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# Southern Youth: Evoking Southern teenage identity through character design for animation

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An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Design

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## 1. **Abstract:**

In this project, I position myself as a New Zealand animator who designs characters that are appealing and which young New Zealand audiences aged 12-16 can relate to. Currently, 95.5% of Children's Animation shown on New Zealand Television is made offshore and the characters depicted statistically and overwhelmingly white, heterosexual and male. The producers of this material are only slowly willing to change as they already dominate world market share with a set formulaic television structure that is economically profitable. I aim to counter this norm by designing appealing characters that are evocative of a particular group of New Zealand youth and the social and cultural issues they encounter growing up in regional New Zealand. Through case study analysis, content analysis, ethnographic study and design synthesis, I further aim to highlight the cultural diversity and teenage identity of one of New Zealand's most sparsely populated regions – Southland.



## 2. Introduction:

”Humans are the only species that lives in a world erected by the stories they tell. The storytelling process used to be handcrafted, homemade, and community inspired. Now it is the end result of a complex manufacturing and marketing process.”

Gerbner (1998, p. 175)

In 2007 I moved to Invercargill. I had recently returned to New Zealand after living for over a decade in Europe and South America. I am born and bred Aucklander/proud Jaffa. I had never even been to the South Island. My knowledge of Invercargill and Southland was limited to scenic posters in the London underground and beer advertising. If I was asked what the culture and community of Southland looked like, I would have simply repeated the stereotypic view of the community as masculine, rugged, tough and silent Caucasian ‘Southern Man’, profoundly heterosexual and where women didn’t seem to exist. What I found was a society half torn between madly holding on to its stereotypic toughness and half chucking this to the wind in the hope for more open and multicultural future which workshops, designing graphics for none profit organisations to being on committee’s initiatives. These life experiences inspired me to develop a project integrating community knowledge and my skills as an animator/educator as well as a desire to create designs that could function as vehicles for the community to engage in meaningful, local storytelling. To do this I aim to design a set of characters based on Southland youth aged 12 to 16 and which I intend as the base for an animated storytelling platform.

Using Gerbner’s Cultivation theory, I set out to analyse national and international animation design case studies in order to understand how characters are currently represented and how their representation may affect their audience’s perceived realities. I review how much media youth consume and their entry points for consumption. This theoretical context forms the basis for my, analysis of the animation content renewed for the 2013/2014 production seasons and which are available over the multiple entry points. In discussing my analysis of the design and construction of contemporary animated characters I reflect on whether there are dominant trends and whether they are indicative of a gender, economic or ethnic bias.

In the design process section, I discuss how the review findings were supported by observational drawing studies as well as an observational quantitative research. I explain how in creating character designs evocative of one of New Zealand’s least populated regions, I chose to visit Southland’s towns and Invercargill’s main streets. . I expand on how this design process process methodology

was inspired by my desire to create identifiable and appealing characters, and that it informed the design aesthetic and templates and drew on government and community research into the Southland youth, their culture and interests.

In the conclusion, I restate my reason for the project, reflect on my process and outline my future intentions for the project and its role in the community.

### 3. Theoretical Context:

#### 3.1. Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory was first formulated by George Gerbner in the 1960s and in response to study then undertaken in mass media messaging. Gerbner (1994) asserted that it was necessary to study the institutions, the creators and producers of the messages as well as the formulas behind them in order to ascertain their cultural production and how they affected their audience. During the 1960s, and through to the 1980s, he and his colleagues conducted extensive USA and international studies on the effects of television watching. They developed a complex theoretical system to explain what was happening to audience perception as a result of long term exposure to mass media messaging. The patterns observed were labelled cultural indicators. While Gerbner's original research centred on repetitive dramatic violence, the scope of the study was extended to include gender, minority and age-role stereotypes, health science, family, education, political aspirations and religion, and was conducted in a cross-culture comparative context (Gerbner et al. 2002).

Cultivation theory works on the assumption that the world of television looks very different to social reality and seeks to understand if light, medium or heavy viewers have a more distorted vision of that reality. Cultural indicators approach was a three pronged research strategy involving, "institutional process analysis", "message analysis" and "cultivation analysis" (Gerbner, 1994). Institutional process analysis involved looking into institutes and the formation of their policies which direct their approach to the design of media messages. Gerbner & Gross (1976) considered that this was the least developed aspect of their research due to the difficulty in obtaining funding. Message analysis, by contrast, involved a rigorous content analysis of television programming to ascertain common patterns which could be used as sources of questioning for the cultivation analysis. The cultivation analysis is where the answers to those questions are cross referenced to the level of television exposure and the participants' demographics so as to determine the 'cultivation differential'. "Cultivation differential is the margin of difference in conceptions of reality between light and heavy viewers within the same demographic subgroups." (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p. 23).

Gerbner acknowledged that modern cultures are made up of many diverse structures of attitudes, belief, values and practices, but what was constant was television viewing, making it the primary channel for 'mainstreaming' (Gerbner et al., 2002, p. 51). He coined this term to describe heavy

viewers' practice of obtaining more of their cultural, social and political attitudes and beliefs through television content than from traditional avenues, such as family, community and society. This meant that different groups were found to have a closer communality than would be expected and that television fostered a cultivation of common perspectives. (Gerbner et al., 2002).

He also discovered that when television content paralleled events happening in the subject realities, the subjects were more likely to be susceptible to cultivation or 'resonance'. An example of resonance is when middle to heavy viewers experience violence from a particular ethnic group then observes similar behaviour on television, leading them to develop inflated perceptions of violence with the given group's community (Gerbner, 1998). Gerbner also coined the term 'mean world syndrome', to describe the finding that heavy television watchers had a distorted perspective on statistics in accordance with their television viewing. Those subjects that watched a lot of crime and news based shows had an inflated view of the crime and violence statistics within their society and also a heightened perception of danger and fear within their lives (Gerbner, 1998). Finally the term 'independent contribution' was coined to describe sustained exposure of media messages over a prolonged period of time. This was found to be particularly prominent in adolescents who develop many of their independent beliefs, attitudes and behaviours from prolonged media exposure (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorielli, 1980; Morgan, 1982, 1987; Morgan, Alexander, Shanahan, and Harris, 1990).

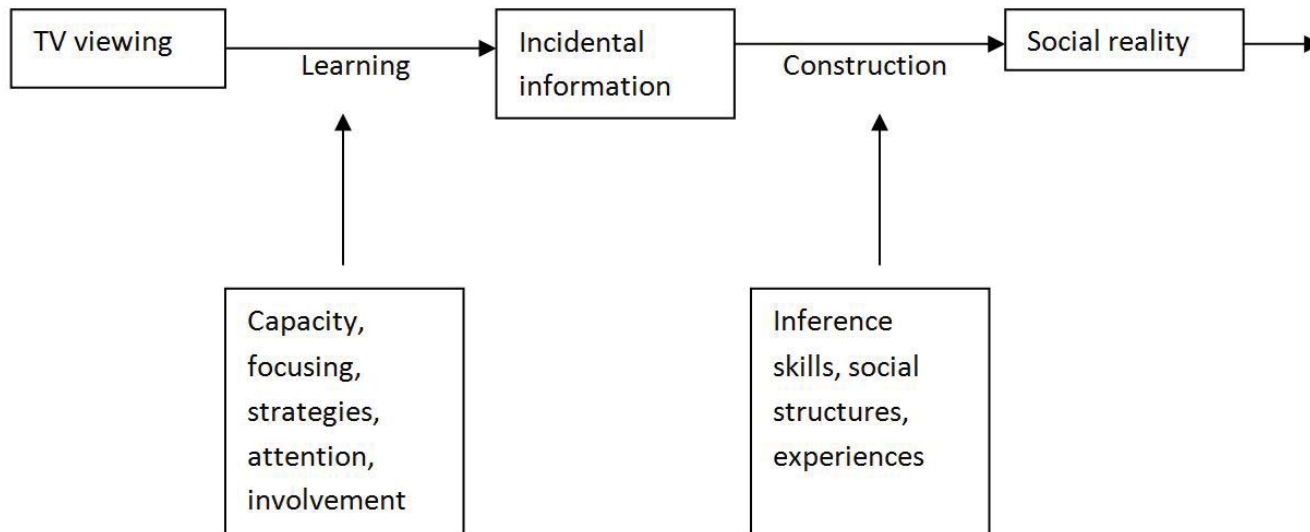


Figure 1. Cultivation Theory Overview, Hawkins and Pingree (1983).

### 3.2 Children and Youth Studies

Today, many New Zealand children and youth have 24hour access to on demand television and media content that is no longer created by their immediate communities but by “distant conglomerates for financial gain” (Gerbner, 1998, p. 176). Griffin (2012) surveyed children and youth viewing patterns and found that their television media consumption significantly shaped their social reality beliefs in adulthood. Over the past decade, a number of international and national studies have examined children’s and youth televisions representation of ethnicity, culture, gender and social roles. In 2007 Gotz et al (2008) conducted a comprehensive study of children’s programming in 24 different countries. Of the programmes surveyed 69 % were fictional and of those 84% were animated (9 live action, 5 mixed and 2% puppet). New Zealand ranked at the bottom with only 0.5% of the programmes produced including local content and lowest in representation of age diversity. The content analysis breakdown showed 35% female to 65% male character representation. When isolating animated content the figures move to 31% female and 69% male. 72% of the characters were Caucasian.

Leaper’s et al. (2002) study found males outnumbered females by more than 2 to 1 in the comedy genre, and by more than 4 to 1 in the traditional adventure cartoons. Raney’s (2007) study of superheroes in children’s cartoons similarly found that male superheroes outnumbered female superheroes nearly 2 to 1, while Gerbner’s (2011) study of gender and ethnicity in Disney XD, Nickelodeon and cartoon Network revealed that the representations of early teens were 85.7% male and 68.7% Caucasian. Morgan (1982) discovered that adolescents who watched a high level of television were more likely to believe notions such as “women are happiest at home raising children” and “men are born with more ambition than women” (Gerbner, 2008, p. 186). Rothschild (1984) found third to fifth graders who watched more television were more likely to stereotype gender along traditional roles such as, females cook and nurture while men are independent and sporty (Gerbner, 2008). Thompson and Zerbinos’ (1994) study into popular cartoons resulted in similar findings causing them to raise concerns about how this male dominated world might affect young people’s social development and perceived opportunities.

The 2012 New Zealand review sponsored by the National advisory council on the employment of women ‘Employment Choices for Young Women’ (2012) found that male characters outnumbered female by 60% to 40% in the lead roles. Male characters on New Zealand television are more likely to be in active, violent, heroes and career driven whereas women are more likely to be depicted working in the caring professions and interested in their social life and romance. European males

were the most likely to have paid employment at 83.36% (Maori men 54.13%). Asian (73.91%) and European (73.81%) women were the most employable women while in comparison only 44.44% of Maori women had paid work. 11.6% of women were represented in a hypersexualised form, while only 0.97% of men received the same treatment. Women characters are also 70% more likely to be shown displaying naked flesh and wearing skimpy clothing and 60% more likely to be seeking a partner. The study findings raised concern about the effect of this on young women's perception of themselves and their future opportunities. The review concludes by calling on the media industry to address the noticeable imbalances with diversity in roles and occupations for characters across gender and ethnicity. It also called on educators to support innovative ways to empower children to be critically aware of the gender and ethnic imbalances in television content and that given the prominence of American produced content children needed to develop an understanding of the context of this content.

### **3.3 Institutional Programming**

“Children may well enjoy popular Disney or Nickelodeon offerings but children who have access to global media content that is produced without their particular interests in mind can also be said to be victims of second-hand media consumption, because the media content at their disposal seldom reflects their immediate cultural contexts. “

(Norris & Pauling, 2012, p.89)

Lustyik (2010) argues that the global face of children and teen television has vastly changed with three main competitive players, Cartoon Network (TimeWarner), Disney and Nickelodeon (Viacom) catering to a constant international audience. Lustyik (2010) further describes the business model of these companies as Global networks that provide the parent company with profits by blanket saturation of the same product packaged across all markets with cross promotions into merchandise and fast food. New Zealand, unlike Australia, England and Canada does not have levies of local content leading to these networks showing their product without localised interruption. TVNZ has volume deals with the above companies meaning that animated programming doesn't vary in diversity of content when transferring to the state channels (Lustyik, 2010). Norris and Pauling's (2012) review of 'NZ on Air' reports that children's animation and drama in New Zealand remains endangered and stand-alone due to being expensive, complex to produce and requiring astute global distribution to make a viable business case. Further Horricks (2004 cited in Lustyik, 2010) point out that New Zealand faces the challenge of being a small market with a government unwilling to adequately support local content. International studies (Morgan and Shanahan, 2010) have

concluded that in some countries where there is less dominance of single source programming the effects of cultivation theory are minimal. These countries include Iceland and Sweden and to a smaller extent Australia (55% local content between 6am to midnight), where programming is state government regulated with local content quotas which charter diverse programming in prominent time slots (Morgan and Shanahan, 2010). Unfortunately New Zealand cannot be considered one of these countries.

In the decades since Gerber first proposed his theory, there has been a substantial shift in the way audiences receive television and media entertainment. Gerbner noted that what the public watched was largely due to time restraints, that is the time restraints of the sender, network programming, and leisure time available to the message receiver/or public. Now, on demand and online content combined with increased mobile device ownership has shifted this relationship. Morgan and Shanahan (2009) contend that Cultivation Theory must be a living theoretical model adapting to shifts in redelivery systems and that it is as relevant today as it was in the 1970s. They further contend that increased media message saturation is not resulting in more diverse content, but a proliferation of existing models and that it is still the few multinational conglomerates, such as Viacom, Disney and Time Warner, who are controlling the commercially motivated messages. Hence Gerbner's original concerns about manufactured messages being controlled by a handful of distant conglomerates with something to sell (Gerbner, 1998) still holds true.

### **3.4 Youth Media Consumption**

The change in media consumption has been documented by many interested agencies both nationally and internationally. The Ministry of Health 2011/2012 survey on the health of children and young people stated that 58% of children 10-14 years watch two or more hours of television with an increase to 62% for Maori youth. This was an overall 4% decrease from the 2006/2007 figures (Ministry of Health, 2012). International studies have also reflected a drop in youth television consumption. In the USA the Kaiser Family Foundation (2010) found that in youth/children aged 8 to 18 there was a decrease from a daily average of 3 hours down to 2.45 hours. However when surveying on demand internet television viewing the overall daily consumption increased 38 minutes to a combined figure of 3.38 hours. This did not include internet/mobile media consumption which the Kaiser Family Foundation found averaged 10.45 hours per day. The Pew Research Center report on teens and technology (2013) discovered that 95% of USA teens had daily internet usage and that 74% percent accessed their media through mobile devices. These findings were echoed in Fenaughty's 2010 PhD thesis on New Zealand youth which found that 99% of students used the

internet and/or mobile devices at least three or more times a week (Fenaughty, 2010). As early as 2005 a Netsafe, Ministry of Education survey discovered that 73% of students between the ages of 12 and 19 had regularly used a mobile device. While no extensive media exposure studies have been conducted in New Zealand in recent years, indicators show New Zealand youth to be in step with international media trends ([www.netsafe.org.nz](http://www.netsafe.org.nz)). This indicates that best practices for communicating entertainment media content to this audience should consider a multifaceted, mobile friendly approach.

## **4. Research methodology**

### **4.1 Character content analysis**

#### **4.1.1 Methodology**

Based on my review of Cultivation Theory, I set out to discover what animated programmes were currently freely available to an audience of New Zealand youth aged 10 to 18 years. My key criterion was to ascertain if the characters in these programmes represented the cultural, ethnical and social reality of New Zealand youth. In addition, I wanted to see what physical traits these characters had and if they were a true representation of the audience they were designed to educate and entertain. As I further wanted to map any discernible trends in design, I elected to use content analysis to process a large quantity of data about the substantial group of characters and traits. The findings from the literature review suggested that if I found trends in my findings they could have considerable effects on the identity development of the youth audiences and therefore be a framework for my design response.

