

TELEVISED EVENTS: SHAPING DESTINATION IMAGES AND PERCEPTIONS OF CAPITAL CITIES FROM THE COUCH

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ABSTRACT

There is a growing body of literature that has identified a strong link between events and destination image (Mossberg, 2000; Jago et al., 2003; Richards & Wilson, 2004; Dimeo & Kay, 2004; Hinch, 2006; Boo & Busser, 2006). A paucity of research exists however, between televised event viewing and peoples perceptions of the host city, particularly in cities perceived as being 'dull' or 'boring', as in the case of Australia's national capital Canberra (Hall, 2002). This paper presents the findings of a national study of Australians' perceptions of the national capital, which was examined through a sample of 1002 respondents, Australian's perceptions of the city and the extent to which the city represents national values and ideals. Specifically the research analysed the extent to which the Australia Day Live Concert, (which was broadcast live to approximately 19.9% of Australian viewing households by commercial provider Network Ten on the 25th January 2006) changed city images and perceptions. The results indicate that people who watched the live telecast were more likely to believe that Canberra represents Australian values and beliefs with 15 from 18 statements rated positively by telecast viewers. Furthermore, 8 from 18 city perception and image statements were rated more positively from telecast viewers than non-viewers. The research confirms empirically that city images and perceptions can be changed through televised events and the case study research indicates that there is wide scope for a much broader in-depth investigation into the impacts of televised events on the images and perceptions of their host destinations.

KEYWORDS

Perceptions, Images, Televised Events, Destinations, National capital, Canberra

INTRODUCTION

For many countries national capital cities represent the heart of a nation, a focal point where politics, history and culture meet. A national capital has special functions, the most important being the seat of government and location for national institutions. Through their architecture and physical design, capital cities symbolise national identity and self-image and also promote national ideals/values and showcase history and culture. Capital cities provide an administrative base of

government operations creating spin off effects for business travel. They also provide the setting for the nation's culture, history and democracy and attract significant numbers of school excursions to help students better understand citizenship, democracy and history. National capitals also hold major national institutions which are significant for tourism as well as preserving and presenting national heritage and national culture (Therborn, 1996).

Political capital cities are one of seven classifications of capital cities suggested by Hall (2000) and examples include The Hague, Washington, Ottawa, Brasilia and Canberra. However, although opportunities exist because of their national capital status, research suggests that national capitals can be "both beneficiaries and victims of their position in their nation" (Campbell, 2003, p.27), where political and administrative importance is also often cited as their downfall for tourism (Hall, 2002). As "in the eyes of the national government run[ning] an effective administration is more important than "build[ing] the foundation of a healthy local economy" (Campbell, 2003, p.11); this coupled with stereotypes and negative images can give rise to a range of place marketing issues which may be unique to political national capitals.

This paper outlines a research project conducted on Australians' perceptions of their national capital, Canberra. The research sought to examine Australians' images and perceptions of Canberra, and to explore whether perceptions differed based on live viewing of the Australia Day Live event on national television. The paper begins with an outline of the image and marketing issues facing political national capitals and the role that events may play in changing destination perceptions and images vital for place marketing. The paper then outlines the research methods employed before presenting the key findings of the research. The paper concludes with a consideration of some of the research implications for Canberra and also for other capital cities that may consider using televised events to build an appreciation of the capital city and change negative images and perceptions among residents.

National Capital City Images/Perceptions

Image is an important concept in the tourism literature. Gartner (1996, p.325) indicates that a destination's image is important in the set of variables that influence destination choice. If this image is negative then it may significantly impact a destination's competitiveness as destination image has been shown to be a significant factor in determining visitor choice (Konecnik, 2004; Lee, O'Leary & Hong, 2002). Gartner (1996, p.457) suggests that the image of a place as a potential destination comprises cognitive, affective, and conative components. The cognitive is what is known, or perceived to be known about the potential destination. The affective is the weighting of what is known by the consumer's value system. The conative stage of destination image is the 'choice' stage. It refers to the process of making a decision on whether to travel to a destination based on the cognitive and affective stages of image development.

In this decision making theory, the cognitive stage of image building may contain false or inaccurate facts/beliefs about the destination. For example, a national capital may be perceived as uninteresting

despite actually possessing a wealth of cultural and historical attractions. Furthermore, as Echtner and Ritchie (1993, p.3) note that destination image perceptions (and thus research) should contain three major areas:

1. Destination images should comprise two main components (those that are attribute based and those that are holistic);
2. Each of these components contains function (or more tangible) and psychological (or more abstract) characteristics; and,
3. Images of destinations can range from those that are based on 'common' functional and psychological traits to those based on more distinctive or even unique features, events, feelings or auras.

