

Planning Panels Victoria

Latrobe Planning Scheme Amendment C151latr Latrobe City Signage Strategy 2025

Panel Report

Planning and Environment Act 1987

12 August 2026

How will this report be used?

This is a brief description of how this report will be used for the benefit of people unfamiliar with the planning system. If you have concerns about a specific issue, you should seek independent advice.

The planning authority must consider this report before deciding whether to adopt the Amendment.
[section 27(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the PE Act)]

For the Amendment to proceed, it must be adopted by the planning authority and then sent to the Minister for Planning for approval.

The planning authority is not obliged to follow the recommendations of the Panel, but it must give its reasons if it does not follow the recommendations. [section 31 (1) of the PE Act, and section 9 of the *Planning and Environment Regulations 2015*]

If approved by the Minister for Planning a formal change will be made to the Planning Scheme. Notice of approval of the Amendment will be published in the Government Gazette. [section 37 of the PE Act]

Planning Panels Victoria acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People as the traditional custodians of the land on which our office is located. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Planning and Environment Act 1987

Panel Report pursuant to section 25 of the PE Act

Latrobe Planning Scheme Amendment C151latr

Latrobe City Signage Strategy 2025

12 August 2026



David Merrett, Chair

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Glossary and abbreviations

ACZ1	Activity Centre Zone Schedule 1
ACZ2	Activity Centre Zone Schedule 2
the Amendment	Latrobe Planning Scheme Amendment C151latr
Council	Latrobe City Council
local policy	Clause 15.01-1L-01 (Signs)
PE Act	<i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i>
Planning Scheme	Latrobe Planning Scheme
the Strategy	Latrobe City Signage Strategy 2025
VCAT	Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

Overview

Amendment summary

The Amendment	Latrobe Planning Scheme Amendment C151latr
Common name	Latrobe City Signage Strategy 2025
Brief description	Implements the recommendations of the Latrobe Signage Strategy 2025
Subject land	All municipality
Planning Authority	Latrobe City Council
Authorisation	31 October 2025, with conditions
Exhibition	22 January to 23 February 2026
Submissions	Number of Submissions: 11 Opposed: 2 - Grant Williams - Fawkner Property

Panel process

The Panel	David Merrett
Directions Hearing	By video, 22 June and 1 July 2006
Panel Hearing	By video, 31 July 2026
Site inspections	Not required
Parties to the Hearing	Latrobe City Council represented by Daniel Mersin Fawkner Property represented by Naomi Beck of Niche Planning Studio
Citation	Latrobe PSA C151latr [2026] PPV
Date of this report	12 August 2026

Executive summary

Latrobe Planning Scheme Amendment C151latr (the Amendment) seeks to implement the recommendations of the Latrobe City Signage Strategy 2025 (the Strategy). The Amendment inserts Clause 15.01-1L-01 Signs (local policy), amends Schedules 1 (Traralgon) and 2 (Morwell) of the Activity Centre Zone and introduces the Strategy as a background document in the schedule to Clause 72.08 of the Latrobe Planning Scheme (Planning Scheme).

Eleven submissions were received following exhibition of the Amendment, however Council referred Submissions 10 and 11 to the Panel for consideration.

Key issues raised in submissions included:

- the Amendment being an overreach of the planning controls relating to business signage
- certain requirements, such as maintaining visibility into shopfront windows and limiting signage to within the building line, would restrict businesses' ability to effectively advertise and attract customers
- the proposed controls introducing unnecessary constraints and red tape for businesses that rely on signage for visibility and economic viability
- concerns that the restrictions on digital, illuminated and electronic signage are ambiguously drafted and insufficiently targeted
- the provisions do not adequately recognise the legitimate commercial role and character of Precinct 2 in Activity Centre Zone Schedule 1 (Princes Highway and Traralgon Station Corridor) as a gateway location and commercial corridor
- concerns regarding the proposed one-kilometre separation requirement for major promotion signs being arbitrary and unsupported by evidence
- lack of sufficient guidance for implementation of the integration and subordination requirements, creating uncertainty for applicants and decision makers
- assertion that the proposed provisions are largely redundant given the existing controls in Clause 52.05 and ACZ1 and may create interpretive uncertainty and unnecessary compliance costs without delivering additional planning benefit.

