



**Proposed Digital Sign
47 The Esplanade, Petone**

Visual Assessment

29th August 2022)

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1. Introduction

MediaWorks Outdoor Limited is seeking consent to erect a 3.5m(w) x 7.0m(h) double-sided portrait digital sign on the forecourt of the site at 47 The Esplanade, Petone. The site is located at the western end of The Esplanade, approximately 350m from the intersection with Hutt Road.

I previously prepared an Urban Design Assessment for this proposal, Updated 31 March 2022.

The Hutt City Council s92 request has requested further information regarding the effects of the proposed sign at night-time:

Provide a night-time visual assessment of the billboard and provided a details assessment of visual effects at night and effects on natural 'coastal' character. Your night time assessment should include any areas where the signage would be visible at night, including nearby walking paths, Petone Beach, Wellington CBD (if visible), Te Ara Tupua (Ngauranga to Petone) walkway (if visible) and State Highway 2 (if visible). Given the close proximity to the coastal environment it is important the billboard doesn't detract from the coastal amenity values at night. We would strongly recommend you offer a condition that the sign off at dusk (noting that this is about 9pm during mid-summer) to minimise visual effects at night during a time when the signage is likely to be most visible.

Subsequent to this, the Council processing planner has provided two plans identifying specific locations that he would like considered by the assessment of visual effects¹. This report provides the requested a visual assessment from the specified locations.

This assessment has been based upon a night-time and early morning site visit to the identified locations. The visit was undertaken between 9pm and 10.30pm on the 4th August 2022 and between 6.45am and 9am on the 5th August 2022.

All photographs have been taken with Fujifilm X-E2S camera with Fujinon XF35mm F1.4 R lens - equivalent of 53mm lens on a full frame camera, i.e., very similar to the equivalent to a 50mm focal length lens on a full frame 35mm camera traditionally recommended for visual assessments. Any difference from the specified lens would be indiscernible and would not affect any assessment made on the basis of the photographs.

In preparing my report, I have been cognisant of the advice provided by Mr Kern² regarding lighting effects and have used this advice to inform my own assessment.

¹ Email from Oliver Clausen to Daniel Coppell dated 29 July 2022

² Application to install an LED Advertising Billboard – 47 The Esplanade, Petone, Kern Consultants, 17th August 2022

Preparation of this Report

This report has been prepared by Richard Knott. Richard has worked in the areas of urban design, planning, heritage and special character for over 30 years.

Richard has provided advice on over 50 digital signs and billboards on sites across New Zealand. He is very familiar with the issues associated with digital signs.

Richard has undertaken the Planning Institute of Australia training in landscape and visual analysis and is familiar with the NZILA and Landscape Institute (UK) guidance on landscape and visual analysis.

Richard Knott Qualifications

- MA Urban Design, 1995
- PG. Diploma Building Conservation, 2002
- Bachelor of Planning, 1989
- BA(Hons) Town and Country Planning, 1988

Richard Knott Affiliations

- Member New Zealand Planning Institute
- Member of Royal Town Planning Institute, UK (Chartered Town Planner)
- Member Institute of Historic Building Conservation, UK (full member)
- Member Institute of Highway Engineers, UK (full member)

Richard Knott Accreditations

- Ministry for the Environment Making Good Decisions Accredited, with Chairs Endorsement

Richard Knott Recent Training/Conferences

- NZPI Ethics for Planners (September 2019)
- NZPI Planning for Maori Values (Advanced) (October 2019)
- Planning Institute of Australia, Landscape and Visual Assessment (October 2019)
- NZPI Conference (March 2018)
- University of Southern California; Fundamentals of Heritage Conservation (July/August 2016)

2. The Viewpoints



Figure 1: Requested viewpoints – Close (provided by processing planner – identification numbers added by RKL)