#### **4.1.2 Sample Range**

My first attempt at producing a measurable sample range was to take all animated fictional programmes on free to air television over the month of June 2013 with a target audience of 10 to 18 year olds. As most animated content on free to air television is for pre-schoolers this reduced the sample range to just eight reoccurring programmes of the sample time. All except one programme was cancelled stock. This meant that I was unable to obtain an accurate result of the current entertainment for this age demographic. I conducted a second sample range, this time covering all television programming including pay for view channels and again eliminating everything that was produced for under ten and over eighteen audiences. I then excluded all programmes which were no longer in production for the 2013 – 2014 seasons. I had intended to exclude those that did not have online content but found that all content had on demand viewing and additional interactive online content. This gave me a sample range of 27 animated titles.

### 4.1.3 Content of Origin

At this point I conducted the first pass of analysis looking at country of origin. Within the sample range no content was of New Zealand origin, 78% originated in the US, 11% in Canada, 7.5% in Japan and a small but significant 3.5% in Italy (see Figure 2).

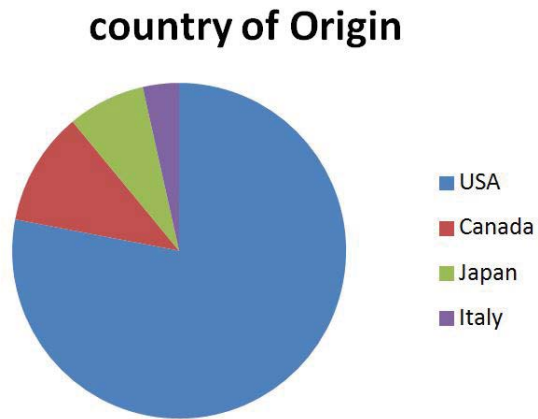


Figure 2. Country of origin.

### 4.1.4 Gender

I then surveyed the gender of all the central and reoccurring characters, including characters who were humanoid (inclusive of all characters with a human design, i.e. super heroes, fairies and Ben 10 etc), anthropomorphic, robot, monster, alien (excludes Ben 10 due to having human design) and mixed design.

The findings showed that 57% of the characters had humanoid designs, 35% anthropomorphic, 3% alien, 3% robot and 1% undefined. The gender ratio was 70.6% male characters and 29.4% female, as seen in figure 3, thus indicating an overwhelming trend towards male dominance in character design (see Figure 3).

I then eliminated all characters that did not have a humanoid characters' design. I recalculated the gender ratio and found that there was a 9.1% shift, the new figures being 61.5% male and 38.5% female. This finding did not alter the overall bias of characters with a male design (see Figure 4).

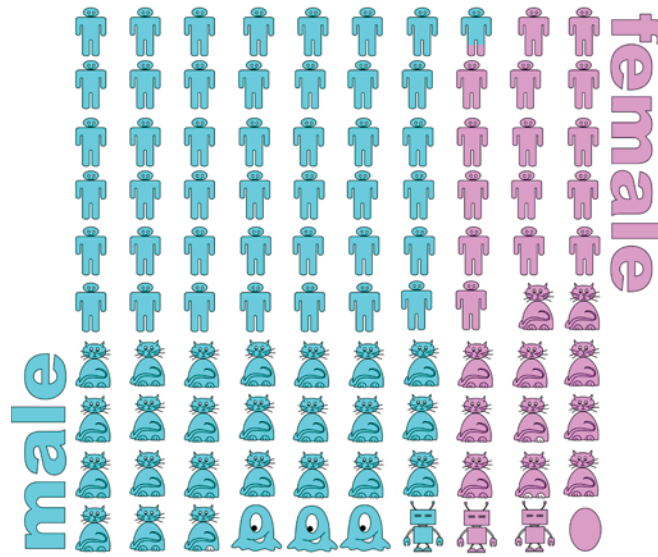


Figure 3. Character representation.

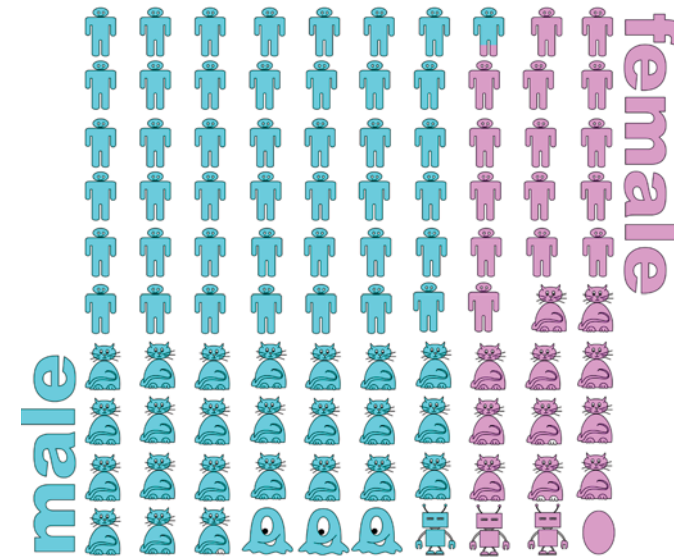


Figure 4. Humanoid character.

#### 4.1.5 Body shapes

Using the criterion of humanoid construction, I first analysed the characters' body shapes and head construction. I applied the standard animation measuring tool of head to body length to width. A standard fully grown human is approximately 7 ½ heads tall and an adolescent child of 14 is approximately 6 ½ heads tall for women and 7 heads for a male, with children 6 ½ heads and infants 4 ½ heads. The width of a grown adult is three head widths and 2 ½ for a child and adolescent (Peck, 1982). The findings from the surveyed character designs were very different from this (see Figure 5).

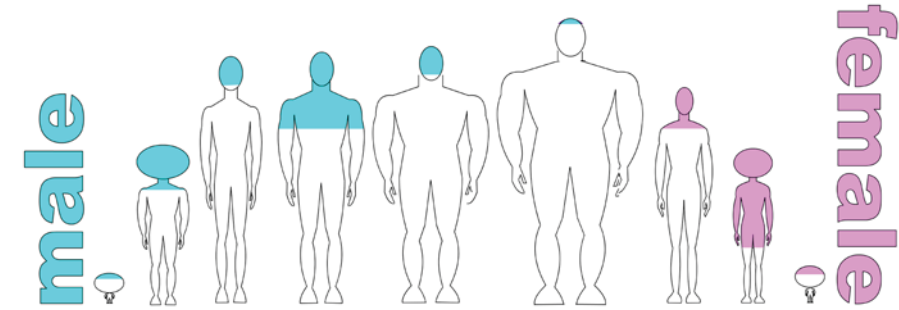


Figure 5. Body types.

Male designs clearly had a greater variety of body shapes and were the only designs to feature a larger girth. 27% of female designs were 5 head lengths to only 1 head width. 1 body shape which is physically impossible for a normal human. This shape design is used to make the woman's body seem smaller and more petite.

The findings show 45.7% of males were of 6 ½ heads, or above, with 30.5% exceeding 8 heads in height. Male width varied with 73% having a 2 heads or more in width with the greatest width exceeding 5 heads in width. In comparison only 32.4 % of females exceeded 6 ½ head height but all were shorter than a 8 head height (see Figure 6). These findings depict a trend for taller more imposing designs for the male characters and more child like form for the female body designs.

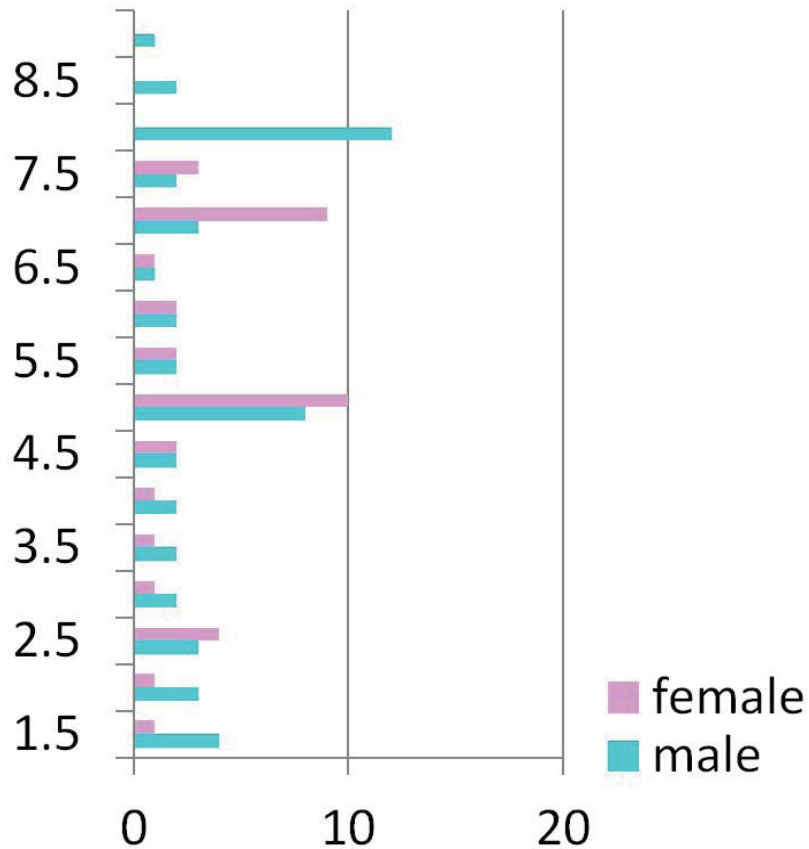


Figure 6. Body types by heads.

#### 4.1.6 Secondary Features

Following this, I analysed body design attributes and features. I found that 81% of women had long hair, 13.5% had medium length and 5.5% had short hair. 19% of the male characters had very short hair, 75% had short hair and only 6% medium or long hair.

My analysis of female character facial features showed that 65% had clearly defined lips and that 60% of those had larger lip designs. In comparison, only 10.5 % of males had full lips and those had a very dark skin colouring (See Figure 7).

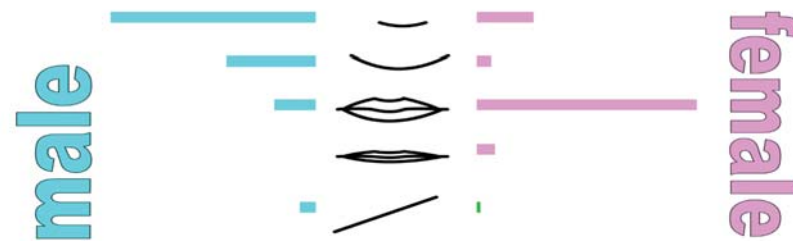


Figure 7. Mouth shapes.

Further, while 83.7% of females had eyelashes no males had eyelashes. Character eye designs show a greater distribution of eye shapes in female characters whereas male designs tended to conform to the traditional round cartoon design (30.5%) and the realistic fillet shape for (44%)(see Figure 8).



Figure 8. Eye shapes.

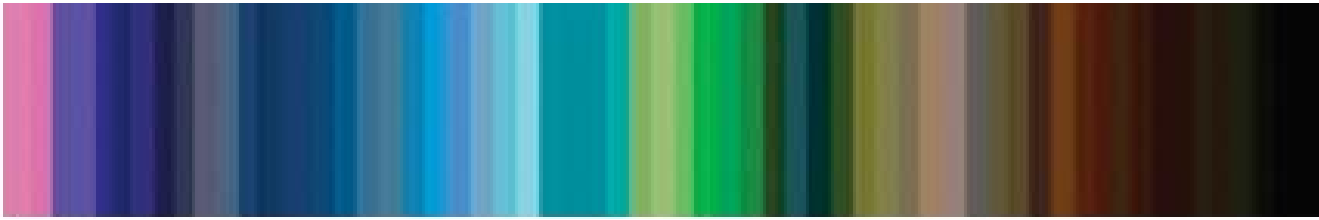


Figure 9. Eye colours.

Analysis of character faces show 65% of female characters had a heart shape face, while male face shapes varied considerably as the most popular being a round shape with 22% and the square angular designs with 24%(see Figure 10). The spectrum of the skin colour of the characters sampled indicates a clear and defined bias to lighter skin tones with only 5% of the spectrum representing people of darker colour (see Figure 11).

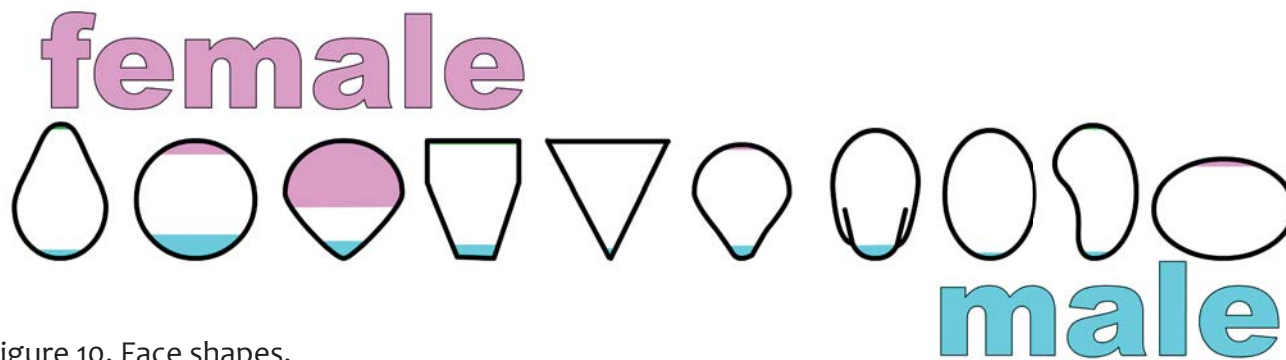


Figure 10. Face shapes.



Figure 11. Skin colour

In analysing the clothing, I found no culturally defined clothing. 57% of women wore skirts or dresses while 64% of the male characters wore trousers. Females were more likely to wear singlets than males but most characters had generic t-shirts or shirts. There were no recognisable ethnic items designed into the clothing or accessories.

#### 4.1.7 General Aesthetics

The general aesthetic of the design showed that a normal weight black outline was used in 46.8% of the designs and a hairline black outline in 32.3% of designs (see Figure 12). Shading design was equally conclusive with 43.8% using 2 tone shading and 37.5% using flat shading (see Figure 13).

This finding would indicate that a simpler design aesthetic is the most popular. It is also the cheapest and fastest option employed in a deadline driven environment.

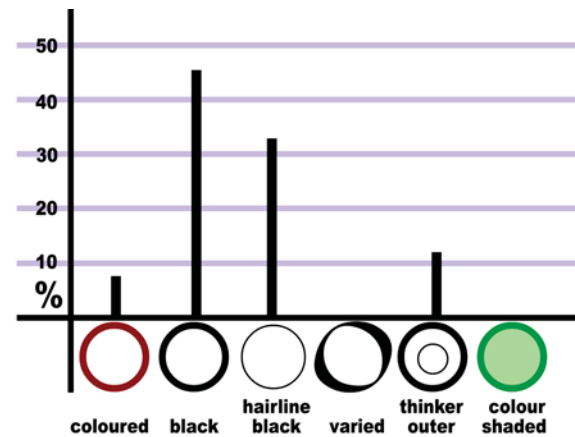


Figure 12. Line work.

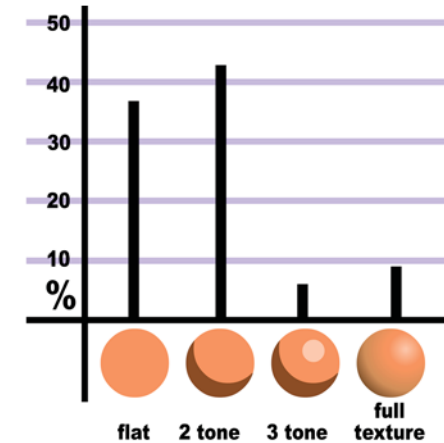


Figure 13. Shading.

In summary, these findings support the literature highlighting dominant trends in current New Zealand animation programming which show a biased view of gender and ethnicity and which do not reflect the social reality of New Zealand youth, nor particularly Southland youth. In the next section I discuss how I conducted an ethnographic analysis of Southland's culture and demographic in order to develop a design criteria for my Southland characters.

