VOICE OF AROHA

NEWSLETTER

NL: 02 | 2025
MAR-APR



2025 ACADEMIC AWARDS NIGHT WELLINGTON & PALMERSTON NORTH



OPENING MESSAGE





Kia ora whānau,

As we move through the heart of autumn, I want to reflect on the powerful energy of the past two months at Voice of Aroha.

Our two climate action hui brought together ethnic leaders and community voices to engage and explore how our cultures, beliefs, and lived experiences can shape inclusive climate solutions for the future of our city. It was inspiring to see so much passion and purpose in one space.

We also proudly hosted academic awards nights in both Wellington and Palmerston North, where 50 ethnic students were recognised for their achievements. This is the second year of our partnership with the Ministry of Education, and it's an honour to celebrate the brilliance, resilience, and potential of our communities through this meaningful initiative.

Our podcast platform continues to grow as a space for storytelling and meaningful kōrero sharing voices that uplift, connect, and inspire change. If you have missed the podcast, I invite you to check them out in our YouTube Channel.

Thank you to everyone who makes this mahi possible—our dedicated volunteers, supportive communities, generous funders, and incredible partners. Your aroha is the heartbeat of everything we do.

Ngā mihi nui,
Kodrean Eashae
CEO, Voice of Aroha

CLIMATE HUI- REFUGEE & MIGRANT STAKEHOLDERS AND LEADERS HUI



Voice Of Aroha had the pleasure of leading the Climate Action Hui for organisations and leaders from the refugee and migrant sector. This hui was for anyone who supports ethnic communities across the Wellington region.

Our aim was to bring together community leaders and organisations to amplify ethnic voices in climate action. The hui offered a valuable opportunity to consult, share, connect and also help to build a support network that will benefit the communities we all work and serve within.

On 6th of March, 2025, the hui saw many keynote guests speak, including a team from the Wellington Council, and the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office (WREMO).

Multiple individuals from different backgrounds, passionate about our climate and environment attend the hui, gaining valuable knowledge and sharing their personal perspectives. A great way to promote social cohesion.

The VOA team was delighted to have the opportunity to host this event and bring together individuals of different backgrounds to share their perspectives about the climate and the actions we could take to protect it!

Written by Ayaan Chand

CLIMATE HUI SESSION TWO





Following the success of its first climate-focused gathering, **Voice of Aroha** held its second climate meeting session on the 5th of April, continuing its mission to amplify community-led environmental action. The session brought together local voices, climate advocates, and youth leaders to discuss tangible ways to reduce emissions, foster sustainability, and support climate resilience within Aotearoa.

Led by our wonderful Climate Mahi Coordinator, Oscar this second session focused on discussions on regenerative agriculture, indigenous land practices, waterways and the many possible actions that could be taken to protect our environment and combat issues. Participants suggested aligning school curriculum to environmental aspects, have eco-education workshops, practice the 3R's and also have simplified climate/environmental awareness projects in order to educate underrepresented voices, such as those from other countries. A knowledgeable guest speaker, from Wellington City Council graced the hui and delved deeper into the concept of the issue of climate change.

"Our vision is rooted in compassion, collective responsibility, and kaitiakitanga," said Kodrean, our CEO. "The momentum we're building shows that when communities are heard, real change begins."

Voice of Aroha plans to organise more such fun climate huis for awareness and education on our environment.

Written by Ayaan Chand

TOP NEWS - RECOGNISING YOUNG PEOPLE



ACADEMIC AWARDS NIGHT - RECOGNISING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE OF ETHNIC STUDENTS

In a heartfelt celebration of achievement and diversity, Voice of Aroha, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, hosted the 2025 Academic Awards Night to honour the performing ethnic high school students across the Wellington region. The event brought together families, educators, and community leaders to recognise and celebrate the hard work, resilience, and academic excellence of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.









Kodrean Eashae, and the wonderful Aarthi Candadai emceed the ceremony with warmth and grace. The evening featured an inspiring speech from past award recipient Danna Arado, who shared her journey and words of encouragement. Mastura Abd Rahman, Team Leader Community Partnerships at the Ministry of Education as well as Alana McCorry- Manager Integrated Services Wellington was invited to present certificates to 35 the students in recognition of their outstanding achievements in 2024.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Hutt Vally High School for generously hosting us and supporting this special event.

We congratulate all our award recipients and wish them all the best for future endeavours.

