VOICE OF AROHA
NEWSLETTER

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EMPOWERING YOUTH VOICES GRADUATION 2025





OPENING MESSAGE

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



Kia ora e te whānau,

The past two months have been an inspiring and action-packed time for Voice of Aroha, filled with milestones that continue to reflect the power of youth leadership, storytelling, and community connection.

In September, we proudly celebrated the graduation of 26 incredible young people who completed this year's Empowering Youth Voices programme. Each of them has grown in confidence, skill, and leadership ready to carry their voices into their communities and beyond. Seeing their journeys come full circle was a powerful reminder of why we do this mahi to empower youth to believe in themselves and lead with aroha. A very special moment came when Jared presented a taonga to the Voice of Aroha whānau, and a korowai to our CEO, Kodrean Eashae. This heartfelt gesture symbolised unity, respect, and the deep connection between our people and our kaupapa.

The months have also been full of stories, conversations, and creativity. Our production team has been capturing powerful podcasts and kōrero with leaders, community members, and young changemakers voices that challenge perspectives, share wisdom, and spark hope.

In October, as local elections took place, we had the privilege of hosting a special civic engagement session led entirely by our youth. This event brought together young people and local decision-makers candidates from the Wellington City Council, Porirua City Council and Lower Hutt City Council for a dynamic conversation about leadership, representation, and the future of our communities. It was a proud moment to see our rangatahi step up, ask bold questions, and demonstrate the value of youth-led dialogue.

This month, we also farewelled Hamid Majdi a valued team member, one of our co-founders, and someone who has touched every episode and impact we've created over the years. Hamid has been an integral part of the Voice of Aroha journey since the very beginning, and while his move to Auckland marks a new opportunity to shine, his presence will be deeply missed. We're excited for his next chapter and grateful that he will continue to support VOA at the board level, sharing his wisdom and experience as we grow into our next phase.

Looking ahead, we are beyond excited for what's next especially our Voice of Aroha Anniversary Gala & Community Fundraiser, happening on 1 November at Victoria University. This special night will bring together our volunteers, supporters, and community whānau to celebrate six years of shared impact, storytelling, and growth. It's not just an event it's a celebration of the people who make this kaupapa possible. It would be a great pleasure to have you join us on this special night — your presence and support mean so much as we continue building a future powered by connection, community, and aroha.

To everyone who continues to walk beside us from our youth leaders and volunteers to our funders, partners, and supporters ngā mihi nui. Your aroha, time, and belief in this vision allow us to keep building spaces where young people can belong, connect, and thrive.

Ngā manaakitanga,
Kodrean Eashae
CEO, Voice of Aroha

EMPOWERING YOUTH VOICES "EYV" GRADUATION



The Empowering Youth Voices "EYV" Graduation was an inspiring night that brought together whanau, friends, and mentors to celebrate the incredible mahi of our young leaders. The evening kicked off with heartfelt speeches and a prizegiving ceremony that recognised the hard work and dedication of every graduate. Each volunteer received a certificate of completion, symbolising their commitment to serving their communities and making a real difference. Guests were treated to delicious kai and a powerful performance from the Aotea College Kapa Haka group, whose energy and pride set the tone for the night. Laughter and conversation filled the room as people reflected on their journeys, shared memories, and looked forward to what's next. The EYV programme continues to show how youth can lead with heart, purpose, and vision, and this night was a perfect reminder of that.

Written by Apiksha Sharma

For more check the Videos

Participants Reflection: Highlights from our Empowering Youth Voices workshops!
Graduation Highlights: Empowering Youth Voices Graduation 2025













EMPOWERING YOUTH VOICES 2025 GRADUATION CELEBRATION





FAREWELL TO HAMID

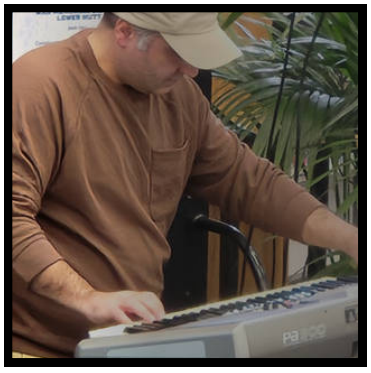


This month, we say a big thank you and farewell to Hamid, our beloved and long-serving production lead and sound technician. Hamid has been a core part of the Voice of Aroha whanau for years, capturing countless stories and moments with skill, creativity, and care. His calm presence behind the camera and his dedication to quality have shaped the look and sound of so many of our projects. Hamid is now moving on to pursue a full-time career in his field, and while we'll miss him deeply, we're excited to see where his talents take him next. His hard work, humour, and generosity have left a lasting mark on our team. From all of us at Voice of Aroha, thank you, Hamid, we're proud of you and wish you nothing but the best for the journey ahead!