## **4.2 Ethnographic Analysis**

### **4.2.1 Introduction**

I chose Southland youth as the topic for this project as it is the community I have chosen to belong to and believe there to be unique distinctly New Zealand stories to be developed from a Southland perspective. To better understand the culture and interests of Southland youth, I extracted information from the 2013 census and cross related it to local studies conducted by Venture Southland, SouthAlive, Our Way Southland, Southland District Health Board, Sports Southland, Invercargill City Council and the Southern Institute of Technology Research Institute (SIT). These agencies all claim to have the common goal of promoting a safer, more inclusive life for Southland residence and use this data to develop programmes such as the Southland Suicide Prevention Program, South City rejuvenation plan, Inner city rejuvenation plan and the Invercargill and Southland Youth Council Programs.

### **4.2.2 Population Statistics**

Southland population, according to the 2013 census, is 93,339 with 51,696 living in Invercargill. Invercargill has a very proud Scottish heritage, which is evident in the town's monuments, architecture and street names. Invercargill also has the highest ethnic diversity in the region with 15.1% Maori, 3.2% Pacific Island, 3.2% Asian and 0.4% other. Since the 2006 census, the town has seen a significant change in its ethnic diversity with an 11.4% increase in people identifying as Maori, a 20% increase in Pacific Island, 300% increase in Asian and 100% increase in those identifying as other. The Invercargill Council ([www.icc.govt.nz](http://www.icc.govt.nz)) are actively encouraging immigration to the region and predict the Asian population should reach the national average of 14% by 2020.

### **4.2.3 Culture and Community**

The Southland Community Outcomes (2012) and the Our Way Southland Youth Forum (2010) action groups found that youth were very aware of the shift in cultural diversity in their community and thought that it was a positive thing as it provided more diverse events to attend in Southland. Since 2006 there has been a rapid increase in community events such as Diwali, Chinese New Year, International Buskers Festival, Wild Food Festival and International Foods Festival. An array of smaller events varying from cultural evenings, theatre and dance troupes have been organised and funded by Venture Southland, Southland Multicultural Council and SIT, and supported by the local

schools. There has been a resurgence of pride in Moari and Pacific Island culture with the growth in popularity of Kapa Haka groups and Nga Putangitangi competition. Matariki is growing fast with events around the city including of the Matariki Maori Design show at the Murihiku Marae and the Matariki Film Festival at Southland Museum and Art Gallery. Parenting in Southland focus group (2011) discovered that youth made their decisions around their connectedness to their community and family and that building strong connections within their community was an important part of their social life. The Youth Views Gallop focus groups (2012) report that they were frustrated by the lack of public transport to see friends and attend events and that they wanted more entertainment and social events. This positive response is a turnaround from the early 2000s when Southland had the second highest youth suicide rate in New Zealand (Ministry of Health, 2006). Overall the studies report that youth experience growing up in Southland as a positive.

#### 4.2.4 Sport

Southland youth are also active participants in the region's sports and leisure activities. Sports and Recreation in the lives of Young New Zealanders (2011) survey showed that on average Southland and Otago youth enjoy their sport with 8.1% more likely to be in a sports club and 12.2% more likely to involved in a school sports team. 90% of youth said they liked sport with 60% being active members of a sports club and 60% participants in school sports teams. 40% of 18 year olds volunteered in mentorship roles within their favoured sports and 90% of youth spend 3 or more hours in some form of training. It was found that males favoured rugby, basketball and football and female's netball, volleyball and badminton. These figures are supported by SIT Research Institute 2013 survey of sport in Southland Schools, which identifies basketball as the most popular sport. Basketball, netball, athletics and running were the most popular school sports teams and rugby swimming, soccer and dance the most popular club sports. Netball, running and basketball are the most popular sports for females and rugby, basketball and touch the most popular with males. While basketball was the most popular sport overall youth also reported wanting to try badminton. They also associated participating in sport with being part of the community, meeting new people and having new experiences.

#### 4.2.5 Career Opportunities

Venture Southland 2013 Career Survey showed that there were a number of factors contributing to Southland youths' decisions about their future. While family and community ranked high amongst 85% of year 11 students, right education was also a big factor. This is contradictory. By

year 11 90% of students knew the career they wished to pursue with females favouring careers in medicine, physiotherapy and vet nursing and males favouring farming, the armed forces and trades (see Figure 14). Overall Southland youth felt very positive about their career prospects.

In summary Southland youth are aware that they are part of an evolving community whose ethnic diversity is changing and they want to embrace those changes. They want to be involved at a cultural, sporting and community level. They want to belong and be part of something that makes them feel connected to their community and to those around them.

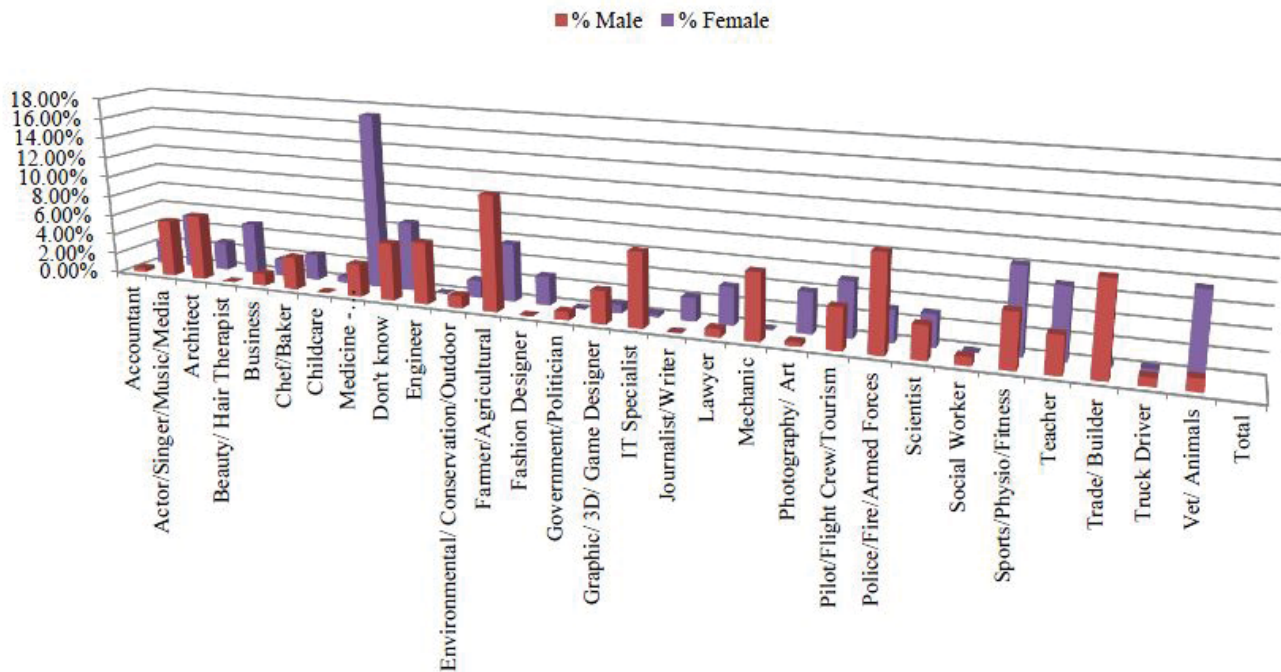


Figure 14. Career choices of year 11 students

## 4.1 Observational Studies

### 4.1.1 Methodology

In this section I reflect on how I employed the methods of observational analysis and on-site sketching to further gather visual indicator information relative to my project subject group.

### 4.3.2 Sample Range

My initial sample range, conducted during May/June 2013 winter, focused on one collection of sketches from the two major subgroups in the Invercargill area, urban and rural youth. For my rural observations I needed an area that had substantial people traffic but which was not personal or restricted. I consequently chose the Lornville sheep and cattle sale yards which operate every Tuesday morning throughout the year (See Figure 15). For my urban studies I initially choose Esk Street, the main shopping area in central Invercargill and place where many young people congregate at the cafes and open communal areas (See Figure 16). I then repeated this in the summer months of January and March 2014 adding locations in Bluff, Winton, Gore and Riverton. I spent one hour a week at each location stationed at either a cafe on the main street or the sale yard cafe adjacent to the sales pens. I aimed to draw every member of the public that I perceived to be between the ages of 10 and 18 years old, paying attention to trends that could be associated with the location.

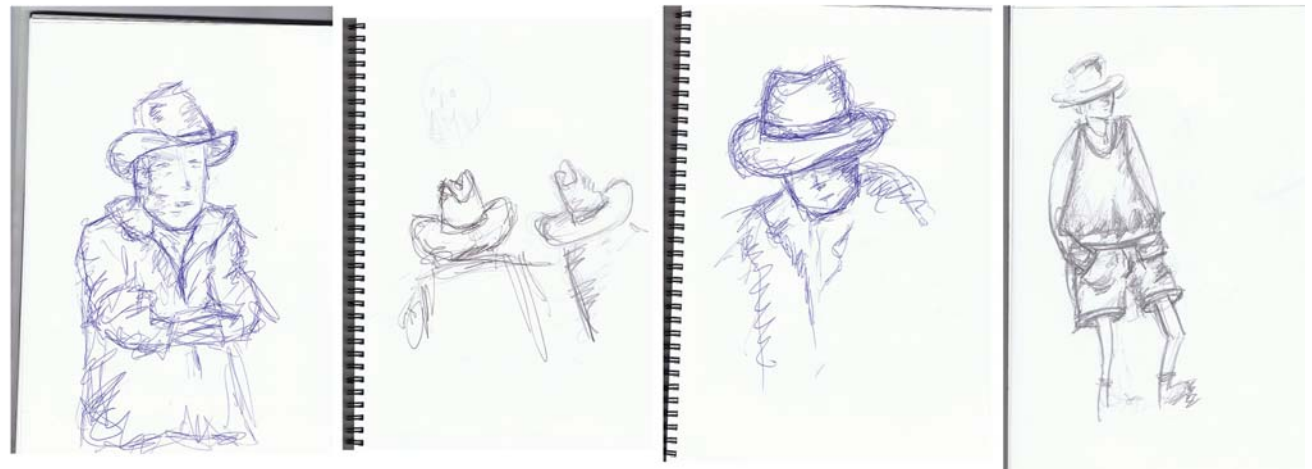


Figure 15. Sample sketches from Lornville sale yards

### 4.3.3 Results

During my visits to Bluff, Winton, Gore and Riverton I found that teenagers did not congregate in any of these small town centres, which meant that I was unable to get any research data during my visits. I changed the days to weekends and found the same results. My visits to the Lornville sales yards were far more successful, but I was only able collect data on male youth as there were no occurrences of female youth during any of the sample periods. My observations proved that rural males do wear some of the items stereotypically assigned to them and that shorts, swandris, and sleeveless waterproof vests and red strip gumboots were by far the dominant dress trends. Esk Street provided the highest volume of equally mixed male and female teenagers and also a high



Figure 16. Sample sketches Esk Street.

#### 4.4 Quantitive Research

Using the data from the sketches, I quantified some of the observed attributes. I limited this sample to Esk Street due to the low possibilities of collecting data in other sample areas. It was unnecessary to collect data at Lornville due to the singular trends observed. I spent two one hour sessions per week over a three week period in March 2014. Again I limited my observations to teenagers between the ages of 10 to 18 years old as I wanted to discover whether the trends documented in my sketch studies were as defined as the sketches implied. My first criteria focused on female upper outer wear. How many females wore black Kathmandu puffer jackets? And was this trend echoed in male upper outer wear? In summary I now had two sets of consistent data outlining clothing trends in Southland youth that I could use to formulate visual identifiers for my character designs.

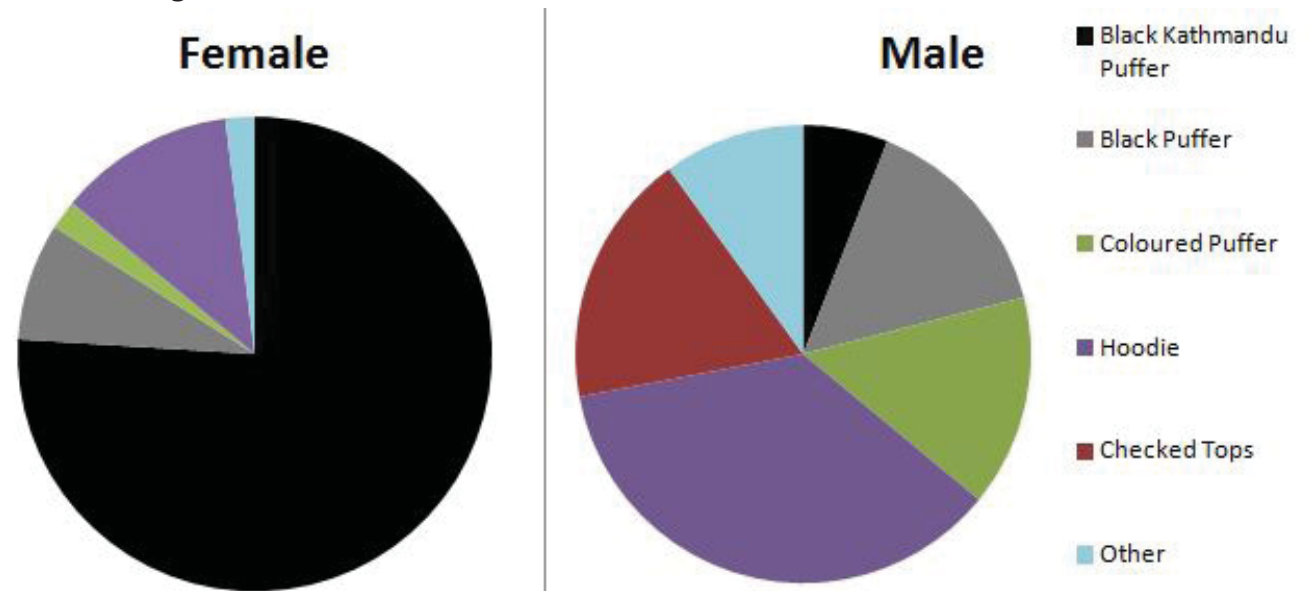


Figure 17. Upper body clothing on Males and Females on Esk Street.

