

## Visual Impact Principles

Agency and public concerns regarding the impact upon visual amenity of the proposed development when viewed from existing major roads are addressed below. These roads are: the F3 Sydney to Newcastle Freeway, the Newcastle Link Road, Minmi Road south of Link Road and Woodford Street in Minmi Township.

This statement reviews the likely impacts of the proposal when seen from each of these vantage points and the measures Coal & Allied have taken to minimize this impact.

### **F3 Sydney to Newcastle Freeway**

Views from the Freeway to the Minmi Village Extension precinct are broken by noise barriers, roadside cuttings and trees existing within the road reserve. This limits views into the site to oblique glimpses. The concept plan has adopted the following principles to lessen impact upon these brief and indirect view lines:

1. Larger lots sizes in the Minmi Extension Precinct ensure that tree cover is retained within lots.
2. Trees are retained within riparian corridors.
3. Large areas of open space dissect this precinct based upon existing tree lined drainage corridors, supplemented by regeneration of those corridors cleared by previous land use activities. Large areas of open space run adjacent to the freeway corridor preserving existing vegetation and screening out any views of housing closer to Woodford Street.
4. Areas of steeper slope through this precinct will ensure that housing responds to slope and preserves steeper embankments. Over time cultivated planting with individual lots will grow to soften the impact of the housing.

As a result the glimpses into the site from the Freeway will be through retained trees towards a residential area largely screened by existing topography (the precinct occupies the sides of a gully network) and by a mix of retained trees and cultivated planting.

### **Newcastle Link Road**

1. Views into both Link Road North and South Precincts here are broken by existing heavily vegetated embankments by the roadside with brief views down into gully systems within the estate. In both precincts vegetation has been preserved within these gullies/ creek corridors in either public open space or private lots outside the Building Location Envelope (BLE). BLEs have been sited away from the creek lines to allow vegetation to be preserved.
2. The Concept Plan has provided a 40m wide vegetation corridor along the southern edge of the Link Road reserve which adds to the already significant width of the road corridor, thus providing a continuous buffer of existing trees along the road corridor.
3. An acoustic buffer will also be located at the edge of the residential development further screening the proposed housing from view (in blocking noise impacts the walls necessarily block views to the houses).
4. The possible upgrading of the Link Road (shown in the Link Road cross-sections in the PPR response) shows there will be minimal impact on the cleared width of the road corridor and therefore is unlikely to greatly reduce the depth of existing vegetation in the road corridor.

5. Both major entries into the site from Link Rd (Woodford Street and Minmi Boulevard) are made through areas of significant tree retention thus filtering views into the site and providing green gateways at the beginning of these roads.

6. Asset protection zones along the creek corridors effectively widen the area of trees retained along the creek lines and push the housing further back from the view lines down the gullies.

As a result views into the site from the Link Road are either blocked by existing cut embankments, retained vegetation and acoustic barriers or are down retained tree lined gully systems. Therefore the visibility of proposed housing will be low.

### **Minmi Road (South of Link Road)**

The views east into the Link Road South Precinct are either along the cleared maintained power easements or into the backs of the very large lots accessed from internal roads at a lower level than Minmi Road. The steep topography along the estate boundaries means that housing can only be placed lower down the slope and not facing or backing onto the road corridor. Asset protection zones ensure trees are retained along the road reserve and that the housing is located much further down the slope. Therefore views into the Link Rd South estate are limited by the foreground of trees within the road reserve and rear of proposed lots.

Oblique views into the site along the power easements are inevitable and are a result of the existing use of the site. A Boulevard has been included between the transmission easements which will be planted with large trees to reduce the visual impact of the transmission line infrastructure

### **Woodford Street**

This road runs along a ridge heading north from Link Rd into the existing Minmi Township. This is a transitional area from the tree lined major roads into a progressively more urban environment. This implies a significant change from the current undeveloped situation. However the experience is mitigated by:

1. Preserving areas of existing vegetation at the entry into Woodford Street
2. Providing screen fencing and landscape buffering (approx. 3-5m wide) along the road corridor thus containing views into the site to the foreground.
3. The addition of Garden House Park, another significant green relief in the experience of driving into the Minmi township
4. That the topography recedes/ descends either side of the road allowing oblique views over housing down to the open space and riparian corridors to the west of the Minmi township.
5. That much of the housing near the top of the slopes either side of the road are lower density and slope responsive: Conservation, Creek side or Hill side Character types.
6. Part of Woodford Street is lined by the existing low density housing of Minmi Township.
7. Over time cultivated planting within lots will help to soften the appearance of the housing on slope either side of the road.

8. The major collector roads in the Concept Plan run along ridgelines wherever possible helping to preserve vegetation through buffering along more visible ridgelines and pushing housing further down the slopes/ away from the road.

As a result the views into the site will be limited to foreground views of retained trees, new parkland or landscape buffering. Distant views are across lower density housing areas broken by vegetated riparian corridors. This provides a softer transition into the current township along the fringe of the denser parts of Minmi and toward the proposed Minmi Village and Minmi East High Street.

In summary the limited visual impact of the proposed development will be minimised from the above vantage points through the following:

- The placement of large lots on steep slopes and the retention of vegetation on these slopes
- The retention of vegetation on major ridgelines in Link Rd North.
- The retention of drainage corridors and vegetation that in the long term will continue to mature.
- Existing fringe vegetation along major thoroughfares such as Link Rd, the F3 and Minmi Boulevards in Link Rd North
- Existing trees retained within Asset Protection Zones
- Landscape buffering and screen fencing along lower density areas of Woodford Street and Proposed Minmi Boulevard
- The application of slope responsive housing types on steeper and more elevated parts of the site which are closest to the existing major road corridors.
- Over time as street trees are planted and mature, as well as trees in private lots, urban development will become filtered.