

# Cowpasture Road, Bossley Park

## Existing Northbound Static Sign Traffic Safety Assessment

Transport for NSW

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*The assessment team has undertaken assessments of similar advertising sign proposals elsewhere in NSW and Australia. In addition to the use of NSW guidelines, our assessments are founded on road safety auditing principles and traffic safety risk assessments. Where a significant change in road safety risk has been identified due to the proposal, potential treatment measures to mitigate the change in risk have been suggested. However, the adoption of any or all the treatment measures does not warrant that the site is absolutely safe from incidents in the future whether they be related or unrelated to the sign.*

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# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Methodology	1
<b>2. SIGN VIEWING LOCATIONS</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1 Viewing Approaches	2
2.2 Driver Views	3
<b>3. STATIC SIGN SPECIFICATIONS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. TRAFFIC SAFETY ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>5</b>
4.1 Key Assumptions	5
4.2 Site Inspections	5
4.3 Review of Crash Data	5
4.4 Approach Sightline Assessments	6
4.4.1 Description of Approaches	6
4.4.2 Driver Sightline Assessment	6
4.4.3 Night-time Sightline Assessment	7
4.5 Compliance Assessment	8
4.5.1 Industry and Employment SEPP Schedule 5	8
4.5.2 Transport for NSW Advertising Sign Safety Assessment Matrix	8
4.5.3 Transport Corridor Outdoor Advertising and Signage Guidelines Section 3	9
<b>5. CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>11</b>

## Tables

Table 3.1:	Specifications and Site Information for the Existing Static Sign
Table 4.1:	Approach Attributes – Cowpasture Road northbound
Table 4.2:	Assessment against Industry and Employment SEPP Schedule 5
Table 4.3:	Assessment against the Transport for NSW Advertising Sign Assessment Matrix
Table 4.4:	Assessment against relevant Signage Guidelines Road Safety Criteria

## Figures

Figure 1.1:	Location of the Existing Static Sign
Figure 2.1:	Driver Viewing Range to the Static Sign
Figure 2.2:	Daytime view from Cowpasture Road northbound
Figure 2.3:	Night-time view from Cowpasture Road northbound
Figure 4.1:	In-vehicle viewing range and views along Cowpasture Road northbound

## Appendices

Appendix A:	Photo Montages
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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

This report has been requested by oOh!media on behalf of TfNSW to renew a Development Application (DA) to enable the ongoing display of an existing static advertising sign. The sign is located above the southern elevation of the Cowpasture Road pedestrian bridge, approximately 150m north of Stockdale Crescent, in Bossley Park as shown in Figure 1.1.



Adapted from Nearmap

**Figure 1.1: Location of the Existing Static Sign**

Bitzios Consulting has been engaged by oOh!media to undertake a traffic safety assessment to accompany the DA. It is understood that no previous traffic safety assessment reports are available as the sign was installed approximately 20 years ago when these assessments were not required.

## 1.2 Methodology

The process used to assess the impact of the proposal involved:

- A review of the viewing locations and sightlines to the static sign to define the geographical scope of the assessment
- A review of the static sign specifications
- Site inspections during day and night conditions to understand the road user's perspective of the sign, then a driver sightline assessment using images captured from in-vehicle video recordings
- A first-principles safety assessment of the static sign, including reviewing road approaches, driver sightlines, surrounding environment and proximity to decision points
- A review of the most recently available five years of crash data in proximity to the sign
- An assessment of the static sign against:
  - State Environmental Planning Policy (Industry and Employment) 2021 (Industry and Employment SEPP)
  - The Transport for NSW Advertising Sign Safety Assessment Matrix
  - The *Transport Corridor Outdoor Advertising and Signage Guidelines: Assessing development applications under SEPP 64* (Department of Planning and Environment, November 2017) (Signage Guidelines).



## 2. SIGN VIEWING LOCATIONS

### 2.1 Viewing Approaches

The static sign faces south towards northbound drivers along Cowpasture Road. The driver viewing range to the sign from this approach is illustrated in Figure 2.1 and demonstrates a relatively short distance on approach to the existing static sign from which it can be identified.



*Adapted from Nearmap*

**Figure 2.1:** Driver Viewing Range to the Static Sign

## 2.2 Driver Views

The driver sign views from Cowpasture Road northbound during the day and night-time periods are shown in Figure 2.2 and Figure 2.3 respectively.



