DECEMBER 2025

Valley Voice

Te Reo Hapori o Waimapihi – the Aro Valley Community Newsletter

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Office hours: Wednesday closed;
Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 10am – 2pm; Friday 12 – 4pm

Aro Valley Community Centre – managed by the Aro Valley Community Council

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A note from the Editor

Welcome to this online edition of Valley Voice.

We started out to have the now usual eight printed pages, in keeping with a 'Christmas' edition and no January publication. But reality got in the way:

- *Material to hand only filled six pages – but the print format means we have to choose between four and eight.*
- *Most critically – despite the welcome support from Mitre 10, advertising revenue is inadequate to cover the cost of printing eight pages – and this is unsustainable.*

This means that all the advertisements and only some news are in the first four printed pages, which are somewhat squashed, and reports on our several events in November appear in pages 5 and 6.

Limiting the printing to what is paid for by advertising ensures the survival of Valley Voice!

Aro Valley fair 2026 ...

Start planning now!

The Aro Valley Fair is back next year on the **14th of March** (rain date 15th) from 10am to 4pm!

Early applications for stalls for selling things or promoting ideas and organisations are open now.

Please email: community@arovalley.org.nz to book your space or get more information.

The sooner you start planning the more sucessful your participation will be!

Use this QR Code to open the online version of Valley Voice – in colour, and all six pages – or go to:
www.arovalley.org.nz/valley-voice.html.

Events coming up

- ***12 December – Christmas in the Courtyard – St Johns in the City, Willis St – see page 4***
- ***14 December – Christmas in the Park with the Wellington Carnival Street Band – see above***
- ***14 March 2026 – THE GREAT ARO VALLEY FAIR – our big annual event – start planning now!!***

Published by the Aro Valley Community Council Inc

Points from the AVCC's November Committee meeting on 10/11/25

- **Loss warning:** The Treasurer reports that the backlog of dealing with invoicing and accounts to be paid has been caught up – but the AVCC is currently in a loss-making situation which will require determined fundraising and expenditure restraint to overcome.
- **The future of Valley Voice**, including ways to reduce the cost of printing, is to be investigated by a subcommittee.
- **Tree care:** The WCC continues to refuse to trim or otherwise maintain trees in Aro Park and this is a threat to the enjoyment of the park when trees become overgrown and excessively shading. There are also potential safety hazards. A management plan for the Park is to be sought from the WCC.
- **Computer stuff:** Work on updating our IT systems while at the same time reducing ongoing costs continues.
- **New Co-chair:** Because Claire is unable to continue as Co-chair, **Morgan Clark** has taken over the role, although Claire will remain a Committee member.

Step inside Inverlochy ...

Wellington's historic art school hosts its annual exhibition

In a celebration of community, creativity, and place, artists from Wellington's infamous Inverlochy Art School have come together for a whole-school exhibition, open to the public until Friday, 12 December.

Held within the fascinating setting of historic Inverlochy House, this exhibition showcases the work of the school's vibrant community of students, tutors, and studio artists. Visitors are invited to explore the house's intimate rooms, discovering both its layered history and the diverse range of artistic practices nurtured at the school.

Most artworks on display are available for purchase, with the majority of profits going directly to the artists. Remaining proceeds support the upkeep of the heritage building and fund community art programmes such as The Inverlochy Connection—a series of free art workshops for seniors.

A highlight of the show is the Gordon Harris People's Choice Award, voted for by exhibition visitors. The winner receives a generous voucher from Gordon Harris Art Supplies and the opportunity to present a solo exhibition in the IAS Community Gallery in 2026. This year's winner will be announced at a special closing celebration and concert with folk group The Wooden Box Band on Friday, 12 December.

Last year's People's Choice winner, Rose Dryland, held her solo exhibition, Echoes of the Wild, at Inverlochy earlier this year. Her detailed and evocative depictions of nature nearly sold out on opening night. "It felt like a real honour to know that people connected with my

work," she says. "Winning the People's Choice Award and exhibiting at Inverlochy has been a real boost to my development as an emerging artist."

