



ADVERTISING SIGNS

Key Issues & Recommendations Paper

19 June 2019

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Introduction

Signs play an important role in the built environment. Advertising signs are essential to identify, communicate and market businesses, institutions and buildings across the municipality. Advertising signs have a significant impact on the public realm and the quality of the streetscape and the building with which they are visually associated.

Well designed and well integrated signage in appropriate locations can add colour, vibrancy and interest to an area. A proliferation of signs and poorly designed and located signs can significantly detract from the attractiveness and amenity of the Shire's urban and rural environments, as well as reducing the effectiveness of signs. Council considers it necessary to plan for the management of advertising signage in the built environment to balance the expectations of business and economic development with that of the broader community.

The recent review of the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) conducted in 2018 identifies the need for a sign guide to ensure that signs do not detract from the character or appearance of a street, building or site. One of the recommendations of the MSS review was that an Advertising Signs Policy be prepared to enhance good urban design outcomes and manage inappropriate and inefficient signage that degrades the character of streetscapes and public spaces.

A Project Working Group (PWG) led by Urban Design including relevant Officers from across the organisation has been set up to prepare an Advertising Signs Policy. First round of internal consultation workshops & meetings were conducted over the last two months. Major concerns, critical gaps with the local planning policy framework and issues associated with the erection of advertising signage across the Shire were identified. Meetings with interface Councils also highlighted some common issues and provided insights on how these could be addressed.

The following stakeholders were consulted as part of this process:

Internal Stakeholders

Statutory Planning	Economic Development
Strategic Planning	Urban Design
Growth Area Planning	Traffic Engineering
Local Laws & Compliance	Communications

External Stakeholders

City of Dandenong	VicRoads
City of Casey	Ultrasligns, Sign Writer/ Consultant
City of Melton	

This Key Issues & Recommendations Paper is a summary of the key findings captured during the consultation sessions and observations made by Council officers during site tours of key areas of signage in the municipality. This Paper also provides further recommendations based on the emerging trends in sign design and technology.

Appendix 1: Consultation Workshop Notes & VCAT Decisions Review includes detailed notes from the consultation with internal Council Officers, interface Councils, VicRoads and Signage Consultants, and a review of the patterns or issues that are emerging through VCAT decisions in recent times.

Key Issues

Currently there is a policy vacuum in the Local Planning Scheme (Scheme) due to the lack of an outdoor signage policy for the Shire of Cardinia. The Advertising Signs Guidelines 2009 is a reference document in the Scheme and is a “guide” only and does not mandate or assist Statutory Planners effectively.

Lack of statutory guidance means that there is no control on the quality of outdoor signage solutions. Hence, a review of the broader issues associated with signage across the Shire and local planning policy analysis were conducted to help identify common concerns and policy gaps. The table below provides a discussion of the key issues identified and how the policy should be adapted to meet those changing needs and issues.

Issues	How can this be addressed?
The quantity of business signs on the one property are exceeding reasonable levels.	<p>Include a provision within the policy which specifies a maximum number of signs per street frontage.</p> <p>These provisions may also address proportional relationship between building, sign and streetscape.</p>
Signage definitions do not refer to siting and design in relation to the street (only in relation to the host building).	Guidance should be included on orientation of signage to property frontages, primary street and carriageway alignment.
Animated signs and other new media are not addressed.	Include an illuminated and animated signs section to refer to new and emerging technologies, illumination and light spill.
Reference to different character areas.	<p>Different land uses have individual characteristics that warrant individual attention. Include requirements relating to signs in different land uses, with the following details for each sign type:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of land use type • Identification of preferred signage type per land use • Design Guidelines for signage per land use
Provide assessment guidance on how bright illuminated signs can/should be.	Illuminated signage provisions can be updated to specify maximum lux, however this needs to have scientific or strategic justification. The illumination provisions should also include guidance on the use of neon, LED, LCD, projection and other new forms of lighting type or design. This should align with VicRoads State Safety Guidelines.

Issues	How can this be addressed?
<p>Provide guidelines to consider wider reaching impacts of signs.</p>	<p>In some circumstances it is appropriate to consider the impact to a wider viewing catchment, particularly where signs are elevated above other buildings or structures and/or within important views and vistas.</p> <p>The general policy requirements can include a requirement that the extent of visual catchment is to be considered. The decision guidelines should address visual clutter and equitable distribution of signage.</p>
<p>Recommendations for 'corporate branding' whereby multiple signs, material finishes and colours and graphics are sited all over the building.</p>	<p>The signage provisions need to include reference to avoiding multiple signs on one frontage.</p> <p>There is a lack of distinction or definition in Clause 52.05 in relation to 'corporate branding'.</p>
<p>Reference to signage on retractable awnings.</p>	<p>Retractable awning signs are not defined in the planning scheme.</p> <p>However, this issue ties in with businesses taking advantage of multiple signage opportunities. Use of retractable awnings can encourage awnings to be extended unnecessarily which could reduce streetscape amenity, i.e.: blocking views across or along streets.</p> <p>Using the 'fascia' or edge of an awning for a simple business identification may be appropriate where the awning acts like a verandah over the public footpath or a seating area</p> <p>Awning signs should be discouraged (including above awning signs)</p>
<p>Temporary signs and hoardings are not addressed</p>	<p>Temporary signs may be a means of short term major promotion signage rather than having a series of major promotion signs along major transport routes, which is the common location for such signage.</p> <p>These should be covered in the Temporary Signage Policy. Also VicRoads are looking at providing State level guidance on signs along major transport corridors.</p>
<p>Consider and include minimum clearances of signage above footpaths</p>	<p>2.7m is the accepted standard clearance height, which is defined in the Building Regulations.</p>