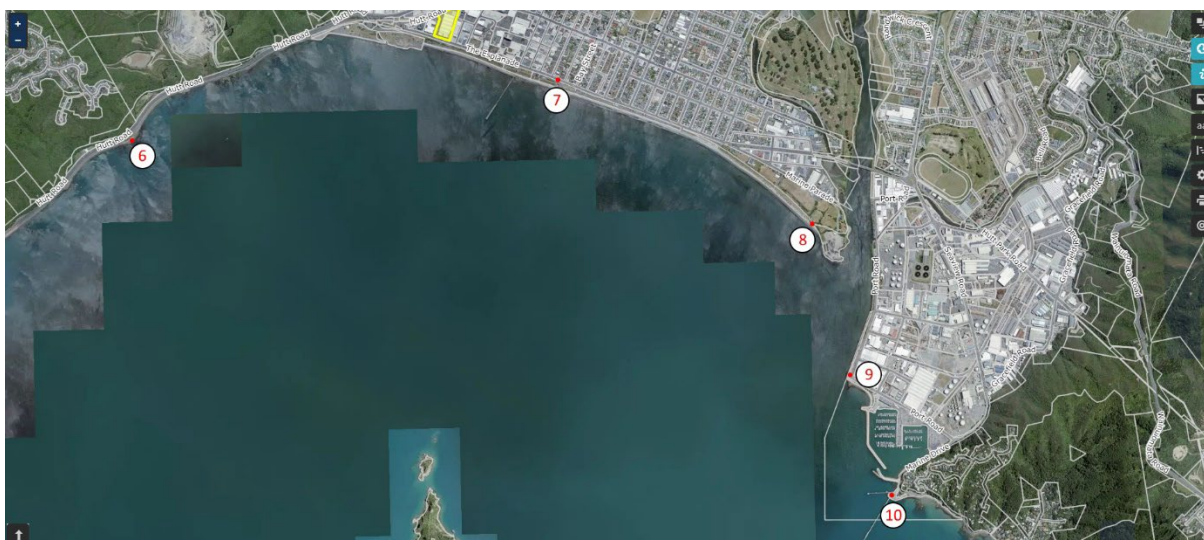


Figure 2: Requested viewpoints – Far (provided by processing planner – identification numbers added by RKL)

As set out in my original report³:

The site, 47 The Esplanade, is located at the western end of The Esplanade. It contains a Bunnings Warehouse and a series of smaller tenancies on the south frontage of the site, fronting the Esplanade. The building presents a two storey frontage towards the street.

There is a vehicular access at either end of the street frontage and two rows of car parking with an access lane between them between the building and the street.

The landscaped area within/along the front boundary of the site, contains low planting and taller cabbage trees, with a retaining wall at the back of this. Close to the entrance at the

³ The Site and Surrounding Environment, Proposed Digital Sign, 47 The Esplanade, Petone, Urban Design Assessment, Updated 32 March 2022, Richard Knott Limited

west end is a Bunnings pylon sign with a smaller sign for a coffee shop below this to one side of the access and a lower directional Bunnings sign on the other side of the access. At the eastern end there are two small directional signs. There is no other signage direct on the site frontage, apart from a flag pole with New Zealand flag.

Relative to the length and height of the building frontage facing The Esplanade, there is limited signage on the building, with one sign at each end of the frontage above first floor level, and signage at ground floor level for three ground floor tenants (albeit that there is a greater area of signage for the Wet & Forget tenant at the west end than is seen for other frontage tenants). There is a large '47' above the central entrance which provides access to the first floor of the building.

The sites immediately to the east (beyond Nevis Street) have buildings built direct to the site frontage, whereas buildings to the west are set back from the street frontage in a similar pattern to the application site.

The street in front of the site comprises a pedestrian footpath along the site frontage (with no berm), a lane of parking, a single east bound traffic lane, a raised grass median (with a single street tree) and two west bound traffic lanes. Beyond this is a wide grass area, trees, meandering pedestrian/cycleway and the beach. At the time of my previous visit to the area, The Esplanade was busy with cars and other vehicles, recognising its role as a key linkage to SH2 from southern parts of Petone and areas east of Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River.

Overall, the site is set at a transition point where it and buildings to the west are set back from the street frontage and buildings to the east are developed direct on the street frontage. The retaining wall and planting on the site frontage assist with providing some presence to the site frontage and assist with mediating this change of site layout. The Esplanade is a reasonably busy street, although the grassed central median to the front of the site assist with reducing the overall dominance of the street and the potential dominance of the built development on the north side of the street relative to the informal open space and beach to the south.

In relation to the wider area, The Esplanade remains a busy traffic route for its full length from SH2 through to its eastern end. The south side of The Esplanade is on the whole not developed with buildings, and consists of open spaces areas, with footpath/cycleway, dunes areas and the beach. However, in views along the street and across the harbour, the reserve and beach area are viewed in the context of the development to the north, including at night time when street lights and lights within sites and buildings are a clear feature of the area.

