SEPTEMBER 2024

Valley Voice

Te Reo Hapori o Waimapihi – the Aro Valley Community Newsletter

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Firstly, an apology: this issue of Valley Voice is again a week late in publication. We print either four or eight pages – this is only a small one, but there is some extra stuff in the pipeline, so October will see us back to eight pages.

See us in colour online: You can see Valley Voice online as a PDF by going to the web page arovalley.org.nz/valley-voice or using the QR code above.

As you may have noticed, we use a different key colour every month.

Valley Voice is published on behalf of the Aro Valley Community Council Inc, 48 Aro St, Wellington.

All opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the writers and not of the AVCC unless adopted at a General Meeting.

Photographs and text are by the credited authors or the Editor, Brent Efford.

Contributions welcome

Contributions – councillors' comments, poems, articles, letters, photos, historical snippets, news of events, business news, etc – relevant to the Aro Valley community are very welcome. Please email to: ***brent.efford@me.com***

The deadline for Valley Voice articles and photos is set to enable distribution of paper copies early in the month – i.e. for the October 2024 Valley Voice it is ...
Thursday 26 September.

Good for business: *situated on the main route to the Polhil Gully mountainbike paradise, the new artistic bike stand and footpath motif is a hit with riders patronising our local Aro St hospitality outlets. A big group of riders collect their steeds after a coffee session on the morning of 3 September.* *See* ***page 3*** *for more on the design of the new facility.*

Aro Park controversy...

Our trees need to be managed

John Witty's letter in the August Valley Voice, urging that the huge gum tree in Aro Park – originally planted as part of our protest action in 1983, and now overshadowing the entire park – should be cut down has certainly stirred a reaction:

Dear Editor,

This gum tree is at the heart of Aro Valley and represents a time when the community pulled together to claim this site for a public park. The Salvation Army intended to buy the site for their new headquarters.

The gum tree seedling was planted in a ceremony attended by many people who had been involved in lengthy community action.

Luckily it was planted on the southern boundary of the park, so the bulk of its shadow is cast onto Aro St. behind it.

This site was originally a kahikatea swamp which was cut down for firewood by the people of Wellington in the 1800s. It was and always will be damp no matter what grows there.

Let's celebrate this tree - not cut it down.

Julia Stace Brooke-White

31 August 2024

Concluded – p2 >>>

Go for a walk ... meet the neighbours ... see interesting letterboxes ... help your community!
We need to build up our squad of voluntary Valley Voice deliverers. If you can spare an hour every month to help, please drop Ahmen a note at community@arovalley.org.nz

Too big to chop *and the icon of Aro St – but it might need a trim.* ***Photo:*** *Julia Brooke-White, 2022.*

>>> Trees in Aro Park – from p1

Hi Brent,

I write in response to John Whitty.

The gum tree in Aro St. Park is splendid. It's healthy; it's growing strong. It is especially good at making the park a shady and cool spot on warm and soon to come - hot days. That tree also makes a home for birds.

For me, the tree is like a welcome arbor on my commute. It is a sign of nature and calm, sending me home.

regards,
Marette

Brent rant: Thank you, Julia and Marette.

Some years ago I had to trim and finally eliminate (in small chunks!) two overgrown trees in my own garden.

The first had reached up to the roof of the School of Philosophy building next door – three stories – and was shading some of their windows. It would very likely have come crashing down in one of the storms we have had since – like the tree that crashed down on the Community Centre in 2013 (see below) – and could have caused big damage.

The other tree – a very large rhododendron – was on the boundary with my neighbour on Boston Tce. One summer its brief but brilliant display of red flowers failed to appear. Then, in a storm, a big branch broke and crashed onto my neighbour's verandah. The core of the tree was obviously rotten, but its complete removal became a task taking quite a few days.

I agree that complete removal of the big gum would be unacceptable, but the Aro Valley Community Council has asked for the City Council to assess the trees around Aro Park and have them appropriately trimmed by arborists as part of a normal maintenance programme.

However, the City Council does not see tree maintenance as a priority in this austerity era, even though it should be a normal cyclical action – like mowing the lawns, albeit not as often.

Brent Efford

What can happen! *A rogue, shallow-rooted, tree which crashed onto the Community Centre during a storm in June 2013.*

From our councillors ...

