

Visual Impact Assessment

Digital Advertising Signage
Pacific Highway, Hornsby



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

October 2023



This report has been prepared by:



Danielle Wigg BP
Planner
E: danielle@keylan.com.au



Padraig Scollard BA MRUP
Associate
E: padraig@keylan.com.au

This report has been reviewed by:



Michael Woodland BTP MPIA
Director
E: michael@keylan.com.au

Cover image: the site (Source: JCD)

All Rights Reserved. No material may be reproduced without prior permission of KEYLAN Consulting Pty Ltd. While KEYLAN Consulting Pty Ltd working on this project has tried to ensure the accuracy of the information in this publication, it accepts no responsibility or liability for any errors, omissions or resultant consequences including any loss or damage arising from reliance in the information in this report. This report has relied on information provided by the Client in good faith and accepts no responsibility or liability for any errors, omissions or resultant consequences including any loss or damage arising from reliance in the information in this report.

Revision	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Date	Revision Type
1	DW/PJ	MW	20/10/23	Draft
2	DW/PJ	MW	20/10/23	Final

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	5
1.1	Report Structure.....	5
2	The site and locality	6
2.1	Site description	6
2.2	Surrounding locality	7
2.3	Existing Signage Environment.....	11
3	The Proposal	13
4	Methodology.....	15
5	Assessment.....	16
5.1	State Environmental Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021.....	16
5.2	Visual Catchment.....	16
5.3	Assessment of Viewpoints	18
5.4	Assessment Matrix.....	29
6	Conclusion	30

Figures

Figure 1: Location of existing sign, view from northbound traffic (Source: Keylan)	6
Figure 2: Site context (Source: Near maps)	7
Figure 3: Mixed use development and high density residential flat building (Source: Keylan)	8
Figure 4: Mixed use development to the southeast (Source: Keylan Consulting)	9
Figure 5: Mixed use development to the southeast (Source: Keylan Consulting)	9
Figure 6: Retail shopping centre to the north (Source: Keylan Consulting)	10
Figure 7: Vacant site with approved DA (Source: Keylan Consulting)	10
Figure 8: Current free-standing sign at the subject site (Source: Keylan)	11
Figure 9: Non-permanent banners on the western side of bridge (Source: Keylan)	12
Figure 10: Road directional signage and business identification signage (Source: Keylan)	12
Figure 11: Indicative photomontage from Pacific Highway, facing south (Source: JCDecaux) ..	14
Figure 12: Visual catchment (Base source: NearMaps)	17
Figure 13: Viewpoints (Base source: NearMaps)	17
Figure 14: Approved elevation plans (Source: Coble Stephens Architects)	18
Figure 15: Existing view (Source: Keylan)	19
Figure 16: Proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)	19
Figure 17: 208-226 Pacific Highway, Hornsby (Source: Keylan Consulting)	21
Figure 18: Existing view from street level of three storey development (Source: Keylan)	21
Figure 19: Proposed view from three storey development (Source: JCDecaux)	22
Figure 20: Existing view from street level of eight storey development (Source: Keylan)	22
Figure 21: Proposed view from street level of eight storey development (Source: JCDecaux) ..	23
Figure 22: Existing view from street level 121-133 Pacific Highway (Source: Keylan)	25
Figure 23: Proposed view from street level 121-133 Pacific Highway (Source: JCDecaux)	25
Figure 24: 135-137 Pacific Highway Hornsby (Source: Keylan)	27
Figure 25: Existing view street of 135-137 Pacific Highway, Hornsby (Source: Keylan)	27
Figure 26: Proposed view street of 135-137 Pacific Highway, Hornsby (Source: JCDecaux)	28

Tables

Table 1: Report Structure	5
Table 2: Development summary	13
Table 3: Rating definitions	29
Table 4: Assessment Matrix	29

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 installation of a digital advertising sign on the western side of Pacific Highway, Hornsby.

The proposed development comprises the removal of the existing static sign and installation of a digital advertising sign comprising:

- an advertising display area of 14.93m²
- a visual screen size of 14.16m²
- the continued display of illuminated advertisements (24-hour operation)
- a minimum dwell time of 15 seconds for message changes
- a maximum night time luminance of 250cd/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 1023 1192060 and located in an established Sydney Trains corridor on the corner of Government Road and Pacific Highway, Hornsby. The site is located in the Hornsby Local Government Area (LGA), approximately 28 kilometres northwest of the Sydney Central Business District (CBD).