**Figure 2.2:** Daytime view from Cowpasture Road northbound



**Figure 2.3:** Night-time view from Cowpasture Road northbound

### 3. STATIC SIGN SPECIFICATIONS

The static sign's current specifications and site information are summarised in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Specifications and Site Information for the Existing Static Sign**

Attribute	Details
Location	Cowpasture Road pedestrian bridge, approximately 150m north of Stockdale Crescent, Bossley Park, NSW
Local Government Area	Fairfield
Land use zoning	SP2 Classified Road
Facing direction	South
Type of advertisement/sign	Bridge advertisement – supersite
Display format	Externally illuminated general advertising
Visual screen size	12.66m x 3.35m = 42.41m <sup>2</sup>
Visual screen size greater than 20m <sup>2</sup> ?	Yes
Visual screen size greater than 45m <sup>2</sup> ?	No
Minimum vertical pavement clearance	5.6m
Structure higher than 8m above the ground?	Yes
Is the site located within 250m of and visible from a classified road under the <i>Roads Act 1993</i> ?	Yes
Consent authority	NSW Minister for Planning
Does the sign contain moving parts?	No
Is it a Variable message sign?	No
Does it have any flashing or flickering content?	No

## 4. TRAFFIC SAFETY ASSESSMENT

### 4.1 Key Assumptions

The assessment of the static sign was undertaken on the basis that:

- It will continue to have the same orientation, height and display size
- The display of content will continue to be static and be externally illuminated
- No change is proposed to the existing structure that supports the static sign (i.e. pedestrian bridge to remain in its current form and function)
- Illumination/lighting levels for the static sign will continue to comply with the *Signage Guidelines* and maintain lighting levels to match the surrounding environment at the site.

### 4.2 Site Inspections

Site inspections were undertaken on Wednesday, 26 April 2023 during day and night-time hours (around 1:00pm and 8:00pm respectively). The weather was overcast and traffic conditions were moderate on both occasions. In-vehicle video recordings were taken for further analysis and for use in compiling photo montages of the driver's perspective on the approaches to the site.

The photo montages can be found in **Appendix A**.

### 4.3 Review of Crash Data

The most recent five years of crash data between January 2017 and December 2021 was obtained from Transport for NSW and used to assess the crash history within the viewing area of the static sign from approximately 200m south along Cowpasture Road. Crashes involving vehicles travelling in the direction of and in view of the sign were used for the assessment.

As per Rule 287 (3) of the Australian Road Rules, crashes are only recorded if they are reported to the police and when one of the following occurs:

- Any person is killed or injured
- Drivers involved in the crash do not exchange particulars
- When a vehicle involved in the crash is towed away.

The crash data was provided in the following degree categories:

- **Fatal** – a crash in which at least one person was killed
- **Serious injury** – a crash involving at least one person identified in a police report and matched to a health record indicating a hospital stay due to injuries sustained in a crash, or is identified as an iCare (Lifetime Care) participant AND no one was killed in the crash
- **Moderate injury** – a crash involving at least one person identified in a police report who is matched to a health record that indicates that they were treated at an emergency department but were not admitted for a hospital stay, or is matched to a CTP claim indicating a moderate or higher injury AND no one was killed or seriously injured
- **Minor/Other injury** – a crash involving at least one person identified as an injury in a police report who is not matched to a health record that indicates the level of injury severity, or is matched to a minor injury CTP claim AND no one was killed, seriously injured or moderately injured
- **Non-casualty (towaway)** – a crash in which no one was killed or injured but at least one motor vehicle was towed away.



A search of the crash data revealed that there were **zero crashes reported within the viewable sight distance to the static sign**. As such, no crashes could be attributed to glances to the static sign nor could the approach to it be considered a prevailing high crash risk location.

## 4.4 Approach Sightline Assessments

### 4.4.1 Description of Approaches

The northbound approach in proximity to the static sign is described in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Approach Attributes – Cowpasture Road northbound**

Attribute	Details
Posted speed limit	70km/h
Decision points within view of the site	Stockdale Crescent T-intersection, approximately 160m before the sign
Approach arrangement	2 lanes (lanes 1 and 2); lane 1 also allows left turns into Stockdale Crescent
Sight length	From 200m south of the sign
Minimum duration of visibility	9 seconds at free-flow speed

### 4.4.2 Driver Sightline Assessment

#### Process

In-vehicle observations were undertaken to assess the subject site considering key decision points and the influence on or from traffic control devices. An assessment of still images taken from the driver's perspective with a windscreen-mounted camera is presented in the following section. It should be noted that the assessment was undertaken based on a standard passenger car and as such a driver's eye height may vary for larger and smaller vehicles.