One of the central tourism marketing challenges that political national capitals may face is that of negative or incorrect image and perceptions. In being the centre for national administration they often draw an image of being 'dull', 'government orientated', 'cool' and 'stuffy', where Canberra has been described as "reserved" and "closed" (Hall, 2002, p.236), and Ottawa as a "sleepy government town" (NCC, 2003). Due to the intangible nature of holiday experiences potential tourists can rarely inspect the purchase of a holiday prior to consumption. As a result holiday decisions are often based on personal perceptions, where visitors will choose desirable holiday experiences that satisfy their own image and lifestyle and thus, creating and transmitting a favourable image to potential tourists in target markets should be a high priority of national capital destination marketing organisations' (DMO).

However the task of changing negative perceptions of potential visitors can be difficult and time intensive because stereotypical images can be difficult to dislodge (Lury, 2001). In addition Neilsen (2001) suggests that promoting a destination in normal circumstances can be a difficult task, and as a result promoting a destination that faces challenges from negative press is perhaps even more so. This is further exacerbated by the fact that a national capitals' primary function is running the government, which is often the source of its negative image in the first instance, which can hardly be altered for place marketing purposes.

Related to its destination image, a capital city has an image in the minds of the country's residents which is part of their culture and self determination. This may be thought of as a 'social' image and may be impacted by a range of factors including actual travel to the destination and through the role of the media (including viewing telecast events held at the destination). This image is a product of the residents' cognitive, affective and conative processes, which in turn are influenced by such experiences. Thus, if a person has seen the national

capital on television portrayed in a positive way, this may have altered perceptions (cognitive), values (conative), and choice making (conative). This research sought to examine changes in perceptions (cognitive) related to the national capital through viewing the Australia Day Live event telecast.

Using Televised Events to Change Destination Perceptions/Images

Whilst there is a developing body of literature that has identified a strong connection between events and destination image (Mossberg, 2000; Jago *et al.*, 2003; Richards & Wilson, 2004; Dimeo & Kay, 2004; Hinch, 2006; Boo & Busser, 2006), a lack of research exists between televised event viewing and peoples' perceptions of the host city, particularly in cities perceived as being 'dull' or 'boring', as in the case of Australia's national capital Canberra. The literature that has emerged to date has tended to focus on the impact of internationally televised sporting events (Tomlinson, 2005; Hede, 2005; Getz, 2004; Mossberg, 2000) rather than national cultural events which is the focus of this paper. Another important difference is that many of these mega sporting events are often located in cities that already have strong positive tourism perceptions and images that are not tainted by an association with government or negative media coverage.

The Australia Day Live concert is an annual event that is presented by the National Capital Authority (NCA) and the National Australia Day Council. It is telecast nationwide to an audience of 1.2 million through an agreement with Network Ten. This concert is held on the laws of Parliament House in the national capital on the eve of Australia Day and in 2006 included performances from artists such as Russell Crowe, Rouge Traders and Thirsty Merc. This event is similar in nature to other national day celebrations such as Canada Day in Ottawa which is televised to 1.2 million viewers and Independence Day in Washington that is televised to approximately 4 million viewers (Pegrum, 2005).

RESEARCH METHODS

The present study examined whether a visit to Canberra or viewing the Australia Day Live event telecast by an Australian resident alters perceptions of the capital city. The National Capital Authority (NCA), the arm of the Australian Government responsible for fostering pride in the capital city, was interested in knowing whether hosting national events could be a way of communicating positive messages about what Canberra represented in the nation's cultural history as part of its charter to build the national capital in the hearts of Australians.

The NCA (formerly the National Capital Planning Authority) is responsible for the development of Canberra

as Australia's national capital. In recent years the NCA has expanded its areas of responsibility to include not only the physical development of Canberra but to foster an awareness of, and understanding the importance of, the nation's capital to all Australians.

In support of its mission "to build the national capital in the hearts of all Australians" (NCA Annual Report, 1999-2000:3), the Authority has developed a communication strategy that has identified visitors to Canberra as one of four target audience segments (the others being young Australians, members of Australian governments and the diplomatic community). More recently, the NCA has used events as a tool to foster an awareness and understanding of the national capital. The Australia Day Live concert, which attracts some 35,000 spectators is telecast to approximately 20% of all Australian viewing households, and is the NCA's largest annual event.