## 5. Character Design Development

### 5.1 Responsive design

#### 5.1.1 Early Explorations

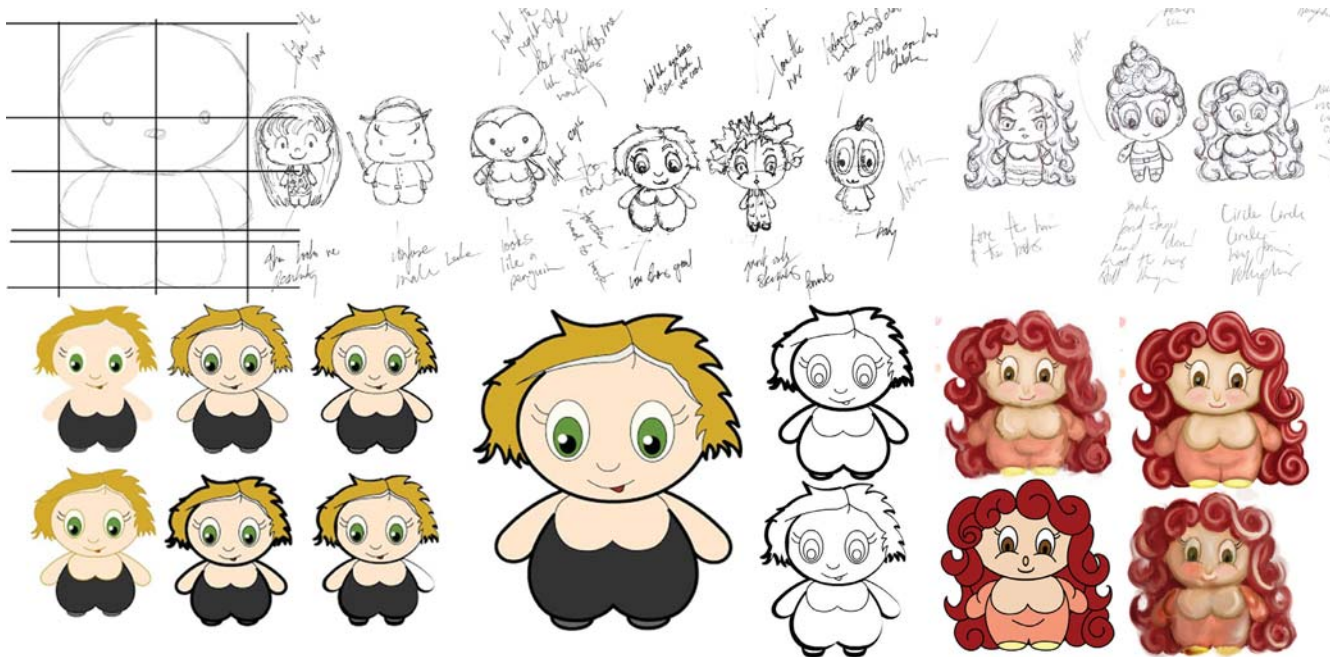


Figure 18. Kawaii experiments

In the early stages of the project, I developed a set of character designs that responded to my research into female-centric animated television programming and the successful refranchising of *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*, *Powerpuff Girls* and *Carebears*. These animations were designed for young girls but have attracted cross gender audiences. The common anomaly design aesthetic was the Japanese character design style ‘kawaii’, meaning cute, adorable, innocence (Madge, 1997) and made popular by the characters Hello Kitty and Pikachu. The template for this design aesthetic is an oversized head and eyes and 1 to 2 head/ body ratio. Part of this initial exploration involved creating portraits of women I knew and who, in my view, represent distinctly New Zealand female characters. For these designs, I employed an aesthetic template based on those provided by Robertson (2013) and Madge (1997). I then sought feedback from friends on social media. I asked them to volunteer photos of themselves and used them to sketch stylised

versions which I then developed using digital vector imaging and painting and which I posted back to them on Facebook. Through this process I discovered that I had started to engage an audience and that many of the participants shared my images of them with their friends. I also started to accrue requests from social media connections, with 32 requests posted to me over a four week period of being online. But, while I had successfully engaged an audience I had neither defined who they were, nor had I placed them in any media context that would add value. They were simply portraits and an interesting curiosity. Their target audience was mixed and confused, and appeared to appeal to a preschool audience who already consume this aesthetic with Wiki the Kiwi and Tiki Tour. I understood that to design great characters for New Zealand youth I needed to engage with them in more direct fashion. This was when I began my observational drawings.



Figure 19. Kawaii character set.

### 5.1.2 Observational Study Design Response

In reviewing my initial observation studies I noticed that they indicated two prominent Southern character types, the rural male and the urban female, which I decided to develop further. I wanted to further capture and refine these dominant character types and so developed a template based on my drawings in the field in order to do so (see Figure 20).

I then went on to take the dominant dress indicators from each group as and created two 3D character concept designs (see Figure 21, 22 and 23). I found, however, that the designs were too clunky and while featuring many of the observed indicators did not show the character appeal that I was hoping to achieve. The designs were too stylised and too much emphasis was on the stylised bare legs. The face and skin tones and facial features were underworked and did not resemble the drawings that I had been working on. When posed as a set, the characters did not complement each other and the male character dominated the female character, a trait I wished to counterbalance. I also thought my premature use of 3D models without fully understanding the concept or target audience meant that the aesthetic and style lacked direction and unity. Nevertheless, I felt that the dress indicators, the puffer jacket, shorts and check shirts successfully

incorporated my observational and quantitative research. This trial design helped me understand that in refining the character designs for my audience I needed to research the styles and trends current in contemporary animation practice.

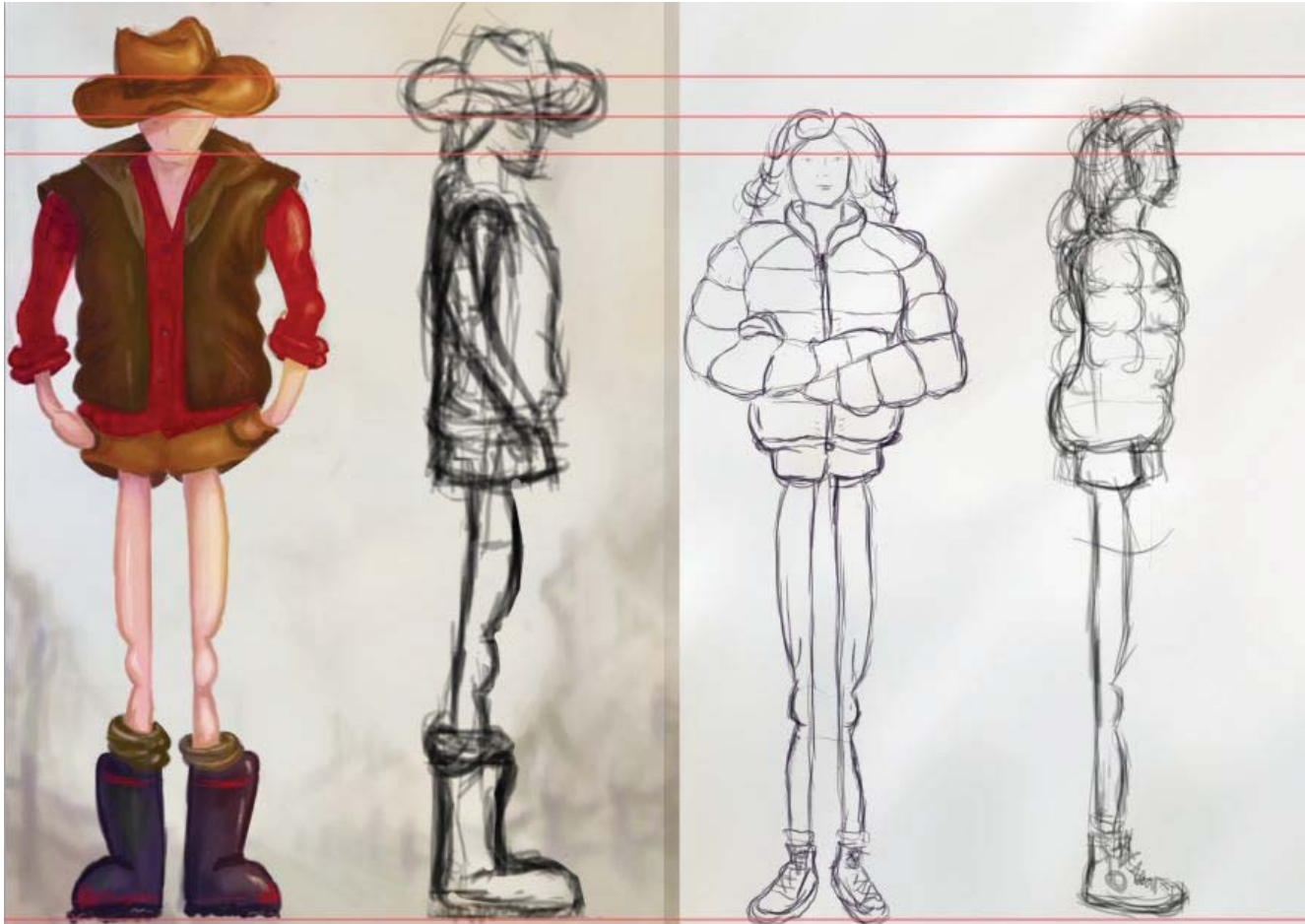


Figure 20. Template development.



Figure 21. Southern urban female.



Figure 22. Southern urban male.



Figure 23. Posed characters.

### 5.1.3 Character content analysis design Response



Figure 24. Urban female/ rural male TV trends

After reviewing contemporary animation character design, I isolated primary trends in aesthetic and body design and applied them to the urban female and rural male designs. I applied the dominant female body type of 5 heads in height and one head in width to both male and female characters so as to give them a sense of design equality that I did not find in my case study. I used the 2 tone 2D style with black line work. In addition to giving them oversized eyes and simplified noses, I assigned them the eye types specific to each gender (see Figure 24). The change in aesthetics meant that the characters now worked better as a set as did the dress indicators. While these characters had more appeal, I felt that they seemed too homogenised and generic and had taken on the exact traits that removed television characters from a defined cultural perspective. In addition the proportions employed made the character designs look a lot younger than my observational studies had indicated.

#### **5.1.4 Observation Design Response Revisited**

I decided to refocus my observation studies on proportion and style in order to determine a combination that would be evocative of an older age group and still have a unique Southland feel. I wanted to use body proportions and features that authentically reflected actual, observed body attributes as well as a more mature style. In this revision, I decided to aim for an approximate age of 17 years old, assuming that this age would appeal to both younger and older audiences. At this point I returned to my observation drawings, selected two more common character types and developed a further set of female and male characters. These developments included making the rural male character look older by altering his proportions, making his head shape squarer and his hair less polished, and adding a new character based on my observation of Maori teenagers. This character features similar dress trends as well as significant skin, eye colour and hair style indicators. In addition to representing popular clothing indicators observed in rural and urban males and females, I experimented with the aesthetic exploring both flat and two tone shading with black outlining and a less saturated colour palette. Of the four designs I felt that panel four was most successfully in representing the target age group and decided to use this as a template for developing the full set of characters (see Figure 25).



Figure 25. Four set of characters from observations, panel on through to four

### 5.1.5 Ethnographic design response

From my ethnographic analysis I knew that the Asian and Indian population of Southland were growing strongly and that Southlanders, particularly Southland youth, were proud of their cultural diversity. During my observation practice I noted a higher than statistically documented mixture of ethnic diversity. To back up my observations I added three one hour Esk Street sessions documenting the perceived ethnic diversity of teenagers. I observed that those who appeared to be of Indian and Asian descent made up 14% of the foot traffic, a much high percentage than is indicated by the 2013 census. This was due to a larger number of immigrants settling in central Invercargill than other parts of Southland and the active policy of immigration implemented by the Invercargill City Council, who have stated their target as 15% Asian population by 2020. To accurately represent this diversity of population with any accuracy I decided to create six characters based on this policy (see Figure 26). All are based on an eight head height by three head

width template and have variously featured and proportioned faces. What I found successful in this iteration was that in departing from international animation aesthetic and working from reality, I had created characters that were appealing and which clearly represented older teenagers. At this point I was happy with the individual and group character designs and felt as if they could work within the context of teenage media entertainment.



Figure 26. Six character set.

### 5.1.6 Design refinement

While I believed that I had resolved the character design, I also had to refine the shape and line work and make sure that the designs appeared consistent over multiple platforms. To do this effectively I decided to develop all the designs in 3D in Maya and to give them a body and facial rig so that the imagery would be consistent over all platforms. This was also done to ensure that all future editing of the design could be rolled out over all platforms effectively. However, I still wanted to retain the look and feel of the character in Figure 26. To do this I had to experiment with surface and toon shaders as the flat shading (see Figure 27 and 28) evident in Figure 26 did not yield the results expected and looked too flat during animation test. By changing back to a simple 2 tone shading the character regained the depth I had achieved in the 2D artwork (see Figure 29 and 30).



Figure 27. Southland rural Male 3D development

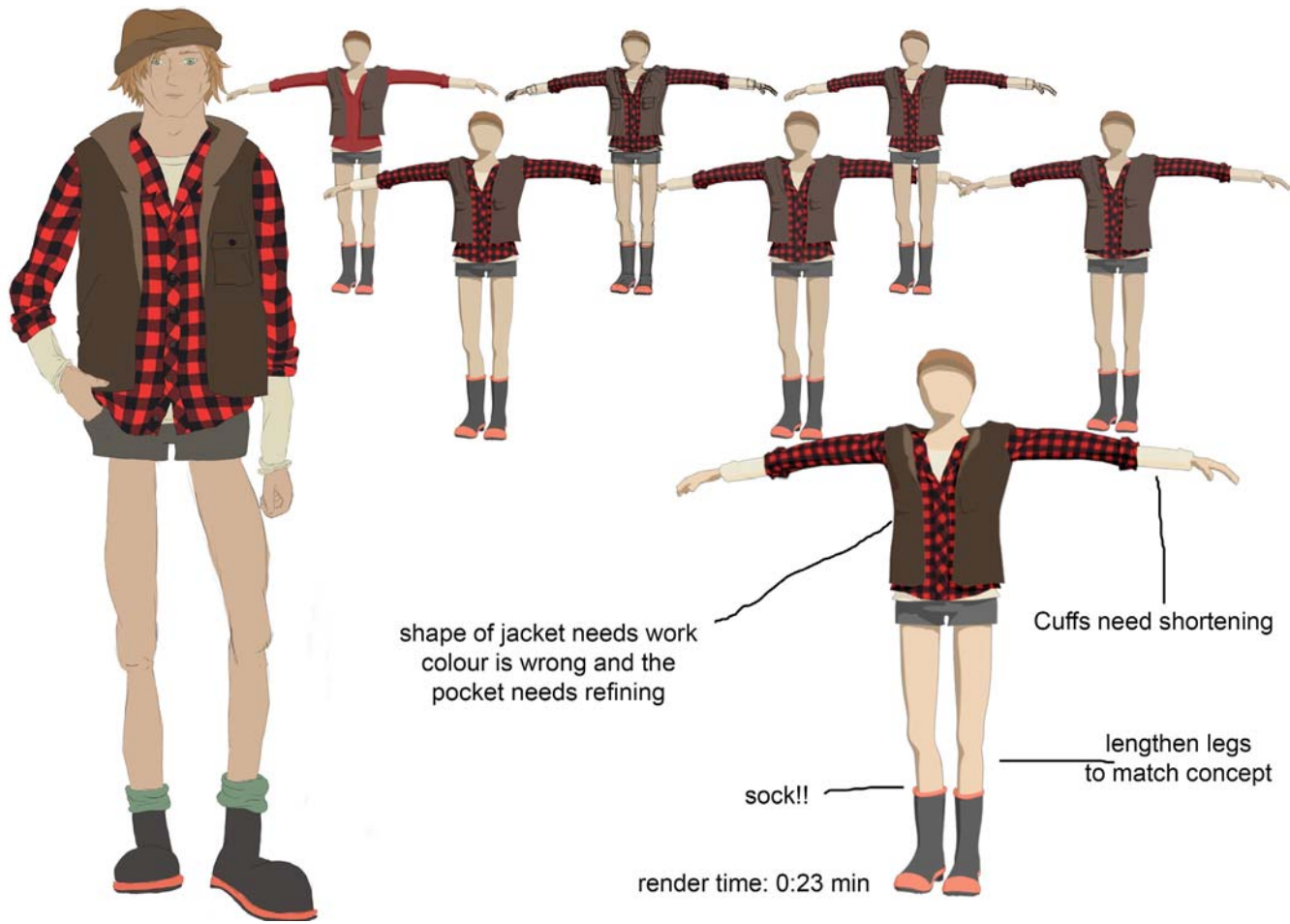


Figure 28. Southland rural male, line work development.



Figure 29. Southland rural male 2D/3D comparison



Figure 30. Southland urban Indian male 2D/3D comparison

### 5.1.7 Character Biographies

Designing appealing Southland characters entailed making them visually recognisable and someone the target audience might be likely to meet in everyday life. During the next phase of design, I relied heavily on the ethnographical analysis and observational studies to provide a set of criteria to design attributes for each characters (see Figure 31). Each character was assigned one dominant attribute from each study, a number of mid-range attributes and at least one lower range attributes. I mixed or ignored much of the gender specific data when assigning dominant traits, for example Lucy is the rugby player and Hamish loves badminton. Each character was also assigned an event which their attributes favoured and which could be later used in building a template for the first series springboards. For some of these characters I have included abbreviated character biographies (see Figures 32-37). For a sample full biography please see Appendix 1.