Written by Ayaan Chand

TOP NEWS- RECOGNISING YOUNG PEOPLE



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL 2025 AWARD RECIPIENTS

TOP NEWS - RECOGNISING YOUNG PEOPLE



ACADEMIC AWARDS NIGHT - RECOGNISING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE OF ETHNIC STUDENTS

In a similar spirit of celebration, Voice of Aroha hosted its 2025 Academic Awards Night in Palmerston North—a heartfelt evening honouring achievement, diversity, and excellence. The event recognised top-performing ethnic high school students from across the region, bringing together families, educators, and community leaders to celebrate their hard work, resilience, and academic success.







The ceremony featured a moving speech from past award recipient Dima Abbas, who shared her inspiring journey and words of encouragement with this year's students. Mastura Abd Rahman, Team Leader at the Ministry of Education, was also present to proudly award certificates to 15 students for their outstanding achievements in 2024.

The night was all about uplifting our young people—celebrating their success and ensuring their efforts are recognised and valued.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Palmerston North Girls High School for generously hosting us and supporting this special event. A big thank you also to our partners and the team at the Ministry of Education for their continued support and belief in this kaupapa.



We congratulate all of our award recipients and wish them every success in their future endeavours.

Written by Ayaan Chand

TOP NEWS- RECOGNISING YOUNG PEOPLE



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL 2025 AWARD RECIPIENTS

NEW EPISODES

From powerful kōrero on the VOA Podcast to the Youth Talk/Team Talk, our amazing volunteers are creating meaningful conversations and building community. We've been joined by inspiring guests—leaders, changemakers, and young voices—who've shared powerful stories and fresh perspectives.

Check them out on our YouTube channel and don't forget to subscribe!



WATCH NOW



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WATCH NOW



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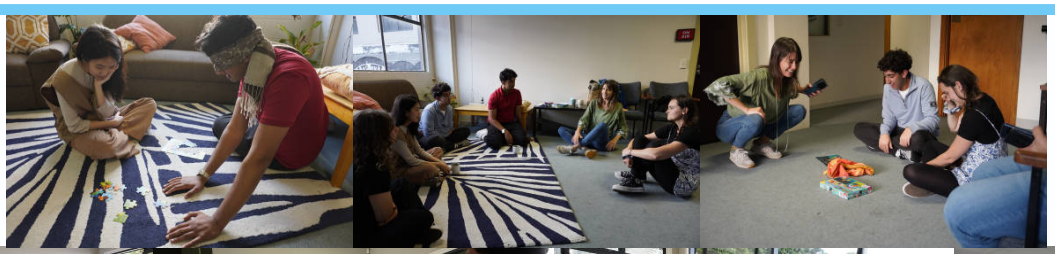
WELLBEING DAY!

TE PATAKA KŌRERO O MOERA NEIAHBOURHOOD HUB



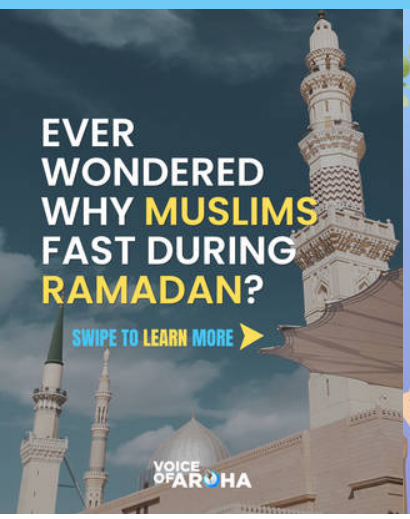
Our monthly wellbeing days, led by the amazing coach Michelle, have been full of connection, reflection, and fun! In March, we held a beautiful session at Moera Neighbourhood Hub—thanks to Lower Hutt City Council for the venue and support.

In April, we continued the vibe with a session for our volunteers—full of laughter, team-building, and planning ahead for Youth Week. Watch this space—more to come!
Wellbeing is at the heart of Voice of Aroha, and Michelle's guidance has been a true gift to our team and wider community.





