

# ***Debt of Honour***

**Findings from the Western Australian Museum exhibition**

June 2012



***Debt of Honour: Findings from the Western Australian Museum exhibition***

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# 1 Executive summary

## 1.1 The exhibition provoked a very positive reaction

Although most visitors had expected the exhibition to be either good or excellent, many felt that the actual experience exceeded their expectations. Visitors were quick to offer glowing recommendations to others, saying how the exhibition was well organised and displayed, but also how it encouraged them to think about history and the effect events like these had made on their everyday lives.

Visitors reported receiving strong intellectual and emotional outcomes, as they improved their own knowledge and understanding of the subject, but also felt moved at the actions of the Timorese during the war. They felt that more people should come and appreciate the selfless actions of others.

## 1.2 The exhibition attracted more first time, overseas visitors

*Debt of Honour* attracted a much higher proportion of first time visitors than *Extraordinary Stories*, which appealed more to a regular repeat audience. Visitors were therefore less likely to have heard about the exhibition ahead of their visit, but over a third of all visitors still said that *Debt of Honour* was the main reason behind their visit to the Museum that day.

30% of visits to *Debt of Honour* came from overseas, compared to 11% at *Extraordinary Stories*. The breakdown of visits from within Australia was also more varied at *Debt of Honour* than *Extraordinary Stories*.

## 1.3 Posters and print were a key information source

Just under three quarters of visitors said they had seen some form of posters or print ahead of their visit to the Western Australian Museum, with banners and signs outside the building a key publicity tool. Adverts in newspapers and magazines are another commonly used information source, while recommendations from friends and relatives are hugely important in driving visits.

## 2 Introduction



### **The exhibition**

In 1942 a small force of around 300 Australian commandos fought against all odds to wage a successful guerrilla campaign in East Timor, holding down over 10,000 Japanese troops at a critical moment when the Japanese were only a few miles from Port Moresby.

This exhibition investigates the heroic exploits of the commandos, the reasons for their initial successes and why the Timorese supported the Australians. It also explores the enduring relationship between the men of the 2/2nd and the people of East Timor, and the contorted relationship between the Australian Government and East Timor/Timor Leste from the 1975 invasion to the 1999 Intervention and beyond.

This exhibition highlights the war efforts of Australia's first guerrilla commandos and their life-long endeavour to repay a 'debt of honour' to the people of Timor-Leste.

This free exhibition ran at the Western Australian Museum from 20 April to 4 June 2012.

### **The research process**

Morris Hargreaves McIntyre conducted an evaluation of the *Debt of Honour* exhibition for the Western Australian Museum in order to ascertain visitor profile, marketing use and awareness, motivation, outcomes and satisfaction.

Visitors who had just completed their exhibition visit were asked to fill in a short self-completion survey which they then handed to Museum staff.

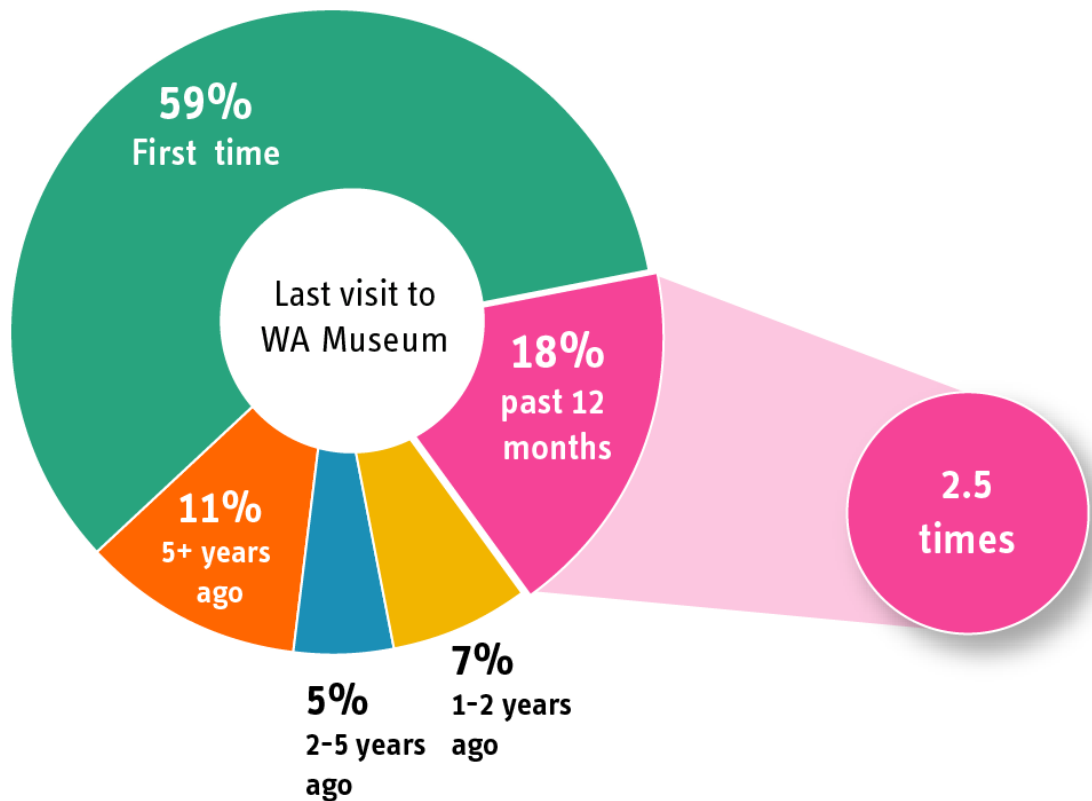
*150 surveys were completed*

Visitors were also observed in the exhibition space by trained researchers to gauge levels of engagement and to understand their different behaviour modes.



### 3 Before the visit

When did visitors last come to the Western Australian Museum?



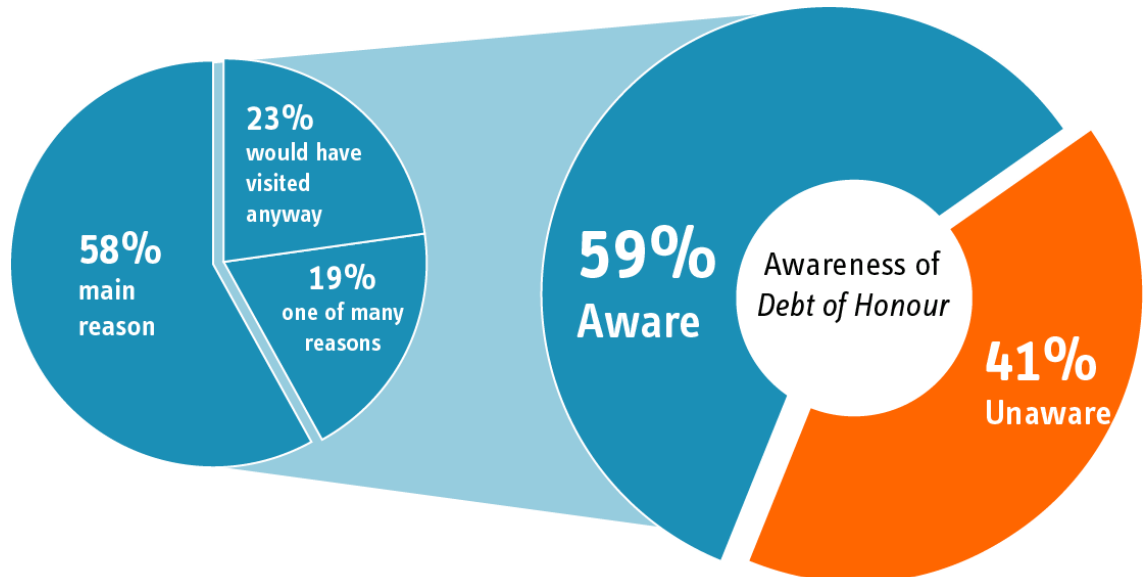
Base: 150

*Debt of Honour* attracted a very high proportion of first time visitors – 59% were making their first ever visit to WA Museum. This compares to 31% first time visiting at the *Extraordinary Stories* exhibition.