Survey Design

A nationwide self-completion survey was designed to capture the perceptions, values and beliefs of the national capital Canberra. The survey was also designed to examine whether a previous visit, or telecast viewing of the Australia Day Live concert had any effect on respondents images, perceptions, values and beliefs about Canberra. To explore what Echtner and Ritchie (1993) term functional holistic/unique images, the survey included open ended questions to examine the holistic images that Australian's held toward Canberra as well as their ability to recall major attractions in the national capital. A series of questions were then asked about what perceptions they had of Canberra using a semantic differentiation scale as well as a series of Likert scale questions asking the degree to which Canberra represents specific functional and psychological attributes likely to be found in any major city. This follows previous studies such as Gartner (1989), Gartner and Hunt (1987) and Calantone *et al.* (1989). Furthermore, questions asked respondents whether the national capital represented or portrayed Australian values and beliefs. Finally, questions were asked concerning previous visitation, concert telecast viewing and socio-demographics.

Research Implementation

This study utilised a self-completion questionnaire, which was distributed by mail to a random sample of Australian households. As an incentive to participate in the study, respondents were informed that all who returned a completed questionnaire by the due date, using the attached pre-paid return envelope, would go into a draw for a chance to win a \$500 cash prize.

A random sample of 5,000 Australian householders were initially selected by a list broker using verified Telstra data

in accordance with privacy regulations. The surveys were distributed after the Australia Day Live concert in the week beginning January 30th 2006, so that data on the concert telecast viewing could be collected. Approximately 50% of surveys (or 2,500) were returned by early March 2006. However, as this initial sample was found to be unrepresentative of the Australian population, the questionnaire was later distributed to a further 2,000 Australian households in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland to increase responses from these under-represented states. The response rate for the second mail-out of the surveys was 14.5% (284 surveys), which were returned by 12 June 2006.

The returned surveys from both mail-outs were collated and a random stratified sample of 1002 surveys was selected using statistical analysis software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for analysis and presentation. It should be noted that there was no difference on concert telecast viewing rates between the two samples. Residents of Canberra were excluded because their perceptions of the city would be influenced by factors such as residency and employment. Based on

the population of Australia the results are confident to +/- 3% margin of error at the 95% confidence level.

Research Analysis

Data was entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 11) and frequencies and cross tabulations were conducted. Furthermore, ANOVA tests were undertaken on the statements and previous visitation (never visited, visited within last 5 years, visited 5 years or longer) to examine whether a visit changed perceptions, values and beliefs. Furthermore, for the specific purpose of this paper, independent sample *t*-tests were conducted on telecast viewing of the Australia Day Live concert and perceptions, values and belief statements. For more information on the research method please see Ritchie and Leon-Marillanca (2006).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Sample Profile

Table 1 illustrates the response rate by State/Territory indicating that the sample was generally representative of the population by State/Territory.

Table 1: Sample Size by State/Territory Compared with ABS Data

| Place of Residence | 2006 Study Sample | | ABS Population Data Percent |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------|-----------------------------|
| | Frequency | Percent | |
| New South Wales | 306 | 30.5 | 33.9 |
| Victoria | 246 | 24.6 | 25.1 |
| Queensland | 202 | 20.2 | 19.8 |
| South Australia | 91 | 9.1 | 7.7 |
| Western Australia | 115 | 11.5 | 10.1 |
| Tasmania | 36 | 3.6 | 2.4 |
| Northern Territory | 6 | 0.6 | 1.0 |

Sources: *Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories, Cat. No. 3201.0 June 2005 figures*

Furthermore, key socio-demographics of the sample included: 74.9% of respondents were female, with 43.4% aged between 35 and 54 years of age. Those aged between 18 and 34 years represented a larger proportion of the sample at 30.4%. Approximately 31% of respondents were from New South Wales with 25% from Victoria and 20% from Queensland. 65% of respondents were married or de facto while only 18% were unmarried. 73.3% have children with the majority having between 2-3 children. Respondents were highly educated with 54% completing a higher education qualification, while 36.8% were employed full time and 21.8% part time mainly as managers/administrators (20.1%) or professionals

(13.3%). 43.2% of gross annual household income of respondents was between \$20,000 and \$59,999 per annum.

Overall, compared to the ABS 2001 Census data the study sample is representative of the Australian population. The major differences exist with respect to a larger percentage of respondents who are female and aged between 25 and 54 years of age. A larger proportion of respondents were either married or in defacto relationships, have higher educational levels and indicated they were employed part time. Some of these

differences could be due to the profile of respondents who may be more likely to complete surveys.

