

# **Visual Impact Assessment**

Digital Advertising Signage Princes Highway, Bombo



Prepared for JCDecaux

March 2022





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Cover image: Photomontage of the proposed sign (Source: JCDecaux)

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Revision	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Date	Revision Type
1	СТ	PS/MW	21/03/2022	Draft
2	СТ	PS/MW	25/03/2022	Final



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## 1 Introduction

This Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) has been prepared by *Keylan Consulting Pty Ltd* (Keylan) on behalf of JCDecaux to accompany a Development Application (DA) for the digital conversion of an existing static advertising sign at the Princes Highway, Bombo.

The proposed development comprises the removal of an existing double-sided static advertising sign at the site adjacent to the Princes Highway and its replacement with a digital advertising sign. The new digital advertising sign provides:

- two new digital advertising panels
- an advertising display area of 20.75m<sup>2</sup> and a visual screen size of 16.25m<sup>2</sup> (per side)
- the display of illuminated advertisements
- a minimum dwell time of 25 seconds for message changes
- a maximum luminance of 250 cd/m<sup>2</sup> during the night time period
- webcam mounted on a safety arm to monitor visual content

The proposed digital advertising panels have a 10% smaller visual screen size than the existing  $18m^2$  panels and will improve the overall quality and visual appearance of the display.

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:

Se	ction	Overview
Ex	ecutive 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

The subject site is in the Kiama LGA and is approximately 26km south of Wollongong and 1km north of Kiama town centre. The site is located between the Princes Highway and the railway in a fenced off area that is not accessible to public vehicles or pedestrians as shown in Figure 1.

The Princes Highway is a Classified Road (Highway 1) and is frequented by drivers travelling north and south along the NSW coast. The site is also located opposite the Kiama Cemetery approximately 100m south of Bombo Train Station.

The existing freestanding static sign has dimensions of 6.00m x 3.00m and has north and south facing panels that are not illuminated. There is no other advertising signage in the immediate vicinity other than road safety signage to the north and south. An 85km/h turning speed sign is located 20m north of the site and a sign for the Gipps Street Highway exit is located 80m north of the site.

The subject site in its broader context is shown in Figure 2 and the site's local context is shown in Figure 3.



Figure 1: The site (Source: Google Maps)



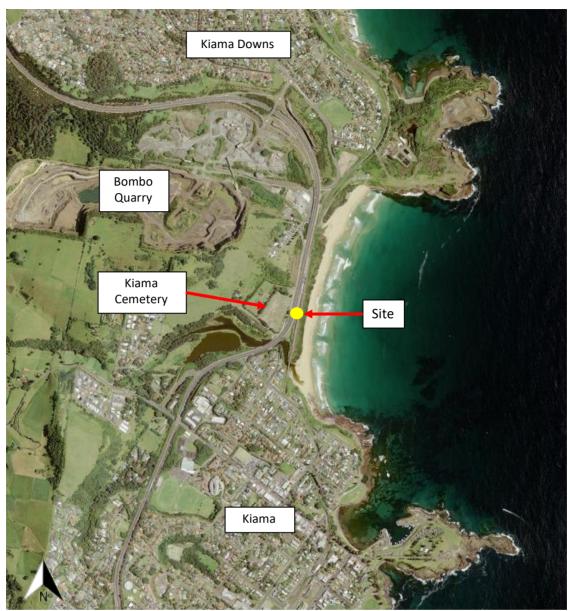


Figure 2: Site context (Base source: Six maps)





Figure 3: Local context (Base source: Six Maps)

## 2.2 Surrounding Locality

The sign's surrounding locality is characterised by the Princes Highway road corridor, the Sydney Trains railway corridor and the coastal environment.

Development and land uses surrounding the site include:

- the railway line, Bombo Beach and the Pacific Ocean to the east
- Bombo Train Station and commuter carpark to the north
- Kiama Cemetery and the Princes Highway to the west
- Spring Creek 170m to the south



There is limited residential development within the immediate vicinity of the site. The closest residential receivers are located 320m northwest, 320m west and 240m south. The primary visual catchment of the sign is limited to the Princes Highway and railway corridor. Despite this, some residential properties approximately 400m south of the site will be able to see the sign.



Figure 4: Area surrounding the site to the south (Source: Keylan)



Figure 5: The site and the surrounding area as seen from approximately 130m south of the site (Source: Keylan)





Figure 6: Surrounding coastal environment and view towards the site from Bombo Headland (Source: Keylan)

## 2.3 Existing Signage Environment

There is no other advertising signage in the immediate vicinity other than road safety signage to the south. An 85km/h turning speed sign is located 20m south of the site and a sign for the Gipps Street highway exit is located 80m south of the site as shown in Figure 1.