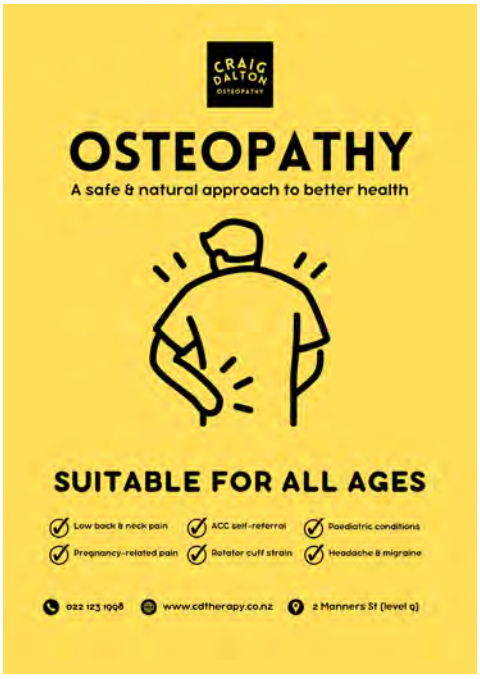
Founded in 1987, Inverlochy Art School is a not-for-profit organisation guided by the kaupapa of "art for art's sake." Despite the ongoing challenges of maintaining its historic home, the school continues to thrive. "We welcome new students all the time and our syllabus keeps growing," shares an Inverlochy Director. "Our tutors and facilities are an absolute treasure, and we want to ensure Wellingtonians have access to what we offer."

The Inverlochy Art School Annual Exhibition is at 3 Inverlochy Place, Te Aro.

Open daily, 10 - 2 pm, until Friday 12 December.

Closing celebration and concert, Friday 12 December from 5:30 pm.

Connah Podmore



Valley poetry ...

Beomeosa Temple

gift-wrapped in green
pine mountains
three thousand years distilled
this quality of silence
young girls glide
new jeans meticulously frayed
the cellphoned dragonflies
continuing
along the ancient way

Don Franks

From our MP ...

Ngā mihi o te wā raumati!

The sun is here, it's the silly season and we're winding down after another big year in the big house!

A big highlight for me over the last month has been **successfully amending New Zealand's first ever law against stalking and harassment**. Following the uncovering of corruption within the former senior Police executive, we have been working hard with the Police Minister's office to improve trust and confidence in the police, particularly for survivors of family and sexual violence.

In opposition, we don't get many wins and can often encounter barriers when working with the government parties and ministers, so it was good for all parties to unite over such a worthy cause. This is particularly noteworthy for Aro Valley given we worked alongside a young, incredible wahine – Zeni Gibson – an Aro Valley native and survivor of horrendous stalking, to make many changes to the way "the system" allows stalking and harassment to continue. Ngā mihi to Zeni and her whānau.

On a less positive note, over the last month, we have fought hard against the **Regulatory Standards Act** and the devastating environmental, social and anti-Tiriti impacts that it will have. Sadly, we are now fighting the progression of the **Fast Track Approvals bill**. This is a bill that will fast track the destruction of our environment and override community voice, iwi and hapū voice, and environmental limits.

The Greens will repeal the Regulatory Standards Act.

The Greens will revoke the fast-tracked consents for coal, hard rock gold, and seabed mining.

Greens Christmas Market Bake Sale – Sunday 14 December, Harbourside Market

Join us at the waterfront markets on Sunday 14th December as we raise money for our campaign to change the government next year and make way for the most progressive Government that Aotearoa has ever seen,

Come to our bake sale: 8am-11am, Sunday 14 December, Harbourside Market

If people wish to contribute baking, please get in touch: tamatha.paul@greens.org.nz

Aro Valley Mini Mart
For your daily needs – Groceries,Wine and Beer.
Open to 9.30 pm
(liquor sales close 9.00 pm)

Photo by AJ

Arvo Kapp 1958-2025

Arvo Kapp has passed away.