Telecast Viewing

The majority of respondents (79.4%) did not watch the Australia Day Live Telecast while 19.3% did and 1.3% were uncertain. It is important to note that this figure stayed consistent even with the extra surveys collected in June 2006 some 5 months after the event. A statistical test was conducted on the socio-demographics of those who watched the telecast compared to those that did not. There were no statistical differences between telecast viewing and the overall sample profile including age, gender, origins etc.

Images and Perceptions of the National Capital

Respondents' first impressions of Canberra were gauged

by asking them to name what they thought of when they heard the word 'Canberra' (as per Echtner and Ritchie, 1993). A large majority (70.6%) associated Canberra with politicians and parliament (including government) and almost 42% thought of the words 'national capital' or the 'ACT' (see Table 2). Other frequently identified aspects were Parliament House, identified by 38.8% of respondents, and the War Memorial/Defence Force History, identified by 32.8% of respondents. Almost one quarter of respondents mentioned an aspect of Canberra's weather. The main differences from Australia Day Live telecast viewing were that those who watched the telecast noted in slightly larger numbers Canberra as the seat of government and Parliament House and were less likely to mention the weather than those that had not watched the telecast (17.4% compared to 26.2%).

Table 2: First Impressions/Images of Canberra (n=253-995)

| Total Sample | Percent |
|---|---------|
| Politicians/Parliament (Government) | 70.6 |
| National Capital/ACT | 41.9 |
| Parliament House | 38.8 |
| War Memorial/Defence Force History | 32.8 |
| Weather (Cold/Hot/Bad/Good) | 24.4 |
| Lake Burley Griffin | 19.4 |
| Respondents who watched Telecast | |
| Politicians/Parliament (Government) | 72.6 |
| National Capital/ACT | 42.6 |
| Parliament House | 41.1 |
| War Memorial/Defence Force History | 31.6 |
| Weather (Cold/Hot/Bad/Good/Pleasant) | 17.4 |
| Respondents who did not watch Telecast | |
| Politicians/Parliament (Government) | 69.9 |
| National Capital/ACT | 41.5 |
| Parliament House | 38.6 |
| War Memorial/Defence Force History | 33.4 |
| Weather (Cold/Hot/Bad/Good) | 26.2 |

Note: Totals do not amount to 100% due to multiple responses.
Respondents could list up to five aspects (responses).

Respondents were asked to nominate the most important tourist attractions in Canberra, and the top six nominations were the same regardless of telecast viewing namely Parliament House, the Australian War Memorial, the National Gallery of Australia, Lake Burley Griffin, National Museum of Australia and Telstra Tower. However, 30% of those that watched the telecast mentioned Lake Burley Griffin compared to 22.9% of those that had not watched the telecast.

Respondents were presented with a series of functional and psychological destination image attributes relating to Canberra, each ranging from positive to negative in a semantic differentiation scale. Respondents were then asked to indicate where along the scale they felt that particular attribute most related to Canberra. For example, "Do you believe that Canberra, the national capital, is friendly (1) through to unfriendly (5)". These

results are displayed in Table 3 indicating that overall the majority of respondents indicated neutral beliefs, with the exception of Canberra having a political focus, which 64.6% of respondents strongly agreed with. A high

proportion of respondents (46.1%) view Canberra as conservative. Almost 30% of respondents also strongly agreed that Canberra is clean.

Table 3: Perceptions of Canberra – Canberra's Attributes Response Distribution by Percentage (n=976-993)

| Attribute | 1 % | 2 % | 3 % | 4 % | 5 % | Attribute |
|---------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|---------------------------------|
| Canberra has a political focus | 64.6 | 19.1 | 7.8 | 2.8 | 5.7 | does not have a political focus |
| Canberra is clean | 34.8 | 35.7 | 18.3 | 7.7 | 3.4 | dirty |
| Canberra is conservative | 21.0 | 30.3 | 32.9 | 12.7 | 3.1 | progressive |
| Canberra is safe | 12.0 | 34.8 | 44.7 | 6.3 | 2.2 | unsafe |
| Canberra is quiet/laidback | 11.8 | 34.2 | 39.3 | 11.4 | 3.4 | hectic / busy |
| Canberra is friendly | 9.6 | 24.7 | 52.2 | 10.5 | 2.8 | unfriendly |
| Canberra is boring | 13.5 | 25.4 | 38.0 | 19.0 | 5.1 | vibrant / exciting |
| Canberra is tolerant | 6.6 | 26.4 | 54.2 | 10.2 | 2.5 | intolerant |
| Canberra is multicultural | 12.0 | 20.6 | 41.1 | 18.7 | 5.6 | monocultural |
| Canberra is cosmopolitan | 5.3 | 18.9 | 45.7 | 22.8 | 7.3 | provincial |
| Canberra has a pleasant climate | 5.5 | 17.0 | 40.2 | 26.4 | 10.9 | an unpleasant climate |
| Canberra is a place of conflict | 5.9 | 10.8 | 46.0 | 29.4 | 8.0 | a place of consensus |