Issues	How can this be addressed?
	Both City of Melbourne and City of Greater Dandenong have implemented the same.
<p>Visual clutter is a constant issue associated with advertising signage. The overall amount of signage in relation to the streetscape and the cumulative effect of many signs can create visual clutter.</p>	<p>A more effective method of controlling visual clutter is to promote positive policy on where and how signage may occur, and to encourage a strong and respectful response to the site's context.</p> <p>To address and prevent visual clutter the following strategies should be employed:</p> <p>Encouragement of fewer and more effective signs</p> <p>Allow the fronts of buildings between the first floor and the parapet to be free of signage</p> <p>Consideration of the context including the amount of signage (promotional, directional or business advertising) already in a location</p> <p>Restricting the number of signs to one per building elevation.</p> <p>Views analysis and consideration of the importance of the view</p> <p>Consideration of the contribution to visual clutter by the supporting structure and the signage</p> <p>Limiting the proportions of different types of signage</p> <p>Restricting signage which projects from buildings and rooftops</p>
<p>Diagrams showing acceptable location of signs on buildings / properties will increase understanding and improve efficiencies in permit approvals</p>	<p>Illustrations of 'encouraged' & 'discouraged' sign types associated with various land uses will be included in the Sign Guide.</p> <p>3D digital models of building prototypes will provide some guidance and examples of good and bad signs that anyone wanting to display one or more signs should consider before ordering or installing any sign, and before submitting a planning application.</p>
<p>Scale of signage that are not proportional and responsive to the host building and public realm is a recurring concern.</p>	<p>More open, large-scale environments such as freeways can accommodate larger signage, however in areas with a fine grain and low scale</p>

Issues	How can this be addressed?
	form signage should be in proportion and visually well integrated with the built form.
<p>Number of signs per tenancy and percentage of façade area occupied by signs should be specified.</p> <p>Location of signage on the facades and footpath clearance may set up parameters</p>	<p>Specify number of signs per façade per tenancy</p> <p>Provide preferred signage zones on building façade.</p> <p>Specify size and or percentage of this sign zone based on building size and use</p> <p>Specify percentage of clear glazing (free of any sign) for shopfronts along ground floor</p> <p>Specify clearance heights along footpaths to avoid proliferation of under awning signs</p>
<p>VCAT decisions lately show characterisation of signs is an issue across councils, and that the applicability of one sign definition vs another is not quite clear under the planning scheme</p>	<p>Provide a section with details for each sign type with term, definition and design guidelines.</p>

New forms of signage and technology

The notable changes in recent times in regards to the display of advertising signage is the emergence of animated screens and a wider use of street furniture for advertising signage. Also, the possibilities for temporary promotion and major promotion signs at construction sites on hoardings and scaffolding are an emerging trend here.

Signs on street furniture

Street furniture advertising has emerged in the form of promotion signage panels on bus shelters, phone booths, outdoor café seating barriers, fences and rubbish bins.

Council's local laws department is responsible for issuing permits for street furniture such as A-frame sign boards and outdoor café seating barriers because they are temporary structures which are exempt from requiring a planning permit. Some Activity Centres and Town Centres in the Shire have specific street furniture and landscape design guidelines. It is critical to ensure that signage locations and design for these areas do not conflict with the local law requirement and the State's street safety guidelines.

Recently, there has also been numerous concerns on the proliferation of signage on fences of recreation reserves. All temporary advertising signage on Council's Sports Facilities and Recreation Reserves are outside of the scope of this project. It is recommended that an exclusive Advertising Signage on Council's Sports Reserves and Facilities be prepared to provide targeted guidance and to address the changing needs and issues with signage in these areas.

New technology

Emerging technology in relation to signage includes the more common use of LED for animated screens and other forms of illuminated signs, projecting light onto surfaces such as building faces and the pavement, as well as the potential for sound and other mechanically animated signs. There is a continual evolution of technology with LED being the major advance in the past decade.

It is necessary to accommodate new technologies where it's possible to better control light spillage, minimise electricity or power usage and other net benefits in the way that signage is currently displayed. LED animated screens are becoming more commonplace with pressure for such signage being placed at key road junctions and intersections.

It is appropriate to embrace new technologies that are technically more sophisticated. However, embracing new technology which introduces elements to the city image and structure that detracts from the intrinsic qualities of the municipality such as its built form, architecture and broader urban landscape should be avoided. Care should be taken in considering planning applications against the core objectives and decision guidelines of the policy.

Signage Vision & Policy Objectives

Based on the above discussions it is evident that signage formats should suit the three dimensional form of the municipality. More open, large-scale environments such as freeways can accommodate larger signage, however in areas with a fine grain and low scale form signage should be in proportion and visually well integrated with the built form.

Thus, a robust vision and clear set of objectives for signage should be incorporated into the planning policy framework and shall be used to guide decision making in relation to planning applications for signage.

The underlying **vision** for signage within the Shire are to:

- Encourage the development of signage which reflects and respects the context, having regard to built form height and massing, subdivision grain, landscape, road hierarchy, openness of the environment and heritage attributes.
- Protect the important view lines and vistas to key buildings, heritage and landscape qualities which are a highly valued part of the municipality,
- Manage transport corridors with a focus on maintaining visual order and avoiding clutter.

The core **objectives** for the advertising policy to reflect the vision includes the following:

- Embed stronger urban design emphasis into policy.
- Require advertising signage to respond and enhance the character, scale, architectural quality and appearance of a building, site and landscape setting.
- Allow for the reasonable identification and marketing of businesses in the Shire of Cardinia.
- Provide flexibility within the policy for dealing with changing modes of communication and new technologies.
- Structure the policy with clarity about signage provisions, based on the public realm and three-dimensional built form.
- Provide guidance on how siting and size of signage could respond positively to the urban environment in terms of scale and spatial structure.
- Ensure that signs are designed, positioned and displayed in an appropriate and attractive manner.
- Maximise the effectiveness of signs by minimising and consolidating signage to avoid visual clutter.
- Encourage signs that contribute positively to the day and night image of activity centres and town centres.

