
WALUYA PTY LTD GOSFORD TRANSPORT DEPOT

7A-11 Racecourse Road, 5-9 Faunce Street & Young Street, West Gosford

LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT STUDY ON RACECOURSE ROAD

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CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION	4
1.1	LOCATION	4
1.2	OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	4
2.0	LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY STUDY OF RACECOURSE ROAD	5
2.1	ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY	5
2.2	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPACT ASSESSMENT	6
2.3	LANDSCAPE BASELINE	7
2.4	VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	9
3.0	CONCLUSION	20

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Visual Assessment Study has been prepared by DEM (Aust) Pty Ltd on behalf of Waluya Pty Ltd in support of a Development Application submission to NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) for the site at 7A-11 Racecourse Road, 5-9 Faunce Street & Young Street, West Gosford.

This study has been prepared to respond to concerns raised by DPE as noted below.

The proposed finished level of the carpark in the south-western corner (above the OSD) is approx. 3m above the existing site levels and approx. 3.5m above the street level.

The Department considers this to be a significant change to the predominant streetscape character for the area. Provide a visual impact assessment (VIA) of the impact of works on the streetscape. Where the VIA recommends measures to mitigation impacts, architectural and landscaping plans should be updated as required.

1.1 LOCATION

- The site is located approximately 1.4 km west of the Gosford CBD within the Gosford City Centre area.
- It is approximately 1.4 km north of Gosford Railway Station (18 minute walk) and the Gosford City Centre retail/commercial centre.
- The site is located in close proximity to Central Coast Highway with access from Racecourse Road.
- The site is located in a mixed use precinct consisting of residential, industrial and commercial.



1.2 OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development is for bus depot transport facility that will comprise of the following:

- An at-grade car park with 113 car spaces including 4 disabled car spaces.
- A three storey administration building for staff and visitors which will include end of trip facilities, lunch room, offices meeting rooms and training rooms.
- External staff recreation area associated with the administration building.
- A 1.5 storey workshop for bus maintenance and repairs. The workshop will contain a mezzanine level with lunch room, offices and store areas.

- Hardstand for stacked bus parking of 96 bus bays.
- Bus wash facilities including water tanks.
- Refueling facilities and storage areas.
- Site security including electric fencing around the site.

2.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY STUDY OF RACECOURSE ROAD

A landscape and visual amenity study has been undertaken to evaluate changes to the physical landscape and to determine the visibility of the proposal when viewed from Racecourse Road and establish the potential visual impact. The analysis also identifies building design and landscape mitigation measures to reduce any adverse visual impacts.

2.1 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

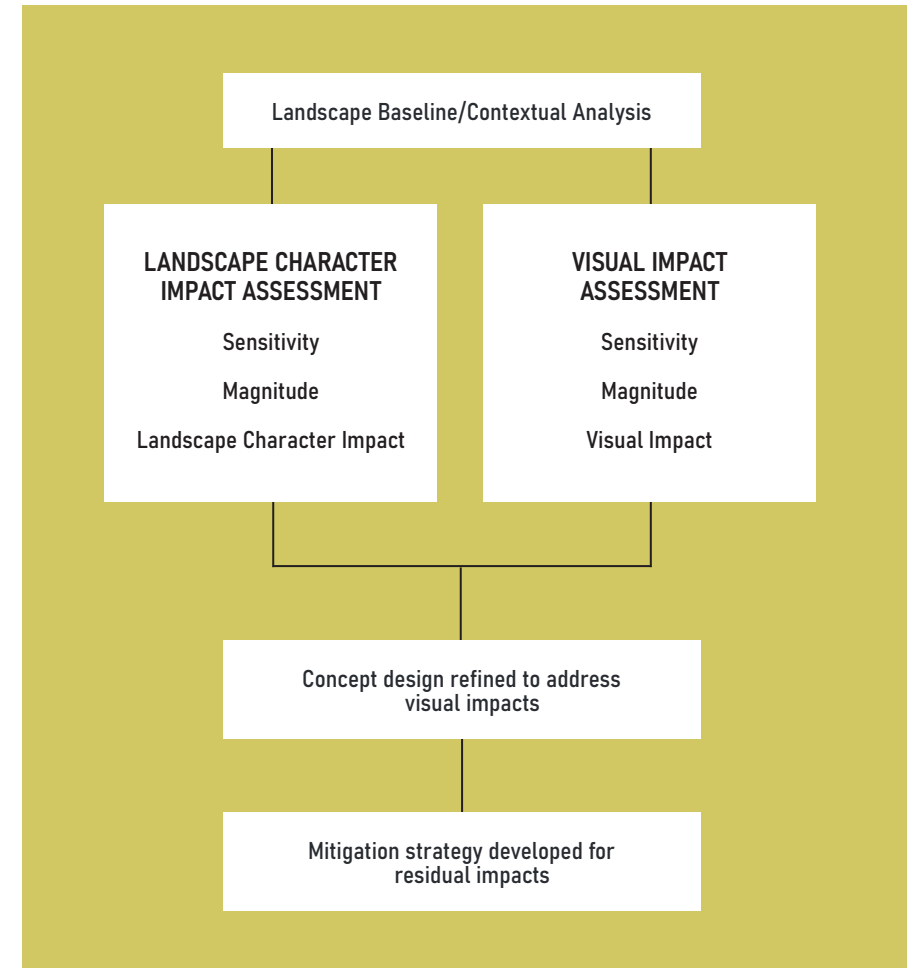
This visual amenity study is based on the methodology outlined in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition 2013 prepared by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (UK) and the Guideline for landscape character and visual impact assessment, Environmental impact assessment practice note EIA-NO4 prepared by RMS, 2020.

