians walking to the town centre. The sign will be partially visible to pedestrian and motorists traveling southeast on Elizabeth Street. The street is lined with dense tree canopies, as it interfaces with the railway corridor to the south. The proposed sign remains below surrounding canopy trees.

The low-density housing on Elizabeth Street is setback from street frontage as it interfaces with the railway corridor. Additionally, dwellings are orientated predominately south-west which minimises visual catchment toward the sign. The setbacks, dwelling orientation of the low-density housing and dense canopy trees throughout the road environment ensures minimal visual impact onto surrounding receivers.

The LIA (Appendix 4) confirms the lux levels of the sign is compliant with the relevant standards and therefore its illumination will have minimal impact on these residential receivers. Noting that Elizabeth Street, interfaces the public open space, visual impacts with this domain will be considered in viewpoint 7.

The impact the sign will have on these dwellings is <u>low</u>, due to the aspect (west facing) of the sign and distance from the dwellings.



Figure 18: View 7 – existing view from corner of Elizabeth Street and Hume Highway (Source: Keylan)





Figure 19:View 7 – Proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)



View 8: View looking southeast from public domain

View 8 was selected as the public domain forms part of a heritage conservation area, is used for public recreation and 11 Bruce Street (Local heritage item) is located within the visual catchment.

11 Bruce Street is located 60m northwest of the site and Federal-Fyle Heritage Conservation Area is located 50m northwest of the site. The visual impacts of the sign on these items were considered in the Heritage Impact Statement at Appendix 6.

The HIS concludes that the sign to have acceptable visual impacts on these items for the following reasons:

- there will be no impact on the fabric of the item. The site lies well outside the curtilage of the surrounding items and conservation area
- the proposed signage will be sufficiently separated from the items and conservation area so that it is not viewed, from the public domain, as being in conjunction with it
- the proposed signage will not block significant view corridors towards surrounding items and conservation areas. The site is located well outside these view corridors
- the proposed signage will be consistent with the setting of the items and conservation area, as a busy commercial corridor with existing advertising signage
- where visible from the items and conservation area, the proposed signage will
 provide for a more visually interesting element within the public domain without
 detracting from the character of the items/conservation area
- the images will be static and not animated, which is consistent with Part 10 of the Inner West Comprehensive Development Control Plan 2016 which permits illuminated signage
- the proposed works will, overall, have no impact on the ability of the public to understand and appreciate the historic and aesthetic significance of the items or conservation area

Additionally, the LIA (Appendix 4) confirms the lux levels of the sign is compliant with the relevant standards and therefore its illumination will have minimal impact on 11 Bruce Street.

It's noted that the public domain is zoned SP2 Road Widening per the ALEP 2013. The SP2 zoning indicates this public domain is marked for future road widening purposes. The future land use of the public domain will likely change consistent with the SP2 zoning. The visual impact associated with future land uses consistent with the SP2 zoning would be low given the land use would be associated with transport purposes.

The visual impact on the heritage conservation area and 11 Bruce Street is low.





Figure 20: View 8 – existing view (Source: Keylan)



Figure 21: View 8 – proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)



View 9: View looking west from Hume Highway

View 9 was selected as it represents the view from the Westside Motor Inn, which is located approximately 75m to the northeast of the site. Additionally, this viewpoint considers the, ad medium density dwellings located further north-east. The visual setting is a road environment comprising of the Hume Highway. Construction works occur on either side of the road environment.

Westside Motor Inn

The Westside Motor Inn is located on the northern side of Hume Highway, whilst the sign is located on the southern side that interfaces with Grosvenor Crescent. The accommodation rooms face into the internal courtyard which minimises opportunity for visual cross over with guests and the sign.

The building arrangement shows four windows that front Hume Highway. The orientation of these rooms east prevents direct view lines towards the sign southwest. Additionally, the sign is proposed to face west, meaning any view lines obtained see the back of the sign.

The LIA (Appendix 4) confirms the lux levels of the sign is compliant with the relevant standards and there is no illumination impact on this receiver. The visual impact on the Westside Motor Inn is <u>low</u>.

Medium Density Housing

Medium density housing is located 100m northeast of the site. These buildings benefit from having landscaping within the front setback, plus a sufficient setback from Hume Highway. The apartment complex has limited view lines towards the sign given the orientation of the buildings. Visual impacts are further minimised as the sign is orientated towards the west, meaning apartments will only have view lines to the back of the sign.

The LIA (Appendix 4) confirms the lux levels of the sign is compliant with the relevant standards and there is no illumination impact on these receivers. The visual impact on the medium density residential is <u>low</u>.





Figure 22: View 9 – existing view (Source: Keylan)



Figure 23: View 9 – proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)



5.3 Assessment Matrix

Viewpoint / Location	Distance of View	Visual Sensitivity	Level of Impact
1	30m	Medium to High	Low
2	80m	Medium to High	Low
3	55m	Medium - High	Low
4	60m	High	Low
5	170m	High	Low
6	125m	High	Low
7	65m	Medium - High	Low
8	70m	Low	Low
9	125m	Low	Low

Table 3: Assessment Matrix

Rating	Visual Sensitivity	Level of Impact
Low	Not a sensitive receiver	Little change to existing views
Medium	Moderately sensitive receiver (e.g. a park)	Somewhat impacted
High	Highly sensitive receivers (e.g. residential uses, childcare, or heritage item)	Highly impacted

Table 4: Rating definitions



6 Conclusion

This VIA supports a DA for the installation of a new freestanding digital advertising on Hume Highway, Ashfield within the Inner West Local Government Area.

The sign is proposed to comprise an advertising display area of approximately 14.93m² (4.708m x 3.172m) plus logo. The sign will be visible to motorists travelling northeast and Hume Highway.

The application also proposes to remove two existing static signs, located on the Hume Highway overpass. These signs have an overall area of 8.4m² per sign and are low quality signage.

Following a detailed analysis of the proposal and the surrounding locality, this VIA has found the following:

- the proposal does not result in any visual clutter as the proposed digital advertising sign is consistent with the locality
- the proposal has low visual impacts on the nearest residential sites
- the presence and addition of mature trees and vegetation along the road corridor will restrict views of the sign from surrounding land uses
- the installed digital advertising sign will enhance the visual interest of the Hume Highway overpass through the presentation of high resolution static digital advertisements
- the proposal will provide fencing upgrades along Grosvenor Crescent which will improve the visual quality of the area
- the proposal is considered appropriate for its setting, as it is located within an established major road corridor
- the sign is located within an urbanised precinct which that is undergoing a built form transition
- the signs' location within the transport corridor is appropriate and has low impact on the residences located immediately west, southwest and south-east
- the sign will not impact the viewing rights of others
- the additional signage does not constitute of visual clutter
- the proposed rationalisation of signage within the locality presents a positive visual impact

Following consideration of the above, the proposal is considered to result in acceptable visual impacts and will provide for a compatible signage structure with the surrounding streetscape of Hume Highway.