This shows that *Debt of Honour* was an appealing proposition to those visitors coming for the first time.

Just under a fifth (18%) of visits to the exhibition were made by people who had previously been to the Museum in the past 12 months. On average, these regular visitors had been to WA Museum 2.5 times in the past year. Regular visitors made 35% of visits to *Extraordinary Stories*, visiting the Museum on average 3.15 times in the past year.

Were visitors aware of the *Debt of Honour* exhibition before their visit?



for **34%** of all visitors, *Debt of Honour* was the main reason for their visit

Base: 145

59% of visitors to *Debt of Honour* were aware of the exhibition ahead of their Museum visit that day, while the remaining 41% were converted on site. This 59% pre-awareness compares to 81% pre-awareness at the *Extraordinary Stories* exhibition.

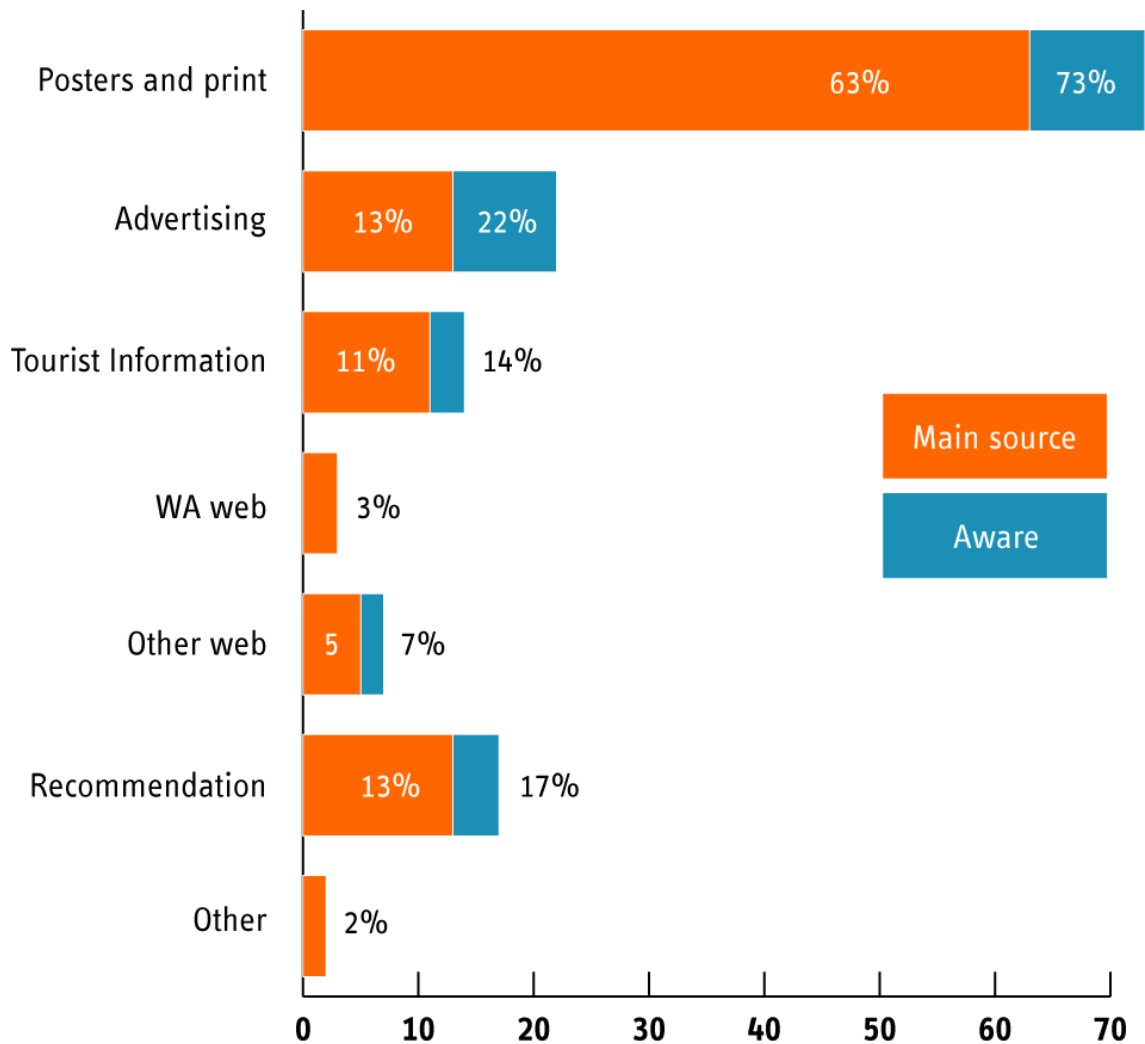
Of those who were aware of the exhibition before they came to the Museum, 58% said it was their main reason for attending and a further 19% said it was one of many reasons for attending.

Given the high proportion of first time visitors to the exhibition, this suggests that the marketing campaign successfully reached and then appealed to a new audience.

Just over a third of all exhibition visitors said that *Debt of Honour* was their main reason for coming to the Museum, compared to 49% at *Extraordinary Stories*.



What information did visitors use to plan their Museum visit?



Base 135

Posters and print advertising the Museum were the most commonly seen publicity material, with banners outside the building a particularly popular information source for visitors to *Debt of Honour*.

Advertisements, particularly those in newspapers and magazines, were another crucial information source, while the high proportion of recommendations from friends, family and colleagues emphasises the importance of generating positive word of mouth.

Visitors at *Debt of Honour* tended to use marketing materials in similar proportions to visitors at *Extraordinary Stories*.

**When did visitors decide to come to *Debt of Honour*?**

More than 1 month ago	1 - 4 weeks ago	Within the past week	Yesterday	Today
4%	11%	23%	17%	44%

→ Visit

Base: 142

The decision to visit *Debt of Honour* tended to be a fairly late one, with 44% deciding to come to the exhibition on the day of their visit, unsurprising given that 41% were unaware of the exhibition before their visit.

Those who were pre-aware of the exhibition tended to decide to visit *Debt of Honour* in the week before their Museum visit, with 17% deciding the day before and 23% in the 7 days previous.

This suggests that the proposition of the exhibition was sufficiently appealing to spark a relatively quick visit to the Museum – visitors found out about the exhibition and then came to the Museum quickly rather than waiting.

