

Walkway leads to the future

Hawera's new thoroughfare is the first in a number of improvements.

Hundreds of Hawera residents turned out in the town centre to support the official opening of its new thoroughfare, Campbell Lane.

The open-air walkway, which connects the Cornish's Car Park with the main street's retail area, was launched by South Taranaki District mayor Ross Dunlop in a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Saturday.

The combination of paving and green space - which features trees, seating, entrance pillars and lighting columns - was filled with people taking part in the morning's festivities.

Activities spilled out on to the main street, with families enjoying face painting, barbecue, balloons and entertainment, which included the Te Kotahitanga kapa haka group, comprising students from schools across the district.

"I love listening to the kapa haka group," onlooker Leigh Hobman said while standing in line to nab herself a free sausage.

Watching on as her 10-year-old daughter, Emma Hobman, assisted Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Leigh said the new laneway was an asset to the town.

"It's a nice way to brighten up the centre," she said.

Bev and Alf Broadmore, residents of Ohawe Beach, eight kilometres west of Hawera, were also in the crowd.

The couple agreed the lane was a change for the better, with Bev saying the space would attract people to sit and eat their lunch.

"If it's a nice and fine day people will use it."

The pedestrian thoroughfare is part of a wider strategy to make the centre of Hawera a more distinctive, attractive and vibrant



South Taranaki mayor Ross Dunlop opened the new Campbell Lane in Hawera.

Future projects include a new library, cultural and art centre, redesigning traffic flows and lighting improvements.

place. It was the first project in a list of redevelopments that was rubber stamped by the council two years ago.

The council had budgeted about \$11 million as part of its 10-year plan for the development. The work is being loan-funded, which will be partly repaid by the

earnings from the council's long term investment fund.

Other projects include the development of a new library, cultural and art centre, the redesign of traffic flows to encourage better use of the town centre, and lighting improvements to better highlight Hawera's heritage buildings.

The Campbell Lane project involved the demolition of the old earthquake-prone Campbell building on High St.

Dunlop said it was appropriate that the name of the new walkway was linked to a mayor from the 1930s, Mr J E Campbell, whose family owned the old building.

Acknowledging the community spirit at the event, Dunlop said it was great to see so many people enthusiastic about the development.

"And it's just the beginning," he said.

The changes had already given confidence to the business community, with a number of retailers having recently opened up in the area, he said.

"It's a really positive start." As part of the international celebration of 100 years of Lions clubs, the Hawera Mt Lions Club donated an art sculpture which had been incorporated into the Campbell Lane development.

Also on Saturday, the mayor cut a ribbon to officially open the new Warehouse Stationery outlet in the town.

PHOTOS: SIMON O'CONNOR/FAIRFAX NZ



Campbell Lane and Warehouse Stationery both opened on Saturday in Hawera.



A big crowd turned out for the ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Minnie Mouse hangs out with Emma Kuklinski, aged one-and-a-half.