



Rockhampton Region Planning Scheme

11 September 2014

Submission from the Outdoor Media Association

01 ABOUT THE OUTDOOR MEDIA ASSOCIATION

The Outdoor Media Association (OMA) is the peak national industry body representing most of Australia's Out of Home (OOH) media display and media production companies, as well as some media display asset owners.

Part of the role of the OMA is to develop constructive relationships with State and Local Governments and to contribute to the process of developing policies, laws and regulations for outdoor advertising that are both fair and equitable to governments, the community and the industry.

On behalf of its members, the OMA advocates for planning systems across Australia that will deliver the following:

- The recognition of outdoor advertising signage as a legitimate land use;
- The removal of the distinction between 'on-premise' and 'third-party' signage in planning policy and local laws;
- Provision of a set of fair and reasonable development standards that are appropriate for signage land use; and
- Provision for the responsible display of outdoor advertising signage within commercial and industrial zones and along transport corridors.

OMA members advertise 'third-party' products on billboards, free-standing advertising panels, buses, trams, taxis, pedestrian bridges and street furniture (including bus/tram shelters, public toilets, phone booths and street kiosks). OMA members also display advertisements in bus stations and train stations, at shopping centres, universities and airport precincts.

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02 VALUE OF THE INDUSTRY TO THE QUEENSLAND ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY

Advertising and marketing play a fundamental economic role in Australian society and in 2013 the OOH industry raised revenue of \$543.8 million, making up approximately 5% of advertising spend in Australia.

The OOH industry also plays a considerable role in the Queensland economy. In 2013, the OMA engaged Deloitte Access Economics¹ to estimate the economic contribution of the OOH industry in Queensland for the calendar year 2012. The Deloitte research found that in Queensland in 2012 the OOH industry:

- o Employed 150 full time equivalent staff;
- o Raised revenue of \$115 million;
- o Made a value added contribution to the Queensland economy of \$42.6 million;
- o Contributed an estimated \$10.43 million to the upkeep of public infrastructure; and
- o Donated a considerable amount of money and free advertising space to charities and 'not for profit' organisations.

The industry provides, maintains and cleans public infrastructure at no cost to local government, including bus shelters, footbridges, public toilets, bicycle stations and park benches.

Local businesses in Queensland place great importance on billboard advertising. It is a highly cost effective advertising media that provides an effective platform for businesses to promote their goods and services to the community as well as the tourist drive market. The OMA considers that such positive outcomes for small business owners would not be achieved through the utilisation of other less targeted and usually higher cost advertising mediums.

Examples of billboard advertising for local businesses in the Rockhampton area are provided below.



Capricorn Highway, Stanwell



Alexandra Street, Kawana

The OOH industry in Queensland differs from other states in that there are more independent members working in a range of different regional and metropolitan areas.

¹ Deloitte Access Economics, Contribution of the Outdoor Media Industry (Queensland), published 2013

Queensland has a much higher rate of local or regional advertising campaigns compared to other states (15.3 million in Queensland in 2010, compared to 4.7 million in NSW in 2010). This would indicate that outdoor advertising has a very positive impact for local business owners and operators in the state.

OMA members place a significant level of attention and investment in the development and presentation of billboards. Once a site is selected the industry liaises closely with all stakeholders from planning through to engineering to ensure designs meet Australian Standards and the billboard device integrates into the architecture of the landscape. The industry strives to ensure that devices are painted in a harmonious colour scheme, that vegetation selection and management is in keeping with other Council programmes and lighting on the devices is the latest technology in terms of energy efficiency and minimising environmental impact.

In addition to providing affordable advertising to local businesses, the OMA’s members also make contributions back to the community each year. In 2013, the outdoor advertising industry donated over \$13 million across Australia in advertising space to a variety of causes, including charities, education, arts and sporting organisations.

Outdoor advertising is also widely used by government bodies to advertise community messages such as road safety messages and health awareness campaigns.

Examples of billboard advertising for community messages within the Rockhampton area are provided below.



Bruce Highway, Fitzroy River Bridge

03 ROCKHAMPTON REGION PLANNING SCHEME

Distinction between advertising types

The OMA notes that the administrative definitions within the Planning Scheme (Table SC1.2.2) include a definition for an ‘advertising device’ and then a separate definition for a ‘third party sign’, as follows:

“Advertising device - Any permanent structure, device, sign, or the like intended for advertising purposes. It includes any framework, supporting structure or building feature that is provided exclusively or mainly as part of the advertisement.”

“Third party sign - Any sign type that advertised goods and/or services that are not sold, conducted, available or the like on the site/premises on which the advertising sign is located or the sign is located in a road reserve and immediately in front of a site/premises where the goods and/or service are available.”