Written by Apiksha Sharma







SPECIAL SHOUT-OUT TO THE LEGEND



YOUTH VOICES MEET LOCAL CANDIDATES: OUR ELECTION PANEL 2025



Last month, Voice of Aroha brought together an incredible group of young people and local election candidates for a kōrero that was all about listening, learning, and being heard. The event was part of our mission to give rangatahi and diverse communities in Wellington a stronger voice in local democracy, as well as provide insight into the people running for councils that constituents would be voting for. This time, though, it wasn't the candidates leading the discussion. It was our youth, asking the hard questions, steering the conversation, and setting the tone.

The panel gave young people a chance to speak directly with local election candidates, no filters, no scripts, just honest conversation. Our youth moderators asked thoughtful questions about what matters most to their communities, including but not limited to, housing, rates, climate change policy, and how we incorporate te tiriti priciples into local government.

A huge thank you to Nureddin Abdurahman, Geoff Hayward, Karen Morgan, Afnan Al-Rubayee, Yan Zhang, and Aditi Tiwari, for engaging enthusiastically throughout the panel, providing valuable varied perspectives, and showing us how they would pioneer our region's future.

If you missed it, you can watch the full recording on our YouTube channel here:
Youth Voices Meet Local Candidates: Election Panel 2025

Written by Meg Lange



NEW EPISODES

This month has been full of inspiring kōrero on the Voice of Aroha Podcast.

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



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SUPPORT US - VOTE FOR VOICE OF AROHA

We've been nominated!

Voice of Aroha has been nominated for the Wellington Airport Regional People's Choice Award 2025!

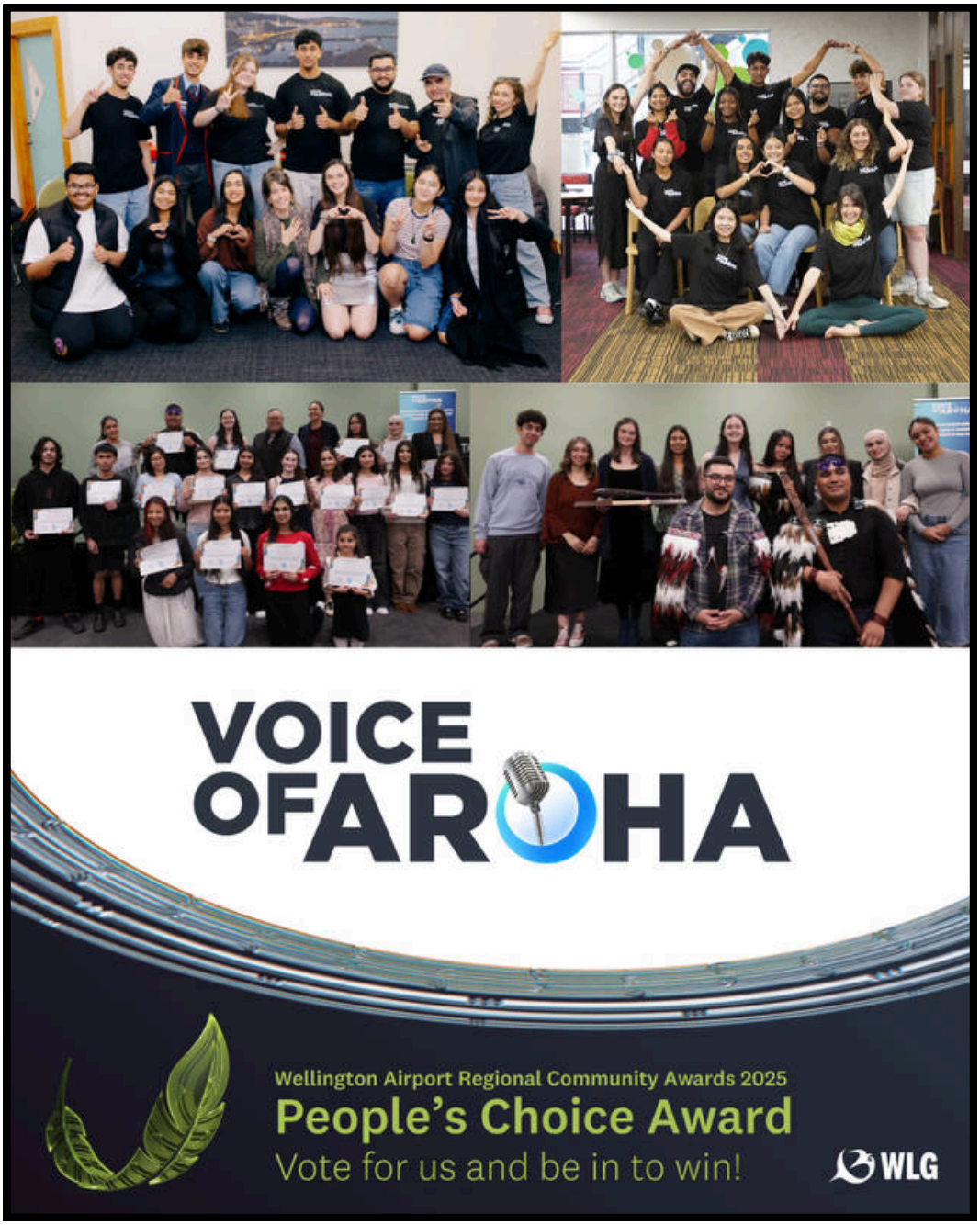
It takes less than 30 seconds to vote — and your support means the world to us