At the eastern end the beach and Great Harbour Way – Te Aranui o Pōneke is remote from built development, with areas of reserve to the north.

Each of the viewpoints is discussed in more detail as they are assessed below.

3. Visual Assessment of Proposed Digital Sign

Analysis of the impact on the visual amenity of pedestrians and other users is provided for each of the viewpoints identified by the Council.

A seven point scale is utilised to assess the visual effects of the Proposed digital sign.

It is commonly accepted that a low visual effect is equivalent to a minor adverse effect (and that very low and negligible visual effects are equivalent to a less than minor adverse effect).

EXTREME	Total loss of the existing character, distinctive features or quality of the landscape resulting in a complete change to the landscape or outlook
VERY HIGH	Major change to the existing character, distinctive features or quality of the landscape or a significant reduction in the perceived amenity of the outlook
HIGH	Noticeable change to the existing character or distinctive features of the landscape or reduction in the perceived amenity or the addition of new but uncharacteristic features and elements
MODERATE	Partial change to the existing character or distinctive features of the landscape and a small reduction in the perceived amenity
LOW	A slight loss to the existing character, features or landscape quality
VERY LOW	The proposed development is barely discernible with little change to the existing character, features or landscape quality
NEGLECTIBLE	The proposed development is barely discernible or there are no changes to the existing character, features or landscape quality

Viewpoint 1

Location: From the pathway in the reserve area, on the south side of The Esplanade

The street lighting in this location, along with the existing lighting within the site is such that the area is well lit at night-time. The sign will respond to the ambient lighting in the area and will be dimmed.

From this viewpoint, a pedestrian would mainly be able to view the side profile of the sign, although would have an angled view of the west facing digital display. The angle of view is such that the image would likely appear darker and less easy to view than it would be in a direct view (this is an inherent limitation of LCD displays).

From my experience of being in the area, I do not consider that this is an area that many pedestrians would choose to visit after dark. Whilst there is passing traffic, there is no other passive surveillance of the area and pedestrians would likely feel vulnerable and ill at ease in the area after dark.

At the time of the site visits there were no pedestrians in the local area, but cars were still regularly moving through the area.

The sign would have some impact on the view experienced by a pedestrian. There would be a slight loss of the existing character and quality of the area and the sign would therefore have a **LOW** impact (a minor adverse effect) on the visual amenity experienced by a pedestrian in this location.



Viewpoint 2

Location: From the pathway in the reserve area, on the south side of The Esplanade to the east of the proposed digital sign.

The street lighting in this location, along with the existing lighting within the site is such that the area is well lit at night-time. The sign will respond to the ambient lighting in the area and will be dimmed.

From this viewpoint a pedestrian would be able to view the east facing digital display of the sign. However, from my experience of being in the area I do not consider that this is an area that many pedestrians would choose to visit after dark. Whilst there is passing traffic, there is no other passive surveillance of the area and pedestrians would likely feel vulnerable and ill at ease in the area after dark.

At the time of the site visits there were no pedestrians in the local area, although cars were moving regularly through the area. A Police car was stopped and watching activity in the area.

The sign would have some impact on the view experienced by a pedestrian. There would be a slight loss of the existing character and quality of the area and the sign would therefore have a **LOW** impact, a minor adverse effect, on the visual amenity experienced by a pedestrian in this location.



Viewpoint 3

Location: From the reserve area, on the south side of The Esplanade, close to the entrance to the car park.

The street lighting in this location, along with the existing lighting within the site, is such that the area is well lit at night-time. The exiting Bunnings pylon sign is visible in this view. The top of the Bunnings sign is very brightly lit. In contrast to the Bunnings sign, the sign will respond to the ambient lighting in the area and will be dimmed.

From this viewpoint, a pedestrian would be able to view the west facing digital display of the sign. However, from my experience of being in the area I do not consider that this is an area that many pedestrians would choose to visit after dark. Whilst there is passing traffic, there is no other passive surveillance of the area and pedestrians would likely feel vulnerable and ill at ease in the area after dark.

At the time of the site visits, there were no pedestrians in the local area, although cars were moving regularly through the area. There were cars parked within the car park to the south, and on the road leading to the Wellington Water Ski Club (to the east). It appeared that people were sleeping/living in a number of these (a number of the same cars were still on the land the following morning).