Arvo was very much the spirit of Aro Valley. When Arvo was well, the Valley was well, and when he was not there was always something amiss. Now what is missing is him, and he will be missed dearly by the many people he touched with his generous spirit, and his love for music and mischief.

He joins his good friend Carlos on the grand adventure to the great beyond.

There will be an event at the hall on the 8th of December from 1:30pm to 4:30pm

Moe mai ra.

Ahmen Mahal

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Valley Voice is published on behalf of the Aro Valley Community Council Inc, 48 Aro St, Wellington.
This issue published on 4/12/25.

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 wanted

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.
*Our next issue is **February 2026**, the deadline for receiving contributions for that is **Wednesday 28 January 2026.***

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Yes, we want your ads!

We welcome advertisements to pay for printing Valley Voice. Send copy and artwork by email to brent.efford@me.com . You will be invoiced by email after publication.

- ***Minimum size:** a small classified style ad, 2 column cm for $15.*
- ***Normal:** at least business card size (90 x 55 mm) $40.00*
- ***Sponsor:** $400, space as negotiated.*
- ***Artwork provided complete by the advertiser is preferred, if possible,** in PDF, JPEG, TIFF or PNG formats.*

From behind closed doors ...

Garage secrets revealed

The Garages of Aro event on Saturday 15 November involved throwing open six interesting garages to the public, each with its own story. They ranged from an art space to vintage cars and motorbikes. Music featured too with jazz in one garage and folk music in another.
Ian Renwick's knife making and woodworking workshop provided a fascinating insight into this ancient craft while Jacqui and Alan's garages gave a history lesson on the past of the street formerly known as Epuni.

Greg Campbell

AJ @ 6 Honiana Te Puni St outside his garage/ workshop.

Ian @ 117 Aro St his workshop where he does woodwork and makes and sharpens knives.

Jaqui Tutt explaining historic photos of Billy Higgs' garages at (now) 20 Hōniana Te Puni St where he kept his fleet of motor vehicles from 1914 to the 1940s, Photos: Julia Stace

Yesterday afternoon a painful accident occurred off Abel Smith-street. Charles Seed, fifth son of Mr William Seed, Secretary of the Customs Department, aged 13 years and 6 months, accompanied by a young friend of his named Frederick Vennell, aged 14 years, went in search of a cat which had killed a canary belonging to Mrs Twist, a neighbor, Charles Seed carrying a pistol in his hand. Failing to find the cat, the boys began to play at highwaymen and policemen, Vennell having picked up a snider rifle, with a Morris tube inserted into it, which he found standing in the corner of a shed. Seed presented his pistol at Vennell, saying "I'll be a robber." Vennell covered him with his gun, not thinking whether it was loaded or not, and shot Seed through the heart, the small pellet just passing by the breast bone. Vennell's cries were heard by two boys named Harry Twist and William Pope, who at once ran to his assistance. Dr Henry, who was in the neighborhood, hearing of the accident, immediately proceeded to the spot, but life was extinct. Death must have been instantaneous, as the boy never uttered a word or scream. Dr France, the medical attendant of the family, was also in attendance soon afterwards. The deceased was a very promising youth. He was beloved by his family and was a great favorite with his schoolfellows. We understand that both boys were engaged in the late Maypole dance held in connection with the Old English Fair some time ago, at the Drillshed, in aid of St Peter's Church building fund. General sympathy was expressed for Mr and Mrs Seed last night, when the news of the sad occurrence became known throughout the city. An inquest will be held at Mr Seed's residence, Woolcombe-street, this afternoon.

NZ Times 24/6/1885

Historical snippet ...

1885 Tragedy in Palmer St

A loaded pistol is not a child's toy – a lesson hard learned in Palmer St in 1885.

The Seed family was one of the most influential in the colonial era Aro Valley (then called Polhill's Gully). William Seed was the head of the Customs Department and died in 1890, soon after his retirement. His much younger widow lived until 1920 and upon her death their large house and acre of freehold land was sold to the Catholic Church for a school – and is now our beloved Aro Park.

DEATHS.