Character bio map: Lucy

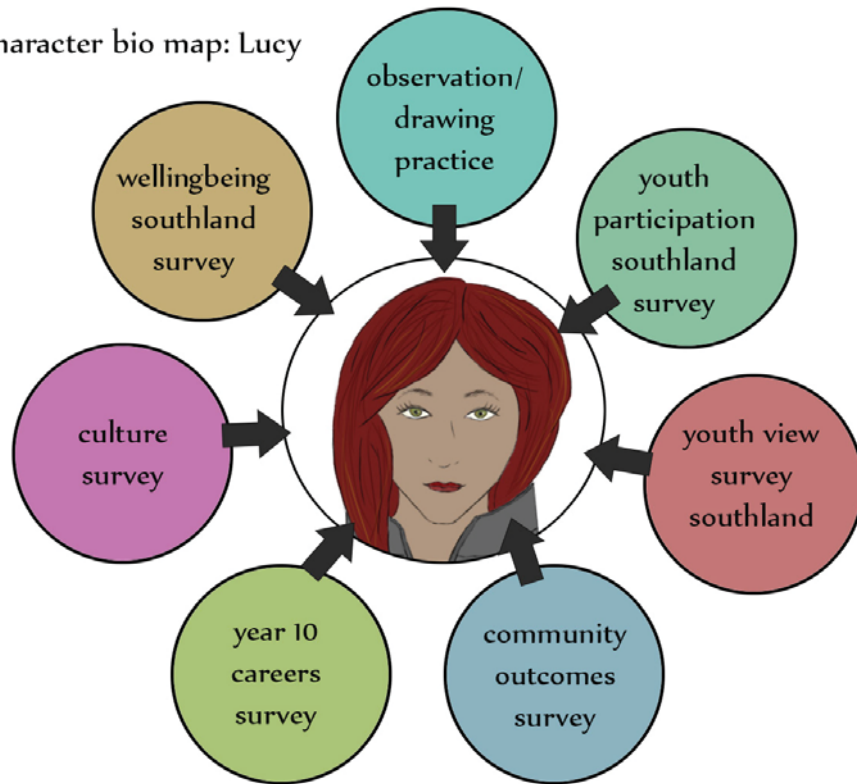
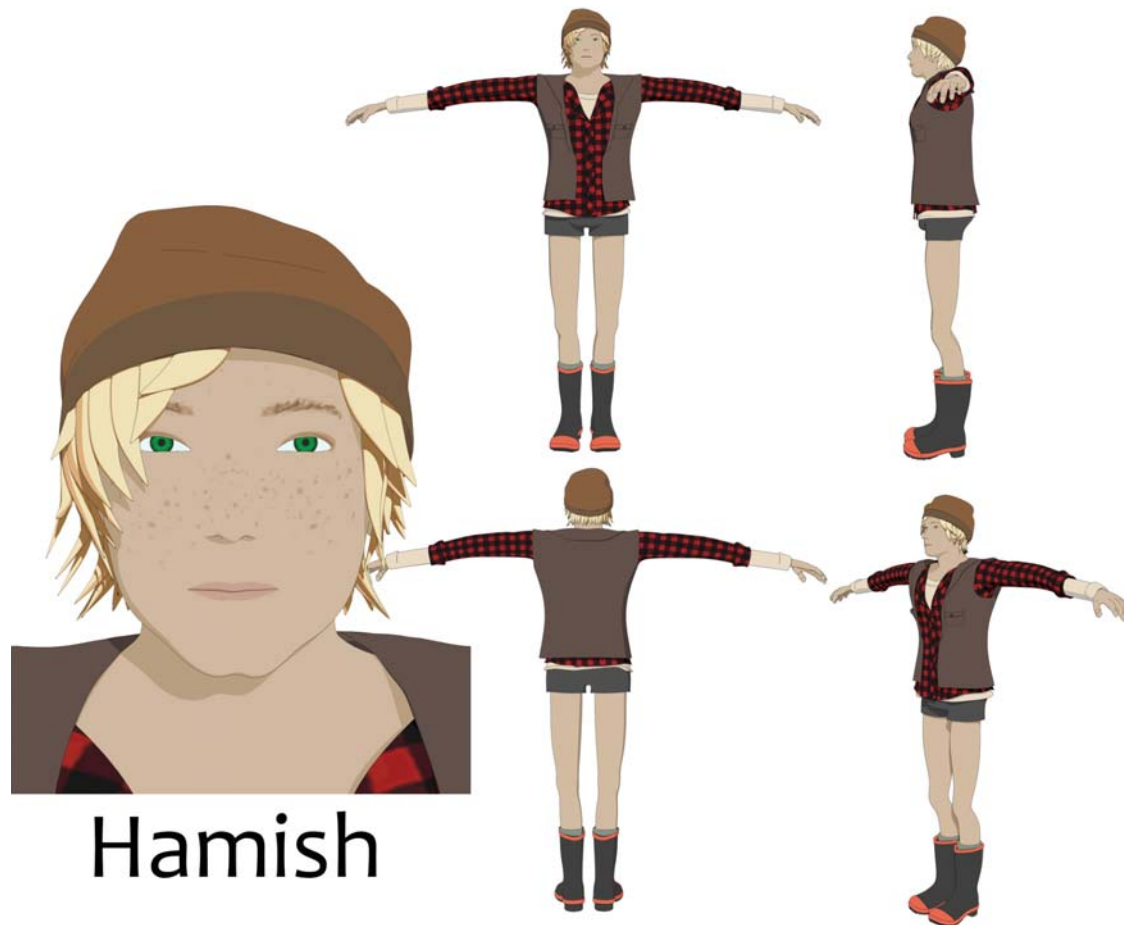


Figure 31. Visual representation of biography templates



# Hamish

Figure 32. Hamish Turnarounds

**Full Name:** Hamish Alan McAllister      **Age:** 16      **Nick Names:** Ham-dog, Ham, Hamster  
Hamish's parents named him after his great-grandfather who set up their family farm in Dacre. His family are very proud of their Scottish heritage and family lineage. His nick names are all given by his best friend Samuel, who changes them constantly to suit his mood. Hamish is very fond of his whole group of friends but Samuel is his best friend, even though he feels a little bullied by him at times. Isabella is his best female friend as she is always there for him and is a good listener. Hamish plays a lot of sport and considers himself to be an outdoors person. His favourite sport is badminton but he also loves cycling as it's his main form of transport and he cycles to be with his little sister. He plays rugby, but it's not his favourite sport. He likes the team spirit, though, and that his dad comes to every game and expresses his pride during these times so he does not want to give up that connection they have together. Hamish believes he might be gay as he has strong feelings about his friend Daneesh. He feels that this conflicts with his family's beliefs and this causes him a great amount of pain. His hopes for the future are to take over the family farm, turn it organic and implement sustainable renewable technology.

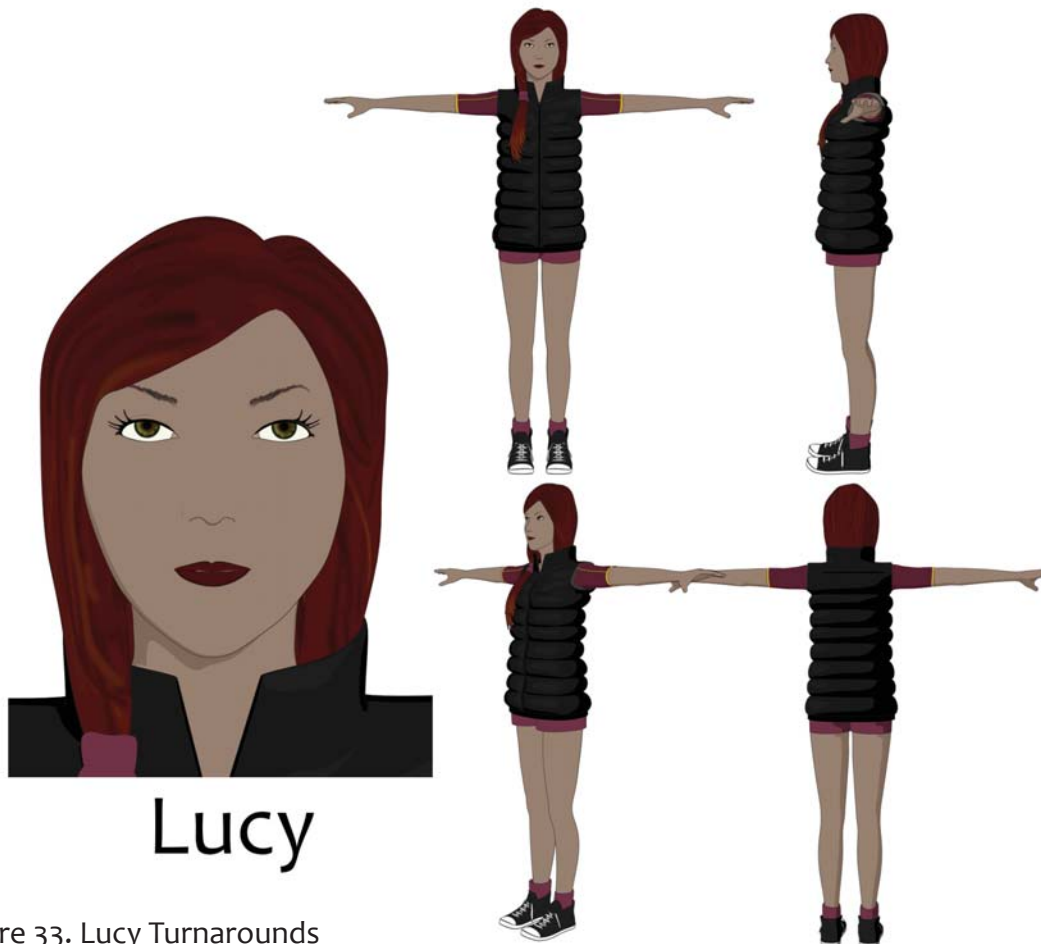


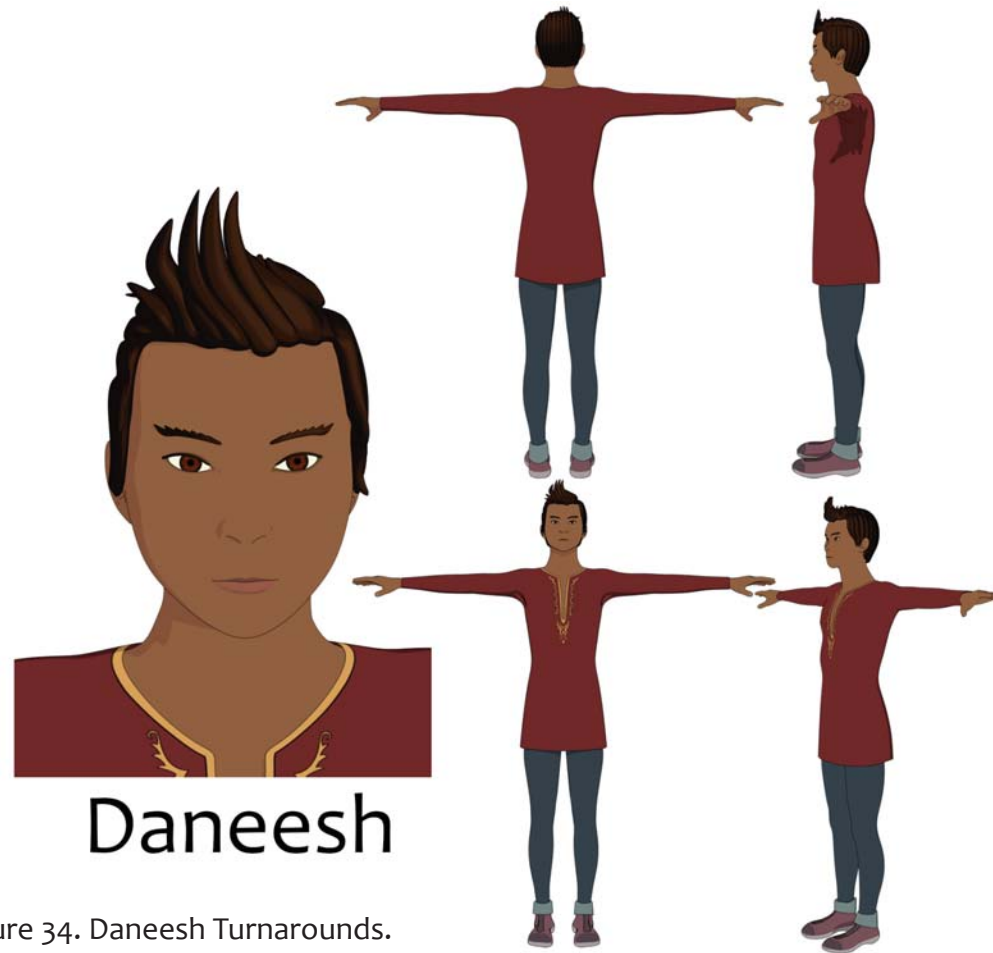
Figure 33. Lucy Turnarounds

**Full Name:** Lucy Elizabeth Murphy

**Age:** 16

**Nick Names:** Luc

Lucy is of Maori, English, Irish and French descent but simply thinks of herself as a Kiwi. Lucy is an absolute sports nut. She will tell you she loves all sports but really her two passions are rugby and basketball. She plays for both school and club teams, is in the mentor program and is assistant coach for the junior girl's rugby teams. She is a huge Stags fan and never misses a home game. She washes and wears her Stags' shirt constantly and has been known to get into trouble for always having it on under her school uniform. Lucy's second love is her mobile phone, which is constantly attached to her. Her friends sometimes tire of the constant photos and posts about their every move but Lucy loves it and gets a lot of her personal self-worth from the responses she receives from her followers. She genuinely feels connected with her many online friends and tries to share this with her real friends, but they often make fun of her serious commitment to her online life. Lucy considers herself to be a kind and caring person and believes she is making a difference in both her on and off-line life, but many of her friends think she is quite dismissive of them and more concerned with her phone.

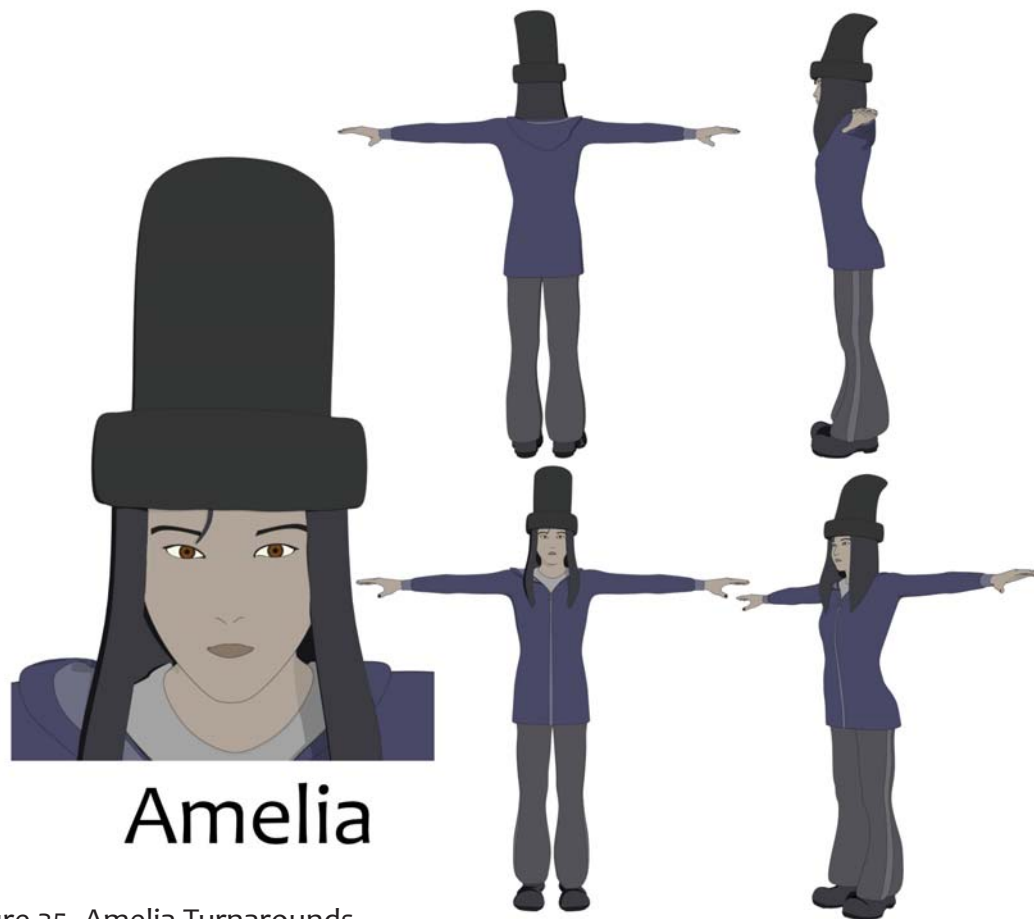


## Daneesh

Figure 34. Daneesh Turnarounds.

