



Visual Impact Assessment

Digital Advertising Signage
Princes Highway, Heathcote



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

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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 Crown Development Application (DA) for the installation of a digital advertising sign on the eastern side of the Princes Highway at Heathcote.

The proposed development comprises the removal of an existing double sided static advertising sign and the construction of a digital advertising sign. The new digital advertising sign provides:

- an advertising display area of 49.49m²
- a visual screen size of 39.94m²
- the continued display of illuminated advertisements
- a 10 second dwell time for message changes
- a maximum night time luminance of 250 cd/m²

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

The site is legally described as Lot 5, DP 1184025 and is located on the eastern side of the Princes Highway, Heathcote. The subject site adjoins the Princes Highway and the Illawarra railway line with low and medium density residential located on either side of the highway and railway line.

The Princes Highway is a state classified highway (HW 1). The portion of the Princes Highway, through Heathcote travels in a general north-south alignment. At the site, the Princes Highway comprises 3 lanes of traffic in each direction.

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

There are 3 existing static advertising signs within proximity to the subject sign. 1 of these signs are proposed to be removed as part of this application, as detailed in Section 3.

The proposed sign will be surrounded predominantly by low lying grass, which is regularly maintained.



Figure 1: Site context (Source: Near Maps)



Figure 2: Street View – Princes Highway, facing southeast (Source: Keylan)



Figure 3: Street View – Princes Highway, facing northeast (Source: Keylan)

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:

- commercial uses including a holiday accommodation, a local supermarket and food and drink premises to the west
- low to medium density housing to the west
- low density residential housing to the east
- low density residential to the south and Heathcote Station further south

The Princes Highway is an established, arterial road corridor, comprising a dual carriageway with three lanes travelling in both directions. On approach to the proposed sign, speed limit of 60km/hr applies to both directions of traffic. On road cycling is permitted, however no formal cycling facilities are provided.

The nearest intersection is Veno Street, which is located approximately 90m south of the proposed sign.

2.3 Existing Signage Environment

Three existing, static advertising signs are located within proximity to the proposed sign:

- A sign on the eastern side of the Princes Highway, near Veno Street (approximately 45m south of the proposed sign)
- A sign on the eastern side of the Princes Highway, near Strickland Street (approximately 100m north of the proposed sign)
- A sign on the eastern side of the Princes Highway, north of Blacket Street (approximately 290m north of the proposed sign)

3 The Proposal

The proposal involves the installation of a digital advertising sign on the eastern side of the Princes Highway, Heathcote. The sign is oriented to the south, facing northbound traffic. The development is summarised in Table 2 below.

Development Aspect	Description
Development summary	The installation of a new digital advertising sign and the removal of an existing double sided static advertising sign 100m north of the new sign site.
Signage location	The sign is proposed at the Princes Highway, Heathcote. The sign is oriented to the south, to face northbound traffic.
Advertising display area	48.78m ² (12.53m x 3.95m)
Visual Screen Size	39.61m ² (12.38m x 3.2m)
Road clearance from ground level to the sign	2.51 m clearance to ground level
Dwell time	10 seconds
Signage exposure	Visibility and readability is from a distance of 150m south-west of the sign
Illumination	The digital signage is illuminated using LEDs installed within the front face
Consent time period	15 years
Existing signage	To mitigate signage clutter, an existing static advertising sign is to be removed as part of this application. The sign is located near the Princes Highway and Strickland intersection. Details are provided within the SEE.

Table 2: Development summary

Indicative images of the proposed sign, as viewed from the Princes Highway are provided below.



Figure 4: Indicative image of sign from Princes Highway, northbound (Source: JCDecaux)



Figure 5: Indicative rear view from Princes Highway, facing southeast (Source: JCDecaux)

4 Methodology

This VIA has been informed by a site visit undertaken on 5 April 2022 and utilises photographs taken on this date. This VIA has been informed by the relevant 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 5.4.

