

Museums

Aotearoa

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# Nau mai haere mai

Cvr: **Writing the Invitation**  
Circa 1924 (detail) H Linley  
RICHARDSON Collection of  
Te Manawa Art Society  
Incorporated, 68.19

A warm welcome to our first quarter 2024 report, it's been a cracking start to the year. We've achieved several successful outcomes for our members this quarter. We've also bedded in a new revenue strategy that puts members in the centre of what we do while making it more cost effective.

Saving members

# \$6 million/yr

Our collective concerted advocacy efforts have recently secured an exemption from museums and galleries paying levies to Fire and Emergency New Zealand on the insured value of their collections. This will save the sector at least \$6 million a year, the cost of which would have otherwise been catastrophic.

This year, we've seen the value of public museums and galleries – as well as the existential threats many face – highlighted like never before. Our Keep the Lights On for Museums and Galleries campaign played out across mainstream, social and digital media (and on the backs of buses around the country) from 11 March to 22 April. This campaign was informed by significant member outreach: 92 per cent of members were contacted individually by phone to better understand specific pain points as well as themes upon which we could build a call to action.

Our request – to fund Aotearoa's museums and galleries sustainably, for the long term – was heard loudly and clearly by decision-makers at local and central government levels from Northland to Southland; we met with the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage during the course of the campaign. A huge mihi to those members who participated.

Keep the Lights On launched on the same day as our Leaders Forum, which, for the third year running, brought together museum and gallery leaders from around the motu to plan for the sector's future. Thirty-five of you gathered in Wellington to brainstorm the beginnings of a 'vision for 2050' framework, whose pillars will be economical sustainability, environmental sustainability and social sustainability. In April, the Museums Aotearoa team took the framework to Auckland, New Plymouth, Nelson,

Christchurch and Dunedin, conducting further dialogue with any members in those areas who wished to attend the sessions.

We are your advocate-in-chief and we are making great gains on your behalf. But we are simply a vehicle for your voice; if we are to increase its volume, we rely on you, our members, to join the chorus. In the coming months, we will be creating more opportunities for collaboration, including on the Vision 2050 framework, which stands to act as an invaluable resource for all members in their interactions with funders.

In this report, we aim to benchmark the value that MA has delivered for members in 2024 so far.

# We're moving forward

The current funding environment has put many of our members under significant financial pressure. Some are still suffering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and Cyclone Gabrielle. And there are perennial questions arising about the role for museums and galleries in supporting education and tourism. We are taking every opportunity to argue for your indispensability.

More broadly, New Zealand's economy has been going backwards for the better part of a year, with a technical recession announced in March 2024. The new coalition government has made it clear there will be no new funding for the Culture and Heritage sector at large. Indeed, sweeping cuts to funding and staff numbers have been announced for almost every facet of the public sector. Aotearoa is, it is fair to say, in austerity mode.

Our new revenue strategy is a direct acknowledgement of the headwinds our members face: we're diversifying revenue streams to ensure we can keep supporting you in the ways you're asking us to.

Increasing our visibility and attractiveness to potential corporate partners and sponsors is a key part of this strategy. Our refreshed brand and new website have been integral.

So have our campaigns: 2023's WonderFull campaign, which promoted the whole sector to encourage visitors to return post-COVID, and this year's Keep the Lights On campaign, which sought to show New Zealanders just what they'd have to lose if museums and galleries had to close their doors.

These campaigns have already generated business leads, with potentially exciting conversations on the horizon. We are in a position to unite organisations aligned with our kaupapa for the good of our members, with opportunities to advertise on Mīharo, among others. Watch this space.

The new revenue strategy also commits us to reducing membership fees over time, allowing more members to join and benefit from the connection and collaboration we facilitate via Mīharo and kanohi ki te kanohi, which we know is more important than ever. Our new fee structure is tagged to institutions' staff numbers/FTEs, rather than their operating expenditure, because it makes sense to put people at the centre of what we do.

**Noah's Ark**, circa 1860  
Collection of Waikato Museum  
Te Whare Taonga o Waikato.  
Gift of Mrs H.W Machon 1968



# We're for you

## Membership

Our membership is strong, with engagement increasing thanks to Miharo and our recent Keep the Lights On campaign. We're expecting to build on the number of organisations who've chosen to partner with us and support you, our members, throughout 2024.

## Engagement

571

Current active members on Miharo

130

Members consulted on the Keep the Lights On campaign

60+

Members downloaded the campaign media kit

## Voice

Paul Goldsmith

Meeting with Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage Paul Goldsmith during the Keep the Lights On campaign

Supporting members

Supporting members in their Long-Term Plan submissions to relevant councils, in ways they ask for

Nelson Council

Submitted on Nelson Council's Long-Term Plan.