The site is adjacent to two major transport corridors being Pacific Highway to the east (Classified Road, Highway No 10) and the T9 Northern Line and CCN Central Coast & Newcastle railway lines to the north under the Pacific Highway bridge overpass. This is discussed further in Section 2.2.

As shown in the figure below, the site contains an existing advertisement sign, retaining wall and electrical box. There is also existing vegetation with small shrubs south of the existing sign and mature trees to the north and west.



Figure 1: Location of existing sign, view from northbound traffic (Source: Keylan)

2.2 Surrounding locality

The site in context to its surrounding locality is shown on the figure below.



Figure 2: Site context (Source: Near maps)

In terms of surrounding transport infrastructure, the proposed digital advertising sign will be visible from the Pacific Highway which is an established Transport for NSW (TfNSW) road corridor (Classified Road, Highway No 10). The Pacific Highway is located east of the site and is frequented by drivers travelling northeast to Berowra and Mount White and southeast towards Chatswood and North Sydney. The Pacific Highway east of the site is a bridge overpass with the T9 Northern Line and Central Coast & Newcastle railway lines operating underneath. The Railway Lines connect to Hornsby Railway Station located 300m from the site.

The site is also in close proximity to existing development including:

- high density residential flat building to the west (approximately 65m from the site, refer to Figure 3)
- mixed use to the southwest (approximately 25m from the site, refer to Figure 3)
- mixed use to the southeast (approximately 50m from the site, refer to Figure 4 and Figure 5)
- retail shopping centre to the north (approximately 85m from the site, refer to Figure 6)
- Hornsby Shire Girl's School to the east (approximately 175m from the site)

- vacant site with approved DA (DA/416/2020) at 228-234 Pacific Highway, Hornsby (approximately 40m from the site)
 - number DA/416/2020 was determined on 16 September 2022 approving the construction of a 10-12 storey development comprising retail tenancies at the ground floor level, commercial tenancies at the first-floor level, a residential aged care facility at Levels 3-11, a residential apartment at Level 12 and strata subdivision.

The surrounding locality is shown in the figures below:



Figure 3: Mixed use development south of the sign and high density residential flat building west of the sign (Source: Keylan Consulting)



Figure 4: Mixed use development to the southeast (Source: Keylan Consulting)



Figure 5: Mixed use development to the southeast (Source: Keylan Consulting)



Figure 6: Retail shopping centre to the north (Source: Keylan Consulting)



Figure 7: Vacant site with approved DA (Source: Keylan Consulting)

2.3 Existing Signage Environment

As shown in the figure below, the site contains an existing, free standing, static advertising sign.



Figure 8: Current free-standing sign at the subject site (Source: Keylan)

Other signage in the immediate vicinity of the site is shown in the figures below and includes:

- static advertisement signage in the form of non-permanent banners. The banners are attached to the western and eastern sides of the bridge and orientated towards the road corridor (Figure 9).
- road directional signage over hanging northbound traffic to the south of the site (Figure 10)
- business identification signage attached to the façade of Westfield to the north of the site (Figure 10)



Figure 9: Non-permanent banners on the western side of the bridge (Source: Keylan Consulting)