The assessment evaluates the landscape character of the site, the current visual amenity from selected viewpoints and the significance of change to the views based on the degree of change and visual sensitivity.

Photographs from selected viewpoints were taken to establish a baseline for the visual effects assessment and to illustrate how changes in views will appear. Photography was undertaken on 18th November 2022 and 11 July 2023 by DEM using an Apple iPhone 12 Pro and Apple iPhone 14 Pro.

The viewpoints represent locations that are publicly accessible and are within the Racecourse Road public realm.

Photomontages have been prepared to simulate the visual changes that are likely to occur from the proposed development.



LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY ANALYSIS

2.2 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Landscape character refers to the built, natural and cultural aspects of an area. Evaluation of changes to the physical landscape is made through assessment of the addition or loss of elements or features in the landscape and is undertaken in accordance with the following process.

1 Establish the landscape baseline using landscape character assessment	
Landscape Baseline	<p>Identify elements and features and the aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape. Establish the overall character in the study area and any distinctive Landscape Character Types.</p> <p>Consider the value attached to the landscape in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any recognised level of importance including international, national, local or community value. - Particular features or qualities that influence value such as landscape condition, scenic quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreation value, perceptual aspects such as wildness or tranquility, and association with people or events.
2 Determine the sensitivity of the landscape receptors	
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>The degree to which the overall character or particular landscape type or area can accommodate the proposed development without detrimental effect upon the existing nature of the landscape by assessing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The susceptibility to change – the ability of the overall landscape quality or condition, or individual element of feature to accommodate the proposed development without negatively affecting the landscape baseline and/or achievement of landscape policies and strategies.
3 Determine the magnitude of landscape effects	
Magnitude of Landscape Effects	<p>The nature and scale of changes to elements within the landscape and the consequential effect on landscape character.</p> <p>Determine the degree of change on landscape receptors by assessing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The size or scale of change in the landscape including loss or addition of features. - Whether the effect changes the key characteristics of the landscape, which are critical to its distinctive character. - Geographical extent – such as moderate loss of landscape elements over a large geographical area, or a major addition affecting a very localised area. - Duration and reversibility of the landscape effects.
4 Evaluate the significance of the landscape effects	
Landscape Impact	<p>The significance of change based on the combined assessment of the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of landscape effects.</p> <p>Effects that have a higher level of significance include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major loss over an extensive area of elements key to the character of nationally valued landscapes. - Loss of mature or diverse landscape elements. - Effects on rare or distinctive landscape character. <p>Effects that have a lower level of significance include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reversible negative effects of a short duration, over a restricted area, to elements that contribute to the character of landscape s of community value. - Loss of new or uniform landscape elements. - Effects on areas of poorer condition or of degraded character.
5 Identify measures to reduce significant or adverse landscape effects	
Mitigation Strategy	<p>Proposals for preventing/avoiding, reducing or compensating for significant or adverse landscape effects.</p>

