

OMA MODEL ADVERTISING DEVICES CODE

NEW SOUTH WALES



**OUTDOOR
MEDIA
ASSOCIATION**

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01 Purpose of the Model Advertising Devices Code

The Model Advertising Devices Code New South Wales (Model Code) is a best practice guideline for the regulation of Outdoor advertising devices. This guideline can be used by New South Wales local governments in the design of planning schemes, planning policies and local laws. The Model Code relates primarily to third party¹ advertising signage, but its provisions can also be applied to on-premise² advertising signage.

The Model Code provides a set of practical and effective planning controls for advertising devices. Overall, the Model Code aims to balance placement, design and utility outcomes for local government and the community with the commercial requirements of the Out of Home advertising industry.

The Model Code has been prepared to apply to advertising devices situated in both urban and rural settings. The Model Code applies to both large format (billboard style) advertising devices as well as small format styles (including bus shelter advertising panels and street level portrait advertising panels). It is not intended to apply to temporary advertising devices such as building wraps (structures installed to cover construction sites) and trailer signs, although the Outdoor Media Association (OMA) recommends that these advertising devices should be closely regulated by government.

The OMA works closely with state planning departments, state road authorities and local governments across Australia to ensure that planning controls promote safe, high quality signage and advertising that is well integrated with the surrounding environment. The OMA supports the reasonable regulation of Outdoor advertising signage and advocates for planning systems within Australia that:

- Recognise Outdoor advertising signage as a legitimate land use.
- Provide a fair and reasonable set of development standards for advertising signage.
- Allow for the evolution of the industry, including new styles of digital signage.
- Protect the industry's existing signage investments.

In Australia, advertising content is self-regulated. The OMA works closely with the Ad Standards, The Australian Association of National Advertisers, Advertising Council Australia and the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code Scheme to ensure that members only display advertising that meets acceptable community standards.

The Model Code includes a new provision developed by the OMA that requires signage operators to comply with the determinations of these self-regulatory bodies regarding content.

The Model Code applies to both large format (billboard style) advertising devices as well as small format styles (including bus shelter advertising panels and street level portrait advertising panels).

¹A sign advertising goods and/or services **not** associated (sold, stored or manufactured) on the site/premise on which the advertising sign is located.

²A sign advertising goods and/or services sold, stored or manufactured on the site/premise on which the advertising sign is located.

02 The Outdoor Media Association



The Outdoor Media Association (OMA) is the peak industry body representing Australia's Outdoor media display companies, production facilities and some media display asset owners. The organisation operates nationally, and prior to July 2005, traded as the Outdoor Advertising Association of Australia. It was first incorporated in 1939.

OMA members display third party advertisements across classic and digital signs, including signs on buses, trams, trains, pedestrian bridges, billboards, freestanding advertising panels and street furniture (bus/tram shelters, public toilets, bicycle stations, telephone booths and kiosks), as well as in office buildings, cafes, bus stations, railway stations, shopping centres, universities and airports.

Members of the OMA adhere to an industry Code of Ethics to ensure they operate their businesses responsibly and abide by the industry's regulatory framework.

03 Investing in our Community



Out of Home (OOH) advertising plays a fundamental role in the Australian economy and is a significant driver of economic growth, contributing almost \$1.3 billion in 2023.

For every dollar of value added by OOH advertising companies, there is more than another dollar of value added across the broader economy. And for every person directly employed in our industry, another two people are employed elsewhere³.

In 2023, the Australian OOH industry provided more than 21,500 public infrastructure assets for use by the community, including pedestrian bridges, bus shelters, retail kiosks, telephone booths, park benches and EV charging stations. The total replacement value for this infrastructure was estimated to be more than \$665 million⁴.

The OOH industry also plays an important role in the community, supporting the arts, sports and charitable organisations. It is also widely used by government bodies to advertise community messages such as road safety messages and health awareness campaigns.

OMA members contribute to the wider community through donations, in-kind services and free advertising space. In 2023, OMA members generously contributed more than \$97 million in donations to more than 300 charities.



³ 2023, Deloitte Access Economics, Economic Contribution of Out of Home advertising.

⁴ 2023, Deloitte Access Economics, Economic Contribution of Out of Home advertising.

04 Digital Signage



In recent years, the use of digital signage has grown across Australia. As of August 2024, nearly 75% of the industry's advertising revenue came from digital media and this percentage will continue to grow.

As our cities work to improve connectivity, digital signage will play a vital role in communication, messaging and way-finding.

