A connection shared by all my texts is selling Wellington as a tourist destination. This connection is significant because the region’s tourist industry depends on the success of its advertising to generate revenue. As the capital city of New Zealand, Wellington is associated with boring politicians and dusty government departments. The challenge for the Wellington tourist industry is to overcome this stereotype.

The first advertisement features a young couple and a strong music track with the repeated phrase “can you feel it?” The target audience is young couples, probably professionals who have disposable income, since the advert focuses solely on the main couple and a day spent spending money in Wellington. The purpose of the advert is to suggest that Wellington is a ‘full-on, happening place’, where you will not run out of things to do or see. In a short time, you will enjoy a huge variety of experiences. The director combines fast paced cut editing with a strong beat, fast paced popular song. The sounds are energetic, electronic drums and bass. The repeated chorus line “can you feel it?” coincides with shots of patting the bare buttocks of a statue and lifting her hair, to accentuate the sensory experience and enlarge the physical reaction the advert aims to create. This feeling of being able to do so much in Wellington is supported by the tag line “It’s never just a weekend in Wellington”. The advert is structured chronologically beginning with the couple waking up and continuing through to late night action.

The advertisement successfully promotes Wellington as a busy, vibrant, attractive and entertaining place to visit. The pace of the editing and music combines well with the focus on the feature couple so that it is almost a little too fast to see everything they are doing. This is not a fault, but an effective way of adding a small sense of breathlessness. The idea that there is so much to do that you can barely take it all in, in the space of an advertisement, cleverly meets the advert’s purpose.

An even narrower target audience would be attracted by the second advertisement for “Vellington”, using the NZ feature film “What we do in the Shadows” as its base for humour and engagement. Fans of NZ film director Taika Waititi specifically and NZ film fans generally, extending to “Lord of the Rings” fans, would identify with this advertisement promoting Wellington tourism. The narrow audience range could be mitigated by choosing to play the advertisement in movie theatres. The success of the advertisement relies heavily on appreciation of the narrator’s character and the mockumentary style of the feature film he stars in.

The main message achieved by the advert is that Wellington is home to New Zealand’s film industry and so it is a creative, theatrical place. The tone of the advert is fun and quirky. For those viewers who have the necessary background knowledge, the advert is especially memorable and successfully imparts its message. For those without knowledge of “What we do in the shadows”, it is strange and odd, and the message is bypassed. However, given that Weta Workshops has international renown, the careful placement of the advert would increase its appeal.

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Overall, these four advertisements work hard to overcome Wellington’s stereotype as the dreary home to stuffy policy makers. Their use of humour and energy, combined with montages of people and scenery, successfully create an alternative view of Wellington. The target audience had a strong hand in shaping these advertisements. The least appealing was the older advert that tried to provide something for everyone, and in doing so, left an overly general and vague impression. The more specific the target audience, the more impact was achieved, despite the risk of excluding those without the required prior knowledge to be in on the jokes. The prevalence of humour in two of the adverts was also integral to overcoming Wellington’s lacklustre reputation. In particular, the ability to laugh at oneself, an especially kiwi characteristic, suggested that Wellington certainly does not take itself too seriously despite being the seat of government. The other two adverts relied on music to suggest an energy and vibrancy to the region, not found in offices and board rooms.