Visitors tended to make the decision to visit *Extraordinary Stories* earlier, with 20% deciding to come more than a month before their actual visit.

### What motivates people to visit?

When we talk about motivations we are referring to the underlying drivers for a museum visit: the factors that encourage people to attend based on their beliefs about the benefits they will get.

Having asked thousands of people why they visit museums, exhibitions and galleries and what they hope to get from a visit we have identified four universal drivers. The model below shows these drivers and the broad needs of the visitors that experience each driver.

These motives make people set off for a visit; as they enter they become expectations and as they leave they become outcomes. This is why they are so important. Being able to measure motives, expectations and outcomes can provide deep insight into the visitor experience.

**Figure 27 Drivers**

See museum as a...	Have this driver...	And they seek this from a visit..
CHURCH	SPIRITUAL	Creative stimulation and quiet contemplation, they see museums as an opportunity to escape and recharge their batteries, food for the soul
SPA	EMOTIONAL	May have a personal connection to the subject matter, want to see facinating objects in an inspiring setting, seek ambience, deep sensory and intellectual experience
ARCHIVE	INTELLECTUAL	Keen to encourage their children's or their own interest and knowledge, may have professional interest in the subject, seek a journey of discovery, to find out new things
ATTRACTION	SOCIAL	See museums as an enjoyable place to spend time with friends and family, seek ease of access and orientation, good facilities and services, welcoming staff

© Morris Hargreaves McIntyre

Visitors can arrive at a venue with any level of need, and if they meet those needs they will have a satisfying visit. It is also possible for visitors to get unexpected benefits, or outcomes, from a visit. This can shape their future expectations of the venue. Experiencing these unexpected outcomes can enable visitors to switch or add new motivations. For example someone can move from purely socially driven visits to visits that are driven by both social and intellectual needs.

If visitors do not have their needs met then it is unusual for them to engage at a deeper level. For example if someone feels uncomfortable, unwelcome or out of place in a museum or gallery they will not have their social needs met and are unlikely to engage at an intellectual or emotional level, so will not get the associated benefits. In this respect the model owes much to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (A Theory of Human Motivation, 1943) in that visitors can only move up the hierarchy if the previous level of need is met.

It is difficult to jump levels. For example, we find that if visitors get unexpected emotional outcomes from a visit, many will want to ‘backfill’ with intellectual understanding of the objects that delivered these benefits. People who expect to fulfil emotional and spiritual needs with a visit tend to have above average levels of knowledge or confidence with the subject matter.

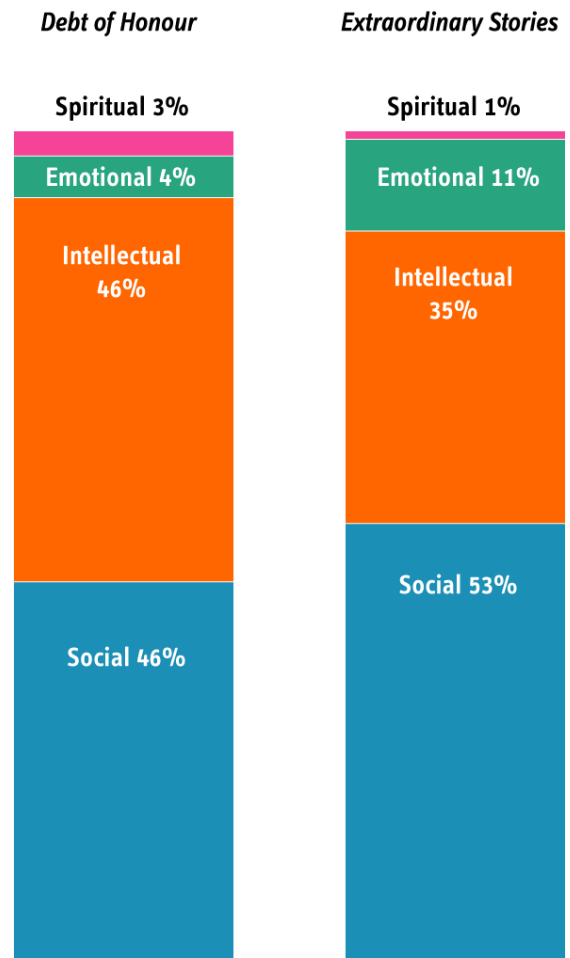
### What motivated people to visit the Western Australian Museum?

Visitors with either primarily social or intellectual motivations each made 46% of visits to the *Debt of Honour* exhibition.

This represents an increase in the proportion of intellectually motivated visits from the audience at *Extraordinary Stories*, but a decrease in the proportion of socially motivated visits.

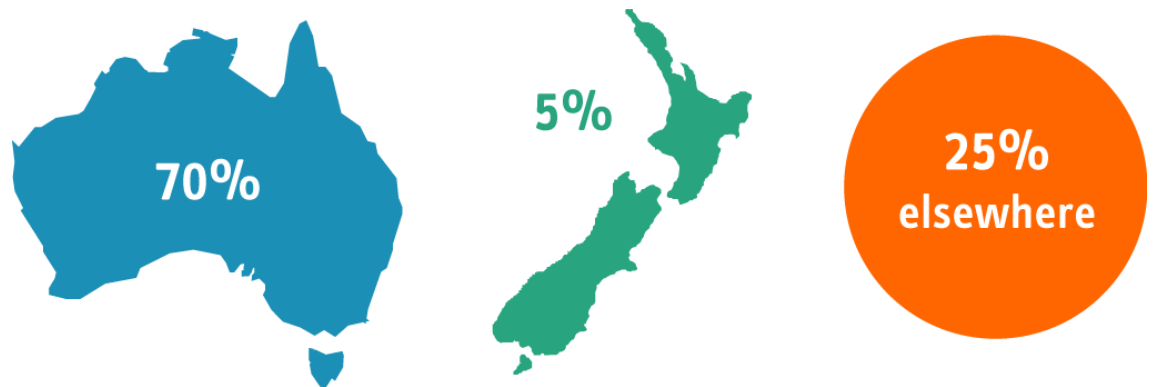
The most commonly cited individual motivation statements were ‘to improve my own knowledge and understanding’ (37%) and ‘it’s an enjoyable place to pass the time’ (23%).

Base: 132



## 4 Visitor profile

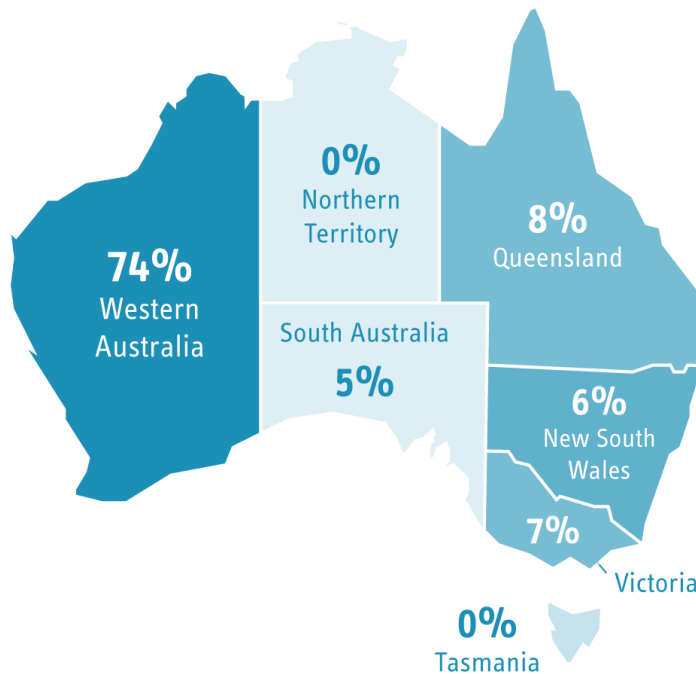
Where did visitors come from?