Fawkner Property (Submitter 11) owns a large shopping centre in the Traralgon Activity Centre and has an interest in signage controls for the centre. This is particularly relevant as it currently has a Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) review for a major promotion sign on its land. Importantly, the Panel does not consider the merits of this sign apart from the separation distance for these signs that is part of the local policy.

The Panel considered the strategic justification of the Amendment, and it recognises the role of a local planning policy for signage to guide decision making at the local level. The Panel considers the Amendment delivers net community benefit and encourages sustainable and appropriate signage proposals as required by Clause 71.02-3.

In regard to the issues identified above the Panel concludes:

- the local policy should apply to the Traralgon Activity Centre

- the operation of Clause 52.05, the ACZ1 and local policy does not result in undue duplication of provisions
- digital/illuminated/electronic signs should not be discouraged in the Strategy for regional/sub-regional retail centres, large town centres and mid valley/big box/industrial areas in the Strategy
- the policy for above verandah signs and shopfronts is appropriate
- the post exhibition changes to the use of the term's 'subordinate', 'dominate' and 'amenity' are appropriate
- there is a need to amend the policy guidelines for the separation distance for major promotion signs to provide more clarity
- there is a need to amend the strategy for major promotion signs within built form instead of freestanding signs.

Recommendations

Based on the reasons set out in this report, the Panel recommends that Council:

1. **Adopt Latrobe Planning Scheme Amendment C151latr with the changes recommended in this report.**
2. **Amend Clause 15.01-1L-01 as shown in Appendix B to:**
 - a) **amend the strategy for major promotion signs to:**
Encourage signs that are incorporated into the built form instead of freestanding sign structures.
 - b) **amend the policy guideline for major promotion signs to:**
Provide a minimum of 800 metre separation between major promotion signs on land that fronts the same road.
 - c) **amend the policy guideline for digital/illuminated/electronic signs to:**
Are sited away from activity centre gateways, town gateways and/or tourism gateways.

Further recommendation

The Panel makes the following further recommendation:

3. **Amend Figure 2 of the Latrobe City Signage Strategy 2025 to note digital/illuminated/electronic signs in regional/sub-regional retail centres, large town centres and mid valley/big box/industrial areas are limited, not discouraged.**

1 Introduction

1.1 The Amendment

The purpose of the Amendment is to implement the Latrobe City Signage Strategy 2025 (the Strategy) in the Latrobe Planning Scheme (Planning Scheme).

Specifically, the Amendment proposes to:

- insert a local policy at Clause 15.01-1L-01 (Signs) that will provide clear guidelines for two of eight character areas
- amend the Schedules 1 (Traralgon Activity Centre) and 2 (Morwell Activity Centre) to Activity Centre Zone (ACZ) to support clear guidance on what signs are appropriate in the activity centres
- amend the Schedule to Clause 72.08 (Background documents) to insert the *Latrobe City Signage Strategy (2025)* as a background document.

The Strategy seeks to:

- address gaps in policy by adding clear objectives, strategies and policy guidelines at Clause 15.01-1L-01 (Signs)
- assist applicants in understanding sign requirements, in particular what will and will not be supported in planning permit applications
- provide a Council-wide direction on signs through policy
- promote a high standard of sign design
- improve efficiency and ensuring a consistent approach is taken by Council in the consideration of sign applications.

The Amendment applies to all land in the municipality. The character areas are effectively defined by use, scale and type, and not the traditional approach to defining character by built form. The character areas are:

- regional retail centre (Traralgon) and Sub-regional centres (Moe and Morwell)
- large town centre (Churchill)
- mid-valley shopping centre (Morwell) and Big Box
- local and neighbourhood activity centres
- small town centres (Boolara, Glengarry, Toongabbie, Traralgon South, Tyers, Yallourn North and Yinnar)
- residential and rural areas
- heritage places
- major promotion signs.

The proposed policy, Activity Centre Zone Schedule 1 (ACZ1) and Activity Centre Zone Schedule 2 (ACZ2) do not use the term 'character areas.'

1.2 Background

Amendment C149latr implemented the recommendations of the *Latrobe Planning Scheme Review 2024* and amended the schedule to Clause 72.04 (Further strategic work) to identify the need for a signage strategy.