CULTURE HIGHLIGHTS





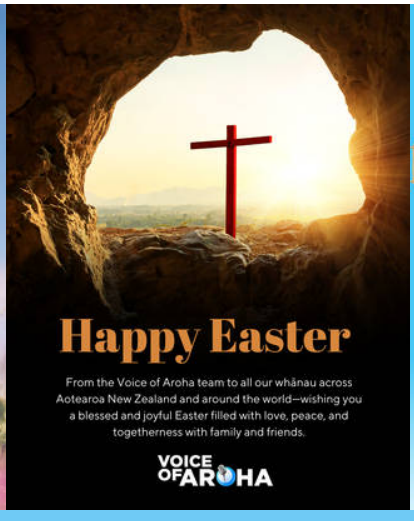


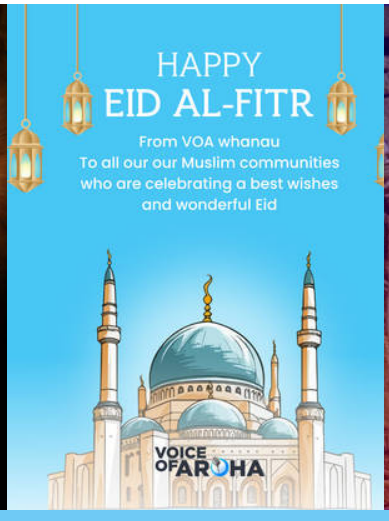


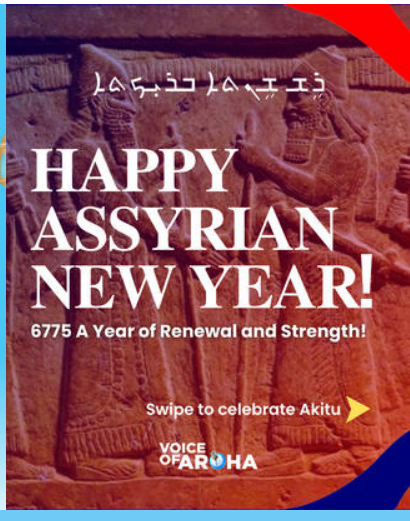
At Voice of Aroha, one thing we always prioritise is celebrating and highlighting the rich cultures of our diverse communities. Whether through video highlights or informative carousel-style posts, we love creating content that raises awareness and deepens understanding of important cultural celebrations. March and April were filled with beautiful moments—from Ramadan, Nowruz, Assyrian New Year, Holi, and Easter, to International Women's Day and the anniversary of March 15th, where we honoured the shuhadā and stood in solidarity with affected communities. Across our channels, we shared stories, visuals, and reflections to uplift and celebrate the significance of these days with our whānau and wider audience.

Check out the full content on our platforms: Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn.



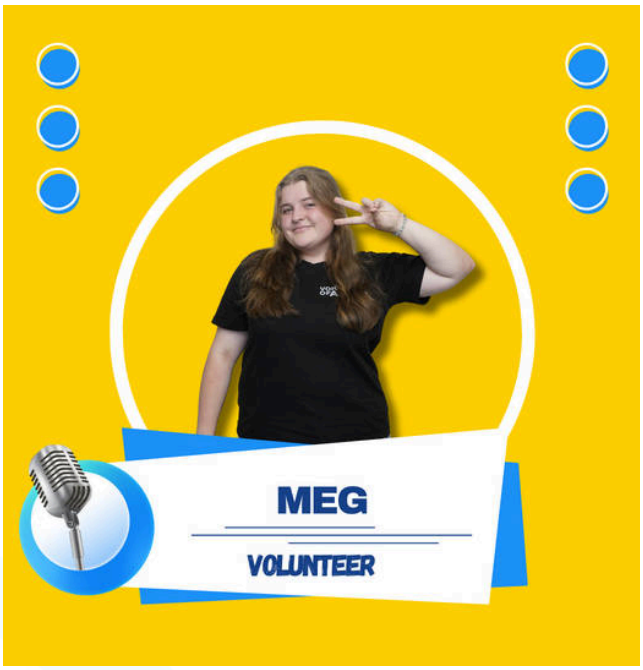






STORY HIGHLIGHTS

This section highlights stories and experiences from our wonderful volunteers.



Kia ora whanau!
My name is Meg and I am a 17 (Almsot 18!) year old currently in my last year of high school at Newlands College. When I'm not volunteering or studying, I love watching TV shows, playing board games and, baking.

I first got involved in Voice of Aroha at the very start of 2024, making this my second year as a volunteer for this amazing organisation. My reason for getting involved was seeing the amazing mahi that a lot of the other volunteers at VOA were already doing, especially superstars the same age as me like Aarthi. As I saw more content and learned more about the value set of the organisation, like their drive for social cohesion, diversity and, community, I knew I had to get involved! This year I have the honour of also being a youth ambassador for Voice of Aroha.

I have two standout memories at VOA: my first Youth Talk and the interview I co-hosted with the NCWNZ. My first ever youth talk was my first time as part of a podcast EVER, so I was nervous as anything! The VOA whanau embraced me and my shy, anxious energy. Making me feel comfortable in frot of the mic and camera. Once I got into it, the words just kept flowing, and it felt completely natural! The interview with the NCWNZ (National Council of Women New Zealand) was amazing because I have never gelled so well with an interviewee. The energy that they brought to the studio was amazing, matched mine perfectly, and I loved hearing their perspectives on some issues and topics.