The results of the total sample relating to this question were examined by whether the respondent had watched the Australia Day Live telecast. An independent sample *t* test was carried out on each of the statements. The results in Table 4 illustrate that only 2 from 12 perception attributes were different based the event telecast viewing. Those that had watched the event on television were more likely to perceive Canberra as more vibrant and multicultural than those that had not watched the telecast. This compared with 8 statements that were statistically different based on previous visitation, where those that had visited (particularly in the last 5 years) were more likely to have positive images than those that had not visited. Interestingly, those that watched the telecast perceived Canberra as being more multicultural than those that had visited (where no statistical difference was found).

Furthermore, respondents were asked their perceptions of Canberra as a city by a series of statements ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The results are presented in Table 5. The majority of respondents agree that Canberra is a city located in a very appealing natural setting (61.7%), which offers first-class educational facilities (51.3%) and first-class sporting

facilities (47.5%) and reflects Australian heritage (46.2%). Most respondents (82%) agree that Canberra is dominated by politics.

The results of the total sample relating to this question were examined by whether the respondent had watched the Australia Day Live telecast. An independent sample *t* test was carried out on each of the statements. The results in Table 6 illustrate that 10 from 11 attributes were different based on event telecast viewing. Those that had watched the event telecast were more likely to agree that Canberra had great shopping, a great variety of nightlife and entertainment, had vibrant commercial activities and was easy to navigate. They were also more likely to perceive, compared to those that had not viewed the telecast, that Canberra offered great recreational opportunities, is a city in a natural setting and offers first class educational and sporting facilities. However, no change was noted on the statement concerning the domination of Canberra by politics. In comparison, 7 from 11 attributes differed by previous visitation to Canberra, with only 'Canberra is dominated by politics' found to be statistically different by those that had visited Canberra previously

Table 4: Influence of Telecast Concert Viewing on Perceptions of Canberra (n=956-968)

| Statement Canberra is/has... | Watched Telecast (Mean) | | F score | T score | Sig score |
|---|----------------------------|------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Yes | No | | | |
| A political focus - does not have a political focus | 1.8 | 1.6 | 13.637 | 1.747 | 0.081 |
| Clean - dirty | 2.2 | 2.1 | 20.156 | 1.083 | 0.279 |
| Conservative - progressive | 2.5 | 2.4 | 4.763 | 0.655 | 0.513 |
| Safe - unsafe | 2.6 | 2.5 | 3.877 | 1.839 | 0.066 |
| Quiet/laidback – hectic/busy | 2.7 | 2.6 | 7.189 | 1.518 | 0.129 |
| Friendly - unfriendly | 2.7 | 2.7 | 12.084 | -0.111 | 0.912 |
| Boring – vibrant/exciting | 2.9 | 2.7 | 0.133 | 2.091 | 0.037 |
| Tolerant - intolerant | 2.7 | 2.8 | 7.763 | -0.592 | 0.554 |
| Multicultural - monocultural | 2.7 | 2.9 | 20.530 | -2.447 | 0.015 |
| Cosmopolitan – provincial | 3.0 | 3.1 | 3.931 | -1.720 | 0.086 |
| A pleasant climate – an unpleasant climate | 3.1 | 3.2 | 0.449 | -1.895 | 0.058 |
| A place of conflict – place of consensus | 3.2 | 3.2 | 6.863 | -0.714 | 0.475 |

Bold scores indicate statistically significant differences between telecast viewers and non-viewers and the perception statements at the 0.05 level.

Table 5: Perceptions of Canberra: Facilities and Characteristics: Response Distribution by Percentage (n=993-999)

