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

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Cover image: the site (Source: JCDecaux)

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1 Introduction

This 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) for a new freestanding digital advertising on Hume Highway, Ashfield within the Inner West Local Government Area.

The proposed development comprises:

- one sign with an advertising display area of 14.93m^2 (Portrait 50)
- the display of illuminated advertisements
- a maximum luminance of 200 cd/m^2 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 8.4m^2 per sign
- structural supports to existing retaining wall

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 8.4m^2 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 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: 14.93m^2
Visual screen size	• Dimensions: 4.608m x 3.072m • Area: 14.15m^2
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

Architectural drawings for the sign and signage removal are provided within the Architectural package at Appendix 2.

4 Methodology

This VIA has been informed by a site visit undertaken on 22 March 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 5.3.

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 face 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: Nearmaps)

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 human in scale and 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 looking east from Elizabeth Street

View 1 was selected as low-density housing is located 100m west from this viewpoint. This location is used by pedestrians walking to the town centre. The sign will be visible to pedestrian and motorists traveling southeast on Elizabeth Street. The street is lined with dense canopy trees along the northern and southern aspect of the street, as it interfaces with the railway corridor to the south. The proposed sign remains below surrounding canopy trees. (Figure 3)

The low-density housing on Elizabeth Street is setback from street frontage as it interfaces with the railway corridor. Additionally, dwellings are orientated predominately west which minimises visual catchment toward the sign east. The setbacks, dwelling orientation of the low-density housing plus 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 low, due to the aspect (west facing) of the sign and distance from the dwellings.

Figure 3: View 1 - looking east on Elizabeth Street (Source: Keylan)

Figure 4: View 1 - existing view from corner of Elizabeth Street and Hume Highway (Source: Keylan)

Figure 5: View 1 - proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)

View 2: View looking east from Hume Highway

View 2 was selected as this viewpoint is located approximately 160m 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 marked to be 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 shows an urbanised road environment with the high-density built form of the West Ashfield Leagues Club 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 6)

Future Ashfield East Precinct

The visual impact associated with the future Ashfield East Precinct 100m west is minimal, as the intended built form controls as outlined in Chapter D part 2 would afford residential visual relief. This is seen through a minimum 7m setback required from Liverpool Road, with the setback requiring a 4m minimum deep soil zone for canopy tree planting. (Figure 7) Additionally, the intended 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 low given the intended built form controls, providing compatibly with the urbanised road and transport corridor.

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 (Figure 8). 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.

As the second level is elevated above ground level, by more than 4m whilst the sign extends above the gate by approximately 6.2m. The topographical levels and distance (120m) between the sign and league clubs, ensures 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 8). 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.

Ashfield Boys High

The Signage Safety Assessment at Appendix 3 outlined that the signage content would not be readable 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 6: Ashfield East Precinct (Source: Inner West Comprehensive Development Control Plan 2016)

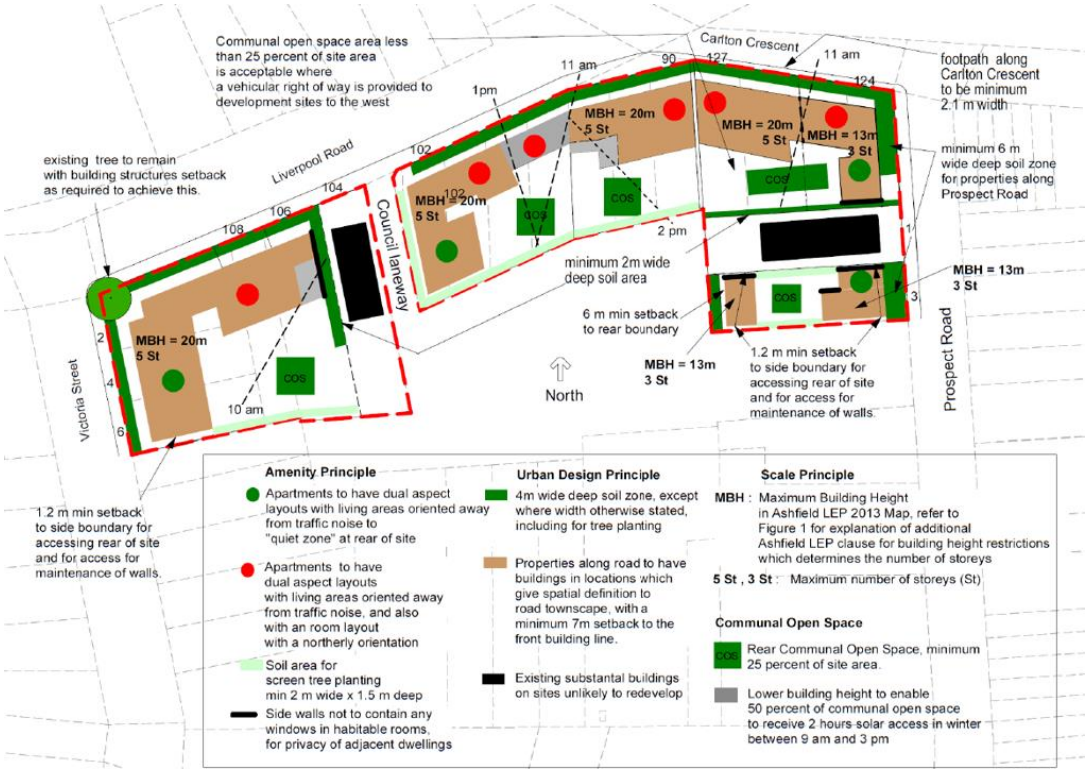

Figure 7: Built form arrangement Ashfield East Precinct (Source: Inner West Comprehensive Development Control Plan 2016)