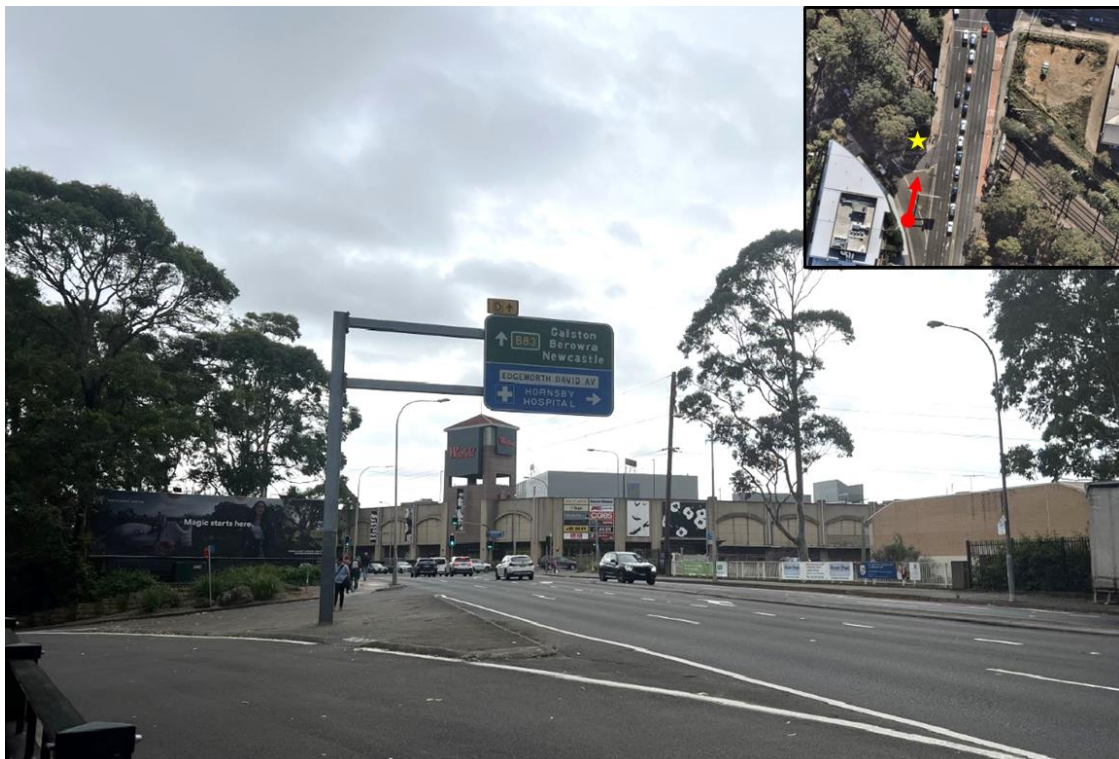


Figure 10: Road directional signage above north-bound traffic and business identification signage attached to the façade of Westfield (Source: Keylan)

3 The Proposal

The proposal involves the installation of a new digital advertising monopole sign on the corner of Pacific Highway and Government Road, Hornsby. The sign will be in a vegetated area, adjacent to the Pacific Highway bridge overpass above the railway line.

The development is summarised in the table below.

Development Aspect	Description
Development summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> removal of existing 42.41m² (12.66m x 3.35m) static advertising sign at the site installation of a new monopole digital advertising sign on the western side of the Pacific Highway, Hornsby display of illuminated advertisements 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Signage location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lot 1023 DP 1192060 corner of Government Road and Pacific Highway, Hornsby oriented south to face northbound traffic.
Advertising display area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14.93m² (3.172m x 4.708m).
Visual Screen Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14.16m² (3.072m x 4.608m).
Dwell time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 seconds.
Signage exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Traffic Safety Assessment (Appendix 3) confirms the digital sign will likely be visible from the following traffic lanes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government Road left turn slip lane, 60m from the sign northbound through lane 1, 100m from the sign northbound through lane 2, 105m from the sign northbound right turn lane, 115m from the sign the digital sign would become out of driving view approximately 5m north of the proposed sign
Illumination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the digital signage is illuminated using LED's installed within the front face.
Consent time period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 years
Existing signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a static advertising sign with an advertising display area of 42.411m² exists at the site. The proposal includes the removal of this signage.
Vegetation Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Arboricultural Impact Appraisal and Method Statement (Appendix 8) confirms no trees are required to be removed.

Table 2: Development summary

An indicative image of the sign as viewed from northbound Pacific Highway is provided below.



Figure 11: Indicative photomontage from Pacific Highway, sign facing south (Source: JCDecaux)

4 Methodology

This VIA has been informed by a site visit undertaken on 14 April 2023 and 22 June 2023 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 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 State Environmental Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021

Chapter 3 – State Environmental Planning Policy (Industry and Employment) 2021 (SEPP Industry and Employment) 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 SEPP Industry and Employment provides assessment criteria which guides the assessment of visual impacts arising from signage.

Schedule 5 of SEPP Industry and Employment is addressed in detail within the SEE.