The Queensland Department of Local Government and Planning has prepared a Draft Planning Note on Advertising Devices (Refer Attachment 1), under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 (SPA). The purpose of the note is to provide guidance to local governments about the role of planning schemes in managing outdoor advertising development. The Planning Note makes the following statement on page 2:

“The state has an interest in ensuring there is a consistent, efficient, effective and accountable development assessment system. The Department’s primary concerns with regulatory provisions applying to advertising devices relate to:

- *inappropriate regulation—including:*
 - *the complexity of operation—the inappropriate additional use of ‘sub definitions’ of advertising devices. Currently, some local governments under older planning schemes use a separate definition for third party advertising, and apply different levels of assessment for each of the separately defined advertising uses.”*

The OMA supports the removal of the separation of ‘third-party’ signage as a sub-definition of advertising devices in planning policy. This is particularly relevant for the Rockhampton Planning Scheme as the assessment criteria for Third Party Advertising is at the highest level of impact assessment and is not code assessable, as outlined below.

Level of Assessment for Third Party Signs

The OMA has noted that clause 5.8 of the Draft Planning Scheme sets out the ‘levels of assessment for operational work associated with an advertising device’. Clause 5.8 requires that all development applications for third party signs will be impact assessable, but does not always require this highest level of assessment for other non-third-party advertising devices.

The OMA is concerned with the proposed requirement for third party signs to be impact assessable for the following reasons:

- The requirement is anti-competitive for third-party advertisers. The OMA believes that all types of advertising devices should be assessed against the same criteria; and
- There may be a presumption in place at the Council, not to approve third-party signs. This is because the existing Rockhampton City Plan 2005 states that sign types nominated as Impact Assessable development are not preferred at any time

due to their impacts, or contribution to impacts on the visual amenity of a locality or the City, and accordingly the City image.

The Department of Local Government and Planning’s Draft Planning Note on Advertising Devices (page 2) also specifies that Planning Schemes should not allow for “inappropriate regulation—including inappropriate level of assessment (e.g. impact assessment where it could be code or self-assessable or exempt).”

In conclusion, the OMA submits that the planning impacts from a ‘third-party’ advertising device (relating to views, amenity issues, scale, etc.) are the same as all other types of advertising device and the type of assessment criteria for all advertising devices should be comparable.

Advertising Devices Code

The OMA fully supports the inclusion of an *Advertising Devices Code* (Section 9.4.2) within the Rockhampton Region Planning Scheme. In particular, the OMA supports the overall purpose of the Code (clause 9.4.2.2 (1)) which is to:

- (a) to facilitate economic activity through the advertising of business, products and services ; and*
- (b) to ensure that advertising devices do not adversely affect visual amenity, the character of a local area and public safety.*

The OMA is aware that the Code will be used as a key resource in the impact assessment process for third-party signs in the Region. For this reason, the OMA needs to emphasise that certain provisions within the Code will place undue restrictions on the industry and its business and community users.

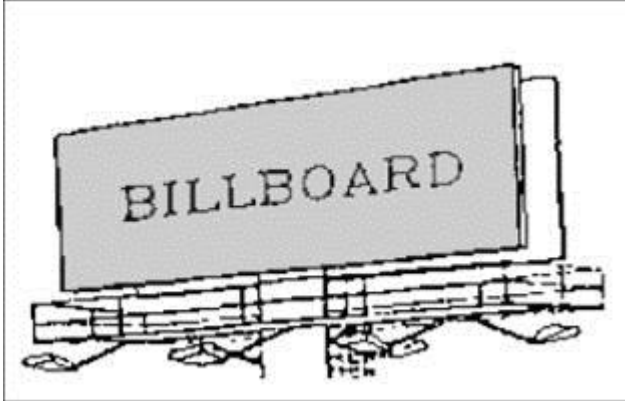
These provisions are contained within Tables 9.4.2.3.2 – *Preferred sign types and outcomes*, for Billboard Signs and Flush Wall Signs and Table 9.4.2.3.3 - *Sign types that are not a preferred sign type*, for Roof Signs. The relevant extracts from the Advertising Devices Code are provided below.