Volunteering has always been important to me, from a younger me helping out fundraising for causes like the Wellington Free Ambulance, to now being involved in various causes across the country. It has taught me important skills like how to connect with people from a variety of different communities, how to demonstrate empathy and manaakitanga in everything I do, and how to advocate for myself and others! I would recommend to everyone to do some volunteering as it teaches you valuable skills and makes you an all round better person.

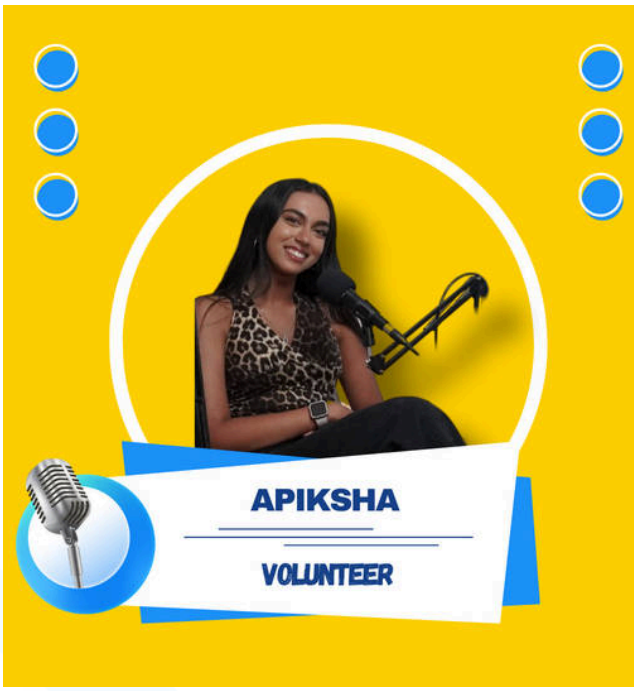
The VOA whanau has taught me how to be more self-assured and confident in my speaking and conversating skills. There has been so much support available to me over my time here and it is genuinely the kindest most genuine group of people I have ever met. This is a whanau, brought from all different corners of the world, with lots of different connections, all trying to uplift the stories of those who are often silenced.

I'll leave you all with a quote: "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success." - Henry Ford

Have a good May everybody, Meg xo

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

This section highlights stories and experiences from our wonderful volunteers.



Kia Ora! I'm Apiksha, a 17-year-old Fijian-Indian, born and raised in Wellington. I'm the youngest of 3, and outside of volunteering, I enjoy baking, spending time with my loved ones, and exploring new things. I love to get involved with different experiences, and working with organisations that boost youth voice and raise awareness is something that I am deeply involved with! I'm the Co-Organiser of TEDxYouth@Paparangi this year, Communications Manager for Youth4ClimateAction, and many more.

Something that inspired me to join the Voice of Aroha team was the dedication to amplify the voices of our society. I wanted to contribute to something that makes an impact, especially in an area that empowers diverse voices. When I noticed all of the mahi that Voice of Aroha does, I immediately knew I wanted to be a part of something so special!

A memorable moment while volunteering is the TeamTalks with other members of the Voice of Aroha whanau! For me, these discussions are the most moving opportunities to learn from others, exchange our ideas, and reflect. They have helped me grow as an individual and also grow closer to the team, and I can't wait for more.

Volunteering means the absolute world to me! 3 years ago, I was too anxious to step out of my comfort zone and leap into opportunities like this, but they have helped me tremendously, not only in developing my inner confidence, but also in understanding the value of giving back to my community. It's taught me the importance of empathy, connection and patience. Through volunteering, I have learned that even the smallest acts of kindness go a long way, and I've gained a deeper appreciation for the things surrounding me. The impact on others is immeasurable, and it's so incredible that these acts can help people create lasting change in their lives.

One thing I have learned through my experience here is the power of listening. Too often, it's easy to overlook how much we can learn simply from being present and giving someone our undivided attention. It's definitely a skill that has helped me grow both personally and in my role as a volunteer.

One message I'd like to share is to never underestimate the power of your presence. Even when you think your contribution is small, it can have a deep impact on someone else. Your time, energy and care are valuable, and just by showing up, you are making a difference. Your presence is a gift that deserves

Thank You | Apiksha

COMING UP EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Climate Community Training – Lower Hutt

After a successful round in Wellington last year, we're excited to bring this powerful program to the Lower Hutt community! This is your chance to develop your project, grow your ideas, or deepen your knowledge through an engaging and practical two-day training.

Date & Time:
Saturday 10th May | 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Sunday 11th May | 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Lunch & refreshments provided

Register now and be part of the movement for local climate action!
Check out the poster below for more info.



Subscribe to the VOA Newsletter for exciting news, events, and community projects. Don't miss out on upcoming episodes—subscribe now to stay informed and get involved!



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