RACECOURSE ROAD STREETSCAPE CHARACTER

2.3 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

TOPOGRAPHY

- The portion of Racecourse Road adjacent to the site has a moderate fall north to south from the intersection of Faunce Road towards the southern corner of the site.
- Racecourse Road remains relatively flat between the southern boundary of the site and the intersection of the Central Coast Highway.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Degraded remnant Swamp Sclerophyll Forest provides an intermittent planted edge along the eastern side of Racecourse Road.
- The site consists of a landscape modified for equestrian and residential activities including a grassed open space, fencing, stables and training area, and residential accommodation.
- Hedge planting and palisade fencing feature in the streetscape along the western side of Racecourse Road.
- Street tree planting is incorporated along a short section of the western verge of Racecourse Road.
- Trees within Waterview Park east of Young street and distant vegetated ridgelines provide a backdrop to the Racecourse Road streetscape.

BUILT FORM

- Two storey commercial buildings address the eastern side of Racecourse Road to the south of the site with a street setback ranging from zero to approximately 10m.
- At grade car parking is located within the setback to commercial properties located along the eastern side of Racecourse Road.
- The Entertainment Grounds is located on the western side of Racecourse Road. An open grassed area, utilised as a race track, is located opposite the site and extends along the western edge of Racecourse Road to the intersection with the Central Coast Highway.
- A security palisade fence provides a defined edge to the eastern side of Racecourse Road.
- Existing single and two storey buildings on the site are located with a generous street setback to Racecourse Road.
- A formal footpath is provided along the western side of Racecourse Road.



RACECOURSE ROAD STREETSCAPE CHARACTER

2.3.1 SENSITIVITY OF THE LANDSCAPE RECEPTORS

- The Racecourse Road streetscape and adjoining properties present as a modified landscape incorporating degraded remnant vegetation, areas cleared for equestrian activities, and residential buildings.
- Views of the site would be primarily experienced by observers walking or driving along Racecourse Road and would be sequential and temporary.

2.3.2 MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE TO THE SITE

- The development would moderately affect the streetscape character by removal of existing vegetation and grassed open space, and incorporation of built form elements including retaining walls, security fencing and crash barriers. Buses parked on the site would also be visible from the road.
- Larger scale built form elements are positioned at the northern end of the site where their visibility is partially restricted by landform.
- Proposed mounding and planting along Racecourse Road will contribute to the greening of the streetscape.
- Trees along Young Street and distant vegetated ridgelines will remain as backdrops to views along the road corridor.

2.3.3 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPACT

- The Racecourse Road streetscape character would be moderately impacted by the proposed changes with the loss of vegetation and introduction of built form elements.
- In the short term the removal of existing vegetation would alter the character of the road corridor, however, proposed planting would minimise the impact of the change in the long term.
- Mounding adjacent to the retaining wall at the site vehicle entry would reduce the visual prominence of the wall.

		MAGNITUDE			
SENSITIVITY		High	Moderate	Low	Negligible
	High	High	High-Moderate	Moderate	Negligible
	Moderate	High-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-Low	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Moderate-Low	Low	Negligible
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPACT RATING MATRIX

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY ANALYSIS

2.4 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Assessment of visual impact upon views is based on visual sensitivity and the magnitude of visual effects and is undertaken in accordance with the following process.