Further south of the site is signage informing road users of events happening within the Kiama LGA as shown in Figure 4.

The site and its immediate vicinity are not currently visually cluttered by signage.



## 3 The Proposal

The proposal involves the digital conversion of an existing freestanding static advertising sign located between the Princes Highway and the railway corridor at Bombo. The development is summarised in the table below.

Development Aspect	Description	
Development summary	digital conversion of existing static advertising signage	
Associated works	<ul> <li>the existing advertising panels, cladding, support columns and footings are to be removed</li> <li>the proposal includes a new advertising sign, steel column, footings and a ladder and internal walkway between the panels for maintenance access</li> <li>supporting structures are to be painted black and monument to improve the visual appearance of the advertising structure</li> </ul>	
Sign location	<ul> <li>the site is located between the Princes Highway and the railway corridor (visible to north and southbound traffic along the Princes Highway)</li> </ul>	
Advertising display area	• 20.75m <sup>2</sup> (per side)	
Visual screen size	<ul> <li>existing: 18m<sup>2</sup> (6.0m x 3.0m)</li> <li>proposed: 16.25m<sup>2</sup> (7.936m x 2.048m)</li> </ul>	
Dwell time	minimum dwell time of 25 seconds	
Sign exposure	<ul> <li>visible and readable from a maximum distance of 285m and 110m respectively from northbound lanes</li> <li>visible and readable from a maximum distance of 210m and 100m respectively from southbound lanes</li> </ul>	
Illumination	• the digital signage is to be illuminated using LEDs installed within the front face 24 hours a day, 7 days a week	
Existing signage	<ul> <li>existing static advertising sign to be removed</li> <li>the existing static advertising panels (6.0mm x 3.0m, 18m<sup>2</sup>) is larger than the proposed sign</li> <li>the new sign will be 10% smaller than the existing sign</li> <li>the existing static advertising sign is not illuminated</li> </ul>	

Table 2: Development summary

Indicative images of the sign as viewed from the Princes Highway are provided at Figure 7 and Figure 8.





Figure 7: Indicative view from Princes Highway northbound (Source: JCDecaux)



Figure 8: Indicative view from pedestrian path on the eastern side of the Princes Highway (Source: JCDecaux)



## 4 Methodology

This VIA has been informed by a site visit undertaken on 9 February 2022 and utilises photographs taken on this date. 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 5.5.

- 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 Lighting Impact Assessment (LIA), visual impacts associated with the illumination of the proposed sign has not been considered in detail 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 State Environmental Planning Policy (Industry and Employment) 2021

Chapter 3 – Advertising and Signage

Chapter 3 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Industry and Employment) 2021 (Industry and Employment SEPP) aims to ensure that advertising and signage is well located, compatible with the desired amenity of an area and of high quality. Schedule 5 of the Industry and Employment SEPP provides assessment criteria which guides the assessment of visual impacts arising from signage.

Schedule 5 of the Industry and Employment SEPP is addressed in detail within the SEE. Key points from the Schedule 5 assessment relevant to the VIA include:

- the proposal is compatible with the existing and desired future character of the area as it reduces the advertising area of an existing sign and improves the quality of the advertising structure
- the proposal is consistent with outdoor advertising in the corridor being an advertising sign adjacent to a highway
- the proposal is visible from scenic views at Bombo Headland and residential areas of Kiama, however, the sign is barely perceptible at this distance
- the proposal does not dominate the skyline as it is a consistent height with other signage and infrastructure along the Princes Highway and railway corridors
- the proposal is compatible with the scale, proportion and characteristics of the site as it reduces the area of existing signage

#### 5.2 State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021

#### Chapter 2 – Coastal Management

Chapter 3 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 (Resilience and Hazards SEPP) aims to promote an integrated and co-ordinated approach to land use planning in the coastal zone in a manner consistent with the objects of the Coastal Management Act 2016.

The site is identified in the coastal environment area and coastal use area under the Chapter 2 maps. In relation to visual impacts, Chapter 2 aims to ensure coastal development does not diminish the visual amenity or scenic qualities of the coast and does not cause any adverse impacts on Aboriginal and built environment heritage.

The assessment provided as part of this section considers several viewpoints from heritage locations and scenic coastal areas and has found there to be minimal and acceptable visual impacts.