- Support signs that contribute to the interest, vitality, and improve the quality of commercial and industrial areas.
- Ensure that signs enhance residential areas and other high amenity built and natural areas and do not detract from the appearance or character of the area.
- Improve the appearance of Shire gateways through the effective, sensitive display of signs and the avoidance of proliferation and visual clutter.
- Encourage the continual renewal and maintenance of existing signage structures to ensure their presentation does not detract from the urban setting

Way forward

Following this detailed review of advertising signage within the municipality, an Advertising Signage Policy and Guidelines will be prepared. It is intended that it will assist applicants in appreciating what the Shire of Cardinia Council considers to be appropriate forms of advertising signage. This document will form the policy basis on which Council will base its decision-making.

The Guidelines will also be laid out as a prospectus called 'Signs Design Guide' which will include illustrations and examples of good and bad signs that anyone wanting to display one or more signs should consider before submitting a planning application.

It is anticipated that the Policy and Guidelines will be adopted by Council by the end of 2019. An amendment to the planning scheme will need to be sought to include the policy within the Planning Scheme in 2020.

Appendix 1

Consultation workshop notes & VCAT Decisions review

Consultation Workshop Notes

Detailed comments and ideas discussed in the consultation workshops held with internal and external stakeholders are as follows:

Gaps & Opportunities:

- Currently there is a policy vacuum in the Planning Scheme due to the lack of an outdoor signage policy. Lack of statutory guidance means that there is no control on the quality of outdoor signage solutions.
- The guidelines is a reference document only and does not mandate or assist Statutory Planners effectively. The Advertising Signs Guidelines 2009 should be updated and adopted with a policy status in the Planning Scheme.
- Lack of illustrations – applicants prefer visual guide to assist in the design of signs in appropriate locations. This should be demonstrated in the diagrams and needs a disclaimer.
- Signage definitions do not take account of the siting or design response in relation to the street; rather it is in relation to the building.
- Animated signs and other new media are not covered.
- Overall strategic direction for major promotion signs and preferred locations.
- Does not reference different character areas
- Does not deal with high wall signs well and balloon/inflatable signs
- No guidance on assessing brightness – light spill at night and what the maximum lux is allowed.
- No guidelines on the wider reaching impacts of signs – the focus is on more immediate surrounds.
- Signage vision should reflect positive imaging and branding of the Shire
- Issue with corporate branding – painting of whole buildings in corporate colours as well as multiple signs on one frontage
- Quantity of signs on one site – need a consistent direction. This could address proportional relationship between building, sign and streetscape.
- Should there be a distinction between business identification and promotion signage?
- Existing use rights on many signs both major promotional and business identification
- Fascia signs are exceeding canopy heights
- Real estate signs are an enforcement issue – particularly ‘for lease’ signs which are not clearly defined or addressed in the local laws.
- Retractable awnings – need to discourage use of these for advertising.
- Duplication of signage in many places on the building.
- Window signage on chemists, newsagents, milkbars that block out the windows.
- Signage strategies for large developments are not covered
- Proliferation of real estate signage
- Signage on top of buildings – sky signs

Further to the above issues, the site tours of key areas of signage in the municipality raised some issues that are associated with the erection of advertising signage:

- Should there be a distinction between business identification and promotion signage?
- Existing use rights on many signs both promotion/major promotion and business identification.
- Fascia signs are exceeding the height of canopies and verandahs.
- Window signage which blocks views into ground level shops is a problem which is common with businesses such as chemists, newsagents and milk bars. This may be an enforcement issue where businesses do not have approval for the quantity and/or location of signage.

- Large developments require co-ordinated approaches to signage to ensure that signage does not overwhelm the new buildings or contribute to visual clutter. As such, signage strategies should form part of the approval of major developments with commercial components to ensure equitable signage opportunities and the consideration of how advertising will be integrated into new buildings when they are approved.
- Signage provisions for heritage areas are considered to be more concise than for non-heritage areas.
- Real estate signs are an enforcement issue – particularly ‘for lease’ signs which are not clearly defined or addressed in the local laws.
- Retractable awnings – need to discourage use of these for advertising
- Signage strategies for large developments – Large Activity Centres, Major/ Special Precincts. Employment precincts/ Business Parks, and the like

Feedback from internal & external stakeholders are tabulated below:

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Urban Design	Issues	From Whom
	Improve & Facilitate creative signage	Urban Design
Shop windows are covered with signage with no sightlines to the street		
Differentiate artwork & signage/ is it ok to integration of art into signage		
Is there a ‘number’ of signage allowed per occupancy		
Visual impacts of signs on the public realm – streetscape & long distance views		
Signs are poorly designed/ poor quality		
Signs aren’t integrated with the architecture of the building		
Size of the sign is not in scale with the building and or the immediate streetscape		
Retractable awnings Should have signage limited to fascia edge only		
“Plastering” of signs in general – unnecessary and redundant signage. Repetitive use of signs displaying the exact same logo, information. Overkill?		
Corporate signage and corporate “colours” – where is the distinction between the two? Especially when the whole building is painted in corporate “colours” and the end result appears as if the building is wrapped in one big sign.		
Diagrams showing acceptable location of signs on buildings / properties.		
Illumination of signage – specified hrs?		
Definitions for signs and logos - Is a logo not a sign?		