Base: 147

70% of exhibition visits to *Debt of Honour* came from within Australia, compared to 89% at *Extraordinary Stories* and 81% at *Pompeii*. *Debt of Honour* attracted a much higher proportion of overseas visits (25%) than *Extraordinary Stories* (7%)

### Where specifically in Australia?

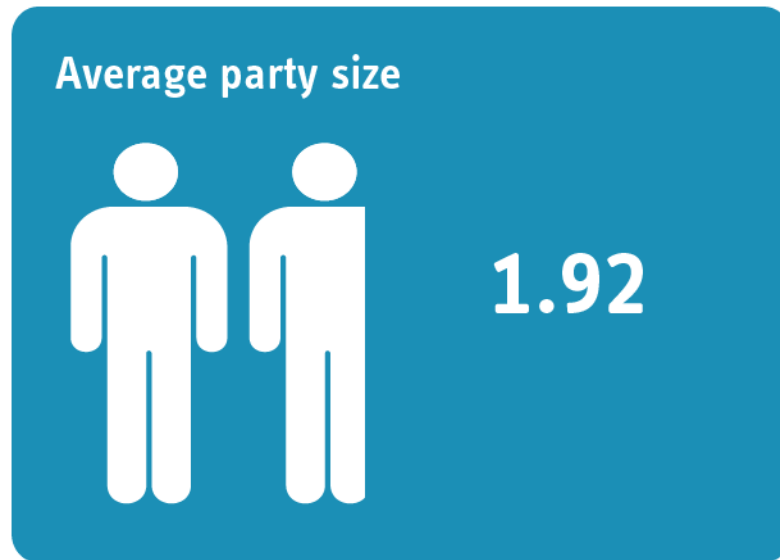


Base: 101

Just under three quarters of visits from within Australia came from Western Australia, while 8% came from Queensland, 7% from Victoria, 6% from New South Wales and 5% from South Australia.

This represents a different Australian profile than that found at Extraordinary Stories, where 85% came from Western Australia, 7% from New South Wales and 4% from both Victoria and Queensland. This shows that Debt of Honour attracted a more varied Australian audience.

What was the average party size?

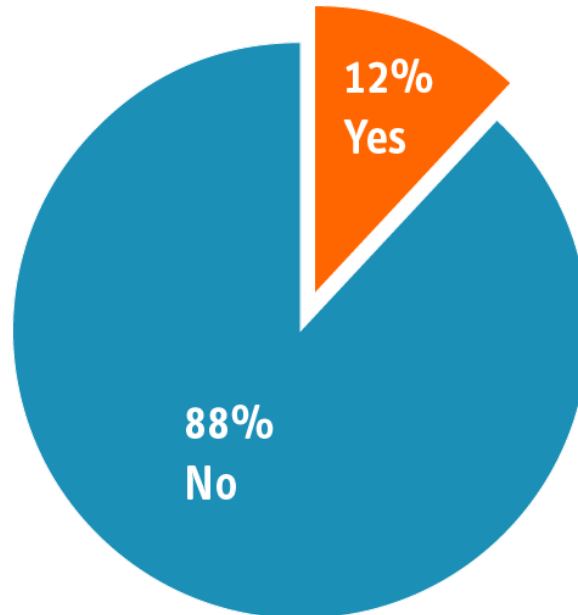


Base: 150

The average party size at *Debt of Honour* was 1.92, compared to 2.66 at *Extraordinary Stories*.



**Did visitors have a professional or academic involvement with history or museums?**



Base: 144

Visitors with a professional or academic involvement with history or museums made 12% of visitors to the *Debt of Honour* exhibition, compared to 22% at *Extraordinary Stories*.

This compares to a London Nationals Museums benchmark of 23% of visitors making a professional or academic involvement in 2010/11. Across the benchmarking group, the 'yes' % ranged from 13% to 43%.



How did visitors describe their knowledge of history?



Base: 146

The vast majority of visitors to *Debt of Honour* had a general knowledge of history, while 8% described their knowledge as specialist. This compares to 9% specialist knowledge at *Extraordinary Stories*, where 84% had a general knowledge.



## 4.1 Culture Segments

**How does the exhibition Culture Segment breakdown compare to that of the Museum?**

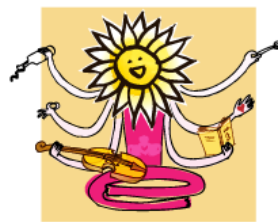
Culture Segments is a whole of market place segmentation system devised by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre for the cultural market. The defining characteristics of the 8 segments are summarised below.



**Essence**  
discerning  
spontaneous  
independent  
sophisticated



**Stimulation**  
active  
experimental  
discovery  
contemporary



**Expression**  
receptive  
confident  
community  
expressive



**Affirmation**  
self-identity  
aspirational  
quality time  
improvement



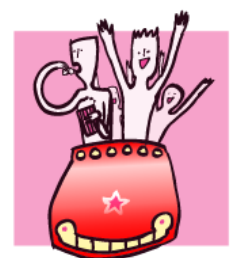
**Release**  
busy  
ambitious  
prioritising  
wistful