The sign would have some impact on the view experienced by a pedestrian. There would be a slight loss of the existing character and quality of the area and would therefore have a **LOW** impact (a minor adverse effect) on the visual amenity experienced by a pedestrian in this location.



Viewpoint 4

Location: From the raised central median to the west of the roundabout where the motorway on ramp, off ramp, Hutt Road and The Esplanade meet.

Due to safety concerns with accessing this position, the photographs at this viewpoint were taken early morning (around 7am) rather than late evening (although I also travelled through this area during late evening).

The street lighting in this location, along with the existing lighting within the site is such that the area is well lit. The exiting Bunnings pylon sign is visible in this view. The top of the Bunnings sign is very brightly lit. In contrast to the Bunnings sign, the sign will respond to the ambient lighting in the area and will be dimmed.

This viewpoint relates mainly to drivers. Whilst there is a footpath on the southern side of the motorway on-ramp, from my experience of being in the area, I do not consider that this is an area that many pedestrians or cyclists would choose to visit after dark. Whilst there is passing traffic, there is no other passive surveillance of the area and pedestrians would likely feel vulnerable and ill at ease in the area after dark.

At the time of the site visits, there were no pedestrians in the local area and cars were moving regularly through the area (particularly in the morning, towards the motorway).

The sign would have limited impact on the view experienced by drivers entering the area from the motorway, given its distance from this position, the position of the existing Bunnings sign closer to the viewer, and the general lighting within the area. There would be little change to the existing character and quality of the area as experienced by drivers. The sign would therefore have a **VERY LOW** impact, a less than minor adverse effect, on the visual amenity experienced by a driver in this location.



Viewpoint 5

Location: From the west end of the car park area beyond the Wellington Water Ski Club.

Due to safety concerns with accessing this position, due to its remote location and with a number of people sleeping/living in cars in the immediate area, I visited this area early in the morning (around 6.45am) rather than late evening.

From this position, it was possible to clearly see The Esplanade area, including lighting in the area of the roundabout at the west end of The Esplanade and east along The Esplanade. However, due to existing topography and planting within the reserve area, it does not appear possible to view the position of the proposed sign.

It may be that the sign could be glimpsed through this vegetation at night-time.

This is not an area that I would expect members of the public to visit after dark, unless there was a particular event at the Wellington Water Ski Club. In normal circumstances, there is no passive surveillance of the area and users would likely feel vulnerable and ill at ease in the area after dark.

In the worst-case scenario that the sign could be glimpsed from this area at night time, the sign would have a barely discernible effect on the existing character of this area and would therefore have a **NEGIGIBLE** impact (a less than minor adverse effect) on the visual amenity of a user of this space.



Viewpoint 6

Location: To east of main train line, west-southwest of the site.

The Te Ara Tupua – Ngā Ūranga to Pito-one shared path is not yet formed in this area, although I understand that a contract has been signed for the construction of the project. This area is therefore not legally/safely accessible, being part of the railway corridor. I was able to view across to the location of the proposed sign when travelling north along the motorway when in the vicinity of this location.

The location is 2.25km from the proposed sign. At this distance, the sign will appear as a very small feature in a large view. From this viewpoint, a pedestrian would mainly be able to view the side profile of the sign and an angled view of the west facing digital display (within the context of the larger view).

Without seeing the fully constructed shared path, it is not possible to understand whether this would be an area that pedestrians and cyclists would use after dark, as the only passive surveillance would be from passing cars and trains and users would be separated from these by fences.

I note Mr Kern’s ⁴comments in relation to views of the proposed sign from SH2, which are applicable to views from this location:

It would be difficult to identify the proposed billboard at night from State Highway 2 Expressway given the distance and height of nearby streetlights and commercial lighting in the area. It may be possible to see the digital billboard at dusk before streetlighting and commercial outdoor lighting turns on, but the image would be very small given the distances involved. For example, the proposed billboard would be approximately 750m from State Highway 2 behind the Rowing Association Building to the proposed billboard and approximately 5km from Ngauranga Train Station.

Given the significant distance from this viewpoint to the proposed sign, and the other lit features seen in this view, I consider it likely that the sign would have a barely discernible effect on the existing character of this area and would therefore have a **NEGIGIBLE** impact (a less than minor adverse effect) on the visual amenity of a user of this space.