Key points from the Schedule 5 assessment relevant to the VIA include is the proposal:

- is compatible with the character area being an urbanised transport corridor, high density mixed developments and a Westfield shopping centre
- is significantly smaller than the surrounding built form and vegetation and therefore will not dominate the skyline or obstruct any important views
- upgrades the existing lower quality static sign to a contemporary, high digital quality sign which improves visual interest along the Pacific Highway and aligns with the urbanised character of the locality
- is compliant with all applicable traffic and lighting requirements
- will not impact on the fabric of any surrounding heritage item

5.2 Visual Catchment

The proposed sign faces south and will be visible from vehicular traffic and pedestrians travelling north along Pacific Highway and the Government Road left slip road.

The character of the visual catchment can be described as:

- within the Hornsby Town Centre
- a transport corridor located on the western side of a classified road (No. 10) and above the Railway Line
- residential flat buildings
- mixed-use, high-rise towers comprising commercial/retail/business predominantly on the ground floor and residential above

Considering the mix of uses within the vicinity of the proposed sign, the proposal is considered to be appropriate, consistent with the character of the area and will have an acceptable level of impact on surrounding receivers.



Figure 12: Visual catchment (Base source: NearMaps)

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

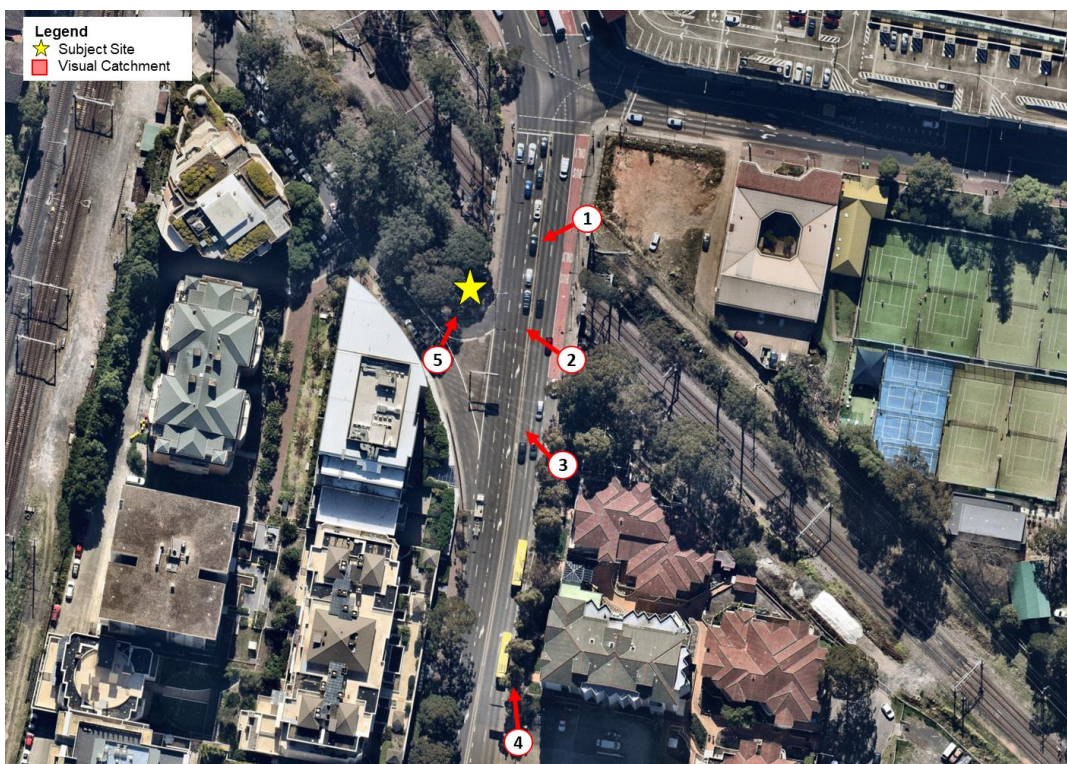


Figure 13: Viewpoints (Base source: NearMaps)

5.3 Assessment of Viewpoints

View 1: View in front of vacant site at 228-234 Pacific Highway Hornsby with DA approval

View 1 was selected as it represents the review from the vacant site at 228-234 Pacific Highway Hornsby, approximately 40m from the site. The vacant site has an approved Development Application (DA/416/20202) for the construction of 10-12 storey development comprising retail tenancies at the ground floor level, commercial tenancies at the first-floor level, a residential aged care facility at Levels 3-11, a residential apartment at Level 12 and strata subdivision.