| Statement | Strongly Disagree % | Disagree % | Neither Agree Nor Disagree % | Agree % | Strongly Agree % |
|---|---------------------------|---------------|--|------------|------------------------|
| Canberra is dominated by politics? | 2.1 | 4.2 | 11.6 | 39.0 | 43.0 |
| City in a very appealing natural setting? | 1.9 | 9.5 | 26.8 | 46.7 | 15.0 |
| Canberra offers first-class educational facilities? | 1.0 | 1.2 | 46.5 | 38.6 | 12.7 |
| Canberra offers first-class sporting facilities? | 2.8 | 7.9 | 41.7 | 35.5 | 12.0 |
| Canberra offers great recreational opportunities? | 1.8 | 8.4 | 47.0 | 35.7 | 7.2 |
| Canberra reflects Australian heritage? | 5.2 | 20.1 | 28.5 | 38.8 | 7.4 |
| Canberra is easy to navigate? | 8.6 | 19.1 | 36.8 | 29.4 | 6.1 |
| Canberra is a city of vibrant commercial activities? | 3.2 | 17.5 | 58.2 | 19.1 | 2.0 |
| Canberra offers great variety of nightlife and entertainment? | 4.6 | 18.3 | 63.1 | 11.6 | 2.3 |
| Canberra offers great shopping? | 4.7 | 23.4 | 49.5 | 19.4 | 3.0 |
| Canberra mirrors Australia's culture? | 10.8 | 30.9 | 35.7 | 19.4 | 3.3 |

Table 6: Influence of Telecast Concert Viewing on Canberra Facilities Perceptions (n=970-977)

| Statement | Watched Telecast (Mean) | | F score | T score | Sig score |
|---|-------------------------|------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Yes | No | | | |
| Canberra is dominated by politics? | 4.1 | 4.2 | 0.279 | -1.040 | 0.298 |
| City in a very appealing natural setting? | 3.8 | 3.6 | 0.006 | 2.322 | 0.020 |
| Canberra offers first-class educational facilities? | 3.7 | 3.6 | 0.000 | 2.761 | 0.006 |
| Canberra offers first-class sporting facilities? | 3.6 | 3.4 | 0.003 | 2.439 | 0.015 |
| Canberra offers great recreational opportunities? | 3.5 | 3.3 | 0.692 | 2.835 | 0.005 |
| Canberra reflects Australian heritage? | 3.5 | 3.2 | 0.115 | 4.259 | 0.000 |
| Canberra is easy to navigate? | 3.2 | 3.0 | 0.006 | 2.172 | 0.030 |
| Canberra is a city of vibrant commercial activities? | 3.2 | 2.9 | 12.470 | 4.144 | 0.000 |
| Canberra offers great variety of nightlife and entertainment? | 3.1 | 2.8 | 0.362 | 3.953 | 0.000 |
| Canberra offers great shopping? | 3.1 | 2.9 | 1.220 | 3.779 | 0.000 |
| Canberra mirrors Australia's culture? | 3.1 | 2.6 | 0.887 | 5.431 | 0.000 |

Bold scores indicate statistically significant differences between telecast viewers and non-viewers and the perception statements at the 0.05 level.

Representation of National Values/Beliefs

A set of questions within the study required respondents to rate their agreement to statements relating to elements of Australian values and beliefs, and whether such elements are reflected in Canberra, the national capital. The great majority of respondents agree that many national achievements and values are reflected in the national capital (Table 7). Respondents indicated the values and achievements most strongly reflected were the Australia's Defence Forces (72.3%), Australia's democracy (69.9%) and Australia's history (66.9%), which reflects respondents' initial perceptions of Canberra (Politicians/Parliament/Government, Parliament House, Australian War Memorial/Defence Force History). Other values and achievements most respondents indicated were reflected in Canberra are science and technology (58.5%), sports (54%) and sporting achievements (49.7%), achievements in arts and literature (49.7%) and environmental values (49.7%).

The results of the total sample relating to this question were examined by whether the respondent had watched the Australia Day Live telecast. An independent sample *t* test was carried out on each of the statements. The results in Table 8 illustrate that 14 from 16 attributes were different based on event telecast viewing. The only two attributes not to change by telecast viewing were related to sports (that 'Canberra reflects sports' and 'Canberra reflects Australia's success in sports'). Furthermore,

respondents who had watched the telecast were more likely to agree that 'Canberra should symbolise Australia's ideas and aspirations' ($f=0.793$, $t=3.308$, $sig=0.001$) and that 'Canberra should be a place for important national and international events' ($f=4.163$, $t=2.904$, $sig=0.004$), compared to those that did not watch the telecast. Telecast viewing again led a larger number of perception alterations (14 from 16) compared to previous visitation which resulted in a change of 9 from 16 statements.

Event telecast viewing led to changes in several statements which were not different by visitation including whether Canberra reflects Australia's democracy, Canberra reflects a sense of humour, the Australian lifestyle, Australia's history and reflects national values.

Media Portrayal Results

As discussed in the background of this paper, political national capital cities often receive negative press coverage with the city name becoming synonymous with political decisions. Therefore, respondents were also asked how they believed Canberra is portrayed in the media and whether they thought this portrayal was fair.