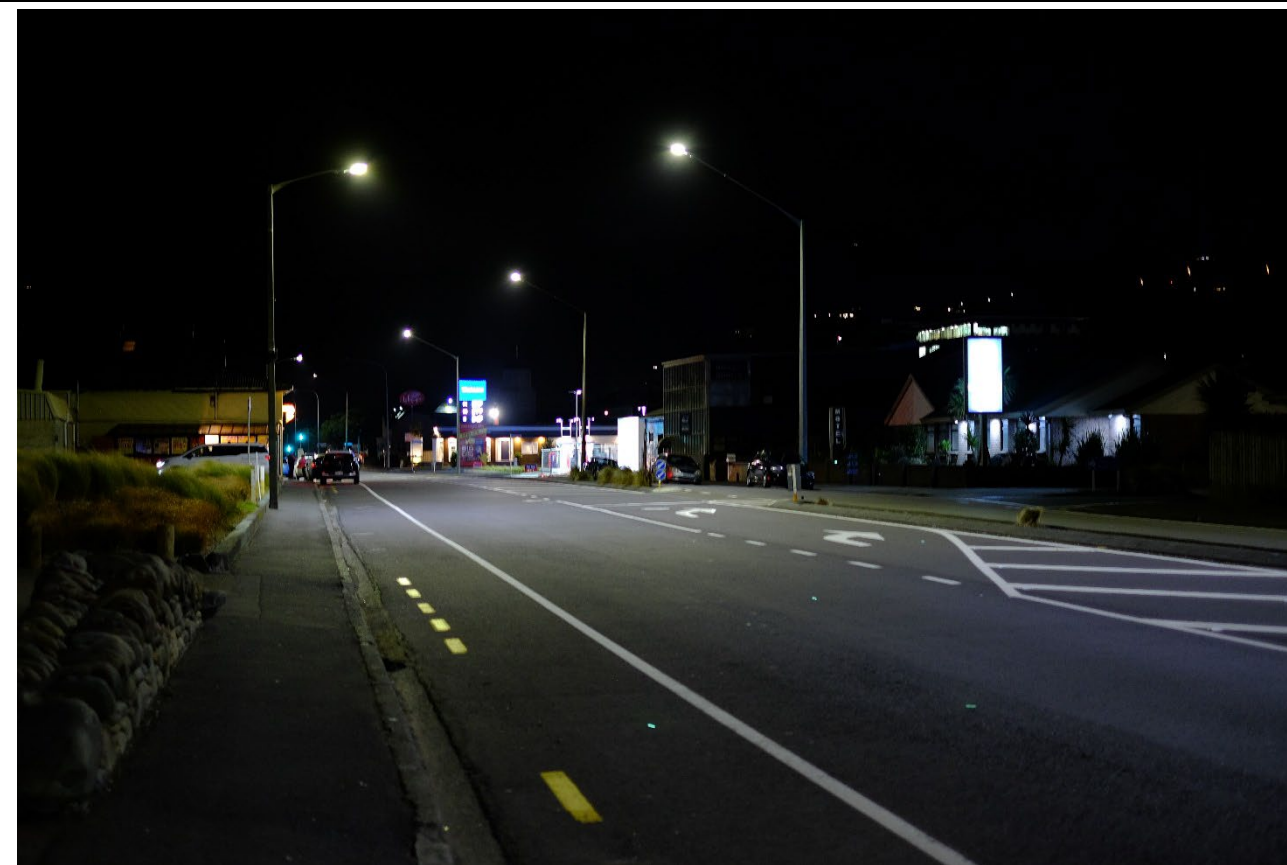
⁴ Application to install an LED Advertising Billboard – 47 The Esplanade, Petone, Kern Consultants, 17th August 2022

Viewpoint 7

Location: To the south side of The Esplanade, between the intersections of Nelson Street and Richmond Street with The Esplanade.

This viewpoint is over 800m from the proposed sign. Due to a slight curve in the alignment of The Esplanade, it is not possible to view the proposed sign from this location. Given this, I also attempted to view the position of the sign from outside of 143 The Esplanade, on the northern side of the street. Even from this position, I consider it unlikely that a pedestrian would be able to view the sign.

In the worst-case scenario that the sign could be glimpsed from this area at night time, the sign would have a barely discernible effect on the existing character of this area and would therefore have a **NEGIGIBLE** impact (a less than minor adverse effect) on the visual amenity of a user of this space.