Signage along Cockatoo main street holds local relevance, is artistic and contributes strongly to local identity.	
Number of signs per tenancy and percentage of façade area occupied by signs	
Scale of the builtform versus the signage	
Inflatable signs should be prohibited (on roof, entrance to premises)	
Signage within rural towns to be covered by landuse rather than location. Rural town centres should be having across board approach. The Dairy Farm café along the Gippsland Hwy has a number of signs.	
Lavender Farm Café has number of signs proliferating the hwy frontage	
Location of signage on the facades and footpath clearance may set up parameters	
% of clear glazing on shop fronts	
Cheap as chips in Pakenham painted the whole building in their branding colour – paint scheme / schedule and branding – Guidance around discouraging the painting of entire building	
Butchers/ Seafood shops having pull down awning and or partially closed shop windows due to direct sunlight – north sun. These areas are often covered with signage adding on to the visual clutter. Note that there aren't many of these	
Large size lifestyle images on the entire images – imagery signage	
Façade is not a menu card	
Banks also contribute to dead facades with no transparency. Is it branding or it	
Define areas- use type <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Town Centres & Activity Centres (Statutory – further discussion) - Industrial - Shopping centres (Pylon signs allowed) - Pad Sites - Interfaces to Freewys and Hwys (Potential within Industrial) - Green Wedge - Residential (Home Office) - Highway Business & Restricted Retail - Display Home Villages & Land Sales Office 	
Pylon signs location criteria & probably other form of signs	
Murals & artworks are they considered as signage	

Growth Area		
	Lack of guidance of wayfinding signage in public realm. Eg: Signage solutions in Activity Centres through branding of the whole suite of signage.	Growth Area
	Guidance on signage on heritage buildings, eg: Interpretive Signs	
	Promotion signs for new land release – location and size	
	Gateways to new estates – signs or artwork? Who maintains these structures?	
	Sky signs that are lit have greater amenity issues depending on location	
	Inclusive signage solutions – people on wheelchair, foreign languages, etc.	
	Pylon signs promoting liquor/ bottle shops – how does it within the gambling and social issues related to that	
Currently UGZ includes a few signage requirements for growth areas		
Statutory Planning		
	Large sized promotion signs on Freeways and Arterial Roads without permits	Statutory Planning
	Sign zones on shopfronts that exceed 8sqm	
	Lack of specific guidance on verandah signs	
	How do we control illuminated sign size, colours, illumination levels and timings	
	Difference between promotion and business identification signs	
	Appearances of mobile signs on carts and shipping containers in the rural zones	
	Guidance for super large sized temporary promotion signs like Gumbaya World	
	What is the tool for assessing signs on heritage buildings, sensitive landscapes and are there any paint controls	
	Awning signs are always unclear and not well defined in the Scheme	
	Temporary signs for school sites (private schools) are not covered in the Scheme	
VCAT decisions for signage in Victoria shows an interesting pattern on the panel's emphasis on case to case based assessment rather than a blanket approach		

	A visual guide will be highly beneficial to demonstrate the preferred sign types and locations. This will reduce to and fro times whilst dealing with both small and large scale development proposals alike	
	VCAT decisions lately show characterisation of signs is an issue across councils, and that the applicability of one sign definition vs another is not quite clear under the planning scheme	
Strategic Planning		
	Signage on recreation reserves are an issue. However, this policy should not be providing any statutory guidance on this matter. Rather make a recommendation that a Signage Policy for Parks & Reserves be prepared in the future.	Strategic Planning
	Pakenham Market Place and Main Street are areas of signage proliferation. It is blurry on what are compliance and or stat planning issues.	
	Adaptive reuse of residential buildings for commercial uses are now quite common. Guidance is required around signage within these areas.	
	Emerald & Gembrook have unique landscape characters and signage in those rural towns do reflect that character. Its good to acknowledge that and consider what it means to new signs.	
	Koo Wee Rup, Bunyip, Nar Nar Goon, Tynong and Garfield have small sized main streets with rural character	
	Sallys Burger Shop in Beaconsfield Upper is a bad precedent for sign size, design and location	
Traffic		
	Policy should be considerate and not conflict requirements of VicRoads as per the VicRoads Signage Policy	Traffic
	Cardinia Road Safety Guidelines and State Road Safety Guidelines are critical in assessing any signage proposals along Category 1Roads.	
	Guidelines must look at size and illumination levels of electronic signs	
	Road safety is paramount for Council and the following elements are critical: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distraction to drivers - Proliferation of signage - Sight lines to on coming and turning traffic 	
	Include some specifications around illumination levels for electronic sign and ensure it is in accordance with VicRoads specification	
	Include wordings around 'when should a signage proposal be referred to VicRoads'	

Local Laws & Compliance		
	Foothpath occupancy and clutter of display goods is a constant issue	Local Laws & Compliance
	A-frame proliferation is a major concern. One A-frame per tenancy is allowed. But some shops have more than one. Eg, Pakenham	
	Temporary Signs Policy is reviewed very year and there are synergies between the two documents. Similar style, template and approach could be achieved in the future. Refer to Temporary Signage Policy INT1812974	
	Community events are covered through temp sign guidelines	
	A visual guide will be helpful for assessing signs and also help proponents understand Council's position on signage	
	Signage on sports ovals are guided by temporary signs policy. But there are no guidance on size and locations of these signs	
	Footpath Occupancy Policy and Footpath Trading Code triggers permit for any vending on footpath	
Economic Development		
	Gumbaya World & Car Mega Mart struggle to promote and or identify their business location due to the nature of road access to these premises and lack of visual exposure along major corridors. This should be factored in whilst assessing permits. Hence a case to case basis approach will be good rather than a blanket approach.	Economic Development
	There are several issues along Board Hill Road, Pakenham Industrial area with signage proliferation, visual clutter and blank facades	
	A standard sign solution factsheet (handout) for shops will be good	
	There are constraints on signage within heritage buildings. Heritage may not necessarily contribute to any character and or architectural merits. Eg: Pakenham Gazette Building	
	Casey Cardinia business register has more than 7500 listed businesses. These can be tapped into during consultation phase. Eco Dev will be working closely with Urban Design to run these focus groups & info sessions	