A background review report was prepared between 2021 and 2024 with a draft strategy completed in September 2025. Around the same time strategic planning staff provided advice on Planning Application 2025/240 lodged by Submitter 11 for an electronic major promotion sign in the Traralgon ACZ. Council refused the application as the Department of Transport and Planning objected to the application as a determining referral authority. It is due to be considered by VCAT on 2 September 2026.

Once the Amendment is approved Council intends to use information sheets that would outline which and in what circumstances signs would be encouraged and discouraged with figures similar to those in the Strategy. The proposed local policy does not use figures.

Eleven submissions were received, however Council referred Submissions 10 and 11 to the Panel for consideration.

1.3 The Panel's approach

Key issues raised in the referred submissions were:

- the Amendment being an overreach of the planning controls relating to business signage
- certain requirements, such as maintaining visibility into shopfront windows and limiting signage to in the building line, would restrict businesses' ability to effectively advertise and attract customers
- the proposed controls introducing unnecessary constraints and red tape for businesses that rely on signage for visibility and economic viability
- concerns that the restrictions on digital, illuminated and electronic signage are ambiguously drafted and insufficiently targeted
- the provisions do not adequately recognise the legitimate commercial role and character of Precinct 2 in ACZ1 as a gateway location and commercial corridor
- concerns regarding the proposed one-kilometre separation requirement for major promotion signs being arbitrary and unsupported by evidence
- lack of sufficient guidance for implementation of the integration and subordination requirements, creating uncertainty for applicants and decision makers
- assertion that the proposed provisions are largely redundant given the existing controls in Clause 52.05 and the ACZ1 and may create interpretive uncertainty and unnecessary compliance costs without delivering additional planning benefit.

The Panel has assessed the Amendment against the principles of net community benefit and sustainable development, as set out in Clause 71.02-3 (Integrated decision making) of the Planning Scheme.

The Panel considered all referred written submissions made in response to the exhibition of the Amendment and submissions presented to it during the Hearing. All submissions and materials have been considered by the Panel in reaching its conclusions.

This report deals with the issues under the following headings:

- Strategic issues
- Policy application and duplication

- Sign types
- Terminology
- Major promotion signs.

1.4 Versions of the Amendment

The Panel directed Council to circulate a 'Day 1' version of the Amendment documentation before the commencement of the Hearing. The Day 1 documents contained post exhibition changes to the local policy, ACZ1 and ACZ2 agreed to by Council (Document 7 – Attachment 6).

Except where stated otherwise, the Panel has reviewed and supports the changes in the Day 1 and final versions, which provide greater clarity and improve the operation of the controls.

The Panel's recommended local policy in Appendix B uses Council's Day 1 version as the starting point. There are no changes proposed by the Panel to the Day 1 versions of the ACZ1 and ACZ2.

1.5 Limitations

Council referred two of the 11 submissions to the Panel for consideration. The Panel has not turned its mind to other submissions as these were not before it.

Submitter 11 requested the Panel should address the definition of 'tourism gateway' and 'gateway and town centre identity' in the ACZ1. These matters are beyond the scope of the Amendment and were applied as part of the structure planning process for the Traralgon Activity Centre and implemented in the Planning Scheme by Amendment C106 in 2019.

Submitter 10 raised concerns with existing approved signs. The Panel does not consider this issue further.

2 Strategic issues

2.1 Planning context

This chapter identifies planning context relevant to the Amendment.

Table 1 Planning context

	Relevant references
Victorian planning objectives	- section 4 of the PE Act
Municipal Planning Strategy	- Clause 02.03-1 (Settlement – Activity centres) - Clause 02.03-5 (Built environment and heritage – pre and post contact heritage)
Planning Policy Framework	- Clause 11.03-1L-01 (Activity centres) - Clauses 15.01-1S (Urban design) and 15.01-1L (Urban design)
Other planning strategies and policies	- Plan for Victoria, Pillar 3 - Gippsland Regional Growth Plan
Planning scheme provisions	- Activity Centre Zone
Planning scheme amendments	- Latrobe Planning Scheme Amendment C149latr (Latrobe Planning Scheme Review 2024)
Ministerial directions	- Ministerial Direction 11 (Strategic Assessment of Amendments)
Planning practice notes	- Planning Practice Note 46: Strategic Assessment Guidelines, September 2022

2.2 Strategic justification

(i) Submissions

No submission considered the Amendment should be abandoned because it lacked strategic justification. Of the two submissions referred to the Panel:

- Submitter 10 considered the signage policy was unnecessary, placed too many restrictions on signs and was planning overreach
- Submitter 11 requested redrafting of provisions to avoid duplication of policy contained in Clause 52.05. The Panel addresses this matter in Chapter 3.