A total of 43.2% of respondents felt it was portrayed in a neutral way, whereas 27.6% suggested it was portrayed positively, 23.9% negatively and 7.2% did not know. A total of 52% considered it was a fair portrayal 20.5%

Table 7: National Values and Achievements Reflected in Canberra Response Distribution by Percentage (n=985-993)

| Statement | Strongly Disagree % | Disagree % | Neither Agree Nor Disagree % | Agree % | Strongly Agree % |
|--|---------------------|------------|------------------------------|---------|------------------|
| Canberra reflects national values? | 1.9 | 9.3 | 33.3 | 46.1 | 9.4 |
| Canberra reflects sport? | 1.0 | 12.6 | 32.4 | 45.3 | 8.7 |
| Canberra reflects environmental values? | 1.9 | 9.7 | 38.7 | 43.2 | 6.5 |
| Canberra reflects relaxed, easy going lifestyle? | 0.9 | 16.0 | 43.6 | 34.9 | 4.6 |
| Canberra reflects outdoor lifestyle? | 1.8 | 16.0 | 43.3 | 33.6 | 5.3 |
| Canberra reflects tolerance? | 1.8 | 13.8 | 54.0 | 28.1 | 2.2 |
| Canberra reflects the Australian lifestyle? | 8.1 | 26.7 | 37.9 | 22.1 | 5.2 |
| Canberra reflects mateship? | 4.1 | 21.1 | 53.8 | 18.2 | 2.8 |
| Canberra reflects sense of humour? | 4.4 | 23.0 | 54.3 | 16.9 | 1.4 |
| Canberra reflects honesty? | 8.2 | 20.5 | 50.4 | 18.3 | 2.5 |
| Canberra reflects Australia's Defence Forces? | 0.6 | 4.1 | 23.0 | 53.1 | 19.2 |
| Canberra reflects Australia's democracy? | 1.4 | 4.5 | 24.1 | 54.6 | 15.3 |
| Canberra reflects Australia's history? | 1.8 | 10.3 | 21.0 | 53.7 | 13.2 |
| Canberra reflects Australia's scientific and technological achievements? | 1.2 | 6.1 | 34.2 | 47.1 | 11.4 |
| Canberra reflects Australia's achievements in arts/literature? | 1.4 | 11.0 | 37.9 | 40.7 | 9.0 |
| Canberra reflects Australia's success in sports? | 2.5 | 12.0 | 36.8 | 37.5 | 11.2 |

suggested in was unfair and 27.5% were unsure over its portrayal. A cross tabulation of these two questions is presented in table 9 and reveals that of those respondents who believed the portrayal to be positive, a greater number of respondents indicated that this was indeed a fair portrayal (83.4%) rather than an unfair one.

Of those respondents who indicated that the portrayal was negative, 56.1% of this group believed this portrayal to be unfair. Those that had watched the telecast were more likely to believe that Canberra was portrayed more positively in the media and fewer indicated neutral responses ($v=25.880$, $df=6$, $p=0.000$). However, there was no statistical difference on whether they perceived media portrayal to be fair or unfair ($v=7.424$, $df=4$,

$p=0.115$). This is similar to analysis carried out on whether respondents had visited Canberra previously, with those who visited in the last 5 years more likely to agree that the media portrayal was positive and those that had not visited were more uncertain over whether it was a fair portrayal ($v=31.238$ and $v=62.762$, $p=0.000$ for both).

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This paper has highlighted a lack of research conducted on political national capitals, despite their important role for tourism and the portrayal of national stories through their many cultural attractions. Political national capital cities may face challenges in overcoming negative

Table 8: Influence of Telecast Concert Viewing on National Values/Belief Perceptions (n=970-977)