20+

20+ campaign-related media stories across print, online, television and radio

7,362

Click-throughs to the Keep the Lights On campaign website

## Community

Partnerships secured to provide communications and professional development support and resources to the sector:

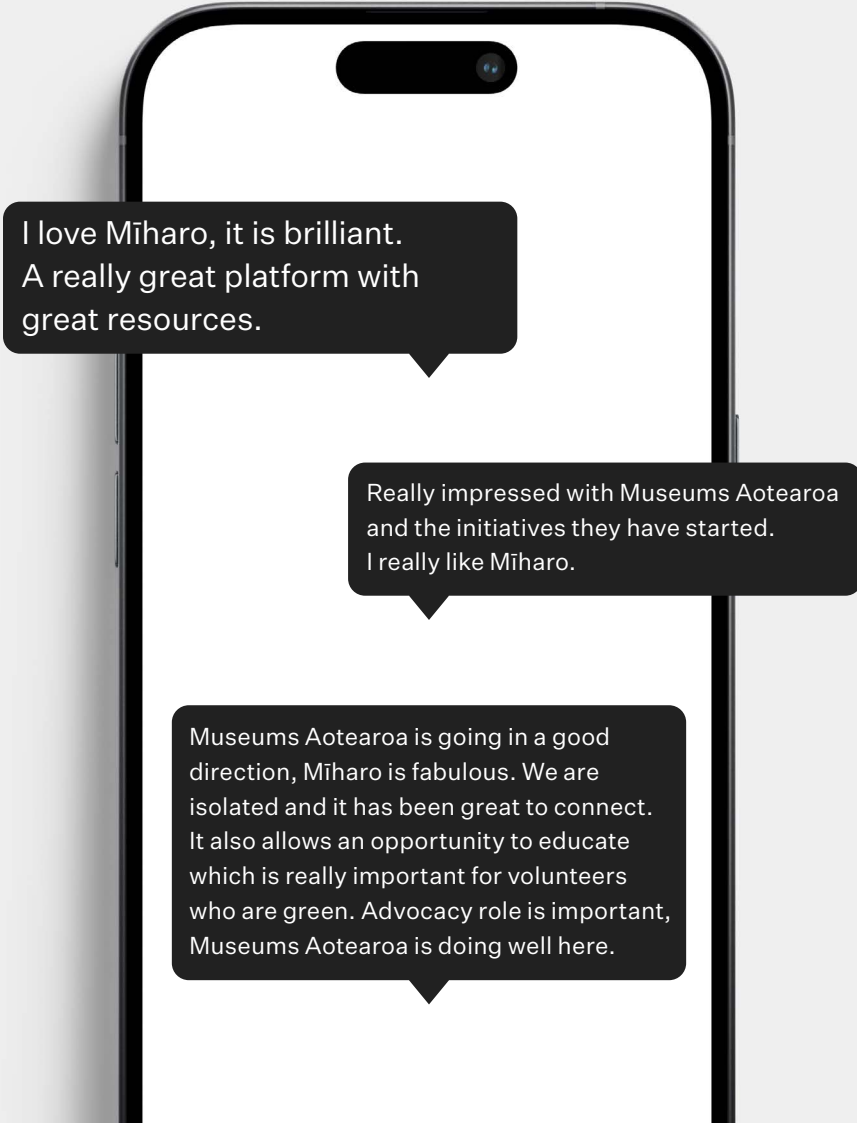


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Mīharo has experienced significant growth since it was launched in August. The platform's success to date has also been evident in engagement and positive feedback from member users. Since October, the engagement statistics for Mīharo have consistently met or exceeded expectations, peaking at over 60% of users in late 2023. To ensure we can continue to meet these goals, more resources are being put into developing content for members.

We built Mīharo for you, in direct response to your requests for a way to engage and collaborate with colleagues in the sector spanning the length and breadth of the motu. We listened, and we provided.

This year, we are aiming to achieve a greater diversity of voices and content. To do this, we need you to sign up, login and start posting. The platform's continued success – and viability – depends on it. This isn't MA's platform, it's yours.



I love Mīharo, it is brilliant.  
A really great platform with  
great resources.

Really impressed with Museums Aotearoa  
and the initiatives they have started.  
I really like Mīharo.

Museums Aotearoa is going in a good  
direction, Mīharo is fabulous. We are  
isolated and it has been great to connect.  
It also allows an opportunity to educate  
which is really important for volunteers  
who are green. Advocacy role is important,  
Museums Aotearoa is doing well here.