Both submitters considered the Amendment would increase regulatory burden for the approval of signage.

As part of its submission Council referred to other examples of a signage local policy in the Ballarat, Greater Geelong, Warrnambool and Wangaratta planning schemes that it considered had similar activity centres where additional guidance on signage was required. Council noted the role of local policy is to provide guidance at the local level on

how state-standard provisions such as signage can respond to a local context. Council submitted¹:

The new Policy will be there to guide applicants and decision makers to consider the local context and provide qualitative guidance, noting Clause 52.05 does not provide context for signs within Latrobe City.

Council's position was that the Strategy *"aims to make it simpler to apply for a sign permit by streamlining the planning application process."*

(ii) Discussion

The Panel does not agree with Submitter 10 that the proposed signage policy is planning overreach and not required. There is a role for local policy to guide decision making for signage at the local level. The Panel does not consider the policy will result in an increased regulatory burden because it seeks to encourage appropriate signage types and locations and clearly outline where other signage should be discouraged. The Amendment does not impact the state-standard triggers for signage planning applications.

The Panel considers the Amendment delivers net community benefit and encourages sustainable and appropriate signage proposals as required by Clause 71.02-3.

For the reasons set out in this report, the Panel concludes that the Amendment:

- is supported by, and implements, the relevant sections of the Planning Policy Framework
- is consistent with the relevant Ministerial Directions and Practice Notes
- is well founded and strategically justified
- should proceed subject to addressing the more specific issues raised in submissions as discussed in the following chapters.

The Panel recommends Council:

Adopt Latrobe Planning Scheme Amendment C151latr with the changes recommended in this report.

¹ Document 9, Council Part B submission, paragraph 145

3 Policy application and duplication

(i) The issues

The issues are whether:

- the policy proposed for Clause 15.01-1L-01 should apply to the ACZ1 area in Traralgon
- there is duplication between the proposed policy, the ACZ1 and Clause 52.05.

(ii) Submissions

The primary position of Submitter 11 was to remove the application of the signage policy from the Traralgon Activity Centre. Council noted this was not requested as part of the objection to the Amendment but was included as a new item in its submission and the panel presentation. Council did not support this request.

Council provided tables in its Part B submission that compared the decision guidelines of Clause 52.05, and strategies and policy guidelines of the ACZ1 and local policy. It concluded the assessment demonstrated the complementarity of provisions, not the duplication of them. Council believed the new policy is there to support gaps when considering signage planning applications under Clause 52.05 where local provisions can add value.

Council submitted²:

Local policy introduces a nuanced approach to assessing an application against the planning scheme. Where Particular Provisions, specifically at Clause 52.05-08 Signs provide a State context for signs, the proposed local provisions at Clause 15.01-1L-01 Signs ensures decision makers and applicants know exactly what signs are encouraged in the referenced character areas.

Council accepted there may be some unavoidable policy overlap as the policy, zone and state provision address the same matter, but this provides a more fundamental understanding at the local level of what is encouraged. It submitted³:

Officers agree that there is an overlap of policy between Schedule 1 and 2 to Clause 37.08 and the proposed Clause 15.01-1L-01 Signs, however the proposed policy guidelines provide a general requirement across all areas in the municipality and are there to support decision-makers when assessing an application outside of the Activity Centre Zone. Accordingly, further context is provided at Schedule 1 and 2 to Clause 37.08 noting that the Activity Centre Zones have a unique character.

Council noted that the Traralgon Activity Centre is due to be reviewed in 2028 and the Morwell Activity Centre in 2030 where a more holistic approach to planning in these centres will be completed.

