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Media Release

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**New research shows dollar value of arts and culture**

For the first time in New Zealand, research has been used to determine the value of arts and culture and finds that the impacts of these activities go far beyond the sector itself.

Auckland War Memorial Museum partnered with Auckland Council’s Research, Investigations and Monitoring Unit to pilot a Social Return on Investment (SROI) evaluation of its 2013 exhibition *Moana – My Ocean.*

The report found that the exhibition had a range of positive impacts for visitors, the environment, contractors, community partners and Museum staff. The primary driver of the value created by the exhibition, however, came from visitors’ strengthened pride in Auckland and increased sense of connection to the marine environment; two outcomes that would have been difficult for visitors to obtain elsewhere. It was these unique aspects of the exhibition that drove much of the value created.

“There is growing interest, both within New Zealand and internationally, in better understanding the social impact and value created by arts and cultural institutions”, says Auckland Museum Director Roy Clare.

“This type of evaluation provides policy-makers with robust evidence about the wider benefits and helps to guide future decision making. It provides a compelling story about the Museum's efficiency and value for money, for us to share with funders and supporters and especially with the people of Auckland, whom we acknowledge very gratefully as they contribute the lion's share of the Museum's revenues.”

Dr Jesse Allpress, of Auckland Council’s Research, Investigations and Monitoring Unit, and primary author of the report, says “In light of the increasing pressure on many arts and cultural organisations to prove their worth and justify their existence, this demonstration of value is significant.

“It shows that the value created by *Moana - My Ocean* exceeded the investment into the development of the exhibition, such that for every $1 invested, $4.66 of social, environmental and economic value was created.”

This report is an example of how the needs of both arts and cultural organisations and funders can be met by using this robust method of measuring and articulating the value that is created by arts and cultural activities.

While specific to the impacts of the Moana - My Ocean exhibition, it has a number of implications for the sector in terms of providing an exemplar for how such work might be conducted. It certainly illustrates how exhibits such as this help the Auckland Council, along with Auckland Museum, achieve the goal of making Auckland ‘the world’s most liveable city’.

Auckland Council is also developing a Draft Arts and Culture Strategic Action Plan that will help deliver on the Auckland Plan’s vision for arts and culture to be embedded in our daily lives and to represent our region on the global stage. Council will soon be asking for public input on the draft plan, to ensure it can help deliver arts and culture programmes that are relevant to every community, contribute to local character and provide economic benefits.

To read more about the research, visit: <http://goo.gl/PtB9Zi>

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