# Reflections

## Keep the Lights On campaign

The Keep the Lights On for Museums and Galleries campaign ran from 11 March to 22 April. The campaign was developed in direct response to what members wanted Aotearoa to know: that the current funding environment meant many were uncertain how they were supposed to survive. Members wanted to be at the forefront of key decision makers' minds, and they wanted to mobilise the public to support them, should funding be cut at short notice and without adequate community consultation (as we have seen in some regions).



The campaign was multifaceted, featuring content across social and digital media, as well as outdoor advertising and a slew of stories in mainstream media. It featured celebrity spokespeople, speaking from the heart, on camera, radio and in print, about the role museums and galleries played in their lives.

In Keep the Lights On, we created a foundation upon which members could build their Long-Term Plan submissions, as well as raised the profile of a sector who traditionally doesn't like to make a fuss.

In addition to the engagement and reach metrics detailed earlier in this report, it has been truly heartening to hear directly from Museums Aotearoa members, and the general public, what the campaign has meant to them.

There has been a noticeable increase in Kiwi museum visitors asking how much it costs to go into the museum, and when we say it is koha, they have been donating between \$10-\$20!

This is remarkable and though no-one has said anything explicitly, I think it's a direct result of all your mahi with the Keep the Lights On campaign. I can't imagine anything else that has changed that could have impacted visitor behaviour in such a way.

Very enthusiastic about the campaign – this is a brilliant example of what MA can do for the sector – thank you.

# Reflections

## Keep the Lights On campaign Stats

3,159,382



Total Keep the Lights On  
campaign video plays  
Facebook, YouTube and TVNZ

25,130



Total campaign Facebook/Instagram  
post engagements  
reactions/likes, shares, comments, saves

4,491,662



Impressions of campaign ads  
times an ad is displayed

Campaign is a brilliant idea.  
Love the tool kit. Great to speak  
together as one.

Love the idea. Really wants to break  
down the idea of museums being  
elite – they are places for the whole  
community. Pleased to be part of it.  
Great mahi.

Glad of the campaign – the timing  
is good. 100 percent behind this.



+ 2,500%

Increase in Facebook **followers**

+ 3,600%

Increase in Facebook **visits**

+ 124,000%

Increase in Facebook **reach**



+ 2,600%

Increase in Instagram **followers**

+ 11,700%

Increase in Instagram **visits**

+ 1,900,000%

Increase in Instagram **reach**

# Six months in review

## Q4 2023 (Oct, Nov, Dec)

New revenue strategy launched	Post-election and post-coalition analysis developed and shared with Mīharo users	Engagement with newly elected ministers and Opposition spokespeople
Analysed and made a submission on the Emergency Management Bill	Support for members facing role restructures	Engagement with tourism sector to align on advocacy for new revenue streams that support both sectors
Analysis on the Government’s ‘Mini Budget’ and the Half-Year Economic and Fiscal Update	Engagement with members to shape the 2024 Keep the Lights On campaign strategy	Engagement with members for feedback on Museums Aotearoa.

## Q1 2024 (Jan, Feb, Mar)

Keep the Lights On campaign launched across social and mainstream media, and digital and outdoor advertising	Meeting with Arts, Culture and Heritage Minister Paul Goldsmith	Leader’s Forum held in Wellington
Roadshow for Vision 2050 framework taken to Auckland, New Plymouth, Nelson, Christchurch and Dunedin	Growth strategy for Mīharo developed	Analysis and engagement on local government Long-Term Plan consultations.
Capacity building resources commissioned and developed for Mīharo users (how to use social media, how to secure funding, how to identify false information, etc.)		



# The year ahead

The year is off to a flying start, and we are committed to maintaining the momentum and seeing results from our groundwork. You are our bottom line.

We'll continue pursuing leads for corporate partners and sponsors; the Institute of Art and Law is new to our partner whānau and they've provided workshops on changes to the Copyright Act on Mīharo. Further workshops on crisis communications are scheduled for the near future. Further workshops on crisis communications are scheduled for the near future, online and in-person.

Of interest to those in the throes of Long-Term Plan submissions: updated and expanded BERL research that presents relevant and compelling evidence of museums' and galleries' value to their communities around Aotearoa. Keep an eye on Mīharo.

This research, alongside the Vision 2050 framework, will empower the sector to speak with one voice, and advocate for solutions in the interest of the collective. Our consultation with members on the framework is ongoing: we need your input to decide on the overarching actions that you can undertake in ways that make sense for your specific circumstances. These discussions are an opportunity to shift our thinking from day-to-day challenges and focus on a positive, even exciting, future plans and webinars for how to make the most of upcoming exhibitions and media opportunities.

Your input and contribution to Mīharo make our sector stronger and more resilient. Our goal is for us to step back and let you curate.

## Fans

Collection of Te Manawa  
Museums Trust, 88/193/7,  
88/193/10