**Full Name:** Daneesh Arjun Pillai **Age:** 16 **Nick Names:** Dan

Dan has been brought up in New Zealand with Indian parents. His father moved to New Zealand as a student and fell in love with the country, especially the South Island. He found the sparseness of the countryside invigorating and at the first opportunity brought his family to New Zealand to live the outdoors life he remembered and loved. Dan got his love for camping and tramping from his parents, it just feels like summer to him. He is openly gay and knew this from a young age. His family have always been very supportive of this as they are inclusive supportive family. He has recently returned from visiting his grandparents in India and wants now to be more involved in his Indian heritage, its culture and history. Dan is a volunteer for the new immigrant mentor system which helps new families settle into Southland society. He loves basketball and is a big fan of the Sharks, and loves to attend the home games as often as he can. Dan has a keen passion for drawing and hopes to find a career in the creative industries. He is deeply in love with his friend Hamish and has kept this secret for a number of years.



Amelia

Figure 35. Amelia Turnarounds.

**Full Name:** Amelia Seo-yeon Bell **Age:** 16 **Nick Names:** None

Amelia is half Korean on her mother's side. Her mother was a famous country and western singer back in Korea and met her father while on a country and western pilgrimage to Nashville. Her father fell madly in love with her and whisked her back to his home town of Gore. She has grown up with music all around her and has adopted her parent's passion. She plays the guitar, violin and trumpet, and is a keen singer. Her favourite music is Heavy Metal and Indie Goth but when she performs she is most passionate about country music. She is not really into sport unless you include her razor scooter, which she has on her at all times, she believes walking is wasting time. She lives in Gore but goes to high school in Invercargill as her mother is the music teacher there. She is very inquisitive and secretly studies very hard, but doesn't let that be known to her group. She loves being part of the group but prefers her own company and is a bit of a loner. Amelia is sharp and can be very witty when she wants. She comes across as being very serious and she is the go to person when anyone wants to know something factual.



Izzie

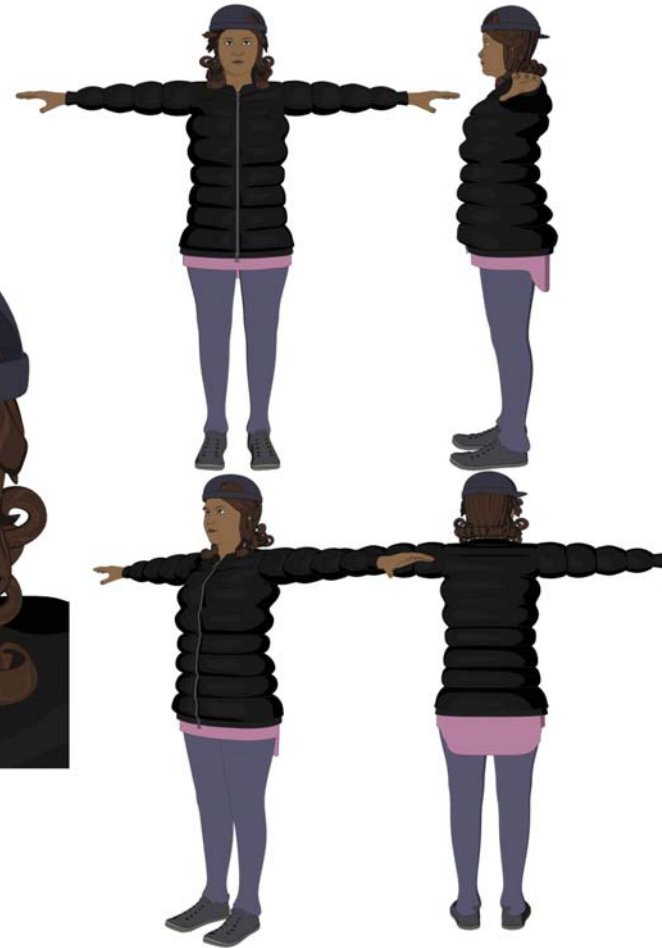
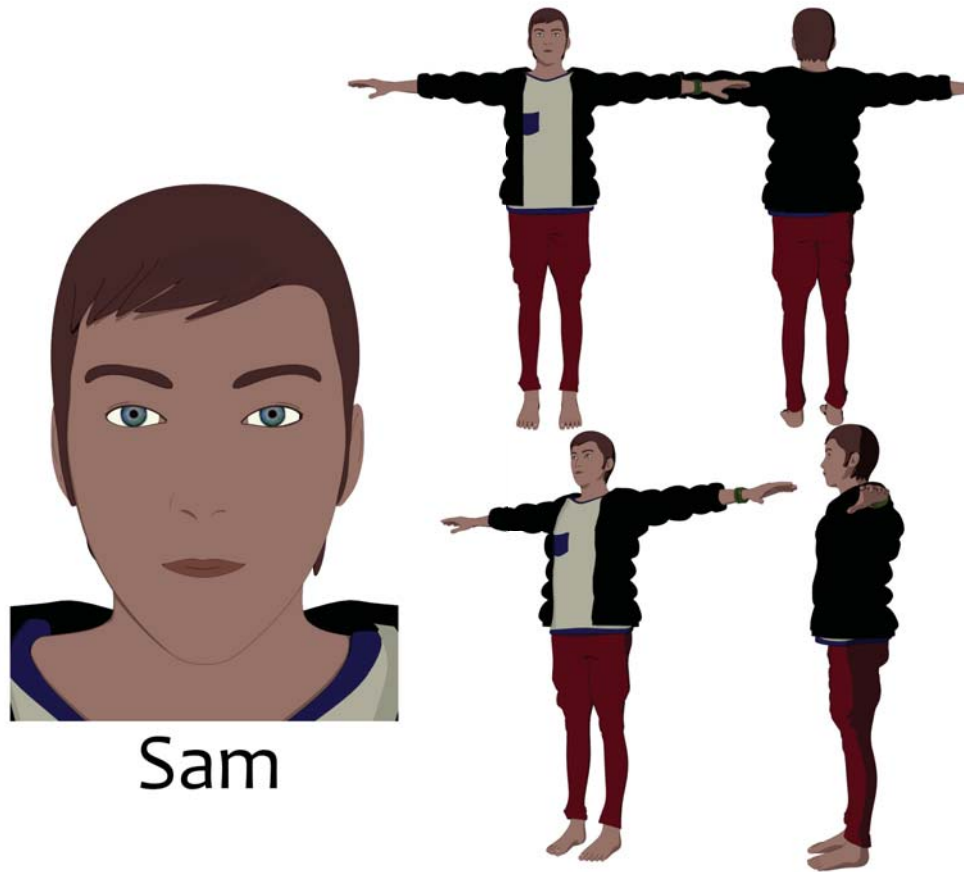


Figure 36. IzzieTurnarounds.

**Full Name:** Isabella Aroha Ferguson **Age:** 16 **Nick Names:** Izzie

Isabella is proud of her Maori, Scottish heritage, she is Ngai Tahu. Her family are originally from Bluff, where a lot of them still live, but Izzie's family moved to Invercargill to be closer to work and school. A lot of her early life was spent in Bluff, in and around the Marae. Her whole family were heavily involved in the development of the Te Fau Aroha Marae. She considers herself a feminist and is involved in mentorship for young Maori girls. She also helps with traditional weaving and craft workshops with her mum. Izzie is the person everyone goes to with their problems as they perceive her to be strong and wise and full of good and valuable advice. Unlike her best friend Lucy, she doesn't like technology and doesn't even have a Facebook page - she believes it is all just time wasting. Lucy teases her constantly about her lack of technological abilities and online absence. Izzie still has a flip phone which mortifies Lucy no end. Izzie's pride and joy is her car which takes every spare piece of cash she has. She has done it up with the help of her dad and loves their joint passion for classic cars. She never misses the races at Teratonga or an Edendale crank-up weekend. Her favourite sport is basketball, a passion she shares with Daneesh.



Sam

Figure 37. Samuel Turnarounds.

**Full Name:** Samuel Alan Smith **Age:** 16 **Nick Names:** Sam, Sammie, Dick

Samuel thinks he is the funniest, fun loving guy in the whole group. He plays the clown the whole time and tends to upset the women of the group a lot, hence they call him 'dick'. He isn't as funny or as insensitive as he makes out. He is quiet insecure about his abilities and thinks he will never quite match up with the strengths of his friends. He is always getting in trouble and tries to get his friends in trouble as well. Samuel is struggling at school and can't keep himself awake at night due to his addiction to his xbox. They are always bailing him out and hiding his exploits from his parents. He claims to love rugby but never plays it, only watches it on TV. He thinks he is doing up his matte black ute but every time he does any modification on it Izzie has to come fix it. He is secretly in love with Amelia but keeps jibing her with racist jokes, which upsets her. He admires his best friend Hamish but is having trouble coming to terms with Hamish's burgeoning relationship with Deenash, but won't talk about it. He loves his group of friends deeply but does not know how to tell them this. He is very caring and will always come running whenever anyone needs anything but pretends he has got there by accident or was just in the neighbourhood.

5.3 Final Designs Sample pages - Bible



Figure 38. Sample page of project Bible



Figure 39. Sample page of project Bible 2.



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## Episodes

### Episode One: Hamish

Hamish struggles to come to terms with the divisions in his life. His father is deeply conservative and resistant to accept the social changing going on around them. He doesn't like Hamish hanging out with Daneesh and has forbidden him to go to his house. Hamish is coming to terms with, and accepting his sexuality and his deep attraction to his friend Daneesh. The conflict plays out during Daneesh's family Diwali celebrations to which the group has been invited.

### Episode Two: Lucy

The group go to the Shark's basketball game at Stadium Southland. After the game the group walk into town. During that time Lucy receives online messages from a friend up north. They are panicked and depressive, her friend is being bullied online. This opens up a discussion about bullying.

### Episode Three: Isabella

Izzie's grandmother has fallen very ill. She wants to bring both her biological and chosen family together, but rifts appear over a shared dinner. This brings to the fore the debate as to whether New Zealand should be referred to as a multicultural society of a bicultural society. Lucy and Izzie fall out over Lucy's complete ignorance of the Maori part of her heritage.

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### Episode Three: Samuel

Samuel nicks a bottle of Bourbon from his parents and takes it to the school ball. He encourages the others to join him in getting drunk, but fails and drinks most of the bottle himself. The group have to save him from being caught by the teachers and from doing stupid things to himself and others. Amelia comes to his rescue and takes him away and looks after him while pouring scorn on his behaviour and while trying to figure out what's going on with him to behave like this.

### Episode Three: Amelia

Amelia invites the group to see her play at the Golden Guitar awards in Gore. This sends the group into shock as Amelia has always presented as a cynical heavy metal rock girl. Samuel realises that his racist jokes are just a cover for his real feelings for Amelia and he is torn about how to move forward with these. Amelia is both nervous and excited about revealing more of what she perceives to be her real self to Samuel and the group as a whole.

### Episode Three: Dan

Amelia invites the group to see her play at the Golden Guitar awards in Gore. This sends the group into shock as Amelia has always presented as a cynical heavy metal rock girl. Samuel realises that his racist jokes are just a cover for his real feelings for Amelia and he is torn about how to move forward with these. Amelia is both nervous and excited about revealing more of what she perceives to be her real self to Samuel and the group as a whole.

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Figure 40. Sample page of project Bible 3.

## 6 Future Development

### 6.1 Transmedia Storytelling

In hypothesizing the future of this project, I needed to find a format which would communicate with its primary target audience, I intend for the project to be produced locally using local talent, voice actors, animators, artists and musicians. While much current programming is made by foreign interests for economic gain, I aim for this project to be made by the community for the community. To set the platform for this kind of collaboration to happen I hypothesize using Henry Jenkin's Participatory Culture and transmedia storytelling. I further propose the Southland characters that I have designed being part of an online community more than a set series of programmes for a linear television delivery. My research into youth media consumption has shown that this is an appropriate platform to communicate with teenagers and to invite them to participate in creating their own part of the story. As represented in Figure 38, there will be owned properties which will be developed and released with frequency on a timed schedule such as in Figure 39.

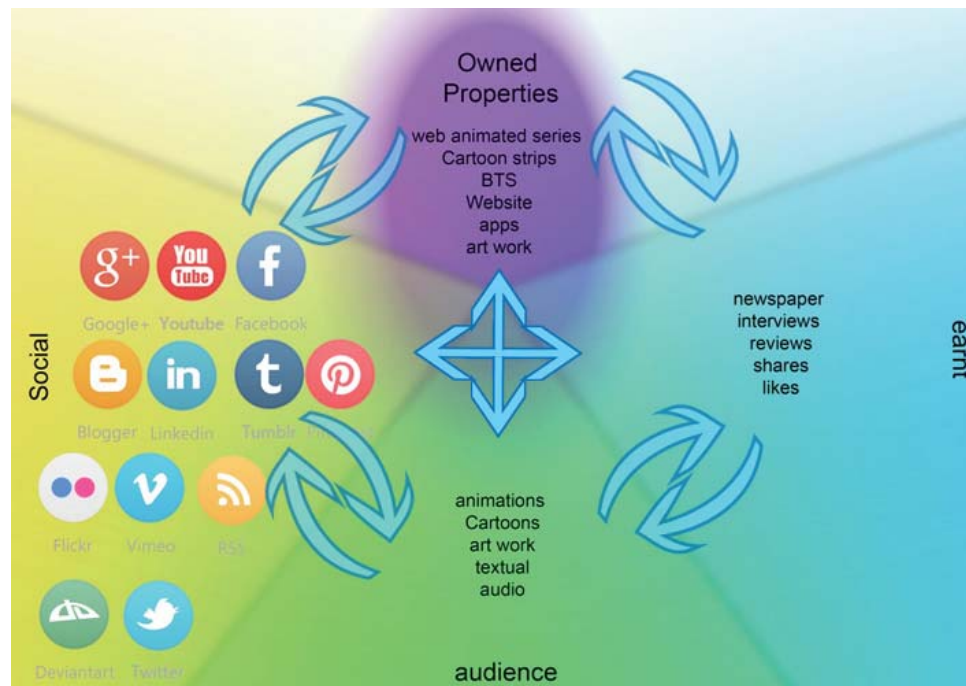


Figure 41. transmedia Communications flow.

Each element of the storytelling process will develop in its own direction and offer different areas for teenagers to participate. For example the web series will initially be created and published to the internet and the stories event centric. The audience will be offered a number of levels of participation, from sharing, liking and commenting to downloading and remixing, audio and video responding. Once the platform is established, it is anticipated that the audience become the directors of the storylines and character development. The daily cartoons will be current affairs centric, offering perspectives from one or more of the characters and will invite the audience to be the creator, commentator or initiator of the daily event. This will facilitate creating a local community where teenagers are able to contribute as little or as much as they feel comfortable with and have a share in owning the community products. Over time more collaborative community dominate the content.

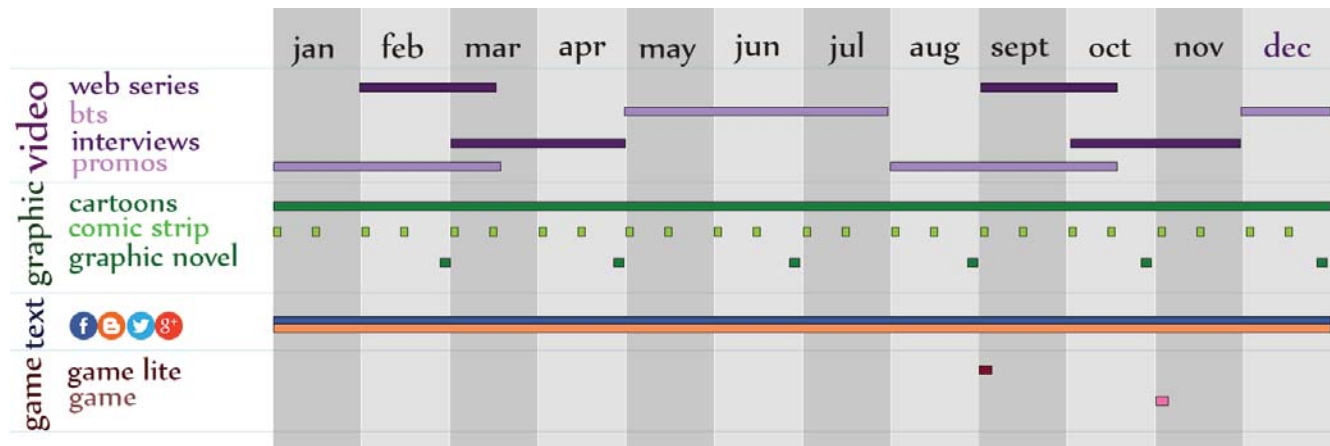


Figure 42. Twelve month transmedia release plan.