STAFFORD.—On the 19th June, at the Lower Hutt, Captain Edwin Stafford.
LIARDET—On the 30th May, accidentally drowned crossing the Wairarapa Lake, Frederick Evelyn, dearly beloved husband of Louise Liardet, and beloved son of Frederick Evelyn, of Macdonald Town, Sydney, aged 34; deeply regretted by all who knew him. Australian papers please copy.
SEED.—In Palmer-street, on June 23, accidentally shot, Charles Hugh, fifth son of William Seed, aged 13 years.

NZ Times 26/6/1885

A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Community

As 2025 draws to a close, I want to extend a warm and sincere thank you to everyone who has been involved with the Community Centre throughout the year. Whether you put on or attended events, volunteered your time, shared your skills, or simply popped in for a cuppa and a chat — your presence and support are what make this place vibrant, welcoming, and full of life.

Your kōha has been deeply appreciated and helps us keep the Community Centre running at its best for everyone who walks through our doors.

I would also like to give a special shout-out to all who joined me at the Planty Fun-d Raiser. I've already heard stories of fresh salads being whipped up from the seedlings you took home, while others have cheerfully told me they're "looking forward to next year." Hearing that joy is exactly what makes these events worthwhile.

Thank you again for making 2025 such a memorable year. Here's to many more gatherings, shared moments, and growing together in 2026.

Have a Safe and Happy Holiday Season. See you all in 2026.

Janette Wong

Management Committee Member and plant sale organiser

Management Committee members Jane Little (Secretary), Jaqui Tutt (Co-chair) and Jacqueline Norden (face obscured) at the at the Planty Fun-d Raiser.

Support our advertisers ... they support the printing of Valley Voice!
See page 4 for advertising information

Housing meeting surprisingly consensual

Those who turned up to the AVCC meeting on The Future of Housing in the Aro Valley on 24 November anticipating fireworks – between diehard NIMBYs defending the old housing of the Aro Valley down to the last finial and young renters seeking cheaper high-rise apartments – would have been disappointed.

The inevitability of change was acknowledged, sunlight for all was essential, and it seemed that there would be no rapid invasion of six storey apartment blocks even where they might now be legally permitted.

The panel of three speakers was introduced by Morgan Clark, replacing Claire Freeman, who had originally suggested the meeting, as an AVCC Co-chair.

Before the start: clockwise from the front – **unidentified**; **Cr Geordie Rogers**; new AVCC Co-chair **Morgan Clark**; **Tamatha Paul MP**; **Iona Pannett**; **Guy Marriage**; **Claire Freeman** (past AVCC Co-chair, face obscured.)

Iona Pannett honoured

A highlight of the evening was a presentation to recently-retired city councillor Iona Pannett.

Long-serving former AVCC chair and community activist Roland Sapsford described Iona's leadership of the anti-bypass movement in the early 2000s, which was also supported by the AVCC. This led to Iona being a Green Party candidate for the Wellington City Council in the local elections of 2004 and 2007.

She was elected in the latter year, and every election since, making her the longest-serving councillor by the time she retired at this year's election. Our gratitude was more fully expressed in the September 2025 Valley Voice.

To recognise her particular WCC support of Aro Valley issues, including the long running and troubled rebuilding of our Community Centre, Roland presented Iona with a medallion conferring life membership of the Aro Valley Community Council.

***Iona,** with her life membership medallion, speaking at the meeting.*

*T**amatha Paul**, MP for Wellington Central.*

Block party revived

For the first time since 2008, the basketball court was host to an Aro Valley Block Party on 22 November.

Pitched mainly at younger Valleyites – and with music at a volume likely to keep the elderly at bay – the programme organised by AVCC Community Co-ordinator Ahmen Mahal and Management Committee member Angus Woodhams included MCing, street art and break dancing. And a solid lineup of bands during the afternoon completed the entertainment.

The Aro Valley Community Centre office will be closed during the Xmas – New Year holiday break.
The next issue of Valley Voice will be published on **Thursday 5 February**. Merry Christmas everybody!