#### 5.3 Visual Catchment

The proposed sign has two panels facing north and south and is visible from vehicular traffic and pedestrians travelling along the Princes Highway. The proposed sign will also be visible from the western side of trains travelling north and south along the railway corridor.

Additionally, the sign will also be visible from Bombo Train Station and some areas of Kiama Cemetery. From greater distances approximately 400m south and 800m north, the sign will be visible to residential areas and headland areas (wider visual catchment). However, due to the great distances the sign will barely be perceptible.

The approximate visual catchment of the sign is depicted at Figure 9. Note, this is limited to identifying visibility within the public domain as part of the site visit.



Figure 9: Visual catchment (Base source: Nearmap)

The character of the visual catchment can be described as:

- a transport corridor being located between the six lane Princes Highway and a railway corridor
- a coastal environment being located adjacent to Bombo Beach
- having a degree of heritage value noting general heritage items at Kiama Cemetery, and Bombo Station and also an archaeological heritage item at Bombo Headland
- low density residential for areas within the wider visual catchment to the south and north



The proposal is considered consistent with the visual character of the area as it is primarily a transport corridor and the site comprises underutilised land between the road and railway. Additionally, sensitive receivers within the wider visual catchment are located at a sufficient distance away that the visual impacts will be negligible.

Further, the proposal will have positive visual impacts on the visual character of the area as the proposed sign is 10% smaller than the existing sign and the proposal involves significant upgrades to the quality and appearance of the structure.

As addressed in Section 2.3, there is limited signage within the vicinity of the site excluding several road safety signs. Despite this, these signs are at a sufficient spacing which ensures the proposal will not result in any visual clutter within the locality.

The viewpoints identified below have been chosen to assess visual impacts with consideration to sensitive receivers and heritage items.



Figure 10: Viewpoints (Base source: Nearmap)



#### 5.4 Assessment of Viewpoints

#### 5.4.1 North-facing Panel

#### View 1: Princes Highway (southbound)

View 1 is taken from the pedestrian path along the eastern side of the Princes Highway and adjacent to the Bombo Station commuter car park.

The viewpoint shows the view of pedestrians walking south towards Kiama and is being relied upon to estimate visual impacts on road users travelling south along the Princes Highway, which are considered the primary viewers of the north-facing advertising panel.

The viewpoint is dominated by the railway and road corridors and is not considered to be a view with high visual aesthetic value. This viewpoint also has unimpeded views towards the existing static advertising sign.

From this viewpoint residential dwellings within Kiama can be seen in the background and two road signs can be seen further south along the road corridor. The road signs are sufficiently spaced, and accordingly, the locality is not visually cluttered.

The proposed sign will be highly visible from this location. The visual impact to this viewpoint is considered to represent a minor change and an overall positive impact resulting from the smaller and higher quality advertising display.

Given the existing sign is unilluminated, the only additional visual impact is likely to be associated with the LED display. Lighting impacts are considered separately as part of the specialist LIA prepared by Electrolight.



Figure 11: View 1 - existing view





Figure 12: View 2 - proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)

#### View 2: Bombo Station

View 2 is taken from the Bombo Railway Station Group which is a State Heritage Item (SHR ID 01092) under the *Heritage Act* 1977 (Heritage Act).

The statement of significance notes that Bombo Railway Station is of State historical significance as it retains its 1887 weatherboard platform building, out-of-room, remnant early platform foundations, brick paved platform surface, and 1925 signal box with original signal levers. The statement of significance also recognises its rarity and aesthetic significance for its landscape setting.

The viewpoint is dominated by the railway and road corridors as well as infrastructure associated with Bombo Station. This viewpoint also has unimpeded views towards the existing static advertising sign and has partial views of Bombo Beach.

The proposed sign will be highly visible from this location. The visual impact to this viewpoint is considered to represent a minor change and an overall positive impact resulting from the smaller and higher quality advertising display.

The proposal is also not anticipated to cause any visual impacts affecting the heritage significance of the station, given it is the conversion of an existing sign and is of a sufficient distance that it does not alter people's experience of the item. Additionally, the historical significance associated with the original station buildings and the aesthetic significance associated with the broader coastal environment are not altered or significantly altered by this proposal.



Given the existing sign is unilluminated, the only additional visual impact is likely to be associated with the LED display. Lighting impacts are considered separately as part of the specialist LIA prepared by Electrolight.