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

General Comments	From Whom
Design Guide has been very helpful for proponents and has accelerated permit approvals effectively. The Sign Policy is a 90% translation of the Guide.	City of Greater Dandenong
Activity Centres have special allowance as per the branding described in Development/ Structure Plans. Having some wording around this in the Policy will be good.	
GD CC decisions on major promotional signs and sky signs has been backfired by VCAT at a number of occasions	
Again, Policies are not a bible, it's a guide. So do not be too prescriptive. Allow room for creative outcomes	
In 2006 when VicUrban took over the revitalisation of Central Dandenong, there was no design guide. Most development proposals did not involve architects and weren't designed solutions necessarily	
Context is the key consideration for any signage	
Negotiation and working with the proponents has been an effective process	
VCAT decisions that affected Council and triggered changes to the policy are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balwyn Road, Industrial Precinct - Good Guys sky sign 	
Provide clear definitions for sign types and be clear on sizing	
Above awning signs are discouraged in Dandenong	
Pylon sign locations should not obstruct viewlines, short and long distance vistas	
Policy took a 'less is more' approach to signage	
Height clearance along footpath should be stipulated in the guide	
Protrusion of signage on to laneways should comply with public safety requirements	
Signage on the entire façade of Chemist Warehouse and Dimmys are still a problem	
Requirements on the % of glazing is critical for massage parlours. They are detrimental to Main Street as they block of the entire façade for privacy reasons.	
A-frame in Central Dandenong is prohibited. This allows for wider and clear footpath for ped safety and higher ped volume	
VicRoads have specific requirements for Electronic Signs	

Foreign languages are restricted to secondary signs. Primary signage must be in English and not more than 2 signs on the façade should be of foreign language	
Heritage buildings should have specific requirements on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signage colours - Wordings - No balloons (inflatable signs) - Active signage enforcement 	
Gateways Policy compliments and strengthen the directions of the signage policy particularly for sites adjacent to gateway sites and or within the City's key viewlines & vistas.	
There is proliferation of electronic signage in Central Dandenong and most of which are illegally out up without permits	
Sculptural signs are dealt on a case by case basis	
Precincts with unique branding like Little India & Afghan Precincts in Dandenong have special guidelines in the Structure Plan and Branding Manual.	
VicRoads are currently reviewing the State Advertising Signs Policy	VicRoads
C SC will work closely with VicRoads to ensure there are no contradictory guidance especially for signage on freeway & highway interfaces	
A workshop to be held with the two signage teams shortly	
Sign fabrication technics are more advanced and cheaper now	UltraSign - Sign Writer, Design Consultant & Fabricator (Industry)
Acrylic and vinyl signs are the go to now	
Electronic signs are becoming more common but are not necessarily visually appealing	
Retro sign writing is a niche market and still exists in small pockets	
A well designed sign is legible, beautiful and good sized on the facade	
Sign wraps are cheaper and could be semi transparent at night. This is the most common solution now.	
Location of sign – signs that are within 2m height is subject to vandalism generally	
Applying 2pac coating protects it from graffiti	
Electronic signs along hwys are too bright	

Real estate signs are frames on which printed banners are mounted. Depending on the UV protection levels the sign could last from 3 to 5yrs	
Flags on poles are fabric that last only for 6 months	
Banner poles are vinyl material that are bit more sturdy than fabric	
Graphic designers and marketing companies design almost all signs in the market now	
Council requirements are respected and adhered by sign consultants. Advise is provided to customers to seek a permit if the sign is bigger than 8sqm	
Neon Signs are now the new technology. They aren't as bright as electronic signs	
Neon signs are expensive than LED lights	
LED lights may look clunky, big and boxy	
Electronic billboards are common yet but will be slowly rolled out in the future due to the cost savings in labour	
Foreign language signs are also frequently used due to the increase in migrant population, especially in community centres.	
From customers perspective, it is hard to design around heritage buildings and compromise on branding colours	
There is not much local knowledge in electronic sign design yet	

VCAT Decisions Summary

Fivex Pty Ltd v Melbourne CC (Red Dot) [2019] VCAT 138 (31 January 2019)	
Address	274-282 Flinders Street, MELBOURNE Site is in Capital City Zone (Schedule 2), Heritage Overlay (Schedule 505), Design and Development Overlay (Schedules 1, 2, 3 and 4) & Special Building Overlay
Proposal	The proceedings concerned two signs - major promotion signs/ business identification signs ; authorised under a permit issued in 2003. The permit had been extended and amended on numerous occasions before the signs were eventually erected in 2015-2016. In 2018, the council advised the applicant that planning permission for the signs had expired under clause 52.05-4 of the planning scheme 15 years after the date of issue of the permit in 2003.
Council decision	Refused
VCAT decision	Permit to be issued
Comments:	<p>The subject site is located on the north east corner of the intersection of Flinders Street and Elizabeth Street on the edge of the Hoddle Grid, within the Melbourne CBD. The site is occupied by an existing 17 storey mixed use building, containing a mix of retail and commercial uses at ground and first floor levels, with commercial office space above.</p> <p>The two signs, which are the subject of these proceedings, are located on the northern façade and on the southern façade at the top of the building just below the parapet. Each sign consists of the word “Fivex” and is internally illuminated. Each Fivex sign is 3.5 metres high and 13.385 metres long.</p> <p>a. Para. 33: It is well established that a sign may fall within more than one classification under clause 73.02. Clause 52.05-2 explicitly provides for signs which may be classified by more than one of the clause 73 terms. It provides that:</p> <p>b.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. If a sign can be interpreted in more than one way, the most restrictive requirement must be met. ii. This has been acknowledged by the Tribunal in cases such as <i>RW & MM Anderson Nominees Pty Ltd v Greater Geelong CC (Amended)</i>[12], <i>Woolworths Pty Ltd v Surf Coast SC</i>[13] and <i>TAG Winchelsea Pty Ltd v Surf Coast SC</i>[14]. <p>c. Para 36. In deciding whether the signs should be characterised as business identification signs or major promotion signs, the size of the signs is not a determining factor.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Para. 37: In <i>RW & MM Anderson Nominees Pty Ltd v Greater Geelong CC</i>, the Tribunal considered that ‘promotion’ necessarily involves some inducement for the viewer to acquire the product or attend the event.[15]