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.

Furthermore, the DA is accompanied by a specialist Lighting Impact Assessment. As such, 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 State Environmental Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021

Chapter 3 – 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 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 character of the area, which is an urbanised transport corridor with an existing advertising theme
- the proposal will not obscure or compromise any important views
- the proposal does not dominate the skyline
- there will be no impact on the fabric of any surrounding heritage item
- the location of the proposal is appropriate as it will contribute to the visual interest of the surrounding streetscape as the sign represents an innovative form of advertising
- the proposal is compatible with the scale, proportion and characteristics of the site

5.2 Visual Catchment

The proposed sign faces south towards the Princes Highway and will be visible from traffic and pedestrians travelling northbound along the Princes Highway. The proposed sign will be visible from properties containing low density residential dwellings to the south of the site and commercial properties to the south-west.

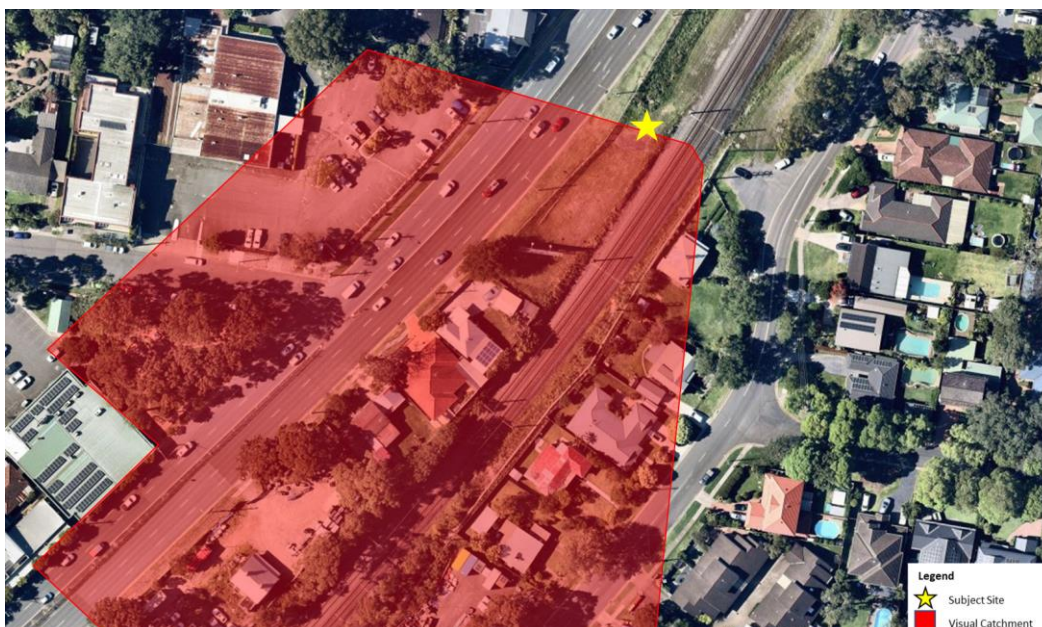


Figure 6: Visual Catchment (Source: Nearmap)

The character of the visual catchment can be described as:

- a transport corridor, being located in between a classified road and the railway line
- a mixture of low and medium density residential and local shops

The proposal is considered to be consistent with the visual character of the area as it primarily a transport corridor. There are limited sensitive receivers within the visual catchment of the sign, due to the orientation of the sign.

As discussed in Section 2.3, there is a precedence for existing advertising signs. These signs are suitably distanced or oriented to ensure the proposal will not result in any visual clutter in the locality.

It is noted, an existing advertising sign is within the visual catchment, located approximately 45m south of the site. The orientation of this sign, facing southbound motorists, ensures motorists will only see the advertising display are of only one sign at any given time.