The premise of the assessment is to ensure that the location of the static sign maintains a driver's sightline to traffic control devices and is not located as such that it may be confused with or confuse the interpretation of these traffic control devices.

The driver's cognitive load specific to the driving environment on approach to the static sign is also considered. Typically, locations where static signs could have a greater influence crash risk are locations where rapid, complex, multi-factor decision making is required.

#### Assessment

The northbound approach along Cowpasture Road is downhill with a long curve towards the Stockdale Crescent T-intersection and the static sign. The sign provides a better visibility in lane 2 than in lane 1 due to the curve and presence of overhanging trees.

The approach to the sign is a location of generally low cognitive load and free-flowing traffic, with the only decision points being the Stockdale Crescent T-intersection and indented bus bay (approximately 160m and 75m away respectively). The intersection was observed to be quite concealed onsite, particularly at night, making it difficult for drivers turning left into Stockdale Crescent to see it. However, given the horizontal and vertical alignment of Cowpasture Road and presence of overhanging trees partially obstructing the sign and its contents, the sign is outside the influence zone of the intersection.

The in-vehicle sightlines from Cowpasture Road northbound towards the sign is shown in Figure 4.1. It demonstrates that a driver approaching the sign, who glances towards it, can instantaneously recognise vehicles changing lanes or braking ahead of them as colour changes, light changes and movement changes, all of which would occur in the immediate forward field of view.



\*Distances measured in Google Maps.

**Figure 4.1: In-vehicle viewing range and views along Cowpasture Road northbound**

#### 4.4.3 Night-time Sightline Assessment

The sign as an object is more visually prominent at night when it is lit and therefore has greater conspicuity than in daylight hours. However, there is very little difference in the driver sightline 'range' to the static sign advertising at night compared to in daylight hours. The range over which the advertising content on a static sign can be recognised is dependent on the size of the sign and its distance from the driver's eyes and not its level of illumination.

The only difference at night, in poorly lit urban environments, is that many of the other visual stimuli that can be seen in daylight may not be visible at night, meaning background cognitive load is reduced. On balance, the increased sign conspicuity at night and the reduced cognitive load from the background environment mean that there is a negligible difference in glance distraction consequence when comparing the sign's influence between daylight hours and night time hours.

## 4.5 Compliance Assessment

### 4.5.1 Industry and Employment SEPP Schedule 5

The assessment against Industry and Employment SEPP Schedule 5 is provided in Table 4.2. Whilst the criteria are quite generic, the basis for the responses to each criterion is provided next to them.

**Table 4.2: Assessment against Industry and Employment SEPP Schedule 5**

Section	Criteria	Response
8. Safety	Would the proposal reduce the safety for any public road?	<b>No</b> – The proposal would not reduce the safety to the public road because there are no crash-related risks linked to the static sign apparent in the crash data.
	Would the proposal reduce the safety for pedestrians or bicyclists?	<b>No</b> – On-road cyclists have a dedicated shoulder lane, and off-road pedestrians and cyclists are protected by the kerb. In any event, the change in traffic safety risks associated with the existing static sign is considered to be negligible.
	Would the proposal reduce the safety for pedestrians, particularly children, by obscuring sightlines from public areas?	<b>No</b> – No sightlines for pedestrians and children are obscured by the proposal as the sign is elevated above the road.

### 4.5.2 Transport for NSW Advertising Sign Safety Assessment Matrix

Table 4.3 details the assessment against the Transport for NSW Advertising Sign Safety Assessment Matrix.