Viewpoint 8

Location: From the Great Harbour Way – Te Aranui o Pōneke approximately 275m west of the Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River

Due to safety concerns with accessing this position, due to its remote location, I visited this area early in the morning (around 7.15am) as it was getting light.

At the time of the site visit, there was one dog walker in the local area. This is not an area that I would expect members of the public to visit after dark.

Due to existing topography and planting within the reserve area, is not possible to view the position of the proposed sign from this position.

It is, however, possible to view the location of the sign from the area of beach below this location and from a position on the path approximately 35m to the east. Like the specified viewpoint, due to the remote location of these, I do not consider that either of these are locations where I would expect members of the public to visit after dark, as there is no passive surveillance of the area and users would likely feel vulnerable and ill at ease in the area.

From the beach and the area to the west of the Council viewpoint, given the significant distance from these to the proposed sign (around 2.7km), and the other lit features seen in this view, I consider it likely that the sign would have a barely discernible effect on the existing character of this area and would therefore have a **NEGIGIBLE** impact (a less than minor adverse effect) on the visual amenity of a user of this space.



Viewpoint 9

Location: From the point that Port Road changes direction.

This is an industrial area. It is not a location where I would expect members of the public to visit after dark, as there is no passive surveillance of the area and users would likely feel vulnerable and ill at ease in the area.

This viewpoint is over 3.5km from the proposed sign. In this view, the sign would be viewed in the context of lights along the whole of The Esplanade, and lit buildings on land to the north of the Esplanade and development across the hillside to the north and west.

Whilst the sign is located in an area with less lighting seen to the rear, given the significant distance from this viewpoint to the proposed sign, I consider it likely that the sign would have a barely discernible effect on the existing character of this area and would therefore have a **NEGIGIBLE** impact (a less than minor adverse effect) on the visual amenity of a user of this space.

I revisited this position during daylight and consider that my conclusion is also relevant to the visual effects of the sign during the daytime.



Viewpoint 10

Location: Marine Drive, overlooking the entrance to the Marina

This is remote area, at the entrance to an industrial site. It is not a location where I would expect members of the public to visit after dark, as the only passive surveillance of the area would be from passing cars and members of the public would likely feel vulnerable and ill at ease in the area.

This viewpoint is over 4.3km from the proposed sign. In this view, the sign would be viewed in the context of the lights along the whole of The Esplanade, and lit buildings on land to the north of The Esplanade and development across the hillside to the north and west.

Whilst the sign is located in an area with less lighting seen to the rear, given the significant distance from this viewpoint to the proposed sign, I consider it likely that the sign would have a barely discernible effect on the existing character of this area and would therefore have a **NEGIGIBLE** impact (a less than minor adverse effect) on the visual amenity of a user of this space.

I revisited this position during daylight and consider that my conclusion is also relevant to the visual effects of the sign during the daytime.



4. Overall Conclusion and Recommendations

The application proposes a 3.5m(w) x 7.0m(h) double sided portrait digital sign on the forecourt of the site at 47 The Esplanade, Petone. The site is located at the western end of The Esplanade, approximately 350m from the intersection with Hutt Road.

Having prepared this visual assessment to specifically consider the visual effects of the sign at night-time, I stand by my previous conclusions regarding visual amenity matters and, in particular, my previous assessment against relevant ODP Policies and the Petone Mixed Use Activity Area Design Guide.

I consider that, based upon my visual assessment, the sign will have at worst minor adverse effects on the visual amenity of the area; this being at only three of the 10 viewpoints considered, with there being less than minor effects at the majority of viewpoints. I also consider that many of the viewpoints are locations where I would not expect members of the public to visit after dark.

Overall, my view remains that the proposed digital sign will appear as an integrated element in the environment, being viewed within the context of the existing buildings on the site, and other large commercial buildings on adjacent sites (and in more distant views lighting and buildings along the whole length of The Esplanade).

Overall, in my view, the new digital sign and will have minimal effects on the visual amenity and the character and quality of this urban environment and on the amenity of the reserve and beach area to the south, during both daytime and night-time. It will appear as an integrated part of the area as it currently exists, when considered in the context of the presence of the existing signs and advertising signage already located within this environment and given the urban nature of the surrounding commercial area.



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29th August 2022

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