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

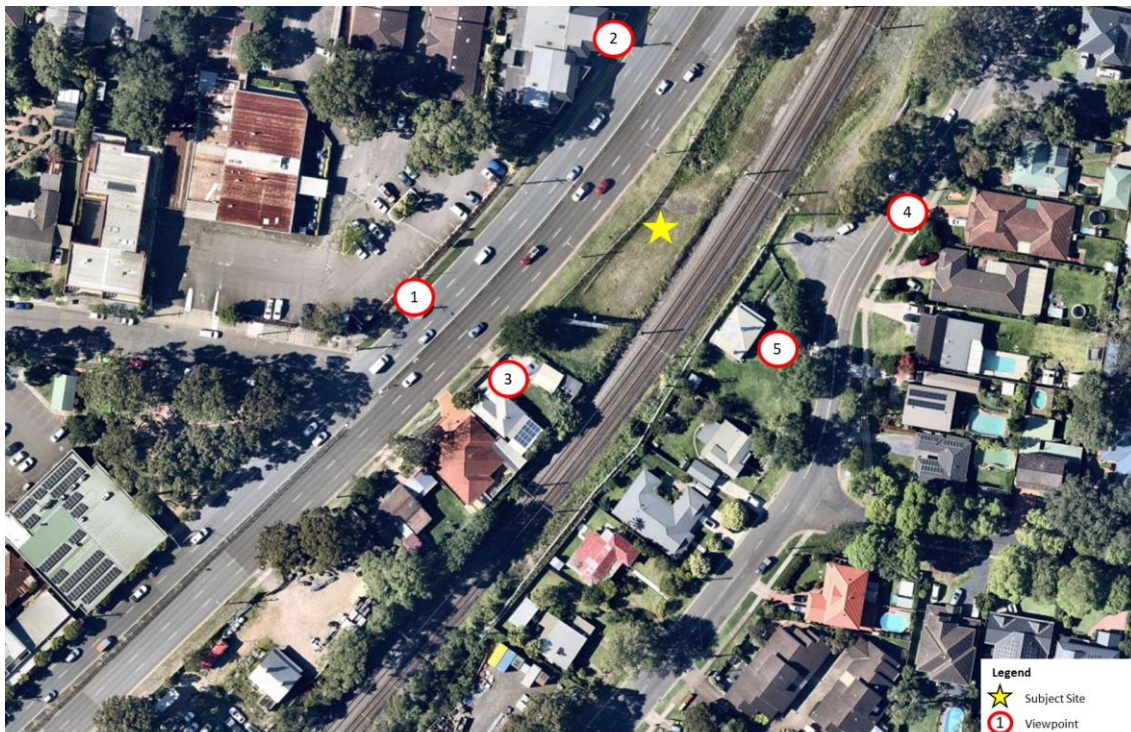


Figure 7: Viewpoints (Source: Nearmap)

5.3 Assessment of Viewpoints

View 1: Corner of Veno Street and Princes Highway

View 1 was selected as it represents the view impacts from the Heathcote Hotel and parts of the Heathcote local centre. This location also identifies the viewpoint for motorists using the nearby Veno Street and Princes Highway intersection.

There are limited residential receivers in this location, which is reflective of the B2 Local Centre zone that applies under SSLEP 2015. From a review of adjoining properties, it is noted that these are primarily commercial in nature. View lines from residential dwellings on Veno Street towards the sign would be largely screened by existing buildings which front Princes Highway.

The anticipated impact at this viewpoint is generally considered to be low as viewers would only be exposed to signage for the period of which they visit the Heathcote bottle shop and pub.

The scale of the proposed sign is considered acceptable and sits below the background canopy trees.

This low impact is considered acceptable given the sites location within a busy road corridor with existing signage.



Figure 8: Existing view (Source: Keylan)



Figure 9: Proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)

View 2: Western Side of the Princes Highway – Strickland Street Intersection

View 2 was selected as it provides context of the sign from the western side of the Princes Highway. Although, this view is not wholly identified within the 'visual catchment', this assessment indicates the nature of the sign as it will be viewed from the nearby low density residential zone.