(iii) Discussion

The Panel agrees with Council that the removal of the ACZ1 from consideration under the proposed policy was not an issue raised in the original submissions to the exhibited Amendment. This position seems to contrast with Fawkner Property's written submission

² Document 9, Council Part B submission, paragraph 25

³ Ibid, paragraph 34

which stated, “*whilst we are overall supportive of the Amendment...*” and then identifies other specific changes. It would be counter-intuitive and unjustified to not apply the local signage policy application to Council’s major commercial centre at Traralgon because there is considerable demand for signage which needs to be managed.

The Panel is satisfied that the Amendment does not duplicate Clause 52.05 decision guidelines, strategies and policy already contained in the Planning Scheme. An example provided by Council is contained in Table 2.

Table 2 Sample comparison between Clause 52.05, ACZ1 and local policy

Clause 52.05	ACZ1	Clause 15.01-1L-01
The relationship to the site and building: The scale and form of the sign relative to the scale, proportion and any other significant characteristics of the host site and host building. The extent to which the sign displays innovation relative to the host site and host building The extent to which the sign requires the removal of vegetation or includes new landscaping.	Signage on the building façade must be limited, windows and doors should retain line of sight through glazing to ensure passive surveillance and an active interface with the streetscape.	Strategy Encourage signs that are integrated into built form and consider architectural or landscape features of the host building or site. Policy Guidelines Prioritise signage that does not obstruct the natural line of sight through windows. Strategy Minimise the number and repetition of signs on a single site and streetscape. Prioritise business identification signs as the main type of signage. Policy Guidelines Limit the number of signs on a site through placement in strategic locations that present directly to the target audience.

Source: Panel

(iv) Conclusions

The Panel concludes the:

- local policy proposed for Clause 15.01-1L-01 should apply to the Traralgon Activity Centre
- operation of Clause 52.05, the ACZ1 and local policy does not result in undue duplication of provisions.

4 Sign types

(i) The issues

The issues are whether:

- digital/illuminated/electronic signage should be supported in the ACZ1
- above verandah signs and shopfronts should have specific policy provisions to guide decision making.

(ii) Submissions

Submitter 11 focussed on the impact upon the Traralgon Centre Plaza which was built in 1985 with 56 retail tenants and has a regional service role. The land is in Precincts 1A, 1C and 2 of the ACZ1. Precincts 1C and 2 are in signage Category 1 and Sub-Precinct 1A is in signage Category 3. Submitter 11 referred to a diagram contained in the Strategy but not in the policy that uses a traffic light system for limiting, encouraging or discouraging signage. This is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Sign type preferences

	Legend									
	Encouraged	Limited	Discouraged							
	Above Verandah	Pole	Panel	Sky	Digital/Illuminated/Electronic	Corporate Building Colours	Business Identification	Promotion	Major Promotion	Sign Structure
Regional/Sub-regional Retail Centres	Discouraged	Limited	Encouraged	Limited	Discouraged	Discouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Discouraged
Large town centres	Discouraged	Limited	Encouraged	Limited	Discouraged	Discouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Discouraged
Mid Valley/Big Box Retail/Industrial	Discouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Discouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged
Local/Neighbourhood Activity Centres	Discouraged	Discouraged	Limited	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Encouraged	Limited	Discouraged	Limited
Small town centres	Discouraged	Discouraged	Limited	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Encouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Limited
Residential/Rural Areas	Discouraged	Discouraged	Limited	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Encouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Limited
Heritage Places	Discouraged	Discouraged	Limited	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Encouraged	Limited	Discouraged	Limited

Figure 2: Character Area to Sign Type Guideline

Source: Latrobe City Signage Strategy 2025, page 7

Submitter 11 was concerned that digital/illuminated/electronic signs were discouraged in regional/sub-regional retail centres and this would impact a planning application for signage.

Council acknowledged this was odd for land located mainly in a Category 1 signage area and agreed to change this to 'limited', noting that this figure was not included in the proposed policy.

Submitter 10 questioned why above verandah signs, shopfront signage and general signage placement should be controlled by the new policy. Council explained that applying excessive signage to shopfronts is discouraged to ensure there is an appropriate level of passive surveillance from the street into the shop, and to provide for activated spaces at the front of shops.