**Enrichment**  
mature  
traditional  
heritage  
nostalgia

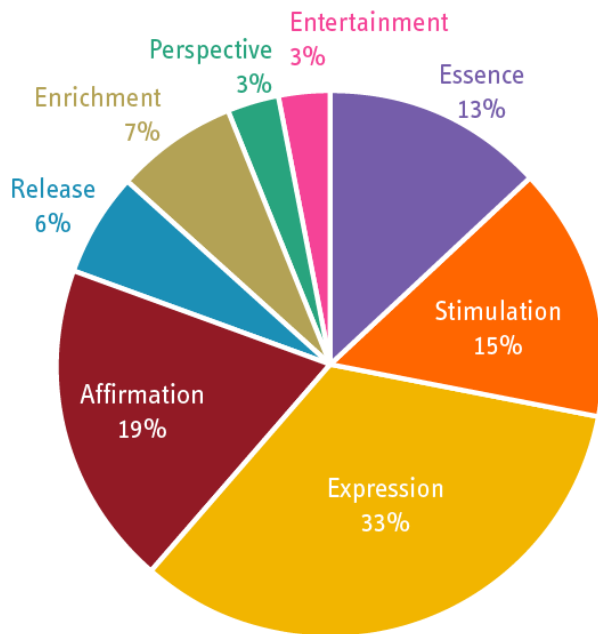


**Perspective**  
settled  
self-sufficient  
focused  
contented

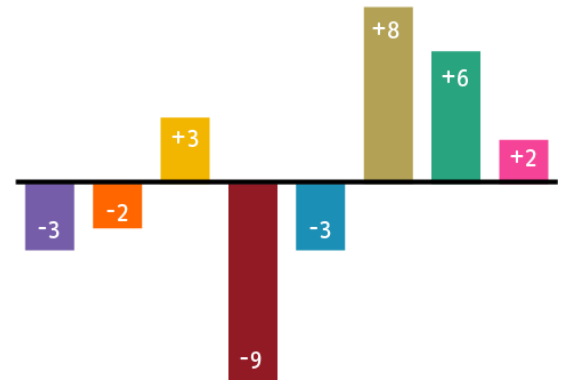


**Entertainment**  
consumers  
popularist  
leisure  
mainstream

WAM Perth National Culture Segments



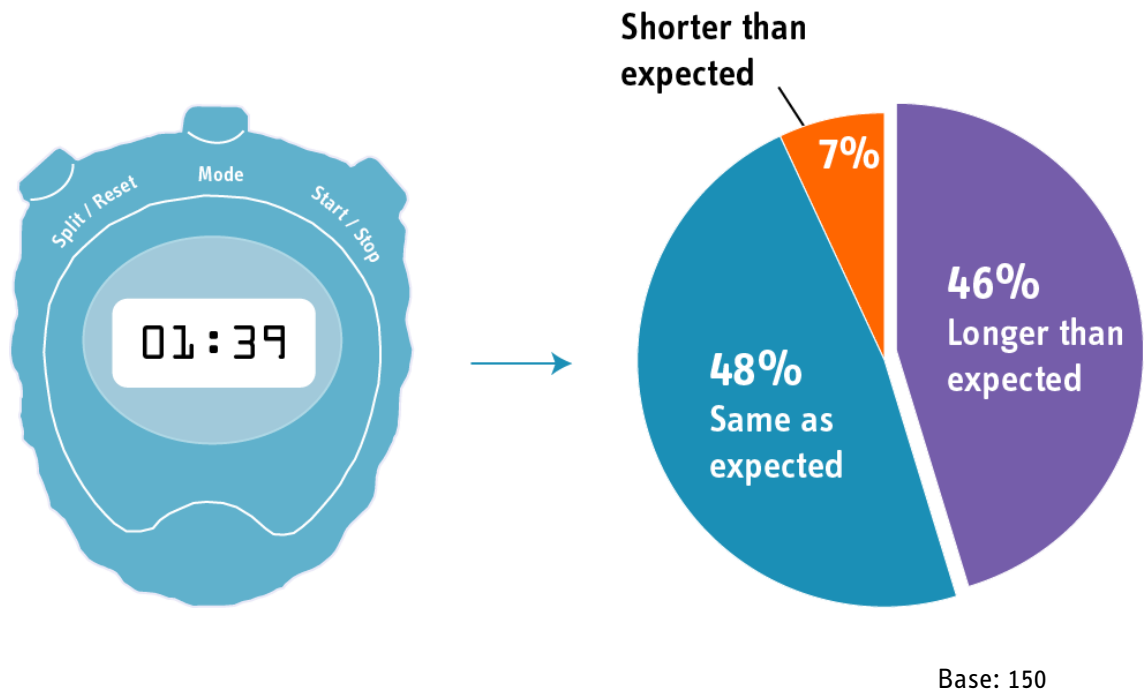
Exhibition difference from WAM Perth National Culture Segments



This shows that the exhibition attracted a higher proportion of visits from the Enrichment and Perspective segments than can be found in the Museum as a whole, but the proportion of visits from the Affirmation segment was significantly lower at *Debt of Honour*.

## 5 During the visit

### 5.1 How long did visitors spend in the exhibition?

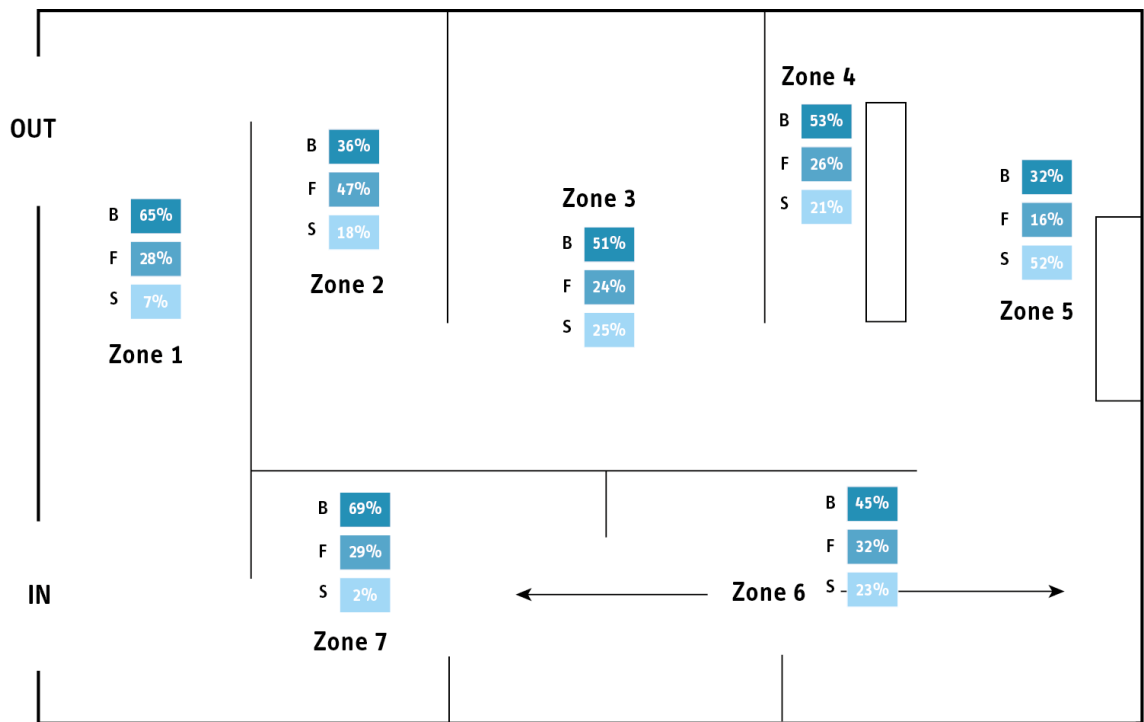


Visitors spent an average of 99 minutes in the *Debt of Honour* exhibition, considerably longer than the 61 minutes they spent at *Extraordinary Stories*. Just under half (46%) said that this was longer than they had expected to spend at *Debt of Honour*, while 48% said they spent as long as they had anticipated.