Digital signage can be innovative and entertaining and is becoming one of the ways that people interact with their cities. Digital signs also contribute to placemaking by adding vibrancy, colour and lighting, which are seen as part of the make-up of a contemporary global city.

Public attitude testing undertaken for the City of Sydney found that 67% of people 'expect any large city to promote the use of new technology in advertising'⁵.

Digital signage offers a number of benefits to the Out of Home industry and the community including:

- **Community benefit** — digital advertising is more cost efficient for charities and governments. One digital sign can display many advertisements on a rotation without the cost of printing.
- **Utility** — digital screens can be used at short notice for emergency messaging and to provide up to date community information. They can also act as Wi-Fi hubs and charging stations.
- **Vibrancy** — digital technology allows for signage that is vibrant, has high image quality and is visually interesting, contributing to placemaking and the creation of exciting and lively urban spaces.
- **Environment** — digital screens produce no PVC or vinyl waste and can be designed to be energy efficient.

⁵ Sweeney Research, City of Sydney Outdoor Communication Report - July 2014

05 Road Safety



The Outdoor Media Association has undertaken research on driver behaviour in the presence of advertising signage, using eye-tracking glasses and a vehicle recording device. The research found that:

- Drivers spend the same amount of time (average 78%) with their eyes on the road whether in the presence of digital, static or on premise signs.
- There is no significant difference in the length of time people look (fixation duration) at digital signage compared with static signage.
- Drivers maintain the same safe average vehicle headway (distance between themselves and car in front) in the presence of all signage types.
- Over 99% of all glances towards advertising signage were less than 750 milliseconds, which is the minimum time needed by a driver to perceive and react to an unexpected event.

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Introduction

Chapter 3: Advertising and signage of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Industry and Employment) 2021 (IESEPP) provides the regulatory framework for the planning and development of Outdoor advertisements in State transport corridors within NSW. The *Transport Corridor Outdoor Advertising and Signage Guidelines* (the Guidelines), prepared by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment, provide additional guidance for the development and operation of roadside signs.

Local councils also regulate Out of Home advertising signage in local planning instruments (including Local Environmental Plans and Development Control Plans) for land outside of State transport corridors. However, some signs also require concurrence with the Guidelines and in the event of an inconsistency in regulation, IESEPP and the Guidelines take precedence.



Overall outcomes sought for advertising devices

CHARACTER, AMENITY AND VIEW CORRIDORS

To promote innovative, unique and creative signs that contribute positively to the character and vibrancy of the council area and integrate well with local buildings, streetscapes, the urban skyline and also the natural setting if placed within a rural zone.

Advertising devices should be compatible with the existing or proposed streetscape, present a visually attractive appearance and provide for a functional purpose in public spaces.

Where placed on buildings, advertising devices should be compatible with the design of the building and with the type, nature and scale of development within the locality.

Advertising devices should not compromise access to key vistas and view corridors or excessively block sunlight and breeze flows.

Newly placed advertising devices should not unreasonably obstruct existing advertising devices that are lawfully installed.

CHARACTER AND AREAS OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

If the advertising device is located in an area of heritage significance its design should be sensitive to the heritage features of the building or place.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Advertising devices, even if for temporary use, must be safely secured and not pose a physical hazard or obstruction to motorists, pedestrians, cyclists or residents.

Agreements should be in place to manage and maintain vegetation around advertising devices for visual amenity purposes and driver safety purposes, including tree trimming.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF ADVERTISING DEVICES

Advertising devices should cater for the needs of local and national businesses and governments, giving them a communication platform to share information about their brand, products and services with the public. In this way, advertising signage drives competition and is an important source of information for the community.

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COMMUNITY BENEFIT PAYMENTS FOR TRANSPORT CORRIDOR OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

The process for coming to an agreement for a Community Benefit Payment (CBP) for an outdoor advertising sign on transport corridor land should follow that which is outlined in section 4 of the **Transport Corridor Outdoor Advertising and Signage Guidelines**.

Community Benefit Payments payable to the Council should be calculated by negotiation between the Council and the media publisher.

Councils should have a prepared list of priority projects, created in consultation with Transport for NSW, which outlines how CBPs will be applied, prior to entering into an agreement for a CBP.

Performance criteria and acceptable outcomes for advertising devices

Advertising devices should be assessed against the Model Code. Compliance with the Model Code can either be assessed by the applicant (self-assessable) or by the local council (council-assessable). Advertising devices will comply with the Model Code if the 'Performance Criteria' and 'Acceptable Outcomes' listed below are addressed and achieved.