Elevations from the approved DA are shown in the figure below.

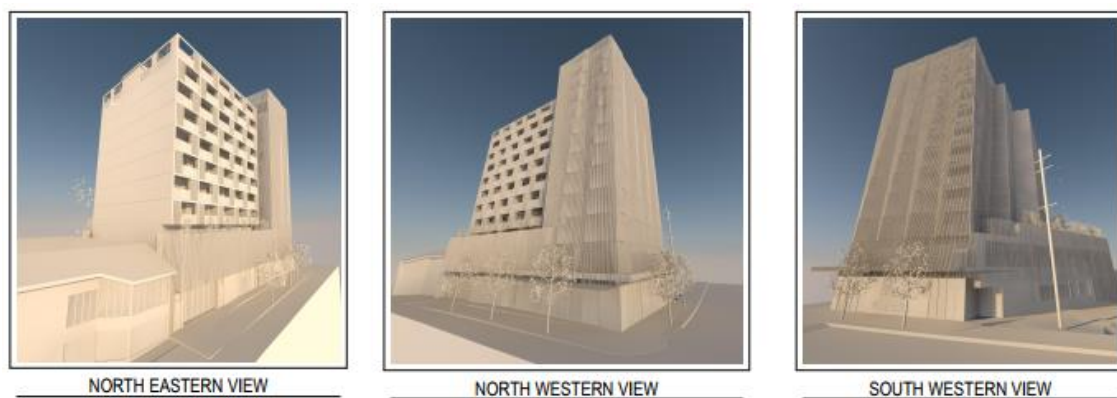


Figure 14: Approved elevation plans (Source: Coble Stephens Architects)

As shown in the figures below, the proposed sign will be located south-west of the development and orientated towards vehicles travelling northbound. The development (if constructed) would not be adversely impacted by the proposed given:

- views towards the sign are limited to the rear of the signage structure only and no direct views of the illuminated side of the sign are visible
- as shown on the above figure, apartments with potential views of the rear of sign are screened obstructing sight lines towards the sign
- the signage will be partially screened by mature vegetation

Therefore, the proposals impact from View 1 is negligible.



Figure 15: Existing view (Source: Keylan)