1. In that case, the sign in question was in association with a service station and displayed four fuel types with prices on four panels on two sides of the steel structure. The fuel types and prices would be changed manually.
 2. Tribunal found the sign was not a promotion sign (the sign being less than 18 square metres in area).
- ii. *Compare to Woolworths v Surf Coast SC*^[16] in which a sign displaying petrol prices at a Safeway outlet was held to be a promotion sign. In distinguishing the *Woolworths* decision, the Tribunal in the RW & MM case said:
1. [84] ... The sign in that case was not confined to the display of prices for various petroleum products. It also advertised the availability of discounts, which can only be interpreted as an inducement to the viewer to purchase those products. The proposed sign in this case carries no similar inducement.
- d. Para 41. In each of these three cases involving service station signs, the signs in question included business logos and petrol prices. In other words, there were different components to the signs. In other cases, such as *Becton Corporation Pty Ltd v Melbourne CC*, *Melbourne Grand Apartments Pty Ltd v Melbourne CC* and *Brady Vision Pty Ltd v Melbourne CC*, the signs in questions have consisted solely of business names such as 'Becton', 'Central Equity' and 'Brady Vision'.
- i. In *Becton Corporation Pty Ltd*, the Tribunal decided that the Becton sign should not be allowed because it was a promotion sign as distinct from a business identification sign. The Tribunal said the purpose of the Becton sign appeared to be promotion of the company and its interest in the site as opposed to making people aware as to the activity or business undertaken on the subject land. It did not appear Becton would retain a significant ongoing interest in the site once construction was completed.
- ii. In the case of *Brady Vision Pty Ltd*, the Tribunal characterised the Brady Vision signs as major promotion signs – "as they are more than 18m² in area and promote the developer of the building, "Brady" and the name of the tower apartment complex "Vision". These fall squarely within the range of 'any other matter' and also promotes the business of "Brady" even though its business is not provided in or from the building. ..."

Issue in the case was whether the sign here was a 'major promotion sign', 'business identification sign', 'high wall sign' or some innominate sign. Council characterised the permit as for a 'high wall business signage', which is not a term under the planning scheme. This case is particularly helpful as it highlights the need to correctly characterise permits for signage and provides a summary of several authorities to aid the interpretation of signage categories. Tribunal found in this case that the sign at issue was a high-wall sign, an internally illuminated sign and a business identification sign, but not a major promotion sign.

Tom Assets Pty Ltd v Greater Dandenong CC [2016] VCAT 811 (19 May 2016)	
Address	723 – 731 Springvale Road, KEYSBOROUGH Site is in Commercial 2 Zone (C2Z). The land is adjacent to land in a Road Zone Category 1 (RDZ1) (both Dandenong Bypass and Springvale Road).
Proposal	Display of a major promotion floodlit sky sign under Clause 52.05 of the Greater Dandenong Planning Scheme. Display of a sign within 600 mm of the road formation of a Road Zone Category 1 under Clause 36.04-4 of the Greater Dandenong Planning Scheme.
Council decision	Refused
VCAT decision	Permit to be issued
Comments:	<p>The application is to display a major promotion floodlit sky sign. The sign is V-shaped, with two advertising panels that each have a length of 18.99 metres, a height of 4.5 metres and an overall advertising area of approximately 170 square meters. The sign will be erected on a 6.4 metre high freestanding monopole (with a diameter of 1 metre. The overall height of the structure will be 11.5 metres.</p> <p>The sign will be setback 11 metres from the northern property boundary with Dandenong Bypass and 110 metres east of the intersection with Springvale Road.</p> <p>The sign will be oriented to the Dandenong Bypass towards vehicles travelling east (outbound) and west (inbound). There will also be views of the western panel from vehicles travelling south on Springvale Road. The sign will only display static imagery and each sign will be lit by six floodlights.</p> <p>The Responsible Authority is opposed to the sign and considers that it will dominate the intersection and detrimentally affect a major gateway location. The Responsible Authority submits that the proposal is not supported by local policy and is concerned that the sign will detrimentally impact on the visual amenity of the area.</p> <p>The key matters for my assessment are whether the proposed major promotion floodlit sky sign will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be located in an area that is supported by the Planning Scheme; • dominate the streetscape and the skyline; • result in visual clutter or visual disorder; • detrimentally affect the amenity of the residential areas or the public open spaces areas; and • be compatible with the gateway treatments identified in the Gateway Concept Plan 03:Dingley/Arterial Springvale Road. <p>Major promotional signs are a legitimate use in the planning scheme and one that is encouraged in industrial locations, in a manner that complements or enhances the character of the area. Major promotion signage need not be automatically reviled or feared, rather, an appropriate assessment against the state and local policy and decision guidelines of Clause 52.05 are required.^[25]</p>