1 Identify areas from which the proposal is visible	
Zone of Visual Influence	The area within which the proposed development may have an effect on visual amenity. Areas from which the site is clearly visible.
Key Viewpoints	Nominated viewpoints from within the zone of visual influence representing a typical view experienced by the visual receptors.
2 Describe the existing view from each viewpoint	
Visual Amenity	The value of a particular area or view in terms of what is currently seen. The existing nature of the site and its context.
3 Determine the sensitivity of the view	
Visual Sensitivity	<p>The degree to which a landscape can absorb change of a particular type and scale without significant adverse effects in relation to its location or visual receptors. The sensitivity of visual receptors and views is dependent on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The location and context of the viewpoint. - The expectation or activity of the receptor. - The duration of the view. <p>Receptor sensitivity may be categorised as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High – from residential properties where duration of the view is long and is experienced frequently; by people engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention/interest is focused on the landscape or particular views. - Moderate – experienced in the public realm where duration of the view is temporary e.g. pedestrians and from vehicles. - Low sensitivity – from places of work, or similar, where attention is expected to be focused on an activity rather than a view; by people engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views.
4 Determine how much the view is changing	
Magnitude of Visual Effects	<p>Determine the degree of change of the view established by assessing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scale of change of the view with respect to loss or addition of features and changes to its composition. - The degree of contrast or integration of changes in relation to such factors as form, scale and colour. - Nature of the view of the development – full, partial or glimpse. - Angle of the view and distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development which determines whether the development would be a focus or form one element in a panoramic view.
5 Evaluate the significance of the change	
Visual Impact	The significance of change based on the sensitivity of the location or receptor and the scale or magnitude of the effect. Greater impact is generally associated with large-scale effects and effects on sensitive or high value receptors. The visual impact may be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse).
6 Identify measures to reduce visual impacts or enhance visual quality	
Mitigation Strategy	Built form design or landscape design measures to enhance visual quality or reduce, remedy or compensate for adverse visual impacts.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY ANALYSIS

2.4.1 KEY VIEWPOINTS

Three key view points have been selected from which the site is clearly visible from Racecourse Road and where the proposal may have an effect on visual amenity to the streetscape character. The key viewpoints are located towards the southern end of the Racecourse Drive frontage where the proposed car and bus parking areas will be approximately 3m above the level of the adjacent public realm.

		MAGNITUDE			
SENSITIVITY		High	Moderate	Low	Negligible
	High	High	High-Mod	Moderate	Negligible
	Moderate	High-Mod	Moderate	Mod-Low	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Mod-Low	Low	Negligible
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

VISUAL IMPACT RATING MATRIX



Source: SIX Maps

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY ANALYSIS

VIEWPOINT 1 - Year Zero

Location:
Western side of Racecourse Road adjacent to the existing pedestrian refuge.



Existing view from the western side of Racecourse Road adjacent to the existing pedestrian refuge



Year 0 view from the western side of Racecourse Road adjacent to the existing pedestrian refuge

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY ANALYSIS

VIEWPOINT 1 - Year 15

Location:
Western side of Racecourse Road adjacent to the existing pedestrian refuge.



Existing view from the western side of Racecourse Road towards adjacent to the existing pedestrian refuge



Year 15 view from the western side of Racecourse Road towards adjacent to the existing pedestrian refuge

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY ANALYSIS

VIEWPOINT 1

VISUAL AMENITY

- View south-east across Racecourse Road towards the site when standing adjacent to the pedestrian refuge.
- The foreground view is dominated by road pavement, road signage and safety barriers.
- A strip of native vegetation is highly visible in the foreground and screens views into the site.
- Gaps between the planting along the western boundary provide contained views into the site.
- Middle distance views feature grassed open space within the site.
- The backdrop consist of built form elements ranging in height from 2 – 7 storeys.

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

Receptor type: public realm

View duration: sequential/short/temporary

Receptor sensitivity: moderate

- Observers would be walking or driving and therefore the view of the site would be one of a sequence and temporary.
- Edge conditions along this portion of Racecourse Road include informal mature native vegetation.
- Visual receptors would experience change to the foreground and middle ground of the view with buildings in the background remaining visible.
- As the proposal includes removal of the existing vegetation along the western boundary of the site, the visual receptors would experience change to the foreground and middle distance of the view on day zero.

MAGNITUDE OF VISUAL EFFECTS

Distance of viewpoint: short

Magnitude of change: high

- There would be substantial change to the view with the removal of existing mature native vegetation along the western boundary of the site and the addition of retaining walls.
- Due to the proximity of the development, the retaining wall at the site vehicle entry will be partially visible.
- Bus parking area, security fencing and crash barriers will be visible from Racecourse Road.
- Proposed tree, shrub and groundcover planting, and mounding within the setback will provide a vegetated batter partially screening the retaining wall and bus parking to minimise the magnitude of change of the view.