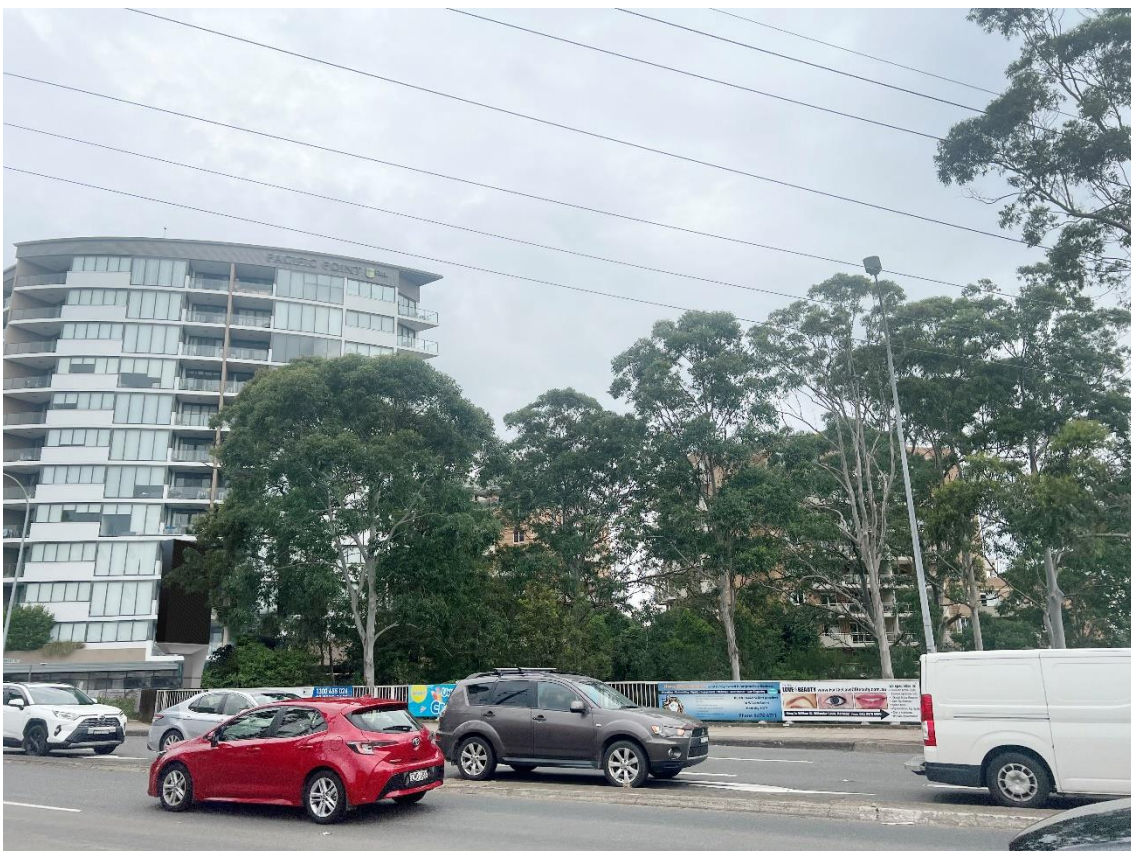


Figure 16: Proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)

View 2 and 3: West of 208-226 Pacific Highway, Hornsby

View 2 and 3 were selected as they represent the viewpoints from 208-226 Pacific Highway. 208-226 Pacific Highway comprises 1 x three storey and 1 x eight storey mixed use development which both front Pacific Highway.

It is acknowledged the residential component of both developments have north and west facing windows. Additionally, that the dwellings which interface with Pacific Highway in the three storey development have balconies that wrap around the dwelling.

The assessment undertaken indicates there will be an acceptable level of impact given:

- windows are orientated north with views of the rail line/approved DA site or west with views of the built form at 135-137 Pacific Highway
- mature vegetation located on the western side of Pacific Highway in front of 208-226 Pacific Highway which assists in screening the proposal
- large directional sign infrastructure above north bound lanes on Pacific Highway assists in screening the proposal
- the proposed signage location and developments are separated by six lanes of vehicular traffic on a classified road and two pedestrian footpaths. The busy nature of the road and footpath environments is consistent with the proposal and the urban nature of the surrounding area
- the developments are of appropriate distance away from the proposed sign being approximately 23m and 50m respectively
- the proposed digital advertising sign has a 65% smaller advertising display area than the existing 42.41m² static sign, reducing the extent of signage in the area.
- the Lighting Impact Assessment specifically assessed the proposals illuminance impacts on 208-226 Pacific Highway and confirmed the lighting impacts are acceptable and comply with all relevant criteria and standards

Given the above, the visual impacts from the proposed sign are considered low and acceptable.



Figure 17: 208-226 Pacific Highway, Hornsby (Source: Keylan Consulting)



Figure 18: Existing view from street level of three storey development (Source: Keylan Consulting)



Figure 19: Proposed view from three storey development (Source: JCDecaux)



Figure 20: Existing view from street level of eight storey development (Source: Keylan Consulting)



Figure 21: Proposed view from street level of eight storey development (Source: JCDecaux)

View 4: 121-133 Pacific Highway

View 4 was selected as it represents the visual impacts from 121-133 Pacific Highway, Hornsby.

121-133 Pacific Highway is a high density, mixed use development on the western side of Pacific Highway comprising business on the ground floor and residential on the remaining seven storeys. The residential component of this development will be largely unaffected by the proposed signage as most windows and balconies are east facing towards the Pacific Highway. A small amount of north facing windows (approximately four) face the general direction of the proposed sign however the impacts will be negligible considering

- there will be no view lines at eye level as the windows are located on storeys four, five, six and seven which are significantly higher than the proposed 8.2m sign
- the proposed signage is approximately 85m away from the windows which further reduces the size of the sign
- existing mature vegetation assists in screening portions of the sign
- large directional sign infrastructure above north bound lanes on Pacific Highway assists in screening the proposal
- the proposed digital advertising sign has a 65% smaller advertising display area than the existing 42.41m² static sign, reducing the extent of signage in the area.