	<p>47. Given the Commercial 2 zoning of the land and its inclusion in Category 1 “<i>minimum limitation</i>” of the advertising controls in Clause 52.05, I am satisfied that there is discretion to grant a permit for a major promotion sign in this location.</p> <p>48. Overall I am satisfied that whilst the sign will be visible, it will not be dominant. It will sit comfortably against the backdrop of existing industrial buildings, particularly the building on the adjoining property to the south. I agree with Mr Rodda that the sign will not detract from the current main road environment which is characterised by road infrastructure and large industrial buildings. These elements will provide a built form context to the way the sign will be viewed.</p> <p>49. This application highlights the tension in the Greater Dandenong Planning Scheme between the state planning provision Clause 52.05, which explicitly encourages major promotion signs in commercial and industrial zones and local policy, which expressly discourages these signs in all gateway locations (and on all freeways). The Responsible Authority’s underlying concern is the proliferation of promotion signs on major roads, however the area of the review site is not such an area. There are no other promotion signs at the intersection of the Dandenong Bypass and Springvale Road, with the nearest major promotion sign 400 metres away and not visible from the intersection.</p> <p><i>This case study reinforces the sign’s response to the site context. This review site sits within an established commercial/industrial area that is dominated by the major cross-intersection of the Dandenong Bypass and Springvale Road. This is not a sensitive area in terms of natural environment, heritage values, waterways or rural character. The subject land is well separated from residential areas and public open spaces by the adjoining arterial roads.</i></p> <p><i>The scale, form and location of the proposed sign is found to be appropriate to its context. The sign will be visible but will not be a dominant element. With a setback of 110 metres from Springvale Road and 11 metres from the Dandenong Bypass.</i></p>
<p>Maple Media Pty Ltd v Greater Dandenong CC [2019] VCAT 269 (28 February 2019)</p>	
<p>Address</p>	<p>841 Princes Highway, SPRINGVALE Site is in Industrial 1 Zone (INZ1). No overlay controls apply. The site is adjacent to ‘Springvale Junction’, which is the intersection of Princes Highway, Springvale Road, Centre Road and Police Road.</p>

<p>Proposal</p>	<p>To construct and put up for display a major promotion externally illuminated sky sign and a major promotion electronic sky sign in INZ1.</p> 
<p>Council decision</p>	<p>Refused</p>
<p>VCAT decision</p>	<p>Council's decision upheld</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	<p>Maple Media seeks planning permission to erect and display two major promotion sky signs on the roof of the building located at No. 841 Princes Highway, Springvale. This site is just one lot removed from a major intersection in Melbourne known as 'Springvale Junction' (the Junction).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Having regard to the submissions and evidence presented, there are two key issues in this case: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The acceptability of both proposed signs having regard to the character of this area; and ○ The acceptability of the proposed electronic sign having regard to road safety, particularly the safety of that part of the Junction where Police Road and Centre Road traffic intersect. 4. In reaching my decision, I have inspected the site and surrounds. I have also considered the planning scheme policies and controls, the context of the site and surrounds, the submissions received, the evidence presented and the various materials filed before and during the hearing. I have decided that the signs are acceptable from a character perspective, but the electronic sign is not acceptable from a road safety perspective. 5. This proposal is an integrated design, meaning that there is limited 'back of house' visibility of the structure of the signs because of the 'V' shaped design. This is one of the reasons to support the proposal from a character perspective. Hence, as the electronic sign is not acceptable, it follows that the proposal as a whole is not acceptable because I have not considered the merits of the externally floodlit sky sign on its own. If the Applicant wishes to pursue such a sign on its own in the future, its merits in terms of its orientation and design within this character setting will need to be considered afresh.

Urban Design in Commercial and Industrial Areas policy

15. Before turning to these policies, I wish to deal with the Urban Design in Commercial and Industrial Areas policy at clause 22.03 that the Council also provided. I do not find this policy to be particularly helpful in considering this proposal as its focus is upon physical development aspects such as layout, setbacks and built form rather than advertising signage. The objective highlighted by the Council about improving the appearance of all commercial and industrial areas, particularly along main roads and identified gateway sites, is probably the most pertinent aspect. Given the lack of specific content about advertising signage, the other two policies that I have already identified are of greater relevance to my consideration of the merits of this proposal.

34. The crash statistics for 2012 to 2018 are a total of 91 including one fatality and 30 serious injuries. Mr Brownlie advises it can take up to 12 months for data to be added to the VicRoads Crashstats database, so the number of crashes in 2018 'is anticipated to be higher' than the statistics available at present.

Both Council and VicRoads consider the electronic sign is a safety hazard because:

- It is at a location where particular concentration is required.
- It could distract drivers due to its size, design or colouring, and it being electronic with advertisements changing every 30 seconds.

54. A/Prof. O'Day gave evidence that movement is a strong stimulus in regard to what the eye concentrates on. The clear field of vision for a driver is narrow and A/Prof. O'Day gave the example of looking at the white panel in the centre of the wall of the existing building on this site (as is visible in the daytime photomontage on the previous page). In focussing on that panel, the surrounds become blurred. However, movement on the electronic sign (such as a change in advertisement) will be noticeable and will draw the eye's attention to it. Whilst this can clearly be a distraction for a driver, the expert evidence presented in this and other Tribunal cases and the research referred to in this and other Tribunal cases has not been able to show that major promotional signs have a negative impact on road safety. Further, there has been limited research to date on what impact electronic major promotional signs have on road safety.

Whilst there is no specific proof of a connection between the existence of electronic signs and road safety, there is no doubt that such signs are intended to be looked at. I am not persuaded the electronic sign is in an acceptable location. It sits low and in proximity to existing traffic signals. It is intended to catch attention and be looked at/read. It could change advertisements whilst a Police Road driver is travelling into the intersection. This is not acceptable in an existing situation where there are uncontrolled right hand turning vehicles and a history of a number of crashes. As such, I am not persuaded the proposed electronic sign will not be a safety hazard.