Council noted above-verandah signs were discouraged rather than prohibited because the Strategy *"encouraged signage within the built form to eliminate visual clutter."*

(iii) Discussion

The Strategy is proposed to be a Background Document and will not form part of the Planning Scheme. The Panel agrees the discouragement of digital/illuminated/electronic signs in the Traralgon Activity Centre would be at odds with its role as the largest retail centre in the municipality and the current drafting of the relevant policy guideline which states:

Support digital, illuminated and electronic signs in urban areas that:

- Maintain views and vistas along streetscapes
- Minimise visual distraction and saturation of advertising in public areas
- Retain trees and high-quality landscaping
- Retain architectural elements and features
- Minimise disturbance and impacts on places of heritage significance
- Are sited away from CBD gateways, town gateways and/or tourism gateways.

The term 'digital/illuminated/electronic signs' is a generic reference to signage types and not specifically defined signs under Clause 73.02. The Panel considers the terms 'limit' indicates the relevant signs are not discouraged, which is the point being made by Submitter 11, and should be guided by the relevant policy guideline above.

An alternate approach would be not to update the background document as it sits outside of the Planning Scheme but in this case, with the agreement by Council, and for the avoidance of doubt, the Panel supports the need to update Figure 2 of the Strategy. This should also include large town centres and mid valley/big box/industrial areas.

The Panel agrees with Council there is a need to discourage excessive signage to shopfronts and above verandah signs. The Panel supports the policy guideline to *"prioritise signage that does not obstruct the natural line of sight through windows."*

(iv) Conclusions and recommendations

The Panel concludes:

- The Strategy should limit rather than discourage digital/illuminated/electronic signs in regional/sub-regional retail centres, large town centres and mid valley/big box/industrial areas.
- The policy for above verandah signs and shopfronts is appropriate.

The Panel informally recommends:

Amend Figure 2 of the Latrobe City Signage Strategy 2025 to note digital/illuminated/electronic signs in regional/sub-regional retail centres, large town centres and mid valley/big box/industrial areas are limited, not discouraged.

5 Terminology

(i) The issue

The issue is whether the terms 'subordinate', 'dominate' and 'amenity' in the ACZ1 and local policy are appropriately defined.

(ii) Submissions

Submitter 11 considered the term 'subordinate' in the ACZ1 and 'dominate' and 'amenity' in the local policy are not appropriately defined.

The exhibited ACZ1 used the term 'subordinate' in:

The scale and location of signage should be subordinate to the built form and site features.

The exhibited policy used the term 'dominate' in:

Sign structures should be designed in a manner to not dominate the surrounding area or detract from the host or site building.

The exhibited policy used the term 'that do not impact on amenity' in:

Restrict digital, illuminated and electronic signs in urban areas that do not impact on amenity.

Submitter 11 considered this phrase to be *"ambiguous and could literally be interpreted as restricting those signs that have no amenity impact, which is a reading that would make the provision largely meaningless."* Council agreed that the wording of amenity could be ambiguous and proposed the following replacement policy guideline:

Avoid digital, illuminated and electronic signs in urban areas that impact on amenity.

Council benchmarked other Council sign policies (for example, Wangaratta), which found the term 'avoid' was regularly used.

Council agreed with Submitter 11 that both terms could be better defined and proposed to replace 'subordinate' with 'complementary' in the ACZ1 and a new reference in the ACZ1 for 'dominate', as follows:

Encourage the appearance, size, illumination and other aspects of signs to complement the building, or site on which they are displayed and not detract from the character of the surrounds.

Council supported 'complementary' because⁴:

The term complementary clearly supports the findings from the *Latrobe City Signage Review (2025)*, where visual clutter resulting from excessive numbers of signs, as well as their placement was prevalent in Regional and Sub-regional centres. The term complementary can be used to ensure signage is not the 'only' feature which supports a business' visual identification but complements the built form of which it resides.

Council submitted 'complementary' was currently used in the ACZ1 and the change will ensure a consistent approach to its use.

In response to the change to the ACZ1, Submitter 11 noted:

This introduces a further undefined concept. The land in Precinct 2 of the Traralgon Activity Centre, for example, has a character defined by commercial and highway facing uses. This

⁴ Document 9, Council Part B submission, paragraph 127

criterion should not be capable of being applied to discourage or prohibit commercial signage consistent with that character.