Given the above, the visual impacts from the proposed sign are considered low and acceptable.



Figure 22: Existing view from street level in front of 121-133 Pacific Highway (Source: Keylan Consulting)



Figure 23: Proposed view from street level in front of 121-133 Pacific Highway (Source: JCDecaux)

View 5: Intersection of Pacific Highway and Government Road

View 5 was selected as it represents the view from closest development to the proposed sign being 135-137 Pacific Highway, Hornsby. The development is mixed use comprising business at ground level and residential within the 11 storeys above.

As shown in the figure below, the development includes north and northeast facing windows and balconies which will have views of the southwest facing illuminated sign.

The visual impacts on the mixed use development will be acceptable as:

- the proposed sign is located within the Hornsby Town Centre which is an area identified by Council to be a highly urbanised area and is therefore a suitable location for the sign
- the proposed digital sign has a 65% smaller advertising display area than the existing 42.41m² static sign
- the proposed signage is 8.2m high from ground level to the top of the sign and therefore direct sightlines to the sign are anticipated to only be from ground floor (comprising business or retail) and the first and second floor levels of the development facing northeast.
- it is acknowledged the first and second floor levels are residential receivers. The visual impacts are minimised by:
 - existing dense landscaping on the eastern side of the building facade which assists in screening the proposal from balconies and windows
 - proposed signage is orientated south towards Pacific Highway, meaning residential receivers will generally not have a front on/direct view of the illuminated side of the sign. Rather, the view will be angled partially comprising the side of the sign and the illuminated front screen
- it is anticipated all other apartments orientated northeast are above eye level of the sign and therefore the proposed signage will not have an adverse impact as:
 - signage will not obstruct any important views
 - views from internal areas such as living rooms and bedrooms will be limited as they would be angled (i.e. as internal occupants would have to look down towards the sign, the floor slab will likely preclude views
- Further, the Lighting Impact Assessment specifically assessed the proposals illuminance impacts on 135-137 Pacific Highway and confirmed the lighting impacts are acceptable and comply with all relevant criteria and standards

Based on the above, the impacts as a result of the proposed sign are considered acceptable and medium.



Figure 24: 135-137 Pacific Highway Hornsby (Source: Keylan Consulting)



Figure 25: Existing view from street level of 135-137 Pacific Highway, Hornsby (Source: Keylan Consulting)



Figure 26: Proposed view from street level of 135-137 Pacific Highway, Hornsby (Source: JCDecaux)

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 high 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.

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 3: Rating definitions

Viewpoint / Location	Distance of View	Visual Sensitivity	Level of Impact
1. Vacant site at 228-234 Pacific Highway Hornsby with DA approval	40m	High sensitivity (if developed)	Low
2. West of 208-226 Pacific Highway, Hornsby	50m	High sensitivity	Low
3. West of 208-226 Pacific Highway, Hornsby	82m	High sensitivity	Low
4. West of Shell Petrol Station	85	High sensitivity	Low
5. Intersection of Pacific Highway and Government Road	23m	High sensitivity	Medium

Table 4: Assessment Matrix

6 Conclusion

The proposed advertising sign on the western side of the Pacific Highway, Hornsby will result in a moderate level of visual impacts to the surrounding locality and to sensitive receivers.

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

- the surrounding area has a high visual amenity sensitivity due to the number of high density residential dwellings
- the sign is consistent with the highly urbanised character of the area and will seamlessly integrate with its surroundings being significantly smaller than nearby built form and mature vegetation
- the proposed digital advertising sign has a 65% smaller advertising display area than the existing 42.41m² static sign, reducing the extent of signage in the area.
- the location and orientation of the proposed sign has been carefully considered to limit the number of residential dwellings within the visual catchment
- views to the proposed sign are largely obstructed by road signage and mature trees
- the windows and balconies of residential receivers are largely orientated away from the proposed signage location
- the proposal does not impact upon any scenic views and will not protrude above the dominant skyline

Following consideration of the above, the proposal is considered to result in acceptable visual impacts.