VISUAL IMPACT

Visual Impact: high-moderate

- The significance of the change would be high – moderate.
- Views from Racecourse Road would be only one of a sequence, and temporary as observers would be engaged in walking or driving.
- The proposed development would impact the natural/vegetated edge to the site and introduce new built forms elements such as retaining walls into the short distance view.
- The proposed new planting will provide a structured vegetated edge to Racecourse Road.

MITIGATION STRATEGY

- Provision of a vegetated batter incorporating native trees, shrubs and groundcovers adjacent to the retaining wall to provide a green edge to Racecourse Road.
- The interlocking blocks for the retaining wall are to be a mid grey colour to assist in reducing the visual prominence of this built element.
- Security fencing is to be a dark grey colour to assist in reducing the visual prominence of this built element.
- Proposed buildings have been located in the northern portion of the site where they will be less visible from the public realm.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY ANALYSIS

VIEWPOINT 2 - Year Zero

Location:
Racecourse Road south-east of the Entertainment Grounds grandstand



Existing view towards the site from Racecourse Road south-east of the Entertainment Grounds grandstand



Year 0 view towards the site from Racecourse Road south-east of the Entertainment Grounds grandstand

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY ANALYSIS

VIEWPOINT 2 - Year 15

Location:
Racecourse Road south-east of the Entertainment Grounds grandstand



Existing view towards the site from Racecourse Road south-east of the Entertainment Grounds grandstand



Year 15 view towards the site from Racecourse Road south-east of the Entertainment Grounds grandstand

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY ANALYSIS

VIEWPOINT 2

VISUAL AMENITY

- View south-east across Racecourse Road towards the site when standing in line with the southernmost corner of the Entertainment Grounds grandstand.
- The foreground view is dominated by road pavement.
- A strip of native vegetation is highly visible in the foreground and screens views into the site.
- Gaps between the planting along the western boundary provide contained views into the site of grassed open space.
- The backdrop of the view consists of existing vegetation located along the eastern edge of the site and Waterview Park
- The top two levels of the 7 storey apartment building located at 27 Young Street are visible in the distance.

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

Receptor type: public realm

View duration: sequential/short/temporary

Receptor sensitivity: moderate

- Observers would be walking or driving and therefore the view of the site would be one of a sequence and temporary.
- Edge conditions along this portion of Racecourse Road include informal mature native vegetation.
- Visual receptors would experience change to the foreground and middle ground of the view with the background remaining relatively unchanged.
- As the proposal includes removal of the existing vegetation along the western boundary of the site, the visual receptors would experience change to the foreground of the view on day zero with the 7 storey apartment building at 27 Young Street being more exposed.

MAGNITUDE OF VISUAL EFFECTS

Distance of viewpoint: short

Magnitude of change: high

- There would be substantial change to the view with the removal of existing mature native vegetation along the western boundary of the site, and the addition of retaining walls.
- Due to the proximity of the development, the retaining wall at the site vehicle entry will be partially visible.
- Security fencing and crash barriers will be visible from Racecourse Road.
- Proposed tree, shrub and groundcover planting, and mounding within the setback will provide a vegetated batter partially screening the retaining wall to minimise the magnitude of change of the view.

VISUAL IMPACT

Visual Impact: high-moderate

- The significance of the change would be high - moderate.
- Views from Racecourse Road would be only one of a sequence, and temporary as observers would be engaged in walking or driving.
- The proposed development would impact the natural/vegetated edge to the site and introduce new built forms elements such as retaining walls into the short distance view.
- The proposed new planting will provide a structured vegetated edge to Racecourse Road.

