Valuing whales: strandings, cultural storytelling and community engagement

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There are different ways of valuing whales.
TERE TOHORĀ, TERE TANGAIA
WHERE WHALES JOURNEY, PEOPLE FOLLOW
Sir James Hector and Staff on the Museum lawn with a Pygmy Right whale Skeleton
Te Papa’s Marine Mammal Collection
All specimens collected from strandings
Early collecting
Whale strandings

- Many species only known from strandings
- Opportunity to study offshore animals
- Some species seldom seen in surveys
- Strandling data almost always provides better diversity information about the cetacean fauna of a region than live surveys.
- Strandings give a window into the health and status of cetacean populations
Cultural values

• Strandings are emotional times in any community
• Histories and cultural practices and beliefs are integral in the interaction with animals
Key Values

- **Mana Whenua**
  - respecting the authority of tangata whenua
- **Mana Taonga**
  - respecting the whakapapa of taonga
- **Mātauranga Māori**
  - empowering the Maori world view
- **Kaitiakitanga**
  - protecting and preserving taonga for future generations
- **Manaakitanga**
  - giving unconditional support
- **Te Marae**
  - A place to stand and be heard
Mana Taonga Concept

- Central in laying the foundation for Māori participation and involvement.
- Recognises the spiritual and cultural connections of taonga with the people
- Acknowledges the special relationships that this creates
2003

Stranding of 12 sperm whales at Karekare on the West Coast of Auckland
Removal of Jaws for Te Kawerau a Maki
Tu Hononga on display in Whales Tohorä
Tu Hononga – the Connection
We all Tell Stories...

- Ownership
- Celebration
- Transformation
- Engagement
- Relationship
Ownership
Ownership

People telling THEIR stories in THEIR language in THEIR voices.
Non-Parallelism

Rich stories from different world views
Celebration
Reframing negative concepts
Transformation
Engagement
Relationship

Be a Part of Community, not Apart from Community

• Create Champions
• Create community Pride/Ownership
• Create Opportunities
• Create responsibility