### 5.2 How did visitors behave?

Visitors' overall level of behaviour in each zone was observed and measured using the following scale:

- **Browsing:** Selecting random objects and displays in no apparent narrative or sequence
- **Following:** Looking at a number of objects and displays in a sequential pattern
- **Searching:** Very applied following, reading everything and engaging with all of the objects



	ZONE						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B	65%	36%	51%	53%	32%	45%	69%
F	28%	47%	24%	26%	16%	32%	29%
S	7%	18%	25%	21%	52%	23%	2%

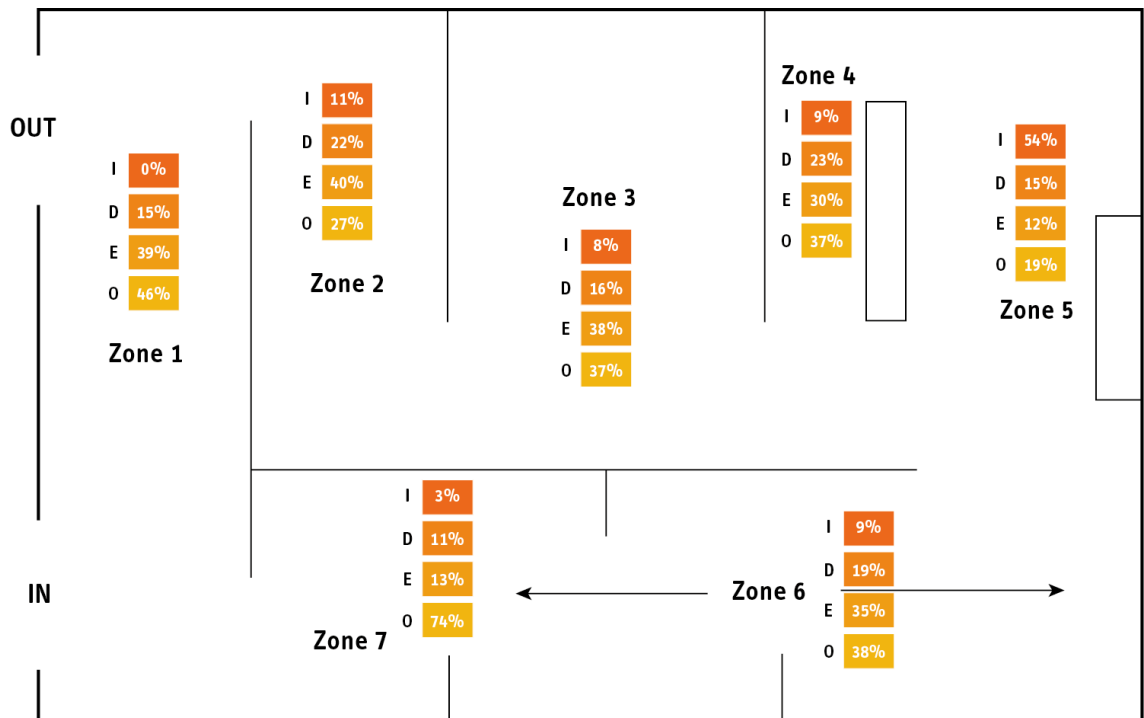
Visitors behaved in a way that is perhaps to be expected from an exhibition of this size. Visitors tended to start in a browsing mode, became more engaged with the exhibition so behaved in following and searching modes, before suffering from fatigue and exited the exhibition in browsing mode once more.

### 5.3 How did visitors engage?

#### How engaged were visitors?

Visitors' overall level of engagement in each zone was observed and measured by trained researchers using the following scale:

- **Orientation:** Glancing around the zone, moving on and leaving the zone relatively quickly
- **Exploration:** Pausing, briefly considering some of the displays, interpretation or objects and then moving on to another zone
- **Discovery:** Pausing for a length of time looking at some of the displays, objects and interpretation
- **Immersion:** Fully engaged, absorbed in the zone and all of the detail



	ZONE						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I	0%	11%	8%	9%	54%	9%	3%
D	15%	22%	16%	23%	15%	19%	11%
E	39%	40%	38%	30%	12%	35%	13%
O	46%	27%	37%	37%	19%	38%	74%

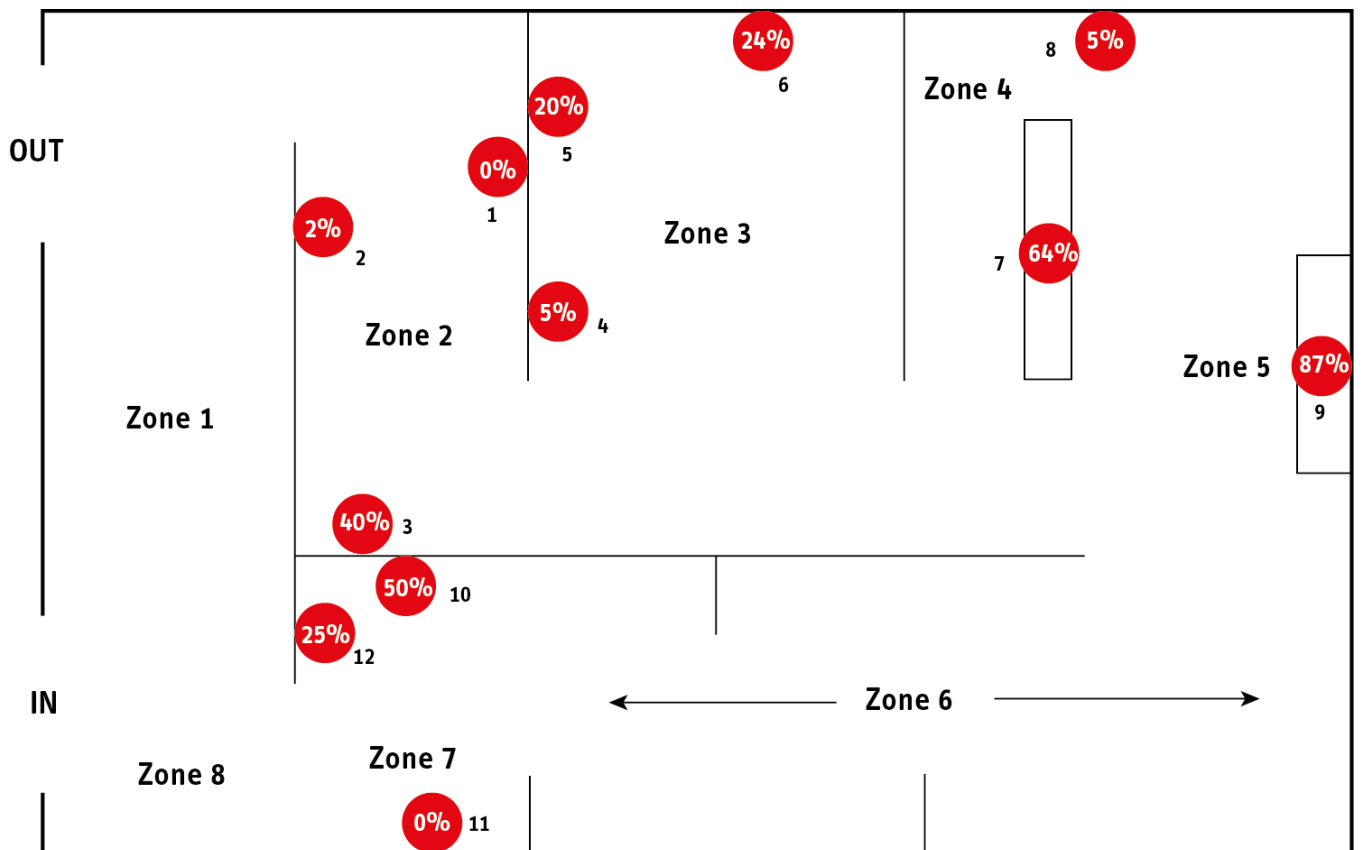
Zone 5 fully immersed over half of its visitors (54%). This reiterates the attractor power of audio-visual screens.