MITIGATION STRATEGY

- Provision of a vegetated batter incorporating native trees, shrubs and groundcovers adjacent to the retaining wall to provide a green edge to Racecourse Road.
- Interlocking blocks for the retaining wall are to be a mid grey colour to assist in reducing the visual prominence of this built element.
- Security fencing is to be a dark grey colour to assist in reducing the visual prominence of this built element.
- Proposed buildings have been located in the northern portion of the site where they will be less visible from the public realm.
- New tree planting will screen views of 27 Young Street in the long term.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY ANALYSIS

VIEWPOINT 3 - Year Zero

Location:
Opposite No.5 Racecourse Road



Existing view north-east towards the site opposite No.5 Racecourse Road



Year 0 view north-east towards the site opposite No.5 Racecourse Road

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY ANALYSIS

VIEWPOINT 3 - Year 15

Location:
Opposite No.5 Racecourse Road



Existing view north-east towards the site opposite No.5 Racecourse Road



Year 15 view north-east towards the site opposite No.5 Racecourse Road

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY ANALYSIS

VIEWPOINT 3

VISUAL AMENITY

- View north-east across Racecourse Road towards the site, opposite No.5 Racecourse Road. The foreground view is dominated by road pavement, and a formal pedestrian path.
- A strip of native vegetation is highly visible in the foreground and screens views into the site.
- The trees does not extend to the south-west corner of the site allowing views into the site of grassed open space.
- Neighbouring commercial property signage is prominent in the foreground.
- The backdrop of the view consists of existing vegetation located along the eastern edge of the site and in Waterview Park.

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

Receptor type: public realm

View duration: sequential/short/temporary

Receptor sensitivity: moderate

- Observers would be walking or driving and therefore the view of the site would be one of a sequence and temporary.
- Edge conditions along this portion of Racecourse Road include informal mature native vegetation.
- Visual receptors would experience change to the foreground and middle ground of the view with the background remaining relatively unchanged.
- As the proposal includes removal of the existing vegetation along the western boundary of the site, the visual receptors would experience change to the foreground of the view on day zero.

MAGNITUDE OF VISUAL EFFECTS

Distance of viewpoint: short

Magnitude of change: high

- There would be substantial change to the view with the removal of existing mature native vegetation along the western boundary of the site, and the addition of retaining walls.
- Due to the proximity of the development, the retaining wall will be partially visible from the street frontage.
- Security fencing and crash barriers will be visible from Racecourse Road.
- Proposed tree, shrub and groundcover planting, and mounding within the setback will provide a vegetated batter partially screening the retaining wall to minimise the magnitude of change of the view.

VISUAL IMPACT

Visual Impact: high-moderate

- The significance of the change would be high - moderate.
- Views from Racecourse Road would be only one of a sequence, and temporary as observers would be engaged in walking or driving.
- The proposed development would impact the natural/vegetated edge to the site and introduce new built forms elements such as retaining walls into the short distance view.
- The proposed new planting will provide a structured vegetated edge to Racecourse Road.

MITIGATION STRATEGY

- Provision of a vegetated batter incorporating native trees, shrubs and groundcovers adjacent to the retaining wall to provide a green edge to Racecourse Road.
- Interlocking blocks for the retaining wall are to be a mid grey colour to assist in reducing the visual prominence of this built element.
- Security fencing is to be a dark grey colour to assist in reducing the visual prominence of this built element.
- Proposed buildings have been located in the northern portion of the site where they will be less visible from the public realm.

3.0 CONCLUSION

- The site consists of a landscape modified for equestrian and residential activities and incorporates a grassed open space, fencing, stables and training area, and residential accommodation.
- The frontage of the site along Racecourse Road is dominated by degraded remnant Swamp Sclerophyll Forest which provides an intermittent planted edge that partially screens views of the site.
- The Entertainment Grounds is located on the western side of Racecourse Road. Existing single and two storey buildings on the site are located with a generous street setbacks to Racecourse Road.
- The development would moderately affect the streetscape character by the removal of existing vegetation and grassed open space, and incorporation of built form elements including retaining walls, security fencing and crash barriers. Buses parked on the site would also be visible from the road.
- Views of the site would be primarily experienced by observers walking or driving along Racecourse Road and would therefore be sequential and temporary.
- In the short term the removal of existing vegetation would alter the character of the road corridor, however, proposed planting will minimise the impact of the change in the long term.
- In addition, proposed mounding adjacent to the retaining wall at the site vehicle entry will reduce the visual prominence of the wall.