Council proposed an administrative correction to the Day 1 local policy guideline for digital/illuminated/electronic signs in the local policy to read:

- Are sited away from activity centre gateways, town gateways and/or tourism gateways.

(iii) Discussion

The Panel supports Council's response to the terms used in the local policy and ACZ1 and the removal of a double-negative in the one sentence for references to amenity. There will always be a degree of subjectivity in interpreting local policy and zone provisions. The Panel supports the current and reinstated reference to 'complementary' in considering sign proposals and the replacement of 'dominate' with the character of the surrounds. These terms are well understood in planning.

The Panel does not consider the change to the ACZ1 leads to further ambiguity.

The Panel supports the local policy changes as they ensure appropriate signage outcomes. The Panel notes the changes are contained the Day 1 documents apart from the administrative correction.

(iv) Conclusions and recommendation

The Panel concludes the post-exhibition changes to the use of the term's 'subordinate', 'dominate' and 'amenity' are appropriate by:

- replacing 'subordinate' with 'complementary'
- replacing 'dominate' with a reference to the 'character of the surrounds'
- referring to amenity in positive terms and avoiding a double-negative in the one sentence.

The Panel recommends:

Amend the policy guideline for digital/illuminated/electronic signs in Clause 15.01-1L-01 as shown in Appendix B to:

- Are sited away from activity centre gateways, town gateways and/or tourism gateways.***

6 Major promotion signs

(i) The issue

The issue is whether the local provisions for major promotion signs are appropriate.

(ii) Submissions

Submitter 11 requested two changes to the provisions that relate to major promotion signs. It requested:

- the deletion of “*over freestanding sign structures*” from the following strategy:
 - encourage signs that are incorporated into the built form over freestanding sign structures.
- the 800-metre separation distance between signs is arbitrary and should be qualified with evidence.

The separation distance was exhibited as 1,000 metres and Submitter 11 considered this would effectively prohibit any new major promotion sign along the Princes Highway in the Traralgon Activity Centre. Council proposed to revise this to 800 metres and considered that, in relation to the current proposed major promotion sign application the subject of a VCAT review, the amended distance would allow for an additional sign.

Council submitted⁵:

Council officers reviewed the existing placement of major promotion signs within the Traralgon Activity Centre and the periphery areas and note that they are generally placed at approximately 800 metre intervals along the Princes Highway.

Council noted there were other reasons aside from separation distance that it did not support the proposed sign.

(iii) Discussion

At the Hearing, Council agreed the term ‘over freestanding sign structures’ conveys a built form outcome and should be replaced by ‘instead of freestanding sign structures.’

The policy guideline for major promotion sign separation states:

Provide a minimum of 800 metre separation between major promotion signs on the same road.

The Panel noted at the Hearing that ‘on the same road’ may be interpreted as being within the road reserve, and Council agreed this should be amended to:

Provide a minimum of 800 metre separation between major promotion signs on land that fronts the same road.

There is a policy guideline that provides opportunities for major promotion signs in 800 metres if they are located on and in existing blank walls.

The Panel is cognisant of the current VCAT review and apart from the separation distance makes no consideration of its merits.

⁵ Document 9, Council Part B submission, paragraph 105

(iv) Conclusions and recommendations

The Panel concludes:

- The Clause 15.01-1L-01 strategy for major promotion signs should encourage signs within built form rather than on freestanding structures.
- Clause 15.01-1L-01 policy guidelines for separation distance for major promotion signs should reduce the minimum separation between major promotion signs on land that fronts the same road from 1,000 metres to 800 metres.

The Panel recommends:

Amend the strategy for major promotion signs in Clause 15.01-1L-01 as shown in Appendix B to:

Encourage signs that are incorporated into the built form instead of freestanding sign structures.

Amend the policy guideline for major promotion signs in Clause 15.01-1L-01 as shown in Appendix B to:

Provide a minimum of 800 metre separation between major promotion signs on land that fronts the same road.

