

## MEDIA RELEASE

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## Reduced Prices at Stardome

Visiting Auckland's Stardome Observatory & Planetarium is now a whole lot cheaper, thanks to Auckland Council.

The Auckland Council controlled Regional Facilities Auckland (RFA) is charged with providing a regional approach to running and developing Auckland's arts, culture and heritage, leisure, sport and entertainment venues. Stardome is one of the venues supported by RFA, and thanks to additional funding through RFA and the Auckland Regional Amenities Funding Board, Stardome has been able to lower their admission prices from the 1<sup>st</sup> of July.

"Making our regional facilities more accessible to residents and visitors is an important part of what makes up the new Auckland. Stardome is one of our most loved and education-focused venues and I am very pleased that they can now offer the same attractions at a reduced price," says Mayor Len Brown.

The new Stardome pricing structure for planetarium shows will be:

	<u>New Price</u>	<u>Previous Price</u>
Adults	\$10	\$16 (for evening shows)
Seniors/Students/Children	\$8	\$14 (seniors/students)
Family Pass	\$30	\$35
School/Pre-School	\$5	\$7

The new prices will remain in place for at least a year. Stardome Chief Executive David Houldsworth believes, "This is an important step in making Stardome more affordable and accessible to the citizens of Auckland and is part of our ongoing commitment to encourage more visitors from across the whole of the Auckland Council region."

Part of the fabric of Auckland since 1967, Stardome is one of the Auckland region's most popular and best loved attractions. Public planetarium shows run every night and weekend afternoons about space, astronauts, black holes and many other topics.

Stardome is a non-profit organisation that provides a valuable public service. The additional funding acknowledges that and allows Stardome to extend the opportunity to learn about astronomy and space sciences to Aucklanders for whom it may have previously been out of reach.

The new prices are great news for schools, many of which are struggling to find the funds to maintain a programme of educational field trips. The unique experience of a visit to Stardome is something no child will forget, with a session tailored to each school group by an Astronomy Educator, and designed to meet their astronomical unit studies in line with the NZ curriculum.

Stardome has a wide range of shows suitable for school children, tourists and locals alike. Recently upgraded displays and interactive exhibits in the foyer tell the story of how the Universe came to be. This area is free to visit and features New Zealand's most diverse display of meteorites including

### Stardome Observatory & Planetarium

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pieces of the Moon and Mars. Visitors can find out how telescopes work and learn about the history of spaceflight and man's endeavours to explore space.

Of all the regional amenities funded or partially funded by Auckland Council, Stardome is one of the most cost effective (measured by the amount of ratepayer funding per visitor). Stardome is a lean and agile organisation, with just three full-time staff, but a wealth of committed volunteers who are passionate about sharing the thrill of astronomy and space sciences. Says Houldsworth, "There's nothing like watching people view Saturn for the first time through one of our powerful telescopes and exclaiming with delight when they see the rings around it!"

"Stardome is a facility on a par with the best observatories in the world, and a treasure of the greater Auckland region that the public should be proud to have available to them."

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For an interview with David Houldsworth or further information contact:

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