## 7 Conclusion

Bro'town was cancelled in 2009 and since then, there has been no other New Zealand animated series that reflects a unique New Zealand perspective. This project aimed at addressing this gap. In it I focused on exploring character design for an animation project based on research conducted on and with a central focus on the Southland Community. Early in the research I identified problems relating to representation in animation products aimed at a youth audience in New Zealand. I found that there was no local content developed for the 2013-2014 period and that funding is a contributing factor in the design, development and production of that content. I also discovered a huge bias in the representation of gender and ethnicity in correct programming due to the need of multinationals to sell a commercial product over multiple continents. These interests neither serve New Zealand youth nor do they represent their perceived perceptions of their reality. I believe that the characters that I have designed and created are successfully representative of Southland youth aged 12 – 16 years. I conclude that they are successful as they are based on government and local body research, local community observation and on-site drawing. Based on this, I intend developing a community based funding model to develop a Transmedia storytelling platform. I hope to fully develop the web series and then add products over a 12 month cycle so as to provide the audience multiple entry points for participation and community collaboration.



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# 10 Appendix

## 10.1 Character Biography – Hamish.

CHARACTER CHART: HAMISH



1

**Character's Full Name:** Hamish Alan McAllister (the supplanter, spirit, elf)  
**Team:** Hamish, Amelia, Isabella, Lucy, Samuel.

**Reason or meaning of name:** His parents wanted him to have a traditional Scottish name which reflected their ancestry and their family traditions, Hamish was his great-grandfather's name and he had set up the family farm in Dacre, just outside of Invercargill.

**Nickname:** Ham-dog, Ham, Hamster, Hannible

**Reason for nickname:** His best male friend Samuel made it up as a piss take of his conservative shy nature. Also to make everyone think Hamish had secretly a party animal lifestyle. (Ham-dog meaning he hammed it up (party), dog – dirty dog). His best female friends Isabella hates the nickname with a passion and thinks his gentleness should be celebrated not the butt of ridicule, no matter how light hearted it is meant.

**Birthdate:** September 10<sup>th</sup> 1997

**Astrological Sign:** Virgo. He is a definite earth sign. Always driven to do the right thing and is very caring and compassionate.

### PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:

**Age:** 16

**How old does s/he appear?** He looks just a wee bit older than he is which means he is able to get away with a lot of things his friends get caught up with. Thought due to his nature he does not exploit this to its full potential.

**Eye Colour:** Greenie brown

**Glasses or contacts:** No

**Weight:** 165 kgs

**Height:** 6 foot more or less

**Type of body/build:** Hamish has a very thick but muscular upper body build with long skinny but muscular legs. His neck is thick and he has very broad facial features.

**Skin tone:** He naturally quite white, due to his Scottish ancestry, he also sports a few freckles during the summer. He does go a little tanned in the heat of the southern summer due to his long hours working out on the farm with his father but nothing most people would boast as calling a tan. But he's proud of it all the same.

2

**Skin type:** Good healthy and hearty skin with a health splatting of freckles. He considers himself very lucky to have escaped the acne phase many of his friends have anguished under.

**Shape of face:** Very square, angular, muscular and very manly.

**Distinguishing Marks:** Hamish has a bit of a crooked nose and a wee swelling of the ears due to his dedication to his team sports, but he wears them well, and is a tad proud of these marks.

**Predominant feature:** His posture, which appears quite blocky due to his upper body strength.

**Hair colour:** Blond with a splattering of Strawberry blond.

**Distinguishable hair feature (bald, receding hairline, etc.):** Always looks like he need a good hair brush but insists washing and wearing. He always has his trusty hat on come rain or shine.

**Type of hair (coarse, fine, thick, etc?)** Thick, a bit clumpy and generally messy.

**Character's typical hairstyle:** Short and unkept, can at times get a bit long due to a lack of worry about the making hair appointments. This his mother does every time she believes she can't see her son's eyes.

**Resembles:** His mother would often say the shaggy sheep on their back paddock.

**Is s/he healthy?** Yip, eats well, exercises often and is very careful how he treats his body.

**If not, why not:**

**Physical disabilities:** None

#### FAVOURITES:

**Character's favourite colour:** Red

**Character's least favourite colour:** Pink

**Why?** Thinks pink is an utter cliché and is sick of people asking him if he likes pink. It makes him want to scream every time he hears that.

**Favourite Music:** Not a big music fan and a lot of the time he just goes with the flow with his friends as they spend much more time sorting out the good from the bad and he secretly likes their taste and he likes the hours he spends listening to music with them but has little desire to introduce new music or buy much different music.

**Least favourite Music:** Country music.

**Why?** Only cos his mum is insistent on putting it on every Saturday to do the housework to and so as a consequence it has the sound of dust and bleach.

**Food:** Most of the time Hamish is a very healthy eater and loves a good fish curry. But nothing beats one of his mum's cheese rolls and a slice of lolly cake with his Milo.

**Expressions:** Hamish has a very welcoming and pleasant demeanour; while quite often he looks serious he can crack a very welcoming smile and has a very inviting and infectious laugh.

**Favourite book:** Not much of a reader does what he has to get through school and quite likes the science fiction stuff but not enough to dedicate much time or effort to it.

**Why?** Just not his thing.

**Expletives:** jeeppers jesus, he thinks its really funny and not too offensive but most of his friends find it a tad annoying and wish he would find something more crity to grace his multi verbal moments.

**Mode of transportation:** On the farm he has a trail bike which he favours over the farm quad but can't take it on the road as it is unregistered and he seriously doubts it is really road worthy but recons no one will notice on the farm. He also has road light aluminium framed road bike which he goes riding with on a Sunday with his younger sister, Trish and her friends. His mum takes him into school every day and for general rides around town relies on his friends Samuel and Isabella for lifts. He also is a bit embarrassed that he is only on his learners but publicly he is claiming he is just saving for his sweat ride and everyone will be uber jealous when he makes his goal.

**Daredevil or cautious?** Cautious but not afraid to get hurt when playing in a team situation.

**Same when alone?** Yes he is!

#### HABITS:

**Smokes:** No, but has had a wee little try

**What?** One Holiday blue and two puffs of a spliff.

**When and how much?** Samuel made him have a cigarette last term while wagging for the first time, they were hanging out at the skate park, Hamish did not enjoy it, was constantly convinced that his mum or aunty would come past and he would be in deep shit. He ended up going home that afternoon with so much lynks on that it made him feel a bit queezy. Samuel again was the instigator of his brush with drugs, they were hanging out on Friday night at the park with an over order of McDonalds and Samuel produced a spliff he reckoned he had grown in the back yard without his parents noticing, Hamish knew this we all puff with no substance but went along with it as he loves Samuel and wanted to have the experience and with someone he trusts.

**Drinks:** Yes Sir

**What?** Hamish likes a beer and enjoys having one after a good game and watching sport with his dad, it makes him feel close to his father even when times are a little strained.

**When and how much?** Just a couple of beers a week and he never goes to the liquor land himself as the thought of being caught buying alcohol underage horrifies him. It also makes him extremely nervous the few times his friends, meaning Samuel, has tried to make him go to barlucca for a drink, he is way too nervous to enjoy his night out.

**Hobbies:** Loves his rugby as the team environment and feeling part of a group. He also shares share his love with his father, they go to the matches together and his dad has never missed one of his games. His dad is also the number one bbq man when fundraising for the team. Hamish loves the fact his dad is always proud of him on the rugby field. Hamish also loves getting out in the countryside riding his heart out with his sister, he thinks she is a bit of a cool character and loves there time together, she is a witty and funny and always a good companion on a Sunday ride. His secret hobby is cartoons and loves to have an early night watching videos on the ipad.

**How does character spend a rainy day?** If there's not a game of rugby or mission on the farm to deal with you'll find Hamish wading through a series of Regular show or Legends of Korra and sketching in his dairy.

**BACKGROUND:**

**Hometown:** Dacre, Southland

**Type of childhood:** Hamish had a fantastic childhood on the farm with a great mum and fun sister who would be his partner in crime exploring the rivers and building of the farm, though would make up extravagant stories as explained away old building and equipment which lay rusting around the back lot of the farm.

**First memory:** Helping his mum make fairy bread for his third birthday, the colour, the sweetness, the promise of presents and a day of sweeties. It all plays back like an Instagram album in his head, he can even see it will the mute tones and flickers, funny that really cos it was the 2000 not 1970 but all the same the memory just seems cooler and more warm and nostalgic.

**Most important childhood event that still affects him/her:** Getting lost when four at the Southern Field Days in Waimumu. It just seemed so huge and the tents were like skyscrapers and so many people and animals and all he wanted was his mum and trying push through the crowds just to find someone or something familiar. Not one was looking down, it was like sea of gumboots, nobly knees and mud. After an hour of wandering around in a bit of a daze his uncle Fred spotted him attempting to steal some candy floss, claiming he had been abandoned and was starving to death and that it was simply survival instinct setting in. He was then spirited away to his family who had presumed he was off with a friend, and they were happily setting up a rather banquetous picnic which momentarily distracted Hamish from his ordeal and most of the family are still none the wiser that that day had such a profound effect on Hamish. Since that incident Hamish has loathed crowds of any type but has had almost a hypnotic fixation on wood chopping, sends him into and almost dream like trance.

**Why?** As above

**Education:** Hamish is in year 12 and is a just above average student, which means he will make it into Tech or Uni. He doesn't really know what he wants to do yet as he really wants to stay on the farm but would like to modernise it and be more proactive and innovative than his father but hasn't quite figured out where he should go from there. He is hesitant to leave the farm to go to Uni as he truly loves the lifestyle and can't image life without his friends and family. Hates the thought of being stuck in a city and unable to just get on his bike and ride out to the long clear spaces that southland gives him. At school he takes all the math and sciences types subjects but is always a little jealous of the kids taking drawing and painting as would of loved this but he wanted to please his family and be practical. He is also a prized member of the first 15 and enjoys this status and the admiration and friendships it brings with it.

**Religion:** His family went to church when he was younger and he remembers Sunday school fondly. He doesn't have any strong thoughts on religion but one of his best friends Isabella is very proud of her Christian faith and he likes to support her and so goes to all her important events. He finds the people and Isabella's church friendly

and enjoys their company at social occasions but main paster scares him a little and he doesn't understand why.

**Finances:** His mum and dad give him a generous allowance and in return he works mornings, some weekends and holidays on the farm, dairy, with his dads. Hamish is pretending to save for a car but secretly he is saving for a new computer.

**FAMILY:**

**Mother:** Fiona Jane McAllister (nee McMead) (white, wine, gift from god)

**Relationship with her:** Very close and loving relationship, as her only son he has been a little spoilt but he is very chuffed when his mother still wants to hug and baby him and looks forward to the moments they share alone. His mum has always been a stay at home mum, as she has ran all the finances and business end of the farm so she has always been available whenever Hamish has needed her. His mum is supportive of everything that Hamish does and worries a lot about making sure her son has the happiest further she can possible help deliver.

**Father:** Brian Cameron McAllister (strength, bent nose)

**Relationship with him:** His is close to his father and always wishes to please him and feel closer but his father has a lot of issues dealing with some of Hamish's decisions and this can overcome Brain and he loses his temper with Hamish quite often. He wants the very best for his son and believes that Hamish himself is sabotaging this by making poor choices. He has a habit of reminding his son of the good farming stock he comes from and that he should never embarrassed the name of the McAllister's as they are the sons of Alexander the Great and proud mens men. It angers Brain that Hamish insists in mocking this proud tradition with his jibes on Alexander's sexuality, it is like he is spitting in the face of generations of hard working men. Brain just wants to knock these silly ideas out of his sons and him to be the man he knows he should be, the man he and his father before him have made, a no nonsense farming man with traditional values and traditional solid future. He worries that Hamish's ridiculous ideas will land him in trouble, isolated and without direction and that truly scares him, but he cannot tell anyone about his fear, not even his wife.

**Siblings:** One younger sister.

**How many?** Just the one

**Names:** Trish Jean McAllister (complete, god is gracious)

**Age:** 13

**Birth order:** She is younger

**Relationship with each:** Trish is a confident and intelligent young woman with a wicked sense of humour. Hamish loves there time together and enjoys there Sunday rides, which are full of laughter with a splatter of competition. But when Miriam and Hamish do come to logger heads it is always Miriam who comes out on top, she can hurt him with a single sentence and go well under their parent's radar. It is always Hamish that gets the blame if something goes array when they are both involved. He can't stay angry with her for too long as she brushes it all off in a moments whim and is back to her fun witty self before Hamish has fully processed his feelings about the matter. This frustrates Hamish at times and wishes he could get over event like Miriam and endeavours to manage his feeling more effectively but never seems to succeed.

**Children of siblings:** None way too young

**Extended family?** Yes and most of the family live around the Southland area and still manage various parts of the old family farm, extra land has been purchased and sold over the years but a full migration to the cities have never really been a full consideration for the McAllister family. The switch from sheep to dairy was a major upheaval in there life's and one many of them are still recovering from. Some of the younger cousins have fled the nest and gone to Uni in Dunedin and have stayed put. And cousin Jack now lives in Auckland and everyone thinks he is now a snob and give him a Jaffa hard time when he comes home for Christmas.

**Close?** The whole extended family meets once a month for a big roasts dinner and if weather permits a bbq or spit roast. Cousin Gary loves pig hunting and that is always a special occasion when that goes on the spit, it's like a mini Christmas with everyone out by the barn having a celebration of togetherness.

**Why or why not?** Close as and wouldn't want it any other way.

**OCCUPATION:**

**Where does Character work?** Hamish works with his dad on their Dairy farm, he'll get up with his dad and do the milking in the morning then catch a lift to school with his mum. During the holidays he spends every morning on the farm and has the afternoons to himself. He loves working the farm and loves the physical activity and doing nature of his work. He also secretly loves spending the time with his dad. It is time when he doesn't feel lost in what or how he is going to talk to his dad, he just does and they just do.

**For how long?** He has been helping his dad since he was ten but as he gets older he does a lot more around the farm.

**How does s/he feel about co-workers?** He mainly works with his dad and he loves him very much but feels very much like he needs to please him constantly.

**Character's dream job:** He wants to take over the family farm in time and wants to work with his dad to improve the farm. He hopes to go off to Uni and get a business degree and look at how he can modernise and innovate the farm, he sees a lot of potential in the things he can bring to the farm but doesn't yet feel confident enough or old enough to bring up his ideas to his dad and thinks that if he goes off and gets an education his dad is more likely to listen to him and give his ideas a chance.

**ATTITUDE:**

**Character's greatest fear:** His greatest fear is that his family and especially his dad is not going to accept him the way he is. His self-worth is very much tied into how his family receives him and he has little confidence that this will always be positive. He knows he has feelings for another boy in his group but these feelings paralyse him with fear and he sees this as his future breaker. He wants to be free and honest with himself and his family but does not understand how he can have this happen.

**Why?** He is gay and he knows how much his dad hates gays and fags, he is constantly insulting them and making jokes about them, this scares Hamish a lot.

**What is the worst thing that could happen to him/her?** That his father rejects him and that he is forced to leave, he can't bear the possibility that they are not a part of his everyday life.

**What single event would most throw character's life in complete turmoil?** Loss of his family and loss of himself, but he can not see how he can have both.

**Character is most at ease when:** When at home enjoying a bbq in the backyard with his friends and family. He loves having all the people he cares about around him. He likes it when Samuel and Isabella are interacting with his family like they are an extension of this family, it makes him loved and secure and even at times like everything might be alright.