Zone 2 was the next most engaging zone, closely followed by zone 4.

Zones 6 and 7 were among the least engaging zones, indicating that visitors perhaps suffered from fatigue toward the end of the exhibition.

## 5.4 What did visitors do?

The following model shows the proportion of visitors from each zone who visited each of the labelled objects.



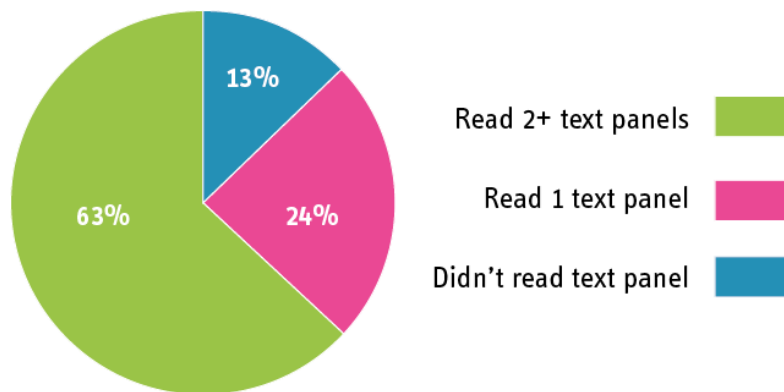
- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Computer screen      | 7. Glass case          |
| 2. Headphones           | 8. Cammando stories    |
| 3. Film on the wall     | 9. Zone 5 film         |
| 4. Sparrow force screen | 10. Men of Timor film  |
| 5. Headphones           | 11. 2/2nd TV adverts   |
| 6. The Criados screen   | 12. We not forget film |

The star object of the exhibition was the film in Zone 5. The Men of Timor film was also highly popular. The computer screen in zone 1 struggled to attract interest from visitors, as did the 2/2<sup>nd</sup> TV adverts in zone 7.



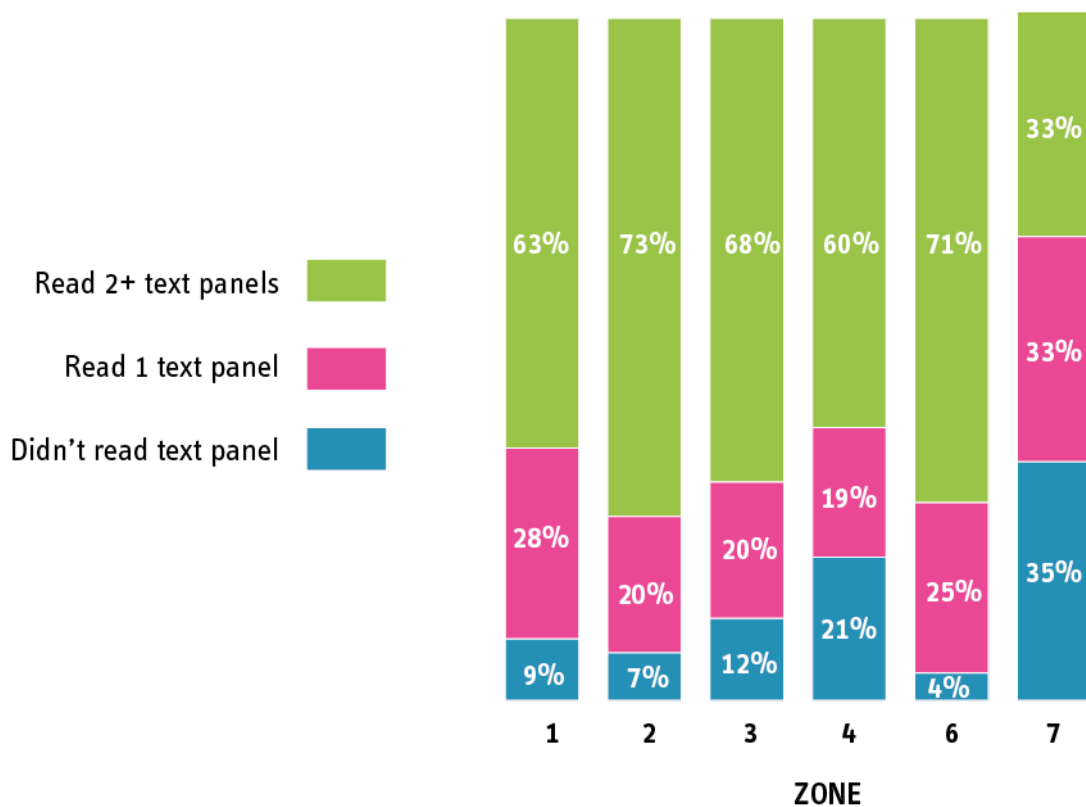
## 5.5 Text panels

The chart below shows how the proportion of visitors who read text panels in the exhibition:



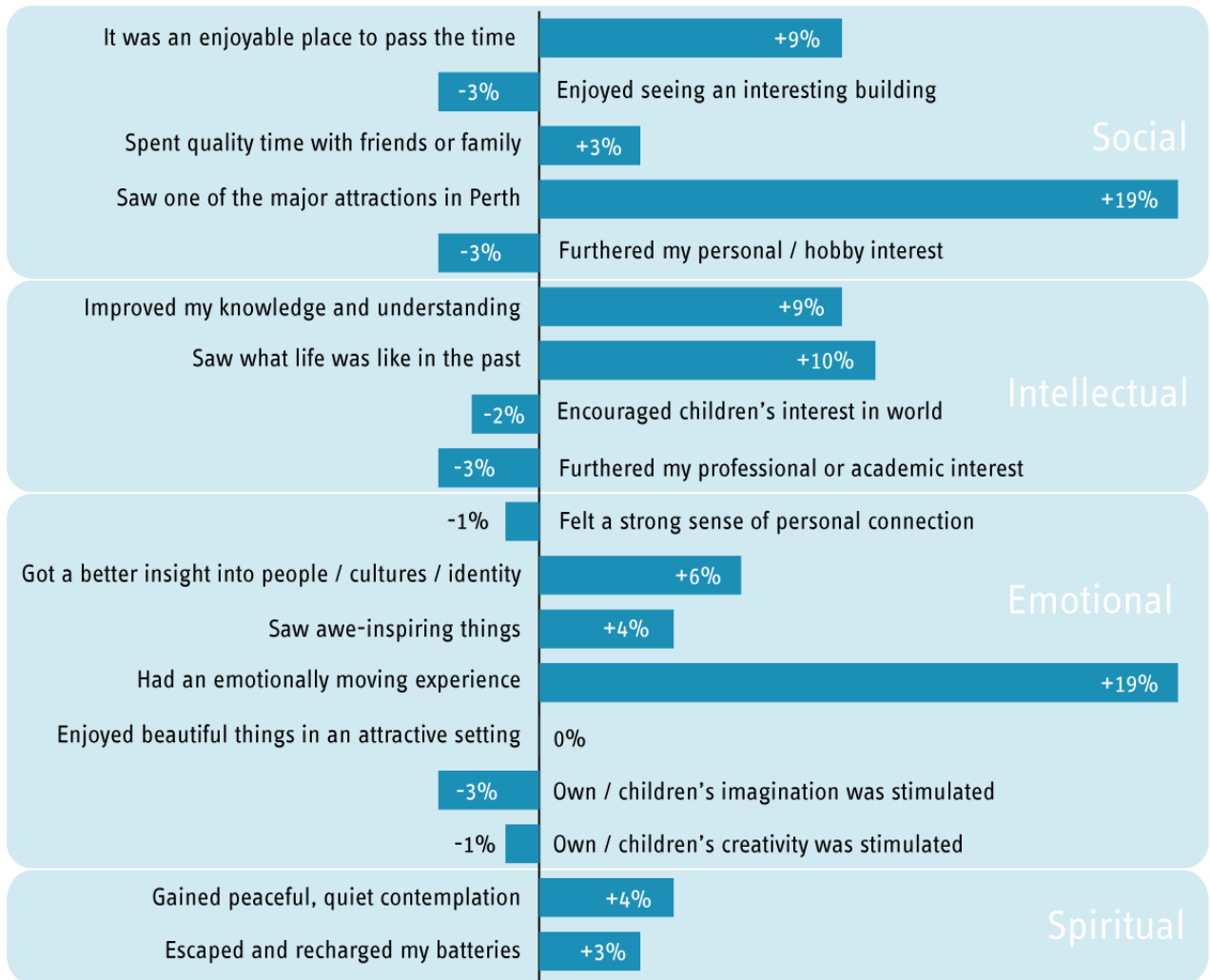
This illustrates that 87% of visitors observed read at least one text panel in the exhibition.