Drive by Developments Pty Ltd v Knox CC [2019] VCAT 280 (27 February 2019)	
Address	872 Burwood Highway, Ferntree Gully Site is in Industrial 1 Zone (INZ1)
Proposal	Installation and display of a major promotion electronic sky sign . Its impact on views to the Dandenong Ranges and Foothills.
Council decision	Refusal
VCAT decision	Council's decision upheld
Comments:	<p>Drive by Developments Pty Ltd (the 'Applicant') seeks a review of the decision of the Knox City Council to refuse to grant a permit for the proposed installation and display of a major promotion electronic sky sign on land at 872 Burwood Highway, Ferntree Gully (the 'review site'). The Council's grounds of refusal raise concerns in relation to the size and scale of the sign, its visual impact on the immediate context and viewlines to the broader landscape, and the compliance with planning policy.</p> <p>5. The parties agreed in this proceeding that it is the Local Planning Policy Framework of the Knox Planning Scheme, along with Clause 52.05, that will provide the most useful guidance in my decision making task. Clause 21.01-2 identifies that the key planning issues and influences affecting the City of Knox include:</p> <p>The visual impact of advertising signs.</p> <p>6. Clause 21.05 Built environment and heritage identifies this part of Burwood Highway as being a Bush Boulevard, where one of the strategies is to:</p> <p>Protect and emphasise views to the Dandenong Ranges.</p> <p>7. It is evident that this is a neighbourhood, which includes parts of Burwood Highway, from which views can be gained to the Dandenong Ranges, including the foothills. Policy at Clause 21.03-4 says the following about such views.</p> <p>Views of the Dandenong Ranges and their foothills are valued highly by the Knox community. The Dandenong Ranges and their foothills also form a backdrop to countless views from across the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, including long range views to and from the Melbourne CBD.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 11.2 Avoid advertising signs which will impact on views to significant landscapes, create visual clutter, or adversely impact on residential amenity. - Large format signs which impact upon views to and within these areas of landscape significance are considered highly inappropriate. - Signs do not dominate, inhibit or hinder views of significant landscapes as defined in this Clause. <p>Major promotion signs and promotion panel signs, including within the front setbacks of a site, are avoided where they will:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have a dominant visual element in the landscape; - be located within or adjacent to significant landscapes; - impact on views and vistas towards significant landscapes; - or where they will obstruct significant viewlines. <p><i>I find the impact of the proposed electronic major promotion sign on views to the Dandenong Ranges and Foothills to be in contrast with the outcomes clearly sought by policies in the Knox Planning Scheme. It follows from such a finding that no permit should be granted for the proposed sign.</i></p>
Zagame Boronia Pty Ltd v Knox CC [2018] VCAT 1001 (29 June 2018)	
Address	112A Boronia Road, BORONIA Site is in Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z) Design and Development Overlay Schedule 7 (DDO7)
Proposal	Display of an electronic major panel promotion sky sign on the roof of the existing hotel that has exposure to Dorset Road and Boronia Road, Boronia.
Council decision	Refusal
VCAT decision	Council's decision upheld
Comments:	<p>This is an application to review Knox City Council's decision to refuse to grant a planning permit for the display of an electronic major panel promotion sky sign on the roof of the existing hotel that has exposure to Dorset Road and Boronia Road, Boronia.</p> <p>Council refused the application on grounds the proposal is inconsistent with the Design and Development Overlay Schedule 7 (DDO7) that discourages large format signs within the Boronia Activity Centre. It also says the sign is inconsistent with Clause 18.02, Clause 21.04 and with Clause 52.05 that discourages major promotional advertising along significant scenic/tourist routes such as the Dandenong Ranges. Council argues the overall height and scale of the sign will be visually intrusive and it will have a dominating impact on the streetscape, particularly on the south side of Boronia Road.</p> <p>Vic Roads is a referral authority under Section 55 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. It has no objection subject to the inclusion of six conditions that relate to lighting output, content of the sign and the timing of the images for greater than 45 continuous seconds.</p> <p>A sign that provides business identification information about a business or industry on the land where it is displayed. The information may include the name of the business or building, the street number of the business premises, the nature of the business, a business logo or other business identification information.^[2]</p> <p>1. I find that whilst the sign is likely to advertise activities conducted within the hotel, it may include promotion of goods sold on the land that include corporate branding and logos. This is beyond the definition of a business identification sign in the planning scheme. I therefore agree with Council that definition as an '<i>electronic major promotion sky sign</i>' is an appropriate description of the sign.</p>

26. Clause 21.05-7 (Advertising Signs) was included in the planning scheme as part of Amendment C150. It states there is a:

‘challenge to ensure that advertising signs are able to adequately and appropriately identify local businesses and services whilst taking into account their visual impact on the built form, streetscape and local amenity.’^[5]

The applicant highlighted Member Taranto’s review of a number of Tribunal decisions relating to major promotion signs that are subject to ‘Bush Boulevard’ policy in *iOM Pty Ltd v Knox City Council* [2013] VCAT 1556. She identified the following principles:

- Proposals for major promotion signs should be assessed from a neutral rather than negative point of view (*Kings Funeral Services v Greater Dandenong CC*)
- An inherent quality of major promotion signs is that they are typically placed in prominent locations and of a scale to maximise their exposure – that is they are designed to be seen and attract attention to themselves (*Caption Pty Ltd v Melbourne CC*).
- As a matter of principle, it cannot be fairly said that major promotion signs reduce visual amenity (*Wyndson Pty Ltd v Bayside CC*).
- Such signs are a legitimate commercial activity (*Wyndson Pty Ltd v Bayside CC*).
- Major promotion signs can serve an important function in relation to public information and awareness and can add interest, colour and character to an area (*Buckle Outdoor Advertising Pty Ltd v Port Phillip CC & Ors*).
- The critical element is that any major promotion sign is of a scale, form and location that is appropriate in the context of the existing physical environment (*Buckle Outdoor Advertising Pty Ltd v Port Phillip CC & Ors*).
- Any sign must be consistent with planning policies guiding future development and have regard to potential amenity impacts on surrounding uses (*Buckle Outdoor Advertising Pty Ltd v Port Phillip CC & Ors*).^[8]

I also accept these principles and that each sign must be assessed on its own merits, in relation to its design, site context and location, and consideration must be given to planning policies guiding the future development of the activity centre. Whilst understanding the applicant’s concerns, the local policies and the purpose and decision guidelines Clause 52.05 also require consideration of the effect of the visual appearance of major promotion signs on significant view corridors that are identified in a framework plan or local policy, which in this case, is the Dandenong Ranges.