As noted, the proposed sign is oriented towards the south-west and majority of the sightlines towards the sign from this view will only be of the signage structure, as the advertisements themselves are not likely to be seen.

The residential flat building located at 1317 – 1321 Princes Highway, Heathcote is the closest residential receiver to the visual catchment on the western side of the highway. It is noted only part of these residential units are located within the catchment, due to the positioning of the sign and the orientation of the building. Views towards the sign will be generally limited to upper level apartments at the south-east corner, which have their private open space oriented towards the east.

Apartments located further north are oriented to the northeast and will not see the advertising display area, only the structure itself.

The units located on the ground floor of 1317 – 1321 Princes Highway are not considered to have any adverse visual impacts as a result of the proposal. The ground floor units have adequate screening and/ or vegetation in place, which minimises any views towards the Princes Highway and the proposed sign. Given, there will be limited direct sightlines towards the sign, a low impact is anticipated.

The units located on the upper levels at the south-east corner of 1317 – 1321 Princes Highway will have limited view lines towards the sign. Notwithstanding, impacts to these upper level apartments are minimised as:

- 1317 – 1321 Princes Highway sits to the north of the site and is orientated to the east
- The proposed sign is oriented towards the south-west and will not directly face 1317 – 1321 Princes Highway
- view lines appear to be limited from balconies rather than from habitable rooms
- a separation distance of approximately 50m is provided between the proposed sign and the units
- the conditions of the surrounding environment, being a busy road corridor with existing signage already result in both visual and acoustic impacts on 1317 – 1321 Princes Highway, therefore the addition of one sign is not considered to result in significant adverse visual impacts beyond the existing conditions

Based on the above, it is unlikely that the proposed sign will have any significant visual impacts on the residential properties and sensitive land located to the northwest of the sign.



Figure 10: Existing view (Source: Keylan)



Figure 11: Proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)



Figure 12: Proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)



Figure 13: RFB at 1317 – 1321 Princes Highway (Source: Google Maps)

View 3: Residential housing located to the South

View 3 was selected as it represents the nearest residential receivers to the south of the proposed sign. These residential receivers are located on the eastern side of the Princes Highway, with the rear of the properties adjoining the railway line.

The low density dwellings are oriented in a general east-west alignment and will not have direct sight lines towards the proposed sign.

The closest residential receiver, located at 1322 Princes Highway is the only anticipated receiver with potential visual impacts as a result of the proposal. However, the anticipated impacts on this dwelling are considered minimal due to:

- the east-west orientation of the dwelling, limiting direct sightlines to the north (proposed sign located)
- the location of the ancillary garage/shed to the north of the property boundary, provides additional screening from the primary dwelling
- existing mature vegetation also located on the property boundary assists in minimising any direct views
- location of the existing advertisement, which assists as a potential visual barrier towards the proposed sign. The residential dwelling is likely to have views towards the back of the existing advertising structure, which may screen views further north to the proposed sign.

The residential dwellings located further south of 1322 Princes Highway are not expected to be adversely impacted by the proposal as views will be limited by existing buildings together with the separation distance provided.

Consequently, the visual impacts at this viewpoint are considered low.



Figure 14: Residential dwelling located at 1322 Princes Highway, Heathcote

View 4 – Wilson Parade low density dwellings

View 4 was selected as it represents views towards the proposed sign from the eastern side of the railway line. The eastern side of the railway is characterised as low-density residential housing.

The low density residential development located on the eastern side of Wilson Parade and the railway line is not considered to be within the visual catchment of the proposed sign due to the orientation of the sign facing towards the south-west.

It is noted, that the residential properties are oriented to the west, and face towards the railway line. As such, these properties will have sight lines towards the rear and side of the proposed structure, rather than the advertising display area on the front of the structure.

