

Tuia te Taitonga tāpiringa

Southlink Extra

Winter 2026



Welcome to Southlink Extra

Welcome to the Winter edition of **Southlink Extra** for 2026. This quarterly newsletter complements our Council Southlink publication, which appears fortnightly in the Ōpunakē Coastal News and monthly in the Pātea and Waverley Press and provides another way for us to keep you informed about what the Council is doing in our District.

Te Hāwera Community Board By-Election

VOTE 2026

LOCAL ELECTIONS

Council has announced a by-election for Te Hāwera Community Board following the resignation of Board member Celine Filbee.

South Taranaki Mayor Phil Nixon extends his thanks to Celine for her service to the Hāwera community and her contribution during her time as an elected member.

“On behalf of the Council and the Hāwera community, I thank Celine for her dedicated service over the past nine plus years. Her commitment, care and contribution to Hāwera and the wider district have been greatly valued, and we wish her all the very best for the future.”

The by-election process formally began on 30 June, and nominations close on 28 July 2026.

Voting documents will be delivered to electors in Te Hāwera from 7 September 2026, with voting closing at noon on Wednesday 7 October 2026. Preliminary results will be available later that day, with the official declaration of results expected on 8 October 2026. For more information, visit www.southtaranaki.com/byelection

Resident Survey Shows Strong Overall Confidence in Council

Council's 2025/26 Residents Satisfaction Survey found strong overall community confidence, with 91% of residents satisfied with Council's overall performance, 92% satisfied with elected members, and more than 90% saying they know where to access Council information and have opportunities to participate in decision-making. Public libraries (96%), wastewater and sewerage services (95%), cemeteries (95%), and parks, reserves and playgrounds (92%) were the highest-rated services. The survey also highlighted areas for improvement, particularly roads (61% satisfaction), stormwater management (80%), and Council's responsiveness following customer enquiries (75%), with residents raising concerns about potholes, drainage, water quality, refuse services and issue resolution. Council's chief executive Fiona Aitken says the results are encouraging while also providing valuable feedback to help guide ongoing service improvements. The survey was conducted independently and included responses from 488 residents across the district.



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Stark Park Upgrade Underway in Eltham

The Stark Park upgrade has officially begun, with demolition and site preparation marking the first stage of the project. While visible activity has been limited to date, significant planning and coordination work has been completed behind the scenes to support the delivery of the upgrade. Additional improvements are also progressing, including the development of new park signage and the relocation of refurbished seating to Eltham Cemetery. Existing features, including the boundary wall mosaic artwork, will be protected during construction and assessed for future restoration.

Waverley Town Belt Nears Milestone

Stage 2A of the Waverley Town Belt development is nearing completion, with the new car park and pedestrian footpath in their final stages of construction. The upgrades will improve access and connectivity throughout the reserve and build on previous enhancements to pathways, parking, fencing and infrastructure. The project is now preparing to enter its ecological phase, with reforestation planting scheduled to begin soon. The planting programme will support biodiversity, native restoration and the long-term vision for the Town Belt as a high-quality community green space.



Te Puna Manawa Ora Taking Shape

Work on Te Puna Manawa Ora (formerly known as the Ōpunakē Green Space) continues to make strong progress, with major structural elements now in place and the redevelopment taking visible shape. Foundations have been completed for key features including the shelter, puna and rock feature, while Corten steel elements and the rebuilt rock wall seating area are beginning to define the space. Sections of the rock wall have been reconstructed using stone from the original structure, helping retain a connection to the site's history. Preparation of the rain garden is also complete, with planting to start soon.



Manaia Town Hall Demolition

Demolition of the Manaia Town Hall and Sports Complex buildings is largely finished ahead of construction of the new facility. There has been a sense of nostalgia across the community as the buildings come down, with many remembering the events and occasions held under the Hall roof over the years, from ballet performances and cabaret evenings to cinema screenings, weddings and concerts. Preservation has been prioritised throughout the project, with selected timbers, seating and other materials recovered by specialist recyclers. Timber flooring from the supper hall will be incorporated into the new building, while chattels from both buildings have been retained for use in Council facilities. Concrete from the demolition will also be crushed and reused on site, helping reduce project costs and waste.

New Features for Pātea Saltmarsh

Construction of the viewing platform at the Pātea Saltmarsh is now complete. The stairs and access ramp have also been finished, providing safe and inclusive access to the lookout area. With the main structural elements now in place, the project is moving onto landscaping and will include native planting to help protect and enhance the saltmarsh environment. A bespoke bench, developed in collaboration with local artists, will also be installed during this phase. This will add a unique cultural element to the space and reflect the ongoing partnership between iwi, Council and the community.



Glover Road Trial Roundabout

The trial roundabout at Turuturu/Glover Road intersection in Hāwera has been very successful and proven popular with residents. Council is now planning to install additional traffic delineators on the southern end of the roundabout to help prevent southbound vehicles turning across traffic.