**Table 4.3: Assessment against the Transport for NSW Advertising Sign Assessment Matrix**

Consideration	Response	Risk Rating	Risk Level
<b>A.</b> It obscures a view of an object/vehicle/pedestrian that creates a hazard	The sign is located above all surrounding objects/vehicles/pedestrians etc. and therefore does not create a hazard.	1	Low
<b>B.</b> Sign positioning relative to travel direction	The sign is positioned over the travel lanes on the Cowpasture Road pedestrian bridge and would be in the ordinary field of view. It will be visually prominent northbound.	1	Low
<b>C.</b> It distracts a driver at a critical time	The sign is located approximately 160m after the Cowpasture Road/Stockdale Crescent T-intersection. However, given the horizontal and vertical alignment of Cowpasture Road and presence of overhanging trees partially obstructing the sign and its contents, this is outside the influence zone of the intersection and does not distract drivers turning left into Stockdale Crescent.	2	Low
<b>D.</b> It interferes with the effectiveness and safety of a traffic control device (e.g. traffic signs, traffic signals or other traffic control devices)	The sign is unlikely to noticeably obstruct or interfere with any traffic control devices.	1	Low
<b>E.</b> Sign clutter	No other advertising sign is visible when a driver is in view of the subject sign.	1	Low



### 4.5.3 Transport Corridor Outdoor Advertising and Signage Guidelines Section 3

Table 4.4 details the assessment against relevant road safety criteria in Section 3 of the *Signage Guidelines*.

**Table 4.4: Assessment against relevant Signage Guidelines Road Safety Criteria**

Criteria	Response
<b>Road clearance</b>	
<p>a. The advertisement must not create a physical obstruction or hazard. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Does the sign obstruct the movement of pedestrians or bicycle riders? (e.g. telephone kiosks and other street furniture along roads and footpath areas)?</li> <li>ii. Does the sign protrude below a bridge or other structure so it could be hit by trucks or other tall vehicles? Will the clearance between the road surface and the bottom of the sign meet appropriate road standards for that particular road?</li> <li>iii. Does the sign protrude laterally into the transport corridor so it could be hit by trucks or wide vehicles?</li> </ul>	<p>The sign does not obstruct the movement of pedestrians or bicycle riders or protrude laterally into the transport corridor as it is above the pedestrian bridge's minimum vertical pavement clearance of 5.6m.</p>
<b>Line of sight</b>	
<p>To maximise visibility of the road and minimise the time a driver's attention is directed away from the road, the following criteria apply to all advertising signage:</p> <p>a. An advertisement must not obstruct the driver's view of the road, particularly of other vehicles, bicycle riders or pedestrians at crossings.</p>	<p>The advertisement does not obstruct the driver's view of the road, other vehicles, bicycle riders or pedestrians at crossings or direct a driver's attention away from the road given its location above it.</p>
<p>b. An advertisement must not obstruct a pedestrian or cyclist's view of the road.</p>	<p>The advertisement does not obstruct a pedestrian or cyclist's view of the road given its location above it.</p>
<p>c. The advertisement should not be located in a position that has the potential to give incorrect information on the alignment of the road. In this context, the location and arrangement of signs' structures should not give visual clues to the driver suggesting that the road alignment is different to the actual alignment. An accurate photo-montage should be used to assess this issue.</p>	<p>The advertisement is deemed not to be located in a position that has the potential to give incorrect information on the road alignment. Day and night-time photo montages showing key approaches to the site are provided in <b>Appendix A</b>.</p>
<p>d. The advertisement should not distract a driver's attention away from the road environment for an extended length of time. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Does the sign obstruct the movement of pedestrians or bicycle riders? (e.g. telephone kiosks and other street furniture along roads and footpath areas)?</li> <li>ii. The sign should not be located in such a way that the driver's head is required to turn away from the road and the components of the traffic stream in order to view its display and/or message. All drivers should still be able to see the road when viewing the sign, as well as the main components of the traffic stream in peripheral view.</li> </ul>	<p>The sign does not obstruct the movement of pedestrians or bicycle riders or protrude laterally into the transport corridor as it is above the pedestrian bridge's minimum vertical pavement clearance of 5.6m.</p> <p>The sign is located and orientated directly above the road, meaning drivers would not need to turn away from the road or traffic stream in order to view its display and/or message</p>
<p>e. The sign should be oriented in a manner that does not create headlight reflections in the driver's line of sight. As a guideline, angling a sign five degrees away from right angles to the driver's line of sight can minimise headlight reflections. On a curved road alignment, this should be checked for the distance measured back from the sign that a car would travel in 2.5 seconds at the design speed.</p>	<p>The sign does not create headlight reflections in the driver's line of sight given its raised location above the pedestrian bridge and it does not tilt down towards them.</p>