Advertising signs are an essential part of the fabric of our cities and towns. They provide critical information for the identification of local businesses, for promoting local goods and services, for informing the public about local community events and for national safety messages (e.g. driver fatigue and missing persons). Advertising signs also create a sense of place and with the application of good design can provide vibrant and active meeting places and centres of connectivity for the community.

LOCATION AND ZONING

Performance Criteria Development demonstrates compliance with the following performance criteria (P)		Acceptable Outcomes Development satisfies the following deemed-to-comply requirements (A)	
P1	Advertising devices to be located in appropriately zoned areas and are of a scale and nature that is compatible with both existing and/or proposed development in the zone.	A1	Advertising devices are usually located within the City Centre/Town Centre, Business/Commercial, Industrial, Mixed Use or Rural Zones. Street furniture is also located in Residential Zones.
P2	Advertising devices do not detract from an identified heritage place or the overall character and amenity of the locality (such as an open space, streetscape, town entrance, landscape feature and vista or view corridor).	A2	The sign face area is an appropriate size for its position and location.
		A3	Freestanding signs are supported on single or multiple pylons or on architecturally designed structures.

FREESTANDING SIGNS – HEIGHT AND SIZE

Performance Criteria Development demonstrates compliance with the following performance criteria (P)		Acceptable Outcomes Development satisfies the following deemed-to-comply requirements (A)	
P3	The height* of an advertising device complements and reflects the surrounding character and amenity of the locality and environs.	A4	The height of the advertising device is appropriate for its position and location.
P4	Freestanding advertising devices are of a size and scale which is considered appropriate for both the natural and built environment and does not create a physical hazard or obstruction to motorists, pedestrians, cyclists or residents.	A5	The sign face area is an appropriate size for its position and location.

*The height is measured from finished road level to the uppermost projection of the device.

An important design consideration for advertising signage is the optimum height needed to obtain effective visibility of the advertising face.

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FREESTANDING SIGNS (≥ 18M²) – SEPARATION DISTANCES

Performance Criteria		Acceptable Outcomes	
Development demonstrates compliance with the following performance criteria (P)		Development satisfies the following deemed-to-comply requirements (A)	
P5	Advertising devices are separated by distance in all zones so that the character and amenity of the locality and existing view and vista corridors are not adversely impacted.	A6	For all freestanding signs, a separation distance is required within the same direction of travel.
		A7	Where the topography of the environment creates a natural visual separation between two advertising devices, the separation distance in A6 does not apply.

The purpose of an advertising sign is to be noticed and safely read by the audience. A requirement for a reasonable spacing between signs can achieve this goal.

When signs are well spaced, the audience has the ability to absorb each advertising message and this increases its effectiveness.

ADVERTISING WALL SIGNS

Performance Criteria		Acceptable Outcomes	
Development demonstrates compliance with the following performance criteria (P)		Development satisfies the following deemed-to-comply requirements (A)	
P6	Advertising wall signs are designed to cover unused or unsightly wall spaces.* *Advertising wall signs do not include building wraps, which are temporary structures.	A8	The sign face area is an appropriate size for its position and location.
		A9	Advertising wall signs must not cover architecturally prominent building design features or other architectural elements that feature in the façade of the building.
		A10	Advertising wall signs should be contained within the outermost projection of the wall of the building and should be designed and positioned to ensure integration with the design of the existing building and character and amenity of the surrounding area.

ADVERTISING DEVICE ROOF SIGNS

Performance Criteria		Acceptable Outcomes	
Development demonstrates compliance with the following performance criteria (P)		Development satisfies the following deemed-to-comply requirements (A)	
P7	The advertising device is compatible with the design of the building and is consistent with the type, nature and scale of development in the locality.	A11	Advertising device roof signs must not cover architecturally prominent building design features or other architectural elements that feature in the façade of the building.

The Outdoor Media Association does not recommend a specific sign size for advertising wall signs and roof signs as this may restrict the optimal design outcomes for the space.

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BUS SHELTERS & STREET FURNITURE

Performance Criteria Development demonstrates compliance with the following performance criteria (P)		Acceptable Outcomes Development satisfies the following deemed-to-comply requirements (A)	
P8	The advertising face is compatible with the design of the bus shelter/street furniture and does not impact on the amenity of nearby residents.	A12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertising sign not to extend above height of bus shelter structure. Luminance of the advertising sign not to impact on local residents.

