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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **EDINBURGH'S CHRISTMAS AND EDINBURGH'S HOGMANAY GENERATE OVER £240 MILLION FOR THE CITY**

Organisers of Edinburgh's Winter Festivals today announced that their 2014/2015 events programme created an economic impact of £241.4m for the city of Edinburgh. Produced on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council by Underbelly and Unique Events respectively, Edinburgh's Christmas and Edinburgh's Hogmanay welcomed almost 1 million visitors to the city over the six week festive period, specifically to attend the capital's famous Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations.

**Edinburgh's Christmas** attracted 886,651 unique visitors who made 2.86m visits to the two sites over the 44 day duration of the festival. The economic impact for the city of Edinburgh was £199.5m.

### **Other key facts for Edinburgh's Christmas:**

- 70% of attendees came from outwith Edinburgh and it is on these attendees that the economic impact above is calculated. 30% of attendees came from Edinburgh; 8% from the Lothians; 34% from the rest of the Scotland and 17% from the rest of the UK. 11% were international - Culture Republic – Post Event Evaluation Survey
- 56% of those questioned from outwith the Edinburgh area stated that Edinburgh's Christmas was the sole or main reason for coming into the city. Culture Republic – Post Event Evaluation Survey
- Data supplied by Marketing Edinburgh shows that hotel room occupancy in the city centre increased in December from 71.1% in 2012 to 74% in 2013, and to 78.7% in 2014. This shows a relative increase of 6.4% in the last year, and 10.8% in the last two years. Marketing Edinburgh/LJ Research
- And revenue per available room (combining room rate and occupancy performance) also increased in the city centre in December from £62.77 in 2012, to £64.61 in 2013, and to £71.60 in 2014. This shows a relative increase of 10.8% in the last year, and 14.14% in the last two years. Marketing Edinburgh/LJ Research

In just 3 days, **Edinburgh's Hogmanay** attracted over 150,000 attendances at spectacular events throughout Edinburgh city centre, of which 80,908 were unique visitors. The economic impact for the city was £41.8m, an average of almost £14m per festival day.

### **Other key facts for Edinburgh's Hogmanay:**

- Audience members travelled from 70 countries around the world to attend the Edinburgh's Hogmanay festival – Edinburgh's Hogmanay Box Office
- 2/3rds of Edinburgh's Hogmanay Street Party audience are visitors from outwith Scotland. 24% of attendees were international, 41% from the rest of the UK, 22% of attendees came from Edinburgh & Lothian's and 13% from the rest of the Scotland – Culture Republic – Post Event Evaluation Survey
- Hotel occupancy in Edinburgh city centre was at 99% over the New Year period - Marketing Edinburgh/LJ Research
- 92% of overseas visitors were very/satisfied with their Edinburgh's Hogmanay experience - Culture Republic – Post Event Evaluation Survey

**Councillor Richard Lewis, Festivals and Events Champion for the City of Edinburgh Council, said:** “The winter festivals consortium has performed well, improving the quality of the Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations, maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction, providing more opportunities for local community groups to participate and increasing value for money for local residents. Edinburgh's Christmas also offered a discount in 2014/15 for all those with an EH postcode, and sold 97,500 discounted tickets to local residents.”

**Charlie Wood of Underbelly and Festival Director of Edinburgh's Christmas** said “This is great news for Edinburgh. The revenue generated does not go to the events themselves, the event organisers or to the City of Edinburgh Council. This is new money, which is going to the businesses of Edinburgh, be it retail, accommodation, food, drink, shopping and entertainment. The Winter Festivals in Edinburgh are a fantastic series of events that allow residents and visitors to the City to celebrate the end of one year and the beginning of another. There's no better place to celebrate it all than in Edinburgh.”

**Pete Irvine, of Unique Events and Festival Director of Edinburgh's Hogmanay** said “We're very pleased that these figures bear out what we know, which is that Edinburgh's Hogmanay and Edinburgh's Christmas have an extraordinary effect on the winter economy of the city. We know millions of people watch Edinburgh's Hogmanay on global television news and that the world comes to party at the 'Home of Hogmanay'. Now once again we can see they contribute hugely; in return, visitors take away great memories of Scotland and the Scots”

**Julie Tait, Chief Executive of Culture Republic**, Scotland's national gateway to public engagement and innovation in the cultural sector,, said, “We're delighted to have been able to evidence such a positive economic impact for culture in our capital city. In our work across Scotland, every day we see further examples of the positive effects of culture and the arts, not only in terms of positive economic contribution but in enriching the lives of individuals and building resilience in our

communities from the Highlands and Islands to the Borders. Today's figures speak for themselves, and it's clear to see that Edinburgh's Winter Festivals are going from strength to strength."

**Roddy Smith, Chief Executive of Essential Edinburgh**, said "We are delighted to see the very strong evidence of the significant economic impact of last year's Winter Festivals. The benefits to Edinburgh's retailers, bars, restaurants, hotels and entertainment providers cannot be underestimated and Essential Edinburgh are looking forward to working with both Underbelly and Unique to continue to deliver these world class events in our city.

**John Donnelly, Chief Executive, Marketing Edinburgh**: "Edinburgh's Christmas and Hogmanay bring a fantastic buzz to the city, with particularly encouraging footfall and sales throughout last year's festive season. Providing such a strong offering to both residents and visitors has allowed Edinburgh to sit firmly on the map as a key winter destination, and we look forward to supporting these key calendar events again this year."

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## Notes to Editors

### Methodology:

**For Edinburgh's Christmas**, the data for the economic impact study was based on the numbers of people that Underbelly counted entering the Edinburgh's Christmas Sites, supported by a survey conducted by Culture Republic that ensured the correct individuals were sampled. Only those who said they were visiting the Edinburgh's Christmas event were included in the research, excluding those who said they were just passing through. Visits to both sites were counted as only one visit and repeat visits were also accounted for, ensuring that each individual was counted only once. Edinburgh residents were excluded. By this means, the sample was established, and individuals were asked how much money they had spent, both on accommodation and other expenditure during their visit to generate an economic impact figure.

**For Edinburgh's Hogmanay**, Edinburgh residents were again excluded and only those attendees who said that attending Edinburgh's Hogmanay that day was their sole or main motivation for being in Edinburgh were included. Those who attended multiple events were also accounted for. By this means, the sample was established, and individuals were asked how much money they had spent, both on accommodation and other expenditure during their visit.