| Statement | Watched (Mean) | | F score | T score | Sig score |
|--|----------------|-----|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Yes | No | | | |
| Canberra reflects national values? | 3.7 | 3.5 | 0.003 | 3.435 | 0.001 |
| Canberra reflects sport? | 3.6 | 3.5 | 0.088 | 1.364 | 0.173 |
| Canberra reflects environmental values? | 3.5 | 3.4 | 0.430 | 2.218 | 0.027 |
| Canberra reflects relaxed, easy going lifestyle? | 3.4 | 3.2 | 4.214 | 3.156 | 0.002 |
| Canberra reflects outdoor lifestyle? | 3.3 | 3.2 | 0.049 | 1.962 | 0.050 |
| Canberra reflects tolerance? | 3.3 | 3.1 | 12.727 | 2.781 | 0.006 |
| Canberra reflects the Australian lifestyle? | 3.1 | 2.8 | 0.430 | 3.216 | 0.001 |
| Canberra reflects mateship? | 3.2 | 2.9 | 4.500 | 4.355 | 0.000 |
| Canberra reflects sense of humour? | 3.0 | 2.8 | 0.000 | 3.173 | 0.002 |
| Canberra reflects honesty? | 3.1 | 2.8 | 0.473 | 4.044 | 0.000 |
| Canberra reflects Australia's Defence Forces? | 4.0 | 3.8 | 9.965 | 2.819 | 0.005 |
| Canberra reflects Australia's democracy? | 3.9 | 3.8 | 0.046 | 1.551 | 0.121 |
| Canberra reflects Australia's history? | 3.8 | 3.6 | 1.187 | 1.990 | 0.047 |
| Canberra reflects Australia's scientific and technological achievements? | 3.7 | 3.6 | 0.449 | 2.343 | 0.019 |
| Canberra reflects Australia's achievements in arts/literature? | 3.6 | 3.4 | 0.052 | 2.455 | 0.014 |
| Canberra reflects Australia's success in sports? | 3.5 | 3.4 | 0.242 | 0.876 | 0.381 |

Bold scores indicate statistically significant differences between telecast viewers and non-viewers and the perception statements at the 0.05 level.

Table 9: Media Portrayal Cross tabulation with Fairness of Portrayal (%)

| How do you believe Canberra is portrayed in the Media? (n=1271) | Do you believe this to be a fair portrayal? (n=1259) | | |
|---|--|------|------------|
| | Yes | No | Don't Know |
| Positively | 83.4 | 6.6 | 10 |
| Negatively | 21.8 | 56.1 | 22.1 |
| Neutral | 57.1 | 11.6 | 31.3 |
| Don't Know | 0.0 | 4.7 | 95.3 |

perceptions for place marketing and tourism as a result of negative media coverage and a perception of being 'dull' and 'boring.' It is in this respect national capital status may be considered both as a benefactor and a hindrance for destination marketing. Despite literature stating the impact that events may have in shifting perceptions and destination images, little empirical research exists on the role of telecast cultural events changing destination perceptions and images.

This paper has outlined and discussed a nationwide study on Australian's images and perceptions of their national capital (Canberra). It has shown that many Australian's are uncertain about the functional and psychological attributes of Canberra yet those that had viewed the

telecast had more positive images and perceptions, and in many instances a higher level of change than those that had visited previously. Event telecast viewing may have an effect on what Gartner (1996) terms the cognitive and affective components of image through adding destination knowledge (cognitive) and helping to alter values of viewers (affective). Only 2 from 12 image attributes on the semantic differentiation scale were perceived more positively, based on the event telecast viewing, including perceiving Canberra as more vibrant and multicultural. However, event telecast viewers were more likely to agree, compared to those that had not watched the telecast that Canberra offered great shopping, a great variety of nightlife and entertainment, had vibrant commercial activities and was easy to navigate. They were also more likely to perceive,

compared to those that had not viewed the telecast, that Canberra offered great recreational opportunities, is a city in a natural setting and offers first class educational and sporting facilities, suggesting 10 from 12 attribute images differed by event telecast viewing. The greatest proportion of change related to the values and beliefs that the national capital portrayed as 14 from 16 statements had a higher agreement from telecast viewers that the national capital portrayed or represented such characteristics.

Questions remain as to why these attributes differed between telecast viewing and why other perceptions and belief statements did not change. Perhaps research on the role of values, in particular consumer or political system values may further explain Australian's perceptions of the national capital shedding light into the affective part of destination image. Further research is also suggested using perceptual mapping to indicate how Canberra is positioned compared to other Australia cities on dimensions of perceptual 'space.' Multidimensional scaling techniques (such as those used by Gartner, 1989) comparing image attributes and perceptions could be useful to help understand relative positioning and destination image. Furthermore, qualitative research could be undertaken to provide insights into why and how an event telecast changes perceptions.

The results of this analysis further highlight the importance of a national event telecast to promote the meaning and relevance of the national capital to Australians. This research suggests that events can help to change perceptions or alter images of political national capital cities, potentially changing perceptions to improve the likelihood of future place marketing and tourism marketing efforts. This research has implications for other destinations, which may face image problems and are examining ways of overcoming such problems. Based on this research, events may be able to change perceptions and attitudes toward a destination, which is an important step in longer term place marketing and nation building efforts. It is suggested that agencies with a mandate to foster and grow an appreciation of the national capital should consider events as a central part of their strategy, based on the results of this research. Both national capital agencies and event stakeholders should work more closely together in holding events of national significance in their respective political capitals which will help to highlight that the capital represents national

values as well as help the correction of negative destination perceptions and images.

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