From Nikau Wineera

"Spring is in the air in the Valley! From my whare up on Durham Street, I've been enjoying the smell of flowers and seeing new growth in the Waimapihi reserve. I recently met two local perfumers down in the village, who shared some fascinating details about the craft and sold me some beautiful kōwhai and mango scents.

I've since discovered our city is served by three perfumers, two of which are in our very own Aro Valley! Whilst I was there, we discussed the possibility of a new mural for the village. If you support this idea, or have any other feedback about Council changes to the Valley, please send me an email at **nikau.wineera@wcc.govt.nz**. Mauri ora ki a koutou katoa!"

Nikau Wineera

From Geordie Rogers

Everyone who ran for Council campaigned on fixing the pipes. It's the one thing we seldom argue about. This year 35% of the Councils total rates collection will go towards three waters and over the next ten years we'll spend $4.8 billion on our three waters network.

Water reform must be the priority for all of us, Councillors and Wellingtonians, over the next 18 months to ensure that we're building a framework for a network that doesn't leak, stops wastewater flowing into our harbours, and delivers water throughout Pōneke efficiently.

With a replacement value of $7.685 billion it's incredibly important that we take the time to think about who should control our water assets, how we want to pay for it, and how we make sure that everyone in Pōneke has access to clean drinking water.

Here are some questions that I have for you.

Should everyone pay the same amount for water (average pricing), or should you have to pay for how much it costs to deliver it to you (marginal pricing)?

If we amalgamate our water with other Councils, should we be open to cross-subsidisation (others subsiding Wellington City, or Wellington City subsidising others)?

What is the most important thing to you about our future water network? Is it costs to you, costs to the environment, efficiency, accountability, all of the above and something more?

I'm very interested to hear what you think, and am always open to an email via **Geordie.Rogers@wcc.govt.nz**

Geordie Rogers

From Nicola Young

I'm known for voting against many Council projects, including this year's Long-Term-Plan. Council's spending needs to be cut, especially as the debt will hang around Wellingtonians' necks for decades.

Wellingtonians are reeling from their latest rates demands. The Council states the overall residential rates increase is 16.9% (plus the 1.6% sludge levy) although Aro Valley's median increase is 18.4% - with many over 22%. It's worse for commercial properties, as those rates are 3.7 times the residential rate.

The most contentious part of the LTP is the decision to sell Council's minority shareholding in the airport. I believe the shares should be sold, with the proceeds reinvested away from Wellington to diversify the risk. However, I've voted against the sale previously due to concerns the proceeds would be squandered.

This year it was proposed the proceeds would be locked away in a perpetual investment fund. This was a sound plan, with an amendment to ensure the proceeds could not be used to support debt, so I voted for the sale.

When it was revealed the debt restriction wouldn't kick in for some years, I joined forces across the political spectrum to oppose the sale. It's still not certain when the final decision will be taken.

If you have any Council-related queries, please contact me: 021 654 844 or **nicola.young@wcc.govt.nz**.

Nicola Young

Committee meeting notes

The Aro Valley Community Council Committee met on 22 August. Some highlights ...

- **Emergency preparedness** – our ability to use the Community Centre to help in the case of emergency, such as a big earthquake, is limited. It is not feasible to store Civil Defence material in the building but the Committee is to be instructed on basic communication procedures and emergency access to the building is being improved.
- The **Hall is heavily booked** until December – good news on the income side!
- The distribution of **Valley Voice** both on paper and via the AVCC website is being improved. Extra volunteers for letterboxing are wanted.
- A **book launch** in the Hall is being planned for October – WATCH THIS SPACE!
- The City Council is being asked to arrange for **over-size trees** around Aro Park to be expertly checked and trimmed
- The **speed of cyclists** from Palmer St to Aro St via the Community Centre area is a potential danger, particularly to the Preschool. The City Council is being approached re control measures.

The bike rack cultural design story

The features of the new bike rack and the blue motif on the footpath beside it reflect the cultural design story for the Wellington cycle network, Whārikitia te Whenua. This story connects to the narrative of Te Ara Tupua, the shared walking and cycling route between Wellington and Petone.

The designs are the result of partnerships between iwi who hold mana whenua around Te-Whanganui-a-Tara (Wellington Harbour), Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika and Ngāti Toa Rangatira, local Councils (Wellington City, Greater Wellington and Hutt City) and Waka Kotahi (NZTA).

Orange is one of the colours that signifies seismic activity. The bright colour was chosen because it makes the structure more visible and safer. The bike rack was designed by mana whenua designer and artist Len Hetet and manufactured locally by Design Solutions.