The following chart shows the proportion of visitors from each zone who read text panels.



## 6 After the visit

### Which outcomes did visitors receive through the exhibition?

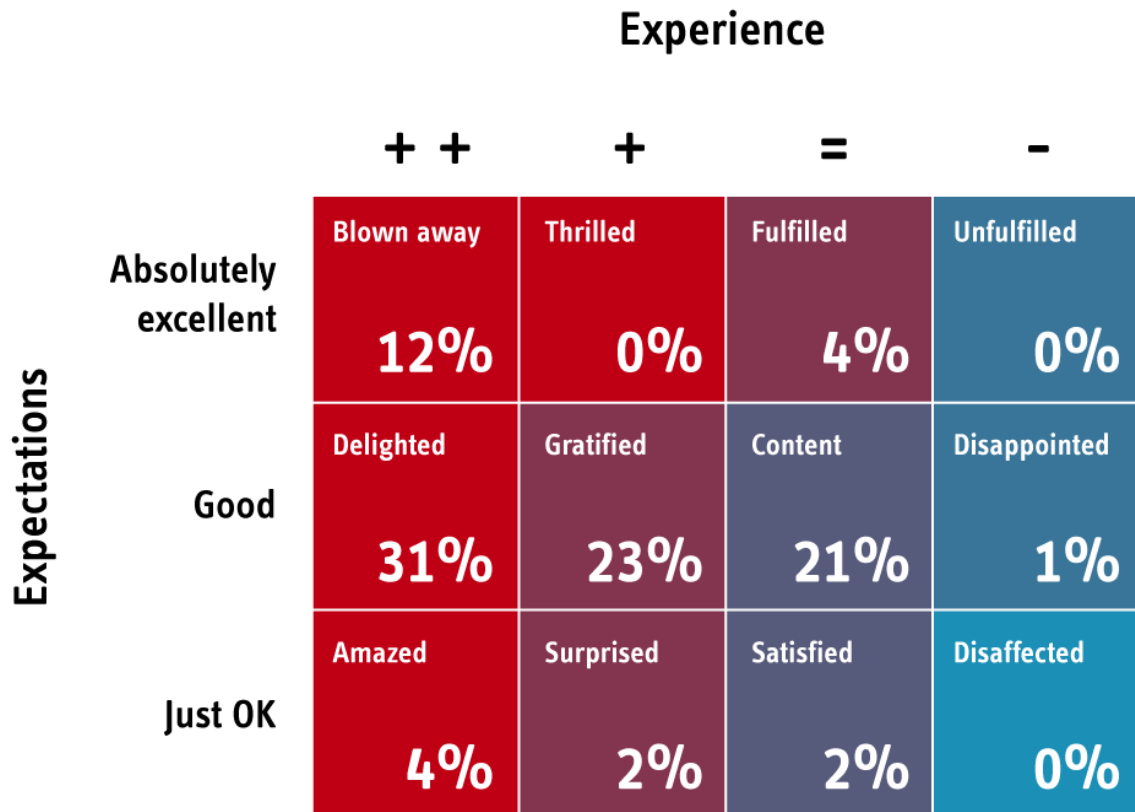


Base: 150

The model above compares all visitors' motivations for attending with all the outcomes they received from the exhibition. The positive scores show where the exhibition delivered an unexpected outcome, while negative scores show where visitors' motivations were left unfulfilled.

There were significant increases in the proportion of visitors who unexpectedly had an emotionally moving experience, saw what life was like in the past and improved their knowledge and understanding.

How effectively did the experience meet visitors' expectations?



Base: 134

The model above compares what visitors thought the exhibition was going to be like (on the left axis) with the actual experience in the exhibition (on the top axis).

This shows that 12% of visitors thought that the exhibition was going to be absolutely excellent, and then found that the actual experience was much better than expected.

In general most visitors expected the exhibition to be good, but 31% found it was then much better than expected and a further 23% thought it was a little better than expected.

This represents a high level of satisfaction with the exhibition and shows how it exceeded expectations for the majority of visitors.

### Positive responses

*A comprehensive story of war that I knew nothing about and found shocking and fascinating*

*A touching look at Australia's complete role and relationship with East Timor from World War 2 onwards – I learnt a great deal and was very moved by what I learnt*

*A very factual exhibition full of emotion. A credit to those who took the time to research and present in such an orderly way*

*A wonderful way to enlighten people to a little known, but fascinating episode of Australia's WW2 history and our relationship with near neighbours*

*An interesting and humbling insight into the interaction between the Australians and the Timorese*

*Every Australian should know a bit more about our relationship with East Timor, one of our closest neighbours and a country to which we still owe a great debt*

*Every Australian should see it and ponder the moral questions it poses on our nation's actions over time in Timor. It also highlights why Australians should be giving far more to East Timor and hopefully in any future scenario behave with ethics and morals, not just expediency*

*It was a fantastically put together exhibition, people need to know the history of what happened when our forces went to fight in the Islands, and what has followed*

*The exhibition is compelling and has emotional charge which makes situations memorable and relevant. The different media enhance the experience and assist in stimulating interest*

*Very moving experience. Sad and emotional video footage was amazing. This will definitely stay in my memories forever*

*It brings home what our soldiers went through to allow us the freedom that we are blessed to have in our wonderful country*