Figure 8: View of the south-eastern façade of the West Ashfield Leagues Club (Source: Keylan)

Figure 9: View 2 - existing view (Source: Keylan)

Figure 10:View 2 - proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)

View 3: View looking east from Carlton Crescent and Hume Highway

View 3 was selected as existing low-density housing are 100m west within the visual catchment of the sign. The low-density housing fronts Hume Highway as it transitions onto Liverpool Road.

As noted in viewpoint 2, the existing housing is marked for future higher density mixed use development.

The dwellings orientation is predominately facing towards the west whilst the sign is located 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 (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 Hume Highway is low.

Figure 11: View 3 -existing view (Source: Keylan)

Figure 12: View 3 -proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)

View 4: View looking north from Carlton Crescent

View 4 was selected as low-density residential is located approximately 50m from the sign. The low-density receivers located on Carlton Crescent interface with the railway corridor. As mentioned in viewpoint 2, four lots on Carlton Crescent are zoned B4, which are intended to form part of the Ashfield East Precinct as shown in Figure 6. Further east on Carlton Crescent the built form character is to remain as low density residential.

As noted in viewpoint 2, the visual impact on the future Ashfield East Precinct is anticipated to be low, given future development controls and orientation of the sign minimise visual impacts.

The existing low density dwellings interface with the railway corridor that has been planted with trees. The tree planting provides appropriate visual relief and skews sightlines from the receivers to the sign. As these trees mature and grow into dense canopy trees visual impacts will be further minimised. The low-density dwellings, whilst fronting Carlton Crescent, there dominate living areas face south. This internal arrangement orientates highly sensitive areas away from both the railway corridor and sign location, minimising impacts.

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 low.

Figure 13: View 4 -existing view (Source: Keylan)

Figure 14: View 4 -proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)

View 5: View looking northwest Grosvenor Crescent and west from Grosvenor Crescent and Hume Highway

View 5 was selected as Grosvenor Crescent has medium density residential and mixed-use development that interfaces with the rear of the sign.

Medium Density Residential

The medium density residential is located 130m east of the sign location. The R3 zone interfaces with the transport corridor that has been densely planted with canopy trees as shown in Figure 15.

The spatial separation of the sign to the R3 building ensures no direct view lines to the sign occur. Further the canopy trees along the railway corridor, sufficiently screen the rear of the sign from view. The proposed view from these dwellings remains as existing given the dense canopy tree planting will block sightlines to the sign.

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 medium density residential fronting Grosvenor Crescent is low.

Mixed Use Development

The mixed-use development is approximately 30m to the north of the sign location. This site (88 Liverpool Road) is currently under construction. It is understood this site is to be developed into a mixed-use site under DA2014/258.

The site received development consent to demolish existing buildings and the erection of three storey residential flat mixed-use building containing eight dwellings, basement car parking, winter gardens and landscaping with strata subdivision.

The sign will interface with this development, specifically the occupants of the site will see the back of the sign (Figure 16). Further, noting that the ground floor will be a commercial premises, residential receivers will be elevated above the top of the sign, minimising visual opportunity. Additionally, incorporating wintergardens into the buildings design provides visual protection from the internal aspects of the dwelling to the sign.

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 receivers.

The visual impact on the mixed-use development fronting Grosvenor Crescent is low.

Figure 15: View 5 -existing view looking northwest from Grosvenor Crescent (Source: Keylan)

Figure 16: View 5 -proposed view looking west from Corner of Grosvenor Crescent and Hume Highway (Source: JCDecaux)

View 6: View looking west from Hume Highway

View 6 was selected as 75m to the northeast of the site is the Westside Motor Inn and further medium density dwellings are located northeast. 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 low.

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 low.

Figure 17: View 6 -existing view (Source: Keylan)

Figure 18: View 6 -proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)

View 7: View looking southeast from public domain

View 7 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 19: View 7 -existing view (Source: Keylan)


Figure 20: View 7 -proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)

5.3 Assessment Matrix

Viewpoint / Location	Distance of View	Visual Sensitivity	Level of Impact
1	100m	Medium to High	Low
2	160m 330m 100m	Medium to High	Low
3	100m	Medium - High	Low
4	50m	High	Low
5	130m 30m	High	Low
6	75m 100m	High	Low
7	50m 60m	Medium - High	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 14.93m^2 (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 8.4m^2 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 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 would partially screen the existing unsightly transport barriers that are located along trainline
- 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 signs do not impact the viewing rights of others
- the additional signage does not constitute of visual clutter
- as the proposal rationalises signage within the locality it 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.