Len also designed the blue niho taniwha motif that is used throughout the cycle network in Wellington to highlight places of cultural and historic significance, including where awa once flowed through the area. It represents a whariki (woven mat) laid upon mother earth connecting and binding us to the land and sea.

The designs for the Te Ara Tupua project relate to the mana whenua narrative which explains the formation of Te-Whanganui-a-Tara by the two tupua (ancient phenomena) Ngake and Whātaitai. They fashioned the land using seismic activity to create the great harbour of the ancestor Tara.

It represents the appearance of the tupua Whātaitai and helps convey Te Ara Tupua still lives within the whenua of Te-Whanganui-a-Tara.

Sourced from Arovalleyconnections@wcc.govt.nz dated 5 July 2024 and https://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/te-ara-tupua/mana-whenua-partnership/ downloaded on 2 September 2024.

Judy Buchanan

Over Polhil Gully

This morning, after Friday night,
from up here,
if not benign;
The city's neutral,
quiet, cool as a pewter tankard.
Winds, uncaring, hurry over hangovers
Tired taxi drivers
recrimination and regrets.
Impatient winds know there's no time
one morning yet to come
The rocks will burn

Don Franks

Shadows Into Light

Deep in the
universe
a connection
of embracing love
turning
forever
and forever
and forever
Papatuanuku
her lover Ranginui

conflict
arose
as Uetopo
glimpsed
Hinātore
whisper of
hope
hope
hope
A way to escape
from the tight space
where more and more
young atua were crammed
shall we change or not?

after many tries
from his kapa Huake Pouri
Tāne Mahuta
directed his anger
towards his
parents
cries of
Kia Kaha!

To
Tear
Them
Apart

A path of
freedom
freedom

Freedom.

Esther Bond

Regular classes & activities

~ September 2024 ~

Day	Time	Class	Price	CONTACT
Mondays	8:30 - 9:30am	**Tai Chi with Yi Ching**	Koha	community@arovalley.org.nz
Mondays	6:30 - 7:30pm	**Foreign Language Class**	Contact for price	info@foreignlanguages.co.nz
Tuesdays	12am - 12:45pm	**Chair yoga with Kristin**	$8/$10 or koha	022 694 1197 kristingiorgi@gmail.com
Tuesdays	6 - 7pm	**Community free yoga**	Free	mark@hotmetal.nz
Tuesdays	6:30 - 7:30pm	**Foreign Language Class**	Contact for price	info@foreignlanguages.co.nz
Tuesdays	7:30 - 9:30pm	**Estudio de Samba Wellington**	$13.30 $80 term	estudiosamba@gmail.com estudiosambawellington.com
Wednesdays	8:30 - 9:30am	**Tai Chi with Yi Ching**	Koha	community@arovalley.org.nz
Wednesdays	1 - 2pm	**Dance 4 Us With Dance Therapy NZ**	Gold coin (If possible)	(09) 636 3029 admin@dancetherapy.co.nz
Wednesdays	6 - 7:30pm	**Afro Brazilian Dance**	$132 term or koha	afrobraziliandances.ba@gmail.com
Wednesdays	7:45 - 9:45pm	**Argentine Tango**	$10	021 542 7136 irinatango.nz@gmail.com
Thursday	4:30 - 6:30pm	**Trash Planet Beat Clinic**	Koha	contact@olmecha.com
Fridays	8:30 - 9:30am	**Tai Chi with Yi Ching**	Koha	community@arovalley.org.nz
Fridays	10:30 - 12pm	**Community Singing With Jo Shrigley**	$10/$70 for The term	jshrigley@gmail.com
Fridays	12:30 - 1:30pm	**Handstand Workshop**	$20	021 996 782 nicolas@oni.co.nz
Sundays	4:30 - 5:30pm	**Community free yoga**	Free	mark@hotmetal.nz
Sunday Fortnightly	2 - 4pm	**Aro Valley Jazz Jam with Aro Valley Jam Band**	Drop in & play or listen	community@arovalley.org.nz

Community Co-ordinator: Ahmen Mahal 04 384 8499
48 Aro St, *community@arovalley.org.nz*
Office hours: Mon closed; Tue to Thur 10am – 2pm; Friday 12 – 4pm

The Aro Valley Community Centre is managed by the Aro Valley Community Council Inc