Billboard sign

a. Table 9.4.2.3.2 Preferred sign types and outcomes (part)

Specific sign types	Specific sign outcomes
A billboard sign is any advertising device generally characterised as having a width greater than its height and is normally positioned on one or more vertical supports. These advertising devices are generally freestanding signs however in exceptional circumstances they may be mounted on the side of a building.	For a billboard sign: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) only one (1) billboard sign (double or single sided) is located at any one (1) premise; and (b) the sign has a face area that does not exceed eighteen (18) square metres per side; and (c) the sign is located to ensure that the back of the sign is not exposed to, or visible from, any public place; and

Example:



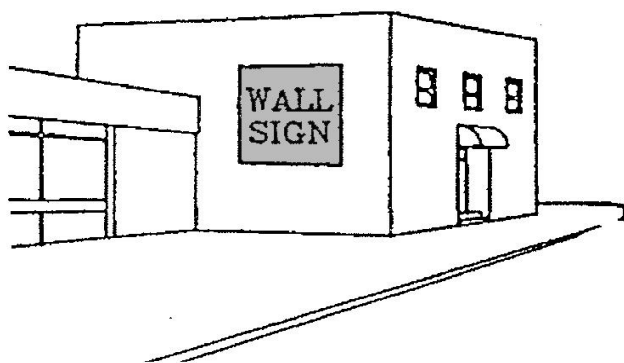
- (d) the sign is supported on single or multiple pylons to avoid unsightly back bracing; and
- (e) where visible to a public place, the area below the sign is landscaped with plants that have a mature height less than the height of the bottom of the sign above ground; and
- (f) if the sign is a freestanding billboard sign:
 - i) the sign is separated from any other freestanding billboard sign located on any premise in an urban zoned area by a minimum distance of 100 metres; and
 - ii) the sign is separated from any other freestanding billboard sign located on any premise in the rural zone by a minimum distance of 300 metres; and
 - iii) the sign has a maximum height that does not exceed five (5) metres; and
 - iv) the sign is set back from any property boundary by a minimum of three (3) metres or half the height of the sign, whichever is the greater.

Flush wall sign

b. Table 9.4.2.3.2 Preferred sign types and outcomes (part)

Specific sign types	Specific sign outcomes
<p>A flush wall sign is any advertising device painted or otherwise affixed to and confined within the limits of a wall of a building. It does not include a real estate sign, public notification sign, trade sign or election sign.</p>	<p>For a flush wall sign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the sign face area does not exceed three (3) square metres; and

Example:



- (b) the sign is located only on a part of a wall that is otherwise blank and the sign does not cover any opening (such as a window) or building design element (such as finery, articulated brickwork, etcetera); and
- (c) the sign does not project any further than twelve (12) millimetres from the wall; and
- (d) the sign does not project beyond the property boundary; and
- (e) the sign does not project above the eaves or parapet of the wall, or the external edges of the building element to which it is attached.

Roof Sign

a. Table 9.4.2.3.3 Sign types that are not a preferred sign type (part)

Specific sign types	Specific sign outcomes
A roof sign is any vertical advertising device located on the roof of a building.	A roof sign is not a preferred sign type.

The provisions contained within the above Advertising Devices Code clauses are impractical and unworkable for the outdoor media industry. In particular, the following prescribed outcomes are of concern because of their limiting nature:

- o A maximum of one (1) billboard sign to be located at any one premise;
- o The billboard sign has a face area that does not exceed eighteen (18) square metres per side;
- o The billboard sign has a maximum height that does not exceed five (5) metres;
- o The sign face of a flush wall sign does not exceed three (3) square metres in area;
- o The flush wall sign does not project any further than twelve (12) millimetres from the wall; and
- o A roof sign is not a preferred sign type.

Details of the reasons why the clauses are impractical and unworkable for the OOH industry follow over page.

Sign Size and Height of Billboards

The 'Specific Sign Outcomes' set out above, fail to match the size and height requirement of some of the industry's larger sized billboards, which are as follows:

- 'Super 8' – 18.26m² (8.3m wide x 2.2m high);
- 'Supersite' – 42.41m² (12.66m wide x 3.35m high);
- 'Portrait' – 42.4m² (5.3m wide x 8m high); and
- The above billboards have a varying height of 3m to 12m above the ground.

A common misunderstanding is that sign companies want to use the largest size sign structures available to project the largest advertisement. However, the purpose of an outdoor advertising sign is to ensure delivery of an advertising message in an effective and efficient manner. A maximum size of 48m² allows for the industry 'Supersite' size face area of 42.41m² with the addition of badged skirt which allows for structural and safety elements to be hidden from public view.

The larger the size of the advertising sign the higher construction costs for the industry, so there is also an economic benefit by only constructing an advertising sign that is of a size suitable for the location. The size of the sign is dependent on several factors such as the road size, road category and travel speed. Main arterial roads or major highways will require a larger sign to produce the greatest result whereas smaller roads and streets will require a sign much smaller in size in comparison.

The size and height requirements of billboards cannot be assessed in isolation from one another as in general a higher supporting structure is required to structurally support a larger sign, whereas, a lower structure is required to support a smaller sign. For example a 42.41m² 'Supersite' billboard cannot be supported by a 2-4m high structure.