Appendix A Document list

No.	Date	Description	Provided by
Referred documents – Amendment C151latr			
1	3 Jun 26	Council report seeking amendment authorisation	Latrobe City Council (Council)
2	3 Jun 26	Authorisation letter from DTP	Council
3	3 Jun 26	Amendment documents: a. Explanatory report b. Instruction sheet c. Clause 15.01-1L-01 d. Schedule 1 to the Activity Centre Zone e. Schedule 2 to the Activity Centre Zone.	Council
4	3 Jun 26	List of submitters	Council
5	3 Jun 26	Referred submissions 10 and 11	Council
Tabled documents – Amendment C151latr			
6	1 Jul 26	Panel Directions and Timetable (version 1)	Planning Panels Victoria (PPV)
7	24 Jul 26	Part A submission and attachments: a. Panel Directions and Timetable letter b. Authorisation letter c. Explanatory report d. Submissions e. Submissions assessment table f. Day 1 documents g. Table of proposed changes h. Council strategic assessment	Council
8	24 Jul 26	Post exhibition changes	Council
9	30 Jul 26	Part B submission and attachments: a. Response to submissions b. Submissions assessment table c. Planning application process chart	Council
10	30 Jul 26	Submission and presentation	Fawkner Property
11	31 Jul 26	Presentation	Council
12	31 Jul 26	Closing submission	Council

Appendix B Panel recommended version of Clause 15.01-1L-01

The Panel recommended changes are based on the Day 1 version of the provisions (Document 7d) and are shown as: Tracked Added ~~Tracked Deleted~~

Signs

Policy application

This policy applies to all development of land for signs.

Objectives

- To ensure signs respond to the natural setting and/or urban context in which they are located.
- To ensure signs do not alter or obscure views of significant natural or built features.
- To avoid signs that interfere with movements and viewlines of the public realm.
- To enhance the appearance of development in Latrobe through well presented signs.

Strategies

- Encourage signs that are integrated into built form and consider architectural or landscape features of the host building or site.
- Minimise the number and repetition of signs on a single site and streetscape.
- Prioritise business identification signs as the main type of signage.
- Avoid signs that will impair the movement, visibility and functionality of the public realm and infrastructure.
- Avoid digital, illuminated and electronic signs in urban areas that impact on amenity.

Policy Guidelines

- Avoid signs that are a distraction and/or impact on movement and/or sight lines of active transport, road users and rail corridors.
- Encourage the appearance, size, illumination and other aspects of signs to complement the building, or site on which they are displayed and not detract from the character of the surrounds.
- Prioritise signage that does not obstruct the natural line of sight through windows.
- Limit the number of signs on a site through placement in strategic locations that present directly to the target audience.
- Support digital, illuminated and electronic signs in urban areas that:
 - Maintain views and vistas along streetscapes.
 - Minimise visual distraction and saturation of advertising in public areas.
 - Retain trees and high quality landscaping.

- Retain architectural elements and features.
- Minimise disturbance and impacts on places of heritage significance.
- Are sited away from [activity centre](#) ~~CBD~~ gateways, town gateways and/or tourism gateways.

Heritage Places

Policy application

This policy applies to all development of land for signs within a heritage overlay.

Strategies

- Discourage buildings being painted in corporate colours.
- Discourage buildings and works related to signs that may damage or alter beyond repair of the significant building fabric or features.
- Avoid sign structures that detract from heritage features and values.
- Avoid digital, illuminated and electronic signs.
- Avoid colours that appear in contrast of the heritage features of the building or place.

Major Promotion Signs Policy application

This policy applies to all development of land for major promotion signs.

Strategies

- Discourage major promotion signs that may restrict the development potential of a site.
- Encourage signs that are incorporated into the built form [instead of](#) ~~over~~ freestanding sign structures.
- Avoid major promotion signs that interface with sensitive land use areas.

Policy Guidelines

- Discourage more than one major promotion sign at any intersection.
- Provide a minimum of 800 metre separation between major promotion signs on [land that fronts](#) the same road; and
- Support major promotion signs within 800 metres on the same street if they are within regional and sub-regional centres and activate an existing blank wall, provided they are fixed to a building, wholly within the built form and do not project outside of the building footprint.

Policy documents

Consider as relevant:

Latrobe City Signage Strategy (Latrobe City Council, 2025)