Figure 13: View 2 - existing view



Figure 14: View 2 – proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)



#### View 3: Kiama Cemetery (north)

View 3 is taken from the northern end of Kiama Cemetery which is a local heritage item under the *Kiama Local Environmental Plan 2011* (KLEP 2011).

This viewpoint shows the view of visitors to the northern end of Kiama Cemetery. The Princes Highway is prominent from this viewpoint and there is also an unimpeded view of the existing static advertising sign.

The proposed sign will be highly visible from this location. The visual impact to this viewpoint is considered to represent a minor change and an overall positive impact resulting from the smaller and higher quality advertising display.

The proposal is also not anticipated to cause any additional visual impacts affecting the heritage significance of the cemetery, given it is the conversion of an existing sign. The historical significance associated with Kiama Cemetery is also not altered in any way by the proposal.

Given the existing sign is unilluminated, the only additional visual impact is likely to be associated with the LED display. Lighting impacts are considered separately as part of the specialist LIA prepared by Electrolight.



Figure 15: View 3 - existing view





Figure 16: View 3 - proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)

#### View 4: Robert East Reserve

View 4 is taken from within Robert East Reserve. Schedule 5 of the Industry and Employment SEPP requires consideration of whether the proposal detracts from the amenity or visual quality of open space areas.

The site visit confirmed that the proposed sign will not be visible from Robert East Reserve. Accordingly, the proposal will not result in any visual impacts from Robert East Reserve.



Figure 17: View 4 - existing view



#### View 5: Bombo Headland Residential

View 5 is taken from the pedestrian path adjacent to 2 Riverside Drive, Bombo which is occupied by a low-density residential dwelling.

This viewpoint shows the view of pedestrians and motorists travelling south along Riverside Drive. The topography of the surrounding area slopes up towards the north giving surrounding properties similar views towards Bombo Beach. Accordingly, this viewpoint is being relied upon to estimate visual impacts on low density residential dwellings located on Bombo Headland.

This viewpoint has views south of Bombo Beach and Kiama as well as the hills towards the west. This viewpoint is considered to have a high visual aesthetic value due to views of the coastal environment.

The Princes Highway is visible from this viewpoint and the existing static advertising sign is also visible in the distance, however it is barely perceptible as shown in Figure 18.

The proposal is not anticipated to cause any visual impacts to this viewpoint given the site is of a significant distance away that the sign will be barely perceptible. Additionally, the proposed sign has a 10% smaller visual screen size which will further reduce perceptibility from this viewpoint.

Given the existing sign is unilluminated, the only additional visual impact is likely to be associated with the LED display which may result in the advertising sign being more perceptible from this distance at night time. Lighting impacts are considered separately as part of the specialist LIA prepared by Electrolight.



Figure 18: View 5 - existing view



#### View 6: Bombo Headland Reserve

View 6 was taken from the Bombo Headland Reserve/Bombo Headland Quarry Geological Site. The Bombo Headland Quarry Geological Site is a State Heritage Item (SHR ID 5045194) under the Heritage Act.

This viewpoint has views south of Bombo Beach and Kiama as well as the hills towards the west. This viewpoint is considered to have a high visual aesthetic value due to views of the coastal environment.

The Princes Highway is visible from this viewpoint and the existing static advertising sign is also visible in the distance, however it is barely perceptible as shown in Figure 19.

The proposal is not anticipated to cause any visual impacts to this viewpoint given the site is a significant distance away that the sign will be barely perceptible. Additionally, the proposed sign has a 10% smaller visual screen size which will further reduce perceptibility from this viewpoint.

Given the existing sign is unilluminated, the only additional visual impact is likely to be associated with the LED display which may result in the advertising sign being more perceptible from this distance at night time. Lighting impacts are considered separately as part of the specialist LIA prepared by Electrolight.



Figure 19: View 6 - existing view



#### 5.4.2 South-facing Panel

#### View 7: Princes Highway (northbound)

View 7 is taken from the pedestrian path along the eastern side of the Princes Highway.

The viewpoint shows the view of pedestrians walking north towards Bombo Station and is being relied upon to estimate visual impacts on road users travelling north along the Princes Highway, which are considered the primary viewers of the south-facing advertising panel.

The viewpoint is dominated by the railway and road corridors and is not considered to be a view with high visual aesthetic value. This viewpoint also has unimpeded views towards the existing static advertising sign.

From this viewpoint Kiama Cemetery can be seen to the west and residential dwellings along Bombo Headland can also be seen in the distance. There are no road signs within the immediate vicinity visible to northbound traffic except highway directional signs approximately 240m north of the site.