**Most ill at ease when:** When he thinks about what he is hiding from his family, when he has to deceive them or tell them an untruth. This he carries around with him with a very heavy heart.

**Depressive or SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder)?** He hits rock bottom when he tries to get his head around how to fit everyone into his life, it creates a black hole he currently cannot see through.

**Priorities:** Finding and making happy times with both his family and friends and enjoying the people around him.

**Philosophy:** That we are all good souls just some of us are lost and some of us are found and we can all be found. Everyone deserves to live a free happy and healthy life.

**How s/he feels about self:** He knows he is a good person, one that cares deeply about others and strives to always do well by everyone. He is conflicted about doing right by himself and right by his family and this can cause self-doubt and sometimes even self-hate.

**Past failure s/he would be embarrassed to have people know about:** He is embarrassed about letting Samuel convince him to try weed and smoking he feels that was silly and not him. He is deeply ashamed about kissing one of the boys in his class; he thought he would tell everyone and that his secret would be out. Now he is just embarrassed about who it was as the boy didn't end up being the kind of person Hamish needed in his life. Hamish knows this boy likes him back but isn't yet able to cope with that fact and reacts aggressively whenever Hamish is around and he finds this hard to handle. He no longer likes the young man but wishes he could reach out to him and help him sort out his feelings without negative feelings or aggression.

**If granted one wish, what would it be?** He wants a partner that wants the same things as him and will want to live on the farm. Hamish knows most young gay men want to run away to the city as fast as they can and he hopes that there must be just one out there for him that doesn't want to run.

**PERSONALITY:**

**Greatest source of strength in character's personality (whether s/he sees it as such or not):** The knowledge that he is a good person and that he has positive inclusive friends even when they are being dicks.

**Greatest source of weakness in character's personality (whether s/he sees it as such or not):** His inability to understand resolutions for every situation.

**Character's soft spot:**

**Is this soft spot obvious to others?** He hides his true self to protect himself when he thinks he is exposed.

**If not, how does character hide it?** He is quieter than he needs to be and agrees with others when he often does not, just to keep the peace.

**Biggest vulnerability:**

**Which of the 7 deadly sins does your character fight (or give into, willingly or not)?**  
*(lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy, pride)*

Pride, this leads him to internalise things better set out in the open.

**Which of the 7 virtues does your character have (or fight against)?** (*chastity, abstinence, liberality, diligence, patience, kindness, humility*)

**TRAITS:**

**Optimist or pessimist:** Optimist in most things but currently indulging in too much pessimism.

**Why?** He currently thinks what is true to him will be damaging to others.

**Introvert or extrovert:** Introvert

**Why?** He does not yet understand that his own opinion can be valuable to others so hides rather than stand beside them.

**Drives and motivations:** He wants to love and be loved and to be accepted just the way he is.

**Talents:** Cycling and Rugby

**Extremely skilled at:** Rugby

**Extremely unskilled at:** Writing, he doesn't really get his head around his English and History writing and essays. He doesn't see how this is going to have any bearing on his future

**Good characteristics:** Kind, caring and mindful of others and their needs and wants. He is for the most part quiet and respectful.

**Character flaws:** Unsure of himself, unsteady with his inner truths and unable to express them for fear of rejection and ridicule. Can be manipulated easily by his best friend Samuel and can never say no to him even when he knows its the wrong thing to do.

**Mannerisms:** Never knows really what to do with his hands when they are not in his pockets and comes across as being a bit clunk and awkward due to his quietness and size being in slight conflict with each other.

**Peculiarities:** Loves his big woolly work socks and wears them all the time even in the summer. Flares his nose when he feels uncomfortable.

**Biggest accomplishment:** Rugby trophies.

**SELF-PERCEPTION:**

**One word character would use to describe self:** Unsure

**One paragraph description of how character would describe self:** Fun loving guy who want those around him to feel valued and comfortable. He wants to be seen as a caring and affectionate but strong and masculine.

**What does character consider best physical characteristic?** He likes his legs as they make him feel strong and in control especially when playing sport.

**What does character consider worst physical characteristic?** He hates his freckles as he believes they make him look a little effeminate.

**How CHARACTER thinks others perceive him/her:** He thinks some people think he is a bit weak and he tries to hide this by over excelling in the rugby field.

**GOALS:**

**Immediate life goals:** School, study hard enough to get into a good course but not so hard he doesn't get to hang out with his friends. To have a good relationship with his dad. To pursue his feeling with Danesh and not be so scared of them.

**Long range life goals:** He would like to take over the farm and become a very modern farmer and business man.

**How does character plan to accomplish goals?** He is not too sure at the moment but know he would like to go to uni and study, he thinks he will have a lot of offer the farm when get grows older.

**GENERAL:**

**Favourite clothing:** Practical farm cloths

**Why?** He loves his life around the farm

**Least favourite clothing:** Woolly socks and swandris

**Why?** So warm so comfy.

**Spending habits (frugal, spendthrift, etc):** Thrifty, does not see the point in wasting money when you can save for bigger things.

**Most prized possession:** His pet cow Beryl

# The Tail Enders

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FADE IN:

EXT. FARMHOUSE FRONT - DUSK

The farmhouse is lit for early evening. The sky has the last splatterings of vibrant colour across the horizon.

An adult male leaves the house clearly distressed, slings on his gumboots, slamming the door behind him. He strides across the courtyard mumbling inaudible expletives.

TONY (HAMISH'S FATHER)  
Mmmmmrrrrggg, not good enough, rrrrr

He enters the garage, flicks the light and radio on and starts tinkering with his classic American car.

In the shadows a figure of a young man, Samuel, emerges. He looks in the shed then quietly runs past. He looks in the window to see a woman, Jan, working in the kitchen, then ducks around the back of the house.

EXT.FARMHOUSE BACK - DUSK

Samuel stops at the back, a light flicks on to the side of him. He picks up a hand full of dirt and flicks it at the window. The young man inside, Hamish, looks up with a start.

Samuel gestures for him to come out. Hamish shakes his head and does a cutting motion along his neck. Samuel pleads with his hands in a praying stance.

SAMUEL  
Pleeeasseeeee, pretty pleeeassee

Samuel lets out a checky grin.

Hamish reluctantly opens the window, Samuel does a run and jump, grabs Hamish around the chest and fights him through the window.

HAMISH  
What the fu...

They both tumble to the ground outside the window, they struggle, Hamish goes to punch Samuel, he ducks.

SAMUEL  
Evening sweetheart.

Samuel grins and Hamish snaps back.

HAMISH  
Dick.

Samuel dusts himself off.

SAMUEL  
Soz, not Soz.  
Samuel gives off a checky grin.

SAMUEL  
We're late.  
Hamish shakes his head

HAMISH  
Na. Not going.  
Samuel grabs Hamish and pulls him towards the corner of the house.

SAMUEL  
Tuff.  
Hamish starts to struggle and shake him off but gives in with little effort but continues to shake his head.

EXT. FARMHOUSE FRONT - DUSK  
They sneak around the front, Samuel turns to Hamish.

SAMUEL  
Shooosh.  
In mock military style Samuel points to Tony, then to Jan, signals down to Hamish's socks, then to the route to his gumboots. Hamish mocks him by slapping his hands as he finishes his sign directions, Samuel mock punches him back and a small play fight ensues. Samuel stops grabs both Hamish's hands.

SAMUEL  
Enuf.  
Samuel nods his head in the direction of the front door. Hamish sneaks up to the door retrieves his boots and runs back to Samuel who has made it to the edge of the shed. They both hitch up on their tippy toes and sneak past keeping a dedicated eye on Tony in the shed.

When they are almost past Samuel fails to see the dog beneath him and steps on his tail. The dog gives out a squeal, jumps to it's feet and launches into a barking frenzy.

SAMUEL  
RUN!!  
INT. SHED - LOW LIGHT  
Tony looks up and heads out to see what the commotion is all about.

TONY  
What the ....

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DUSK  
Realising that it is his son and friend sneaking out he gives chase, waving his spanner in the air.

TONY  
Stop, get back here!!  
Up the drive a car starts up and the boys race for the back door which opens as they approach.

Tony sprints as fast as he can but he just misses them, the car speeds off and Tony, in anger, hurls his spanner at the departing car.

TONY  
Little bastards.  
INT. CAR - DUSK  
The boys are all stacked, arms and legs everywhere, on top of the back seat passenger, Amelia. They all hear and feel the spanner thud against the back car wheel.

SAMUEL  
Shit, Hammie, your dad is trying to kill us.  
The boys start detangling themselves as Amelia shoves them off her.

AMELIA  
Ieeeck, yous stink.  
Lucy briefly looks back from the front seat and resumes texting. Isabella turns from the driving seat.

ISABELLA  
Kia ora, twinkle toes.  
HAMISH  
Lol, Na.  
ISABELLA  
I take it it went well.  
HAMISH  
Nope, crazy, better I go back.  
ISABELLA  
Oh grow some, too late, we're outa here.  
Isabella revs the engine.

HAMISH  
What?  
Hamish leans down and retrieves his gumboots from the floor.

AMELIA  
Gumboots? Sexy as, just saying.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DUSK

Tony storms back u the driveway, Jan is at the front door checking out the commotion. Tony looks up at her in anger and yells.

TONY  
Keys, now!

INT. CAR - DUSK

Samuel is annoying Hamish, poking him and jabbing him in the side.

HAMISH  
Thought you didn't like this weird as foreign stuff, anyways.

SAMUEL  
Fireworks rock. Always!

EXT. OUTSIDE DEENASH'S HOUSE - DUSK

Isabella pulls u in front of a large wooden villa. The house is adorned with lights and colourful diyas which give off a warm glow. The path from the street to the front door is decorated with elaborate Rangoli patterns.

The group exit the car and look around them in delight.

SAMUEL  
Woowooow!

Samuel leaves the group and strides up to the house and confidently rings the doorbell. Deenash answers with a big smile.

DEENASH  
Saal Mubarak, welcome to diwali.

Samuel give Deenash a big grin and disappears off into the house. The rest of the group approach slowly admiring their surroundings. Isabella pushes Hamish forward but he hangs back. The group, enter one by one, greeting and smiling at Deenash till there is only Hamish left.

DEENASH  
Do I have to carry you across the

threshold or something?

Hamish goes a little flush and gives Deenash a quick hug as they follow the group into the house.

INT. HALLWAY - LAMP LIGHT

DEENASH  
Your parents?

Hamish looks disappointed and gingerly starts to speak.

HAMISH  
They ... They ..

Deenash sees his pain and puts his arm around him.

DEENASH  
Don't worry, its our night.

They follow the rest of the group inside.

INT.LOUNGE - LAMP LIGHT

Samuel is transfixed on the shrine of Lakshmi, Amelia comes up behind him.

SAMUEL  
Wow, she is hot.

AMELIA  
She is Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, love and fortune and the lights are for her. Be kind to her, you'll need her one day.

SAMUEL  
Why are our gods all hairy men?

Amelia rolls her eyes and mocks.

AMELIA  
Ahhh, sexy sells.

Lucy comes up behind them taking pictures on her phone. She goes in for a selfie with the shrine, Samuel and Amelia notice and photo bomb her with big grins. They all laugh.

LUCY  
Nice.

AMELIA  
Send us those Luce.

Lucy taps a couple of times on her phone.

LUCY  
Thirup.

The three of them head towards the crowd gathering at the far end dining area.

INT.DINNING ROOM - LAMP LIGHT.

In the center of the room there is a lavishly dressed table adorned with colourful petals, platters of sweets and dried fruits.

Hamish with Isabella and Lucy one side and Amelia and Samuel on the other. Deenash enter the room with a tray of sweet lassis, places them on the table in the middle of them and sits next to Hamish.

Samuel picks one up and sniffs it, smiles then gulps a little down then looks around shiftily. He pulls a small hit flask out of his pocket and elbows Amelia, and whispers to her while shaking the flask.

SAMUEL  
Want to spice things up a bit.

Amelia give Samuel a disgusted look and snaps at Samuel.

AMELIA  
Inappropriate.

Samuel sheepishly returns the flask to his pocket and reaches out to stuff his plate with sweets.

Hamish is eating a ball of Gulab Jamun.

HAMISH  
This is amazing!

DEENASH  
Gulab Jamun, my favorite.

HAMISH  
Yeah but, no I mean, like everything, your so lucky. Your parents are cool n everything.

ISABELLA  
So are yours, you just never give em a chance.

DEENASH  
Just be patient with them.

Hamish get upset and defensive.

HAMISH  
So, so its all my fault they are so small minded, deranged and irrational?

Samuel, completely unaware, interrupts.

SAMUEL  
So sweet, so yum.

Deenash looks hurt.

DEENASH  
I didn't mean that.

INT.TONY'S CAR - EVENING

Tony jerks on the breaks, looks out the window. Starts to open the door.

TONY  
Bloody hell, this has to be the place.

EXT. OUTSIDE DEENASH'S HOUSE - EVENING

Tony slams the door and storms up the pathway leaving a dust cloud of colour behind him.

INT. BATHROOM - CANDLE LIGHT

Hamish has retreated to the bathroom to try and get hold of his parents but his phone calls and texts are left unanswered. He is feeling anxious and frustrated, he splashes some water over his face and looks in the mirror. He knocks his head against it in frustration.

There is a knock at the door and Hamish is startled.

AMELIA  
Hurry up, I'm bustin.

Hamish opens the door looking rejected.

AMELIA  
Gee whats bustin your guts?

HAMISH  
Parents, lock me in, lock me out, can't make up their minds.

AMELIA  
Special.

Amelia pushes Hamish out of the way and slams the door behind him, leaving him a tad disorientated. Hamish, phone still at the ready, heads back to the dinning room.

INT.DINNING ROOM - LAMP LIGHT.

The others are still eating and talking. Hamish joins them.

ISABELLA  
Sup, grumpy?

HAMISH  
Can I stay at urs?

ISABELLA  
Nope, no room in the inn Joseph.

HAMISH  
Funny, no

ISABELLA  
Whats up with your room?

HAMISH  
Can't I'll be busted big time,  
he'll kill me for sure, ill be pig  
meal by morning.

ISABELLA  
Really!, Yous have got some serious  
drama queen genes there matey.

Isabella returns her focus to her pile of sweets and takes a hearty mouthful. Samuel looks over his pile of treats and grins at them both.

SAMUEL  
Kennel at mine, washed out this  
morning by yours truly.

HAMISH  
I'll take my chances in the park,  
thanks.

Deenash's father, Ted, opens the door from the deck and interrupts.

TED  
Come one and all, now the real show  
begins.

EXT. DECK - EVENING

Fireworks light up the night sky. They are all transfixed, Lucy multitasking with the photo shooting. Hamish wandering up last starrng down at his phone.

DEENASH  
For heavens sake, put that away.

Isabella not noticing is transfixed on the evening sky.

ISABELLA  
Fabulous ayh?

Deenash notices Tony helping his dad with the fireworks. Deenash turns to Hamish.

DEENASH  
Hay?? Ain't that your....

Deenash notices that Hamish has forgotten his phone and is smiling at fireworks.

HAMISH  
What?

DEENASH  
Oh nothing.

Samuel looks around at Deenash.

SAMUEL  
Awesome dude, I'm in love, you got  
a sister.

Amelia looks at Samuel in disgust.

AMELIA  
Dick.

The fireworks come to a close. The crowd start mingling and dwindling. Isabella looks at her phone for the time and looks up at the group.

ISABELLA  
Yous all coming, its past my  
bedtime.

Deenash grabs Hamish by the shoulder.

DEENASH  
No, Hamish, your staying here with  
me.

Isabella turns and winks at Hamish, Hamish looks a little shocked.

DEENASH  
We haven't finished the fireworks  
yet.

Deenash smiles, Hamish blushes and looks a little nervous.

Deenash starts to lead Hamish down to the back of the garden where the two men are packing up the fireworks. Hamish suddenly realises that one of the men is his father.

HAMISH  
What the f... What that bastard  
doing here?

Hamish starts to pull away and turn around, Deenash grabs

Hamish by the hand, and squeezes tight.

DEENASH  
We can do this.

FADE OUT

THE END