Advertising faces on bus shelters and street furniture require a different set of controls compared to large format signs as they are generally smaller, are often located closer together and can also be located in residential areas.

DIGITAL ADVERTISING DEVICES

Performance Criteria Development demonstrates compliance with the following performance criteria (P)		Acceptable Outcomes Development satisfies the following deemed-to-comply requirements (A)	
P9	Digital advertising devices, including Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) and Light Emitting Diode (LED) are allowed in appropriate zones.	A13	Digital advertising devices permitted in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City Centre, Commercial, Mixed Use and Industrial Zones; and/or Locations where there is a high flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
P10	Digital advertising devices do not create a road safety risk or hazard.	A14	The static images on LCD and LED advertising devices have a minimum dwell time of 6-8 seconds per advertisement.
		A15	There is an instantaneous transition from one message to the next (approximately 0.1 seconds). No transitional effects such as fly-in or fade-out are supported.
		A16	Advertisements on digital advertising devices are designed so that the amount of text is kept to a minimum and is no more than a driver can read at a short glance.
		A17	Advertisements are designed so that content cannot be mistaken for a traffic control device.
P11	Illumination of digital advertising devices does not create a safety risk to motorists or detract from the amenity of the local community.	A18	The luminance of digital advertising devices is modified according to location, time of day and ambient light conditions (refer to luminance levels table on page 11).
		A19	LCD and LED advertising devices use light sensors to adjust illumination levels according to the ambient light levels.
P12	Digital advertising devices minimise energy consumption where possible	A20	Where possible, digital advertising devices will be designed to minimise energy consumption.

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Digital advertising devices differ from conventional signs in that they have the capacity to display changing digital messages. The digital effect can contribute to the vibrancy of cities, streetscapes and contribute to placemaking. The Outdoor Media Association (OMA) advocates for a 6–8 second dwell time in all speed zones and for instantaneous transition from one message to the next avoiding transition effects (generally approximately 0.1 seconds). The 6–8 second dwell time is based on international best practice and is long enough for the change not be mistaken for animation.

Advertising devices may be illuminated either externally or internally. Either method is appropriate provided that the illumination does not cause glare to surrounding residences nor impact upon the safety of drivers.

LCD and LED advertising devices can appear to be too bright if the light is not dimmed during twilight, night time and inclement weather. Luminance levels can be controlled with light sensors that adjust the illumination according to the surrounding ambient light level. If there is full sun on the face of a digital sign, it can become difficult to read and maximum luminance output is needed to ensure that the advertising message is clear to the eye, to avoid distraction. The OMA has developed the following best practice guidance for luminance levels for different locations and time of day in conjunction with a lighting expert.

OMA members will work with the community to alleviate any concerns in relation to new digital signage, particularly in relation to luminance levels.

LIGHTING CONDITION	ZONE 1	ZONE 2	ZONE 3
Sun on face of signage	Maximum Output	Maximum Output	Maximum Output
Day time (full light conditions)	6,000–7,000 cd/m ²	6,000–7,000 cd/m ²	6,000–7,000 cd/m ²
Day time (dawn, dusk and inclement weather)	1,000 cd/m ²	700 cd/m ²	600 cd/m ²
Night time	500 cd/m ²	350 cd/m ²	300 cd/m ²

Zone 1 covers areas with generally very high off-street ambient lighting, e.g. central city locations.

Zone 2 covers areas with generally high to medium off-street ambient lighting.

Zone 3 covers areas with generally low levels of off-street ambient lighting e.g. most rural areas, many residential areas.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT			
Performance Criteria		Acceptable Outcomes	
Development demonstrates compliance with the following performance criteria (P)		Development satisfies the following deemed-to-comply requirements (A)	
P13	Legal advertising devices are not obscured by vegetation.	A21	A Vegetation Management Plan is in place to enable the pruning and maintenance of trees and shrubs adjacent to the advertising device, to ensure the sign continues to be legible for driver safety reasons.

CONTENT MANAGEMENT			
Performance Criteria		Acceptable Outcomes	
Development demonstrates compliance with the following performance criteria (P)		Development satisfies the following deemed-to-comply requirements (A)	
P14	Advertising devices should display content that is compliant with the Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA) Code of Ethics and must comply with any decisions by Ad Standards.	A22	A system of content management and complaint handling arrangements for the content displayed on advertising structures must be in place. Advertising content should be compliant with the AANA Code of Ethics. Where an advertisement is found by Ad Standards to be in breach of the AANA Code of Ethics, the determination must be complied with and the advertisement removed.

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