The proposed sign will be highly visible from this location. The visual impact to this viewpoint is considered to represent a minor change and an overall positive impact resulting from the smaller and higher quality advertising display.

Given the existing sign is unilluminated, the only additional visual impact is likely to be associated with the LED display. Lighting impacts are considered separately as part of the specialist LIA prepared by Electrolight.



Figure 20: View 7 - existing view





Figure 21: View 7 - proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)

#### View 8: Kiama Cemetery (south)

View 3 is taken from the southern end of Kiama Cemetery which is a local heritage item under the *Kiama Local Environmental Plan 2011* (KLEP 2011).

This viewpoint shows the view of visitors to the southern end of Kiama Cemetery. The Princes Highway is prominent from this viewpoint and views towards the existing static advertising sign are significantly obstructed by landscaping.

Street trees and landscaping within the cemetery are considered to mitigate any visual impacts to this viewpoint resulting from the proposal. Visual impacts are therefore considered negligible.

The proposal is also not anticipated to cause any additional visual impacts affecting the heritage significance of the cemetery, given it is the conversion of an existing sign which is currently not visible due to landscaping. Further, the historical significance associated with Kiama Cemetery is not altered in any way by the proposal.





Figure 22: View 8 - existing view

Views 9, 10 and 11: Kiama Residential

Views 9,10 and 11 are taken from the pedestrian paths within low density residential areas of Kiama. The exact locations are shown in Figure 10.

This viewpoint shows the view of pedestrians and motorists travelling throughout residential areas of Kiama. Accordingly, this viewpoint is being relied upon to estimate visual impacts on various low density residential dwellings.

These viewpoints have views north of Bombo Beach and Bombo Headland as well as the hills towards the west. This viewpoint is considered to have a high visual aesthetic value due to views of the coastal environment.

The Princes Highway is visible from this viewpoint and the existing static advertising sign is also visible in the distance, however it is barely perceptible as shown in Figure 23 to Figure 25.

The proposal is not anticipated to cause any visual impacts to the low density residential properties in the area given the site is a sufficient distance away that the sign will be barely noticeable. Additionally, the proposed sign has a 10% smaller visual screen size which will further reduce perceptibility from these viewpoints.

Given the existing sign is unilluminated, the only additional visual impact is likely to be associated with the LED display which may result in the advertising sign being more perceptible from this distance at night time. Lighting impacts are considered separately as part of the specialist LIA prepared by Electrolight.





Figure 23: View 9 - existing view



Figure 24: View 10 - existing view





Figure 25: View 11 - existing view

### 5.5 Assessment Matrix

Viewpoint / Location	<b>Distance of View</b>	Visual Sensitivity	Level of Impact
1	~60m	Low	Low to moderate
2	~140m	High	Low to moderate
3	~75m	High	Moderate
4	~250m	Moderate	None
5	~780m	High	Low
6	~850m	High	Low
7	~110m	Low	Low to moderate
8	~110m	High	Low
9	~440m	High	Low
10	~740m	High	Low
11	~640m	High	Low

Table 3: Assessment Matrix

Rating	Visual Sensitivity	Level of Impact	
Low	Not a sensitive receiver	Little change to existing views	
Moderate	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

The proposed digital conversion of the existing static advertising sign adjacent to the Princes Highway, Bombo will result in positive visual impacts.

The proposed digital sign will have a visual display area 10% smaller than the existing sign and will be accompanied by advertising structure upgrades which will improve the visual appearance of the structure.

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

- the proposal is consistent with the prevailing character of the surrounding area being a transport corridor
- the proposal will not adversely impact the scenic and aesthetic qualities of the coastal environment
- due to the topography of the surrounding area, the site has a large visual catchment, however, perceptibility is limited from distant receivers
- impacts to the Bombo Railway Station Group and Kiama Cemetery heritage items in the immediate catchment are considered positive due to the smaller display size and higher quality structure
- there is some visibility within the wider visual catchment from residential dwellings, however, this is at a great distance which ensures the sign will be barely perceptible and therefore visual impacts are limited
- the proposed sign will be visible to high numbers of motorists reflective of its location along the Princes Highway
- the surrounding area does not exhibit visual clutter
- the proposal will reduce visual impacts overall due to its smaller size and higher quality

Following consideration of the above, the proposal is considered to result in acceptable visual impacts and will improve the visual appearance of the site.