Criteria	Response
<b>Proximity to decision making points and conflict points</b>	
<p>a. The sign should not be located:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. less than the safe sight distance from an intersection, merge point, exit ramp, traffic control signal or sharp curves</li> <li>ii. less than the safe stopping sight distance from a marked foot crossing, pedestrian crossing, pedestrian refuge, cycle crossing, cycleway facility or hazard within the road environment</li> <li>iii. so that it is visible from the stem of a T-intersection.</li> </ul> <p>b. The placement of a sign should not distract a driver at a critical time. In particular, signs should not obstruct a driver's view:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. of a road hazard</li> <li>ii. to an intersection</li> <li>iii. to a prescribed traffic control device (such as traffic signals, stop or give way signs or warning signs)</li> <li>iv. to an emergency vehicle access point or Type 2 driveways (wider than 6-9m) or higher.</li> </ul>	<p>The sign is located approximately 160m after the Cowpasture Road/Stockdale Crescent T-intersection. However, given the horizontal and vertical alignment of Cowpasture Road and presence of overhanging trees partially obstructing the sign and its contents, this is outside the influence zone of the intersection and does not distract drivers turning left into Stockdale Crescent.</p>
<b>Advertising signage and traffic control devices</b>	
<p>a. The advertisement must not distract a driver from, obstruct or reduce the visibility and effectiveness of, directional signs, traffic signals, prescribed traffic control devices, regulatory signs or advisory signs or obscure information about the road alignment.</p>	<p>The advertisement is unlikely to distract a driver from, reduce the visibility and effectiveness of any traffic control devices or obscure information about the road alignment given its raised location above the pedestrian bridge.</p>
<p>b. The advertisement must not interfere with stopping sight distance for the road's design speed or the effectiveness of a prescribed traffic control device. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Could the advertisement be construed as giving instructions to traffic such as 'Stop', 'Halt' or 'Give Way'?</li> <li>ii. Does the advertisement imitate a prescribed traffic control device?</li> <li>iii. If the sign is in the vicinity of traffic lights, does the advertisement use red, amber or green circles, octagons, crosses or triangles or shapes or patterns that may result in the advertisement being mistaken for a traffic signal?</li> </ul>	<p>The sign is unlikely to noticeably interfere with any traffic control devices.</p> <p>Conditions can be imposed by the consent authority to ensure that sign content, design, imagery and messages neither replicate nor can be mistaken for a prescribed traffic control device or instruction to drivers.</p> <p>For example, advertisements must not instruct drivers to perform an action such as 'Stop'.</p>

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The key conclusions from the traffic safety assessment to enable the ongoing display of an existing static advertising sign above the southern elevation of the Cowpasture Road pedestrian bridge, approximately 150m north of Stockdale Crescent, in Bossley Park are summarised as follows:

- The sign does not obstruct or interfere with the view of or restrict sight distances to any intersections, traffic control devices, vehicles, pedestrians or cyclists given its location above the road
- The sign will not reduce the safety of any vehicle, pedestrians or cyclist movements given its location. It will be located within a driver's ordinary field of view when approaching from the south and a glance to the sign will still permit co-incident recognition of vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist movements in the forward view in a road environment with very few decision points
- A review of available five years of crash data within 200m of the site showed that **zero crashes were reported within the viewable area to it**. As such, no crashes are attributable to the sign and this location generally reveals an inherently low risk crash despite its high traffic volumes
- Illumination does not increase safety risk as there is no material change in how drivers glance to a lit sign at night vs. an unlit sign during the day, when considering other stimuli in their visual field
- The sign complies with the requirements of the Industry and Employment SEPP, the Transport for NSW Advertising Sign Safety Assessment Matrix and *Signage Guidelines*.

Given the above conclusions, there are no traffic safety concerns whatsoever with the static sign continuing to operate as it currently does.

## Appendix A: Photo Montages





## 1. Cowpasture Road northbound approach – Lane 1 (Day)





## 2. Cowpasture Road northbound approach – Lane 2 (Day)



## 1. Cowpasture Road northbound approach – Lane 1 (Night)





## 2. Cowpasture Road northbound approach – Lane 2 (Night)