There are also other issues relating to the height restrictions for freestanding signs that are not supported by the industry, as follows:

- Low-set signs can become attractive targets for vandalism and graffiti, as they are easier to access; and
- Height restrictions will limit the options for the installation of signage in a dip in the landscape, as this will limit the visibility of the sign from a higher roadway.

Another common misconception is that sign companies want sign structures to be as high as possible. However, the purpose of outdoor advertising signage is to ensure the delivery of an advertising message in an effective and efficient manner. A critical planning consideration for the location of any new advertising sign is the optimum height needed to obtain effective visibility of the advertising face to its desired audience, the majority of who are in their vehicles and viewing from road level.

Locating a sign structure too high can make its message delivery just as ineffective as one which is too low and unreadable. In addition, the greater the height, the more the construction cost so there is always a strong economic benefit to be gained by maintaining the sign height at the minimum optimum viewing level.

Spacing of Billboards

The OMA is aware that there is a concern within the community about an over proliferation of billboard signage on roads and transport corridors. However, the OOH industry does not want to see a multitude of signs in any one location as this weakens the commercial impact and viability of the signage. Visual amenity issues and concerns regarding clustering of signs can be addressed by requiring reasonable spacing between signs. The restriction of the number of signs to 'one per premises' could limit a significant income source for a rural property owner who has a large property frontage, where several suitably spaced signs could be accommodated.

It is understood that the decision to employ size, height and location restrictions would have been made in the interest of preserving the character, amenity and lifestyle values of the region. However, while the preservation of these values is important to achieving the outcomes of the Planning Scheme's Strategic Framework, it should not be at the expense of other, equally important strategic outcomes such as economic development.

Outdoor advertising is a cost-effective way for local organisations and small businesses to advertise their products, services and events. Many of the Queensland OMA members are themselves independent small businesses. The OMA is concerned that the requirements put forward by Council within the Draft Plan may restrict the outdoor advertising industry to such an extent that it could make outdoor advertising financially unviable and an ineffective advertising medium.

The requirements put forward by Council could have significant implications for the local businesses and consumers in the Rockhampton Region and it is for these reasons in particular that the OMA requests that the Council carefully assess our submission to the Draft Plan.

04 OMA MODEL ADVERTISING DEVICES CODE

In March 2012, the OMA finalised a 'Model Advertising Devices Code' specifically for Queensland Regional Council areas, including the Rockhampton Region (Refer Attachment 2). The OMA's Code sets out the development provisions required by the OOH industry to effectively meet the one of the key 'purposes' of the Council's Code, outlined above, which is *to facilitate economic activity through the advertising of business, products and services*.

The Council is invited to incorporate the OMA's Model Devices Code into the Planning Scheme and the OMA would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with Council.

05 DIGITAL SIGNAGE

In the past five years the use of digital rather than static signage has grown across Australia. Currently digital technology makes up 13.9%² of total OOH advertising revenue and it will continue to grow.

The OMA considers that the Planning Scheme's Advertising Devices Code should include performance criteria/outcomes for digital advertising signs, as demonstrated within the OMA's 'Model Advertising Devices Code'. Digital technology is increasingly being accepted as the new way to advertise given its flexibility, creativity and versatility, and it is important that this is acknowledged within the Planning Scheme.

The technology of outdoor advertising is constantly evolving, bringing with it new opportunities for better achieving public interest and industry objectives. Static and non-static electronic message display can add to a streetscape, be more environmentally friendly, avoid occupational health and safety issues associated with changing screens and help disseminate emerging or community information.

The OMA supports specific regulation to guide the development of such technology on a permissible and reasonable basis and has worked with Councils and State Governments across Australia on this specific matter. The Queensland Government has worked with the OMA to develop guidelines around digital signage which are included as part of the 'Department of Transport and Main Roads 'Roadside Advertising Guide 2013'.

06 CONCLUSION

OMA members are committed to working with Council to develop an advertising policy that ensures all advertising structures, regardless of size or content, are located in areas permitted by Council and are well integrated within the supporting environment to maintain the significant environmental features and urban fabric of the region.

The OMA appreciates your time in considering this submission and looks forward to having the opportunity to work with the Council to further develop the Rockhampton Region Planning Scheme and the provisions which regulate outdoor advertising throughout the region.

Should you have any questions regarding this submission, please contact the OMA's Senior Policy Adviser, Emma Luttrell on (02) 9357 9900.

² Based on second quarter 2014 revenue numbers – Outdoor Media Association

ATTACHMENT 1

DLGP SPA Practice Note

ATTACHMENT 2

OMA Model Advertising Devices Code

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