Every vote count and helps shine a light on the amazing mahi of our youth and communities.

When you vote, you'll go in the draw to WIN a $500 shopping spree at Wellington Airport!

Vote here: [Vote for Voice of Aroha]

Thank you for standing with us — your voice truly makes a difference



VOICE OF AROHA ANNIVERSARY GALA 2025

Experience a Night of Celebration and Impact in Wellington!

Join us at the Voice of Aroha Anniversary Gala on Saturday, November 1st, 2025, for an unforgettable evening of reflection, connection, and aroha. Immerse yourself in inspiring stories, captivating performances, and the warmth of community — all while making a real difference in the lives of refugee and migrant communities across Aotearoa.

Voice of Aroha 6th Anniversary Gala

For six incredible years, Voice of Aroha has amplified untold voices, empowered youth, and brought people together through storytelling, leadership, and celebration.

This year has been filled with achievements and new opportunities for our young people, but it has also been one of the toughest yet, with limited funding. To keep our mahi alive and ensure our youth continue to thrive, we need your support. **Will you stand with us?**

Date: Saturday, November 1, 2025
Time: 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Location: The Hub, Kelburn Campus (Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington)

What to Expect:
Inspiring youth voices
Beautiful cultural performances
Dinner with whānau for a great cause
Raffle tickets + prizes to be won
A night of aroha, unity & impact

Every ticket is a donation. Your generosity directly supports Voice of Aroha's ongoing mahi — empowering youth, creating inclusive spaces, and ensuring refugee and migrant voices are heard, valued, and celebrated.

Get your ticket here and be part of this milestone celebration! Together, we'll ensure our mission not only continues but grows stronger, making a lasting difference for generations to come.




ANNIVERSARY GALA
6
Years
JOIN US
FOR OUR GALA FUNDRAISER
AMPLIFYING VOICES
EMPOWERING YOUTH
STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY
GET YOUR TICKET HERE
SATURDAY
1ST NOVEMBER 2025
VOICE OF AROHA
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON (THE HUB)
JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OF CELEBRATION AND IMPACT – GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY!

VOLUNTEER STORY HIGHLIGHTS

This section highlights stories and experiences from our wonderful volunteers.



Kia ora!

I'm originally from Vietnam. I came here in 2023 and since then Wellington has been my second home. Outside of volunteering, I read books, listen to music and take a walk to the waterfront.

I discovered Voice of Aroha when I joined the Wellington Plus programme at Vic Uni. I saw that people are doing a lot of meaningful things, especially empowering voices from diverse communities that are present here in Wellington. I simply want to see myself part of that scene and want to contribute something.

What has been a memorable moment or experience while volunteering?

People! Everyone is so warm, friendly and welcoming. A sense of home that I never knew I needed!!

What does volunteering mean to you personally?

To find out more about myself and naturally what I do along the way also contributes meaningfully to others as well so it's a special two-way street. I think that also helps strengthen a sense of community and belonging. We are humans after all!

What's one thing you've learned through your experience here?

Just be yourself. Relax more. Enjoy the moments. And have fun!

If you could share one message with the community or future volunteers, what would it be?

Just bring your best attitude and willingness to help. Stay curious and connect with people genuinely.

Written by Hannah

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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VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON TE HERENGA WAKA