These residential dwellings on the eastern side of Wilson Parade are substantially setback from the street and railway line. In addition, the presence of existing, mature vegetation is prevalent along the Wilson Parade frontage. The mature vegetation will assist in screening any potential impacts towards the proposed sign.

Additionally, the existing vegetation along the periphery of the railway line will assist in minimising any direct sight lines towards the proposed sign.

The proposed sign should not dominate the view from these dwellings, given its scale and as it sits below the surrounding tree canopy. As such, the visual impact associated with the proposal on these properties is anticipated to be low.



Figure 15: Residential dwellings on eastern side of Wilson Parade (Source: Keylan)



Figure 16: View towards sign location from eastern side of Wilson Parade (Source: Keylan)



Figure 17: Existing vegetation along the eastern side of the railway – facing north (Source: Keylan)

View 5: 1 Wilson Parade, Heathcote

View 5 was selected to provide assessment against the potential visual impacts on the residential dwelling located at 1 Wilson Parade, Heathcote. This dwelling is also identified as a local heritage item under the *Sutherland Shire Local Environmental Plan 2015*. Accordingly, a Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared by Weir Phillips (Appendix 5) to assess the impacts of the proposed sign on the heritage value and significance of the dwelling.

The proposed sign will be visible from the residential dwelling. However, the proposed signage will be sufficiently separated from the dwelling by the intervening railway corridor and associated fencing so that it is not directly viewed, from the public domain.

Furthermore, the sign is oriented towards the south-west and will not directly face 1 Wilson Parade, as this dwelling is orientated towards the north-east.

The proposed signage will not block significant view corridors towards the heritage item, which are obtained from Wilson Parade. The proposed site is located well outside these view corridors.

Based on the above, a low to moderate impact is anticipated to 1 Wilson Parade as a result of the proposed sign.



Figure 18: 1 Wilson Parade, facing south (Source: Google Maps)



Figure 19: View towards rail line from eastern boundary of 1 Wilson Pde (Source: Keylan)

5.4 Assessment Matrix

The below matrix provides an overall assessment of each viewpoint based on the number of viewers, duration of view, distance and visual sensitivity.

The number of residential dwellings within the area indicate a higher visual sensitivity. However, the proposal seeks to minimise the proposed impacts of the sign and careful consideration has been given to the locality.

Given the orientation and size of the proposed sign, visual impacts of the proposal are considered to be low to most viewpoints.

Viewpoint / Location	Distance of View	Visual Sensitivity	Level of Impact
Veno Street intersection	90m	Low sensitivity	Low
Strickland Street intersection	85m	Moderately sensitive	Low
Residential to south	70m	Moderately sensitive	Low
Wilson Parade	40m	Moderately sensitive	Low
1 Wilson Parade	40m	Highly sensitive - Residential house Heritage Item	Low to medium

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

The proposed digital advertising sign on the eastern side of the Princes Highway, Heathcote will result in limited visual impacts to the surrounding locality, including sensitive receivers within the Heathcote residential areas.

Following a detailed analysis of the proposed and its context within the surrounding locality, this VIA has found the following:

- the surrounding area has a low to high visual sensitivity due to the number of residential dwellings and existence of a heritage item
- the sign is consistent with the character of the surrounding area, which contains existing outdoor advertising
- the proposal will not contribute to visual clutter as it involves the removal of an existing double sided sign within the vicinity
- the proposed sign will be visible to a high number of motorists reflective of its location and proximity to the Princes Highway
- views to the proposed sign from sensitive receivers will be minimised by existing street trees, fencing and signage
- furthermore, the location and orientation of the proposed sign has been carefully considered to limit the number of residential dwellings within the visual catchment, minimising potential impacts
- the proposal will not impact upon the fabric of nearby heritage items or views to these items
- the proposal will not impact any scenic views or protrude above the dominant skyline.

Following consideration of the above, the proposal is considered to result in acceptable visual impacts